

Ep #274: Making Decisions



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With Your Host

Angela Kelly

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Hello empowered principals. Welcome to Episode 274.

Welcome to *The Empowered Principal™ Podcast*, a not so typical educational resource that will teach you how to gain control of your career and get emotionally fit to lead your school and your life with joy by refining your most powerful tool, your mind. Here's your host certified life coach Angela Kelly Robeck.

Hello, my empowered leaders. Happy Tuesday. Welcome to the podcast. So happy you're here today. And welcome to all my newbies. I love you guys. The Facebook group is on fire. If you guys were there in February when we were doing the Self-Love Challenge, we were having such a hoot. And I have been coaching the winners of that Self-Love Challenge.

And this month in March we are doing some fun work with luck, and how we can turn luck into results. We're having a good time with that. I hope you're joining us. If you're in Facebook, come on over. Get in the group, let's have some fun.

Okay, making decisions. We're going to talk about making decisions today because the majority of what you do as a school leader is make decisions. You make conscious, intentional decisions sometimes. And other times you make tons of smaller micro subconscious decisions, right? We're making decisions every minute of the day. When we get up. I think I talked about this on the decision audit podcast where we talk about from the time you get up to the time you go to bed, just making decisions all day long.

I'm sure there's some stat out there about how many decisions that we make on average per day. It's a lot. From when you're going to get up, to whether or not you're going to brush your teeth, to what you're going to eat for the day, to what kind of car you bought to drive to work, to the school you decided to say yes to, to the people you hired, to the curriculum you chose. So many decisions, right? To what you're going to have for lunch.

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Little decisions, big decisions. Decide, decide, decide all day long. This is what we do. So you want to be very aware of how you make decisions. You want to be very intentional about those decisions. And you want to be consciously making them, okay?

And I talk about decision making so much on the podcast because of the power of making intentional, conscious decisions from awareness and alignment with your values. Here's why your decisions determine your actions. You decide to act or not act. You decide to do this or to do that.

Your actions then determine the results you create, the outcomes that happen, the goals you achieve or do not achieve. Every single result in your life, professional and personal, is a product of your decisions and your actions. So you want your decisions to be intentional. And you want your results to be the ones that you most desire and want to create.

This means that you want your decisions to be made from the results, or the goals, or the outcomes that you desire. Stick with me on this. The results that you want to create for yourself, whether that's work/life balance, or higher test scores, or more positive school culture. Or a better managed schedule, you want to make better use of your time. Or you want to get to yoga. Or you want to stop working until 7pm. Or you want to learn how to delegate. Or you want to change up grade levels and have difficult conversations.

Whatever goals you have for yourself, you want to make decisions about those goals through the filter of that goal. These results that you want, you have to think about that goal as the filter through which you're going to make your decisions. Because decisions are made in one of two ways, with intention or with emotion.

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And I call those reactions, right? When you're deciding out of an emotional reaction, that's not intentional. It's reactive. You want to be intentional. So you either make it with intention or with emotion.

So I want you to think about your current decision making process. How do you decide? How do you make decisions? How do you process decisions? Are you a person who just decides? Boom, I'm done. I feel it. It feels good, feels aligned. I'm done, out, let's move on?

Or do you go slow and you're methodical and you seek a lot of information and you seek a lot of input from others? Do you ask people about their opinion of what you should do? Or do you ask your goal, or your desired outcome what decision to make?

I do this all the time. I have a goal and I ask the goal. Goal, what decision do I need to make in this moment that's going to help me reach you? That's going to make this easier, or this faster, or this better? What do I need to decide right now in this moment, to hit that future goal?

Let the goal be the filter through which you make the decisions, okay? Do you ask yourself for input or do you rely more on the opinions of other people? Really think about this, do you value your own input? Do you trust that you have the ability to make a decision without gathering the opinions of others or without asking for permission to make that decision?

Are you in a school leadership position and you're new and you don't know? Or even if you're not new, it doesn't really matter if you're new or not. But do you feel like you have to get the superintendent's approval? Do you look for external evidence to give you the trust you need to make a decision?

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Or do you have enough belief in yourself, and trust in yourself, and conviction that whatever you decide, you're going to make that decision work? Because most of us, and I'm included in this, we don't trust our decisions. We tend to make them out of fear and doubt. And then we waver and we second guess.

