

## Ep #299: Make Peace with Time



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Angela Kelly**

## Ep #299: Make Peace with Time

Hello empowered principals. Welcome to episode 299.

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.

Well, hello my empowered principals. Happy Tuesday. Welcome to the podcast. So happy to be here with you guys. Ah, I have to tell you. I am recording this podcast in mid-August. It's probably not going to drop until October.

So I want to tell you what's going on in my life in real time because I have big exciting personal things happening in my life. I'm so excited to share this with you. So as you're listening to this podcast, all of this has already happened, but I can't hold it back anymore. I have to tell you that my son, our son, my one and only child is moving from Los Angeles, California where he went to school.

He went to school down at Chapman University, which is a small, private college that he chose to go to, to study screenwriting. So he's big into film and video. He always has been. He operates cameras. He works on huge movie sets, TV sets, commercials, and he's been in the film industry for a few years. With this writer strike that's been going on for months and months, it has impacted his ability to work.

When you don't make films and people aren't creating films, you're not able to run a camera. You're not able to do commercials. Well, maybe a little bit on the commercial side. But he's been impacted by this writer strike. His ability to write in his ability to work on set.

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So he and a friend from Chapman have decided that they are going to try out a new city. They are moving to Nashville, Tennessee. Oh my gosh, my son is moving from California. He's born and raised, California boy through and through, lived here his entire life. Even though he was born in Minnesota, we only lived there for about two months before we moved out to California. He's been a California boy.

Now he's moving to what I consider like the Deep South. I don't think it is the deep south. It is south. I don't even know for exactly how you would label Tennessee. But from my California point of view, I think Tennessee would be considered southern, right? So he's moving to Nashville.

I have been to Nashville once. I went there for my business mastermind, and I fell in love with it. It's a great city. It's a beautiful, it's clean, it's fun. The music scene is out of this world. I didn't get a lot of time to explore it because I was busy doing my mastermind and working, but I did get out one or two evenings very quickly. I just walked up and down the Nashville like music strip scene. That was about it for me.

But we are going to drive across the country from LA all the way to Nashville. Then I'm going straight from Nashville. I'm going to stay there for a week, help him get unpacked. We sent a pod. Get him unpacked, get him sent off. I'm going to help him do the things, like unpack his place, get him settled in. I'm sure I'm going to be shopping and buying him new things that he needs.

I'm going to be there a week. I rented a little Airbnb so that he and his buddy can move in, get settled in. Then I'm going straight from Nashville to my Life Coach School mastermind, which is an annual event that we hold for our certified coaching program. I'm getting recognized at that event for having created a six figure business within a 12 month period. I'm so, so proud of this accomplishment. That's happening in September.

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By the time you're listening to this, it'll already be done. But I will tell you all the things and all the details, but I just couldn't wait to tell you guys. I'm heading out on a road trip next week with my son across the country from LA to Nashville.

Then I'm going down to Dallas, Texas for my mastermind where I'm going to be celebrated and honored for this milestone in my business. Then I will be back here, coaching you all. So I can't wait to tell you all how that goes down. But I had to let you know what's going on in my world, in my life.

So that's where we're at. The EPC, the Empowered Principal® Program, is up and running. If you didn't get a chance to join when the doors were open, you can get on the waitlist and be included in the next round of EPC. So make sure that if you didn't get into EPC now, you get in in the next round. Get on that waitlist so I can ensure that you get in, and we take care of you and we coach you and we support you, and we help you create the success you want. All right.

Today, I'm going to talk about creating peace with your time. I feel like you're at the point in the school year where you've been at it for a few months, and the honeymoon of starting school, that excitement and enthusiasm where everybody's on a high and everybody's excited and you're doing the themes. You're having the back to school events. That's all fun. That's done.

Now it's October, and you are wearing thin. That honeymoon's worn off. Your mind is racing. There's so much to do. There's not enough time, and you do have a huge portion of the school year, and your brain's already telling you that you're running out of time, right. So what happens is you're up at night thinking about it, you're losing sleep, you're getting up early, you're working longer and longer.

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You're maybe not honoring the time when you said you were going to leave for the evening, or you're missing out something at home, or you're not scheduling in fun. You're not having fun with your friends or your family, or taking time for yourself. You've cut out your walks in the mornings or your walks in the evenings because you've got to get some emails done or you've got a project or a task. I get it. I've been there you guys.

More than that, I feel like what really starts to hunker down is you're looking at how far you have until the end of the year, and you're stressed. You're tired, you're exhausted, you're overwhelmed. You're stressed about what other people are thinking and how they're feeling, what they're thinking about themselves. You're trying to boost them up.

What the students are thinking and what they're feeling and how parents are thinking and feeling and how colleagues are responding to you, and what they're thinking about you. What the district administration is thinking about you. What they're feeling, what work is doing to you, right? You're thinking about test scores, you're thinking about you, how you're holding up. All of that compounds and feels very stressful.

Then you're wondering how to do the job, and how to do it without it consuming you even though it already has. You're trying to figure that out. But it really comes back to your thoughts around your time and your energy. Is my time and energy being spent producing outcomes? Is it being spent in the way I want to spend it?

So what I have noticed in my own brain and in my clients' brains, and we're talking about this in EPC, is that your mind is at battle with time. It's literally going to war with time. It's telling time, you're talking to time, and you're telling it that there's not enough of you, and that it's working against you. We literally say things like I'm working against the clock. I've got a deadline. I got to work against the clock.

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Our brains are thinking that time is the problem. The story that humans are telling ourselves and each other that there's not enough time to be both accomplished and have a life you love and be rested, to self-care, take the rest and respite you need, and go have some fun, and work hard. That all three of those can't be together in existence because there's not enough time.

This story, and mark my word. I'm very intimate with the story. I see it in myself. That there's not enough time to accomplish my goals and to get the rest and to have a life. It's hogwash. Hogwash just means it's a false story. For those of you who don't know what hogwash is, my mom used to say that's hogwash. It's just a lie that your brain is telling you. It's a false narrative than your brain.

Actually, it's not hard to understand why. All of society, and sadly the field of education, has been leading us as students and as teachers and now as school leaders to believe that time is scarce. There's not enough of it. The reason we are unsuccessful or the reason we don't feel better is because we don't have enough time. Interesting right?

We're so sold on the idea that more equals more that we haven't questioned if more equals success. We haven't considered anything else than the idea that more equals success. If I have more money, I must be more successful. If I have more time, I'll be more accomplished. If I have more resources, I will get more done. I will be more productive, which means I'll be more impactful, which means I'll have a bigger influence, and I will create bigger legacy. I will feel amazing.

We think that more equals success, but we haven't really stepped back just long enough to one, define what success is in our schools and for us personally, and how we measure success. There are different currencies by which we measure success. You can be financially successful and emotionally miserable. You can be financially less successful and

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emotionally successful. You could be financially successful and emotionally successful.

There are many ways in which we measure success. By our finances, by our relationships, by our influence, our impact, our connections, our contribution. But the currency that we tend to use the most is how we feel about those external aspects of our lives, about our relationships, about our family, about our friends, about our career, about our finances, about the material things we have or don't have, about where our school is in relationship to other schools.

Okay, so we really haven't talked about the tools and measures upon which we define success. All we do is chase our tail. We chase more, do more, be more, have more, achieve more, and we run, run, run. Then when we do achieve it, we're onto the addiction of more. So we chase more. We don't even celebrate the success we do create. We just are in the angst and the chase have more. Because we think that if we have more time, that we'll achieve more, and then in that achievement, we will feel better.

What we haven't considered in our schools, and I invite you to do this as a school leader, is that we need to feel more than do more. You can make peace with time based on checking in with your feelings more than your actions.

Because our battle with time has nothing to do with time. It's how we think and how we feel about time that fuels how we spend our time, and our thoughts about how we spend our time. The actions that we implement during our time, how those actions create results and outcomes, or do not create results and outcomes.