But I want you to think about this, let's play this out. You and I are leaders responsible for making decisions. But if our self-concept is we don't make good decisions, or we don't know how to make decisions, or we have to ask other people permission to make decisions, or we have to get other people's input for decisions and we don't trust ourself to make decisions, which is what we're getting paid to do because decisions are valuable.

The more decisions you make, the more valuable you become. The stronger you become. The more capable you become. But when you're a person who's in a leadership role and you're not trusting yourself to make a decision because you're worried about what other people will think, or you're not sure if they're going to like the decision, or you doubt that the decision is the right one in the first place and you start second guessing yourself, you convince yourself that it's not the best one.

And when you're not convinced that it's the best decision or the right decision, you're not convicted. You're not committed to that decision, which means other people aren't going to be convicted or committed to that decision. How can your staff, the people that you lead, be committed to a decision that you've made when you're not even convinced or committed to the decision? It doesn't work.

What happens is, they can feel that energy where you're wavering and second guessing. And then the minute somebody complains or has a different opinion, you change the decision. And when you change decisions based on other people's values or other people's opinions, that creates lots of confusion and uncertainty in your school.

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And what happens is the result of that, of those actions when you waver and you listen to other people. And then you change your mind and you change the decision. Or you kind of stall and you just don't do anything with the decision you've made and it creates all this confusion and uncertainty. The result of that is it builds more evidence in your mind that your decisions aren't right. They're not the best ones. They can't be trusted. You prove yourself true.

So here are some things I would like to offer when it comes to decision making. One, there is no right decision, I'm using air quotes. There is only the decision you make right. Let me say that again. There is no right decision, school leaders. There is only the decision that you make right. There are no wrong decisions. There are simply decisions. They're neutral.

Decisions simply mean that you choose one based on your values, the priorities you have in the moment, and the information you have at the time and you move forward. If a decision that you made has some unintended consequences, some results you didn't desire or didn't intend to create, you simply solve for those and adjust and make new decisions. You adjust accordingly. No wrong decisions and no right decisions. There are just decisions, that's it.

Number two, indecision is the worst decision. Not deciding is procrastinating your progress and the progress of your school. And it feels terrible. It's the worst place to be in. You literally are in the meadow of the miserable maybe. Maybe this. Maybe that. I don't know. I could go here. I could go there.

You're just spinning around. You feel lost. You feel pulled in all the directions. You feel really scattered, confused, overwhelmed, weighed down. Making the wrong decision is actually better than not deciding at all because at least if it's the wrong decision, you now know. You tested your

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theory, it didn't work. Okay, now you know that and now you can make a new decision that's more informed.

When you're too afraid to decide one way or the other and you sit in indecision, what you're doing is stalling your progress, and your knowledge and your wisdom. You aren't testing the decision. So you have no idea if it's going to work or not. And you're not getting to work to make that decision work for you and your school. Do you see it? Indecision is the worst decision. Do not sit in indecision.

Now, I'm not saying make hasty, unnecessary decisions because you don't want to deal with the decision making process. That's not what I'm saying. What I'm saying is, when you have a decision to make, ignoring it, avoiding it, procrastinating it, and not getting to the dirt of what do I value?

What is the priority value? How is it going to help me reach this goal? Or is it, yes or no? If so, let's go, even if it's scary or hard. If not, we say no. It makes it very simple. But sitting in Indecision is when you're avoiding, procrastinating, and resisting having to make a decision. That's different, okay?

Number three, decisions aren't as life and death as your brain wants us to believe that they are. We fret over so many decisions that don't matter as much as we think they will. We worry about lots of little things that we think are great big deals. But we make them and we move on. And at the most, it's maybe on the front page for a day and then people are distracted. They go back to their lives and think about other things.

But for the most part, we're so worried about little tiny things, or even bigger things. Like I was coaching somebody on making a decision about what professional development they were going to offer for their school for this year. What PD were they offering? Was it going to be language arts or math?

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And then they made that decision with their leadership team, it was going to be math. And now they have to decide which professional development is the right one. And so we coached on there is no right one. There's just the one that you make right.

You just pick one, create a theory based on the data that you have, the information you know, the wisdom you already have inside of you and the values that you want to be in integrity with and aligned with. You make a decision and you go for it. And you're like, this is the best decision. This is how. I'm going to make it the best decision, okay?

So, we worry about making the right one versus getting busy making it right. And in the end, so many of our decisions don't really matter as much as what we do with that decision and what we make it mean and the effort we put into trusting and believing in that decision and creating it to become the right decision.