It's not about the time. Just ponder that for a second. Time really does only exist in our minds. Human beings created time in the measurement of light and dark. So when the sun was out, and when the sun wasn't out. Then

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throughout the seasons, which we now call a year, right? We have the four seasons, and we have a year. There is a rhythm that we, as humans, notice patterns within the Earth and the universe when it comes to lightness and darkness and seasons and weather, temperature, all of those things.

Eventually, us humans, we're so clever with the help of some genius mathematicians who created time and clocks to measure time. What they did was they generated a consistent system to organize human events, such as gathering, socializing, working together, exchanging resources, planting season, hunting season, harvesting season. You can see how it came to be. That was the purpose of time. That has been our purpose of time. As a means to gather, to communicate, to exchange.

But sadly, somehow we've turned it into the enemy, and we're at war with it. We crunch minutes and hours trying to figure out how we're going to fit in all of the things, and it makes us have to prioritize our time, our watch, our calendars. That doesn't feel comfortable because it makes us put value on one thing over the next. How am I going to spend my time? If I spend my time on this, it means I value that more than what I'm not spending my time on.

That makes us feel uncomfortable to have to prioritize, which is what I asked my school leaders to do. Get into the habit of getting comfortable with prioritizing and being comfortable with not doing something with our time. Because what our brain's doing is we're ranking what we value by assigning it time in our day, but we feel guilty if we're not doing everything. Then we blame it on time. I don't have the time. I've run out of time. Time got away, time slipped away.

So oftentimes what I see principals doing is planning one thing on their calendar, and then spending time doing something else. Have you done that? You have your whole week mapped out, and you're so proud of yourself. You're going to get all this stuff done. Then the life of a principal



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happens, and two of those things got done and nothing else did. Or maybe zero got done. You're like what just happened to the week?

But the battle, the frustration comes in when you spend time doing something other than what you planned, and then you're upset that you didn't get done what you had planned. Because you're thinking the thought that should not have been how I spent my time. I should have done it here. We're judging how we spent our time.

You feel like that what you wanted to do with your time was taken away from you and it was replaced with something that you had to do. Not that you wanted to do, but you had to do it. It was an emergency. It was an urgency. Somebody needed me, the boss told me to, I got off track. It feels like time happens to us, and then we get upset with it and blame time.

Then we'll argue that the thing that we planned on our calendar was equally important, and that it should have gotten done in addition to whatever did get done. What that leads us to is this internal tug of war with having attended to the thing that we felt we should in that moment, maybe an emergency came up or an urgency happened at school. Instead of writing your site plan, you ended up dealing with a student issue or a parent.

Then at the end of the day, you're upset at yourself for not getting your site plan done or worked on, even just a portion of it done. You're thinking to yourself well, now I've got to go home and work on it tonight. because I didn't get it done today because that thing took over my time. I should have been working on my site plan.

This is all being driven, not by the clock or the calendar, but by our choice to have a combative relationship with time. So what we do is we blame it, we get upset with it, we're frustrated with it. We label it as the reason as to why we don't do the things we say are important. Time gets to be the

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scapegoat as to why we're not happy, or why we don't do the things we want to do or why something doesn't get done.

We say things like I didn't have the time, time slipped away, time got away from me, I lost track of time, I got interrupted, right. We blame time. The lack of time, the scarcity of time is the problem. Once we start to see that oh, we're blaming time, and it's not time's fault. Time's just like sitting there neutral.

Once we see that we're like well, what else could it be? If time is not the problem, what is the problem? Then what we tend to do is we blame the situations. We blame the boss, the teachers, the students, the parents, the family, the friends, the PTA. We blame something for demanding your time.

Or we say it's a task we have to do. Or sometimes it's ourselves. Your own set of standards and perfectionism and expectations demand your time. You spend more time on that newsletter or preparing that speech because you're so wanting to perfect it. The standard upon which you've set for yourself doesn't allow you to do B minus work and let it go.