And what's so interesting about decisions is that decisions equal empowerment. Think about how you feel after you've made a decision. It feels so amazing. It feels so good. It feels so powerful, right? Back in 2020, I'll have to look it up, but I did a podcast called The Anatomy of a Decision. You could probably Google it. Look it up on my website. And I talked about the three components of a decision.

There's the before the decision, all the things you do before you make a decision. There's the moment of a decision, which happens in an instant, you just decide. There's that moment and then there's after the decision is made. So listen to that podcast, I'm not going to review all of that, to create more awareness around what you're thinking and feeling before you make a decision and after you make a decision, and what happens in the moment.

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So just notice, what actions do you take beforehand? What are the thoughts driving those actions? How are you feeling before you make a decision? And then there's that moment you decide. There's a thought that happens in an instant. You're like I've got to make this decision. Maybe it's a deadline creating that certainty for you to decide, maybe you're just tired of not deciding.

Notice. Create awareness around the moment of decision. Notice the thoughts and emotions that fuel your decisions. And are your decisions made out of doubt and fear and worry? Or are they made out of clarity, trust, and alignment?

One of the things I offer to my principals who are interested in coaching is a free consultation call. So anybody interested in coaching, the first step that they take is to schedule a free consultation phone call with me. And one of the things I coach them on during that call is their current decision making process and the process they want to implement in terms of making decisions.

So what most principals want is they want to make decisions from clarity and confidence and certainty. And they want a guarantee that their decisions are the right ones. And they want to know ahead of time that their decision is the right one and that it's going to work and everybody's going to be okay.

But here's the rub, they also want to make decisions that align to their future goals, even when that decision feels scary in the moment. What they also want, they want certainty and a guarantee, but they also want to make decisions from courage. And here's the truth, in order to achieve your next goal you're going to have to make decisions from a place of trust.

What got you here, the way you made decisions in your past will not necessarily get you to your new goals. You're going to have to be willing to

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make decisions in pursuit of your goal when you don't feel confident in the moment, when you're not sure. You have to lean on trust to know exactly what decision you need to make to reach the next goal.

And that goal can be professional or personal. It can be academic achievement, school culture, hiring the ideal staff, selling your school vision, getting people on board, managing your work calendar, or receiving recognition for your school.

I just had a consult with somebody so lovely – Rachel, shout out to you if you're listening – who really wanted to make her school shine. And that is such a beautiful goal because she can just find ways in which her school is already shining and then make that happen for her school. I love that goal, it's so beautiful.

Or you can have personal goals, right? A lot of people come to me and they're like, I'm good with my professional goals. I want work/life balance, self-care. I need to work on my personal relationships with my spouse, partner, my kids, my mother, my mother-in-law. Like all the people, right? Or I want to create a group of friends outside of school. Or I'm working on my health, or my spirituality.

Any desire that you have, any goal that you want, anything you want to accomplish or experience or achieve, it all happens based on the decisions that you make. So what I teach principals to do is to get intimate with their decision making process, and show them how to make decisions from trust and confidence even when their brain is freaking out.

You can feel the intensity of your brain telling you, "No, this is scary." While at the same time, your heart and your soul is telling you "Yes, this is what I want. This is what my goal needs. This is the next best step." You can be in that flux of feeling fear and making the decision out of alignment and knowing this is what I want and what I need in order to evolve myself to

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become the person who achieves this goal and to move myself and my school forward.

I show you how to get your brain on board with a tool called intentional belief building. It's one of the most magical tools that I have learned through my own coaching experiences. And what it is, it's a way to help you make decisions swiftly and powerfully so you're not stalling out in indecision. And you're not just rushing through decisions.

It's that balance of making them swiftly and powerfully, to bring your brain up to speed by selling it on why the decision you want to make is the best decision for you and your goal.

So for those of you who are on the fence, when you're thinking about coaching, you've been listening to this podcast for a long time and you keep like filling out the contact form but then you don't submit, I hear you. I get it. You're just worried. You're afraid. You're scared. It's okay. Let me comfort you. Let me reassure you.

If you're on the fence about whether or not to sign up for coaching, let this podcast be the opportunity where you decide. You either decide yes, and you love your reasons even though you're a little afraid and unsure. But you're doing it for your future goals and you're using it as a filter. I'm deciding this for my future, for my goals, for the things I desire to experience as a school leader.