So I'm going to ask this. Let's stop going into battle with time and make peace with it once and for all. I want you to consider time as a person. Think of it as another human that you're going to build a relationship with. I do this with time, money, energy, effort, all of my assets. I want to build a beautiful relationship with my brain because it gives me so much power and content and knowledge and skills.

I love my brain, and I want to not blame it, but I want to have a relationship with it. I want to understand it. I want to love it and be compassionate with it. The same is true with my time. If time were a person, how would you build a relationship with it? How do you want to think and feel about it? How do you want to approach it?

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If you decide you're going to make peace with time then you can see time for what it truly is, which is a gift and a miracle of being alive on this planet. Because look, when we're born, we're all granted with the gift of time on the planet. As adults, especially here in America, we have the freedom and the privilege of doing whatever it is that we want with our time.

Now, I understand that for many Americans, there is systemic oppression that can deter you from the ability to feel like you have choice. So if you're listening to this podcast, and you have discriminations and oppressions as systemic racism or sexism or any ism that is holding you back from true freedoms because of our societal beliefs and approach, I invite you to consider thinking in the ways in which you do feel you have control and starting there.

So as a woman, I feel like men have more freedom than women to feel in control of their time because women have been taught that our time should be spent serving others so that they feel good. I have to work on the discomfort of bumping up against that societal belief that women's time should be spent making other people comfortable and allow myself to feel that burn of that belief and gently say no thank you and do what I want to do with my time, even when it feels completely out of alignment with what society thinks I should do. So I do want to just throw that caveat in there.

I am not a woman of color. I am a Caucasian white woman. I know that being a woman is just one of many oppressive belief systems that can hold you back from even tapping into the idea that time is completely available to you, and that you can build a beautiful relationship with them. So just start with what you can believe and build up from there. Okay.

So when you're born, you're not born with a manual of how you should spend your time. You're just born into existing and breathing and living and just being. For those of you who've been around a newborn, you definitely

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know that they do not come into the world with a curated schedule that fits into our adult earthly worldly schedule.

They're up in the night, and they're sleeping in the day, and their food is all over the place. When they have to go to the bathroom, it happens when it happens. They sleep when they sleep. They eat when they eat. They cry when they cry. They're literally just living in the moment, purely existing living and breathing being okay. So all of us entered the world in that way.

Babies, brand new babies, come into life, into planet Earth, with their own schedule, what they need when they need it. They don't know of times and clocks and calendars. We feel very thrown off by this. We think they should have the ability to follow our version of time. We know that they can't intellectually understand time, which is why we do what we do and why we love them so much. We will go out of our way to ensure their safety, protection, love, comfort. But we do create a schedule for them, and we train them to follow the schedule based on what feels good for us.

So as children go from infants to babies to toddlers to elementary age to middle to high school, as they get older, and they start to engage with the rest of the world, the world starts to train them on the schedule that works for the world. When to sleep, when to get up, when to leave for school, when to be at sporting events, when to be home for dinner, when to do their homework, when to play with their friends, when to brush their teeth, when to go to bed, right.

I'm not saying that schedules are a problem. That's not what I'm talking about. We're just talking about looking at time, stepping out of our current experience, and looking at time in a holistic way.

Eventually what we learn as kids is to follow whatever schedule is given to us. What I think is kind of sad is that our societal notions around time ask an individual to tune out our internal compass. We have an internal

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compass that tells us when we're hungry, when we're full, when we're tired, when we're energetic, when we need to use the bathroom, when we need water.

We have an internal compass that tells us it's like a navigation system within us that tells us everything we need, but it doesn't always beat to the drum of the clock or what society views as normal for the use of our time. We tend to tune that compass out, and we override it with what other people tell us because we're trained to value other people's schedules, other people's timelines, other people's expectations of us, other people's opinions more than we value our own.

One of the things I invite my principals to do is to value their opinion equally. Not to dismiss other people's opinion, but to take note of it and consider it and then kind of compare it to their own opinion, and then make a decision. What is your opinion of their opinion? What's your opinion of your opinion? Where do you want to take that input and feedback? Where are you happy to move on? Okay.