Or make that decision to not sign up for coaching right now, and ask yourself, why not now? And what do I need? What do I need to think, what do I need to feel in order to say yes to yourself and yes to coaching? And I'm going to tell you very directly, that what holds most people back at first, is the decision to invest the money.

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There is a payment required to coach with me, just in case you're wondering. And it's significant. It's not cheap because this work is so valuable. I think it's reasonable compared to other coaches out there and other professional development programs that you can pay for. I think it's extremely reasonable for how high-touch, how customized it is, how personalized it is, and how it creates 100% results every single time.

So I think it's worth double, which is why I love selling it for the price that I do. But what holds most people back initially is the money. They want to coach. They want the results that coaching offers. But they're afraid to invest in themselves. Either because they've never invested before in this way, like you're new to life coaching and leadership coaching. Fair enough, right? And it feels awkward or new or kind of different and you're kind of unsure of the process.

That's one reason. Another big reason is that they're afraid they're not going to get the results. Like they're not going to get the return on investment, meaning they're paying for the results. They're paying to have work/life balance. Or they're paying to have better management over their time and their schedule.

Or they are looking for confidence. They want to be able to hold difficult conversations with confidence and know how to plan those conversations ahead of time. Or they want to just become more valuable as a school leader and be able to inspire and motivate people and get other people on board with their vision and their goals.

Whatever they're coming to me for, they've tried it 10 different ways on their own and they failed. And they're scared that this is the one next decision they're going to make and it's going to fail. I just want to say it's totally normal to be afraid of new approaches to leadership and to your life. And it's also very normal to be afraid to fail.

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I want to normalize the fear. The fear is not the problem. It's supposed to be there. It's supposed to happen. I would be shocked if people weren't afraid to try new things or afraid to invest in themselves when they've tried so many times and failed.

The fear is normal. You're going to feel like, oh, wow, this is kind of scary. This is a scary decision I'm making. But feeling that fear and being able to manage your mind in a way that allows you to move forward and decide what you want from the place of your future goal, that is the transformation you're looking for. It's why you came to the call. It's why you hire a coach.

It's the moment where you make the decision based on the goals and the values that you have and the desires that you want. You make them based on your goals, not your emotion of fear. You decide for the goal to invest in it. That you will give it everything it needs to survive and succeed.

I think of my goals like a newborn baby. My little baby goal, this little dream that I have, I'm holding it in my arms. It's brand new and it needs my full time and attention to survive. To even survive, let alone succeed. It needs me to invest my time and my energy and my money. Every single resource I can leverage, I put it all into this newborn baby goal. I make it work.

Think of the decisions you would be making if your goals were newborn babies, because they are little newborn babies. Think of how aligned it would feel to invest your resources that you need. If this were a newborn baby, you'd be spending money on diapers, and bottles, and food, and blankets, and clothing, and car seats, and all the toys and all the things, right?

When your priority is your goal, when the goal is the priority, you happily put your resources towards that goal. When people go out and make a decision to have a baby, they happily know they're going to spend time, money, and energy on that baby. They know they're going to be tired and

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exhausted, and sometimes they're going to feel frustrated at times. They know they're not going to be perfect parents. They know they're going to fail.

But they do it anyway. They decide anyway because of the future goal, because the love and bringing somebody up into the world. Think about the reasons people decide to have children. It far outweighs the cost or the investment of time and energy and money and other resources that we put into having this baby.

Your goal is a little baby. We know it's going to take everything within us and we want it. We want to do it anyway. We sign up for it. Coaching is the tool that you need to take your dreams and goals and turn them into your new reality. And all you have to do is be willing to decide from the filter of your goal what it needs. And decide that the goal is worth more than the temporary discomfort of saying yes.

Next week's podcast is a client interview. Her name is Rebecca. She's going to share with you her thoughts about her decision to say yes to coaching and how she's so grateful she did. And why she wishes she had done it sooner. It's fabulous. She's such a success story, I can't wait to share that with you next week.

So all of this to say your decisions are the most powerful tool you have. And I want to invite you to make the most empowered decisions from the place of your goals and the feelings you want to feel. And one of those feelings is trust and courage. So here is to empowered decision making, my friends. I love you, have a great week. Talk to you next week. Take good care. Bye.

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learn more about the tools that will help you become an emotionally fit school leader.