So as adults, we strive to fit into these parameters of time, to the parameters of our families and our bosses and our jobs and our communities. All along our career, the longer we go on, the deeper we go into belief that time is the problem. That it's the enemy, and that we're at war with time. Time is the reason why we can't have or experience or achieve or do what we want.

So you know me, I want to call a loving BS on this made up war with time. It doesn't have to be this way. You can be at peace with your relationship with time. Here's how.

Number one, accept that sometimes you're going to spend time on things you don't prefer to spend it on. You're not going to enjoy or love every minute of every day, and you're not going to love everything you're doing or

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spending your time on. That isn't the goal at all. I also want to say when you don't enjoy something, don't assume that it's a signal that you're out of alignment, and that you're not on the right path. Or you've done something wrong, something's gone terrible.

Don't believe that you should feel good all of the time. If you don't feel good, that you make it mean you are doing something out of alignment. That's not the case. You're still a great school leader even when you aren't feeling great about yourself or what's going on.

You're still cut out to be a school leader on days that everything goes off the rails. When your plan blows up, when the day blows up, when the test scores drop, when people leave your school, those actions don't equate to you being a great leader. Don't decide whether your time has been well spent by how you feel in the moment. Decide if it's time well spent by the results and outcomes you create based on the actions you took.

So what I'm saying is, there are times when you're going to choose to spend time doing something you don't love doing but you choose to do it in spite of it not feeling great or not loving it because you want the outcome that it creates more than you want to feel good in the moment you're doing the action. So don't think that oh, this is a waste of time because it doesn't feel good.

Ask yourself, why am I doing this? Why am I choosing to leave my office and go into this classroom and help this teacher or help this student? Or why am I choosing to say yes when somebody knocks on my door and asks me do you have a minute where you turn around and say yes, I do. Come on in.

Number two, I want you to understand that emotions drive actions. So while you're not using emotions to determine if your time was well spent in that

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moment, you are using emotions to fuel the energy behind the actions that fill your time. How you feel determines the energy behind your actions.

So you can take the same set of actions, but it's being fueled by different levels of energy. That energy fueling your actions determines how you experience the result you create. There's a difference. You can take the same action, create the same result, but you can feel differently about it depending on the energy that fueled the action and the result.

Okay, for example, if someone comes into your office and interrupts you and you're annoyed at them, but you allow them to come in and meet with you. The entire time they're talking, in the background your brain's like hurry up, get this over. I've got stuff to do. This is not how I want to spend my time. Why are you here? It's taking so long. I'm so annoyed.

If you're annoyed and you allow them to come in, but that entire time you're just frustrated and annoyed, the way you're going to engage with that person will feel different to you and to them versus if that same person were to knock on your door and ask to meet with you, and the emotion driving your decision to say yes was out of curiosity and compassion. You are going to experience that conversation, and so will they, differently than if you were to feel annoyed and the action saying yes and listening was fueled with annoyance versus compassion and curiosity.

You're not going to judge that time as a waste of time when you feel compassionate and curious and want to be helpful and help this person through whatever it is their need to talk to you about versus being annoyed that they're interrupting you when you should be getting your newsletter done. Do you see the difference? Okay.

Number three, your emotional energy that fuels actions are triggered by your thoughts and your beliefs. When you believe that time is scarce, and you're thinking that thought over and over all day long, your brain is going

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to search for evidence to prove the thought true. Which reinforces the belief that the thought is true.

Your brain is very effective and efficient at collecting the evidence it wants to believe. Because you can say look, here are all the reasons of why time is scarce. This is my to-do list. These are the hours in the day. Here's the math. It's statistically true that there's not enough time in my life to do everything I want to do. You could argue that in a court of law, and you can prove the thought true every single time.

I'll give it to you. If you want to argue and be at war with time, and that's how you want to live your life and experience school leadership, that's okay. You have the right and privilege to go experience that and approach school leadership from being at war with time.

Or you can decide that I want to be at peace with time. I want to start looking for the ways in which I am in control of my time, and I do have time, and it is allowable. I do have permission to take time off and to get the rest I need and to take care of myself and to be with family and friends.

What I find with school leaders is that it's tough for them. When you want to believe that you have more time and you want to have this great relationship with time but you don't think you can. Or you don't believe that it's possible to have control over your time. What's going to happen in your mind is it's going to blame time for the problem.

Once it sees that time is not the problem, because everybody has 24 hours in a day, then you think it's you that's the problem. Then you think it's other people or the task or the situation or the circumstance that's the problem. The brain is just looking for where's the problem? Is it me? Is it them? Is it the situation? Where's the problem?



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I'm sure that I could have a better relationship with time if people weren't annoying and people didn't interrupt me, and I was better disciplined and managed my calendar better. That's what I used to tell myself. I just wasn't disciplined enough. Or if my boss would stop asking me to do so much or expect so much of me, which meant I was expecting so much of me. Or, like this task, it's taking too long. It's too hard. It's too this. It's too that.

I want to just let you know that the reason you're in battle with time is because you think if you had more of it, then you would be able to accomplish X, Y, Z, and you would feel better if you accomplish those things. Here's the problem with that line of thought.

The more time you think you need, the more things you think you need to do, you're going to keep thinking that thought even when you do more, achieve more, accomplish more. You will not feel better if you bring that thought with you. There is no perfect way to spend your time that's going to feel amazing all of the time. Thinking that you should have spent your time in some other way than how you actually spent it is going to just create an experience of frustration for you.

Number four, gently remind yourself that how you spend your time is a choice that you made. Do take ownership of it. It's a decision you had control over. When you're doing things that you don't enjoy with your time, we tend to tell ourselves that it's somebody else's fault. We blame the situation for the reason that we're wasting time or not doing what we love, or not doing how we would prefer to spend our time.

Sometimes even when we do enjoy what we're doing and how we're spending our time, we sometimes even abdicate that responsibility. We're like well, we just got lucky. Nobody interrupted us today. I'm not sure how that turned out so well. Must have been a fluke, those kinds of things.

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But I want you to consider that you do have ownership over your time. That we have a choice. That even though it's hard or even though it doesn't feel good or even though it sucks, we do choose to get up and go to work and to help people and to figure this job out and to show up and be the best of ourselves, even when it's hard, even when we don't like some of the things we have to do or our time doesn't go the way we thought it would or planned it would.

What I like to do for myself is that when I start to pout or to fuss and say that I don't have a choice. I'll tell myself okay. If you think you don't have a choice than just don't do it. Just stop. Don't be a school leader, don't be a mother, don't be a parent, don't be a wife. Don't be a friend, don't be a sister. Just stop doing those things and then you won't have to worry about it. You'll have plenty of time.

How would I feel if I just stopped some of those things that I think are demanding all of my time? Right away my brain will start to argue for the very things that I said I didn't want to do. Now it's arguing the counterpoint that it actually does want to take time out to call family or to spend time with my friends or to get that sleep or to finish that project at work, or to stay a little bit longer and answer some emails that I didn't get to.

So you can kind of play around at making peace with your time. You can tell yourself I'm in control. I'm choosing to do these things, even when I don't love them. Because making peace with time is deciding that the relationship you want to build with it is possible, and it involves taking ownership in your part of that relationship. That's what we're doing in the Empowered Principal® Collaborative.

On our weekly calls, we're dismantling old stories about time that do not serve us as leaders, and we're making peace with the time we spend working and the time we give ourselves permission to not work. That we

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have the ability to stop working, get the rest we need, and still get the things done.

That prioritizing what we most believe will give us the biggest impact and create the best results for our school. We do that first. We're willing to put aside or delete altogether the tasks that do not serve us or do not serve our school. It's a beautiful thing. So let's make peace with time so that you can move on to experience a more beautiful career, a more brilliant life in and out of school leadership. Come on over to EPC, get signed up, get on the waitlist. We will be reopening the doors very soon. Talk to you guys next week. Take good care. Bye, bye.

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