

Ep #336: The Significance of FUN in School Leadership



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Angela Kelly

Ep #336: The Significance of FUN in School Leadership

Hello empowered principals. Welcome to episode 336.

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. I'm so happy you're here. Welcome to the podcast. I am thrilled that you're here and I have some exciting announcements that I'm going to share with you today before I get into today's content.

First of all, I want to tell you all about the Empowered Principal® Collaborative. We just finished our first full year of EPC, and it was a huge success. I'm so proud of the principals who participated in the Empowered Principal® Collaborative. I had fun. They had fun. We grew. We learned. We laughed. We cried.

We really supported one another throughout the entire year, whether we were able to join live or watch the replays. People showed up, supported one another, cheered each other on, gave great strategies, tips, and advice. Along with the content and the coaching, so we did some teaching, we did some learning, we did some coaching, and it was the best experience. I am so proud of it. I'm so honored to be hosting it.

What's coming up this coming school year is going to be phenomenal. I'm adding so much more content and services for the upcoming school year in EPC. So I'm going to give you a sneak peek. I'm still in the process of developing it, so there's going to be a little bit of surprise and anticipation because it's not all complete, but here's what we have so far.

I've decided to make EPC a year-round program. That's number one. This first year, I held the program from August through May thinking that this is when school leaders need support, from the beginning of the school to the

Ep #336: The Significance of FUN in School Leadership

end of the school year. But I realized something. I don't know why I didn't think about this the first year, but I realized hey, principals, most of them work year-round. So they need support year-round. I am happy to offer EPC year-round. So, we're going to make it a year-round program.

This summer, I'm going to take a break. I'm going to take June and July off because we did decide to end the season at the end of May. So I'm taking this month and next month off to prepare for EPC. We're going to launch it in August instead of September. I was planning to do September this year, but I'm going to launch it, and here's why.

One of the other things I'm going to be adding to EPC this coming year is bonus courses, bonus sessions, and workshops throughout the year that are based on the relevance of what you're working on during the school year.

So in August, when you join EPC, I'm going to be having additional bonus planning workshops, vision workshops, preparing to hire an onboard and get everybody on the right seat on the bus, prepared and ready to go, kicking off the school year with success, without overworking, without all of the chaos and the stress.

We're going to be doing bonus workshops. In addition to our weekly coaching sessions, I'm going to be teaching bonus content, holding workshops where you come and actually get work done so you can feel like you were productive during the workshop. And then the weekly calls are going to be for questions and coaching, new content that I'm going to be teaching and sharing.

So I'm adding these bonus workshops throughout the year. Things on time management, prioritization, how to plan, how to create balance, your leadership identity, building up your efficacy as a leader, how to create inspiration and motivation, and how to create impact so you feel empowered, because ultimately this is about empowering you so that you can empower staff and students.

Ep #336: The Significance of FUN in School Leadership

We're going to talk about relationships, how to build them, how to maintain them, how to nurture them. And communication, how to be articulate, how to be specific, how to create communication that is effective and efficient, consistent, and allows you to receive communication and express communication in a way that feels good for you and that is coming from a place of love and service.

We're going to talk about culture and mindset and teamwork. I definitely want to cover HR topics such as hiring, how to fire people, which is really uncomfortable. It's really hard. All of the evaluation process, observations, how to get them scheduled, how not to have them eat up all of your time, onboarding people for the beginning of the year, or if you have to hire mid-year, how to onboard them, the systems to have in place.

I'm going to talk about aspiring administrators. I'm going to do a very specific series. If you're an aspiring leader, come on into EPC. Be in a room with principals. You're listening to them. You're getting their mindset. You're understanding strategies and skills. You are learning how to become a principal before you're even a principal. Get in the room. I will have an aspiring administrator series for you that's going to teach you what to do, how to get hired, how to land your ideal job, and then what to do those first steps when you very first walk into your administrative role.

As I continue to develop my own skills as a coach, as a business owner, as a leader, and in my own quest for personal development, professional development. As I evolve myself in my ability to lead you, I will create additional content to help you be the best version of you as a leader. So this is a continual process. There are always new strategies, new ways of approaching this job to make it a little bit easier, a little bit more fun, a little bit lighter, a little bit more successful.

So if you have ever, at all, been intrigued or interested in experiencing leadership coaching and finding out what leadership coaching feels like, this is the year to join EPC. I'm going to make joining EPC more fun than ever by kicking off the Summer of Fun 2024.

Ep #336: The Significance of FUN in School Leadership

So my intention with the Summer of Fun this year, I have really thought about the Summer of Fun and its impact and its significance. So the title of this episode is the significance of fun because it has a value. It has a purpose, and it is significant. It really matters.

So what we're going to be talking about in the Summer of Fun, which we just started. This is the beginning of June. We're going Summer of Fun last from the beginning of June to the end of July. It's an eight week program. It's free. It's fun. You get in the Facebook group, and you participate. This is what we're going to be talking about.

We're going to talk about building safety around planning and having fun. A lot of times fun does not feel safe. It doesn't feel like it's okay. It doesn't feel acceptable. It feels irresponsible. We're going to talk about how to change the way we think and feel about fun. We're going to talk about what the value of fun is, the significance of fun, why it's so important.

I want to debunk the negative stigma that we have as adults particularly about having fun, around the idea of taking some time off and having some fun or having fun at work. Everything doesn't have to be so serious, so dry, so intense all of the time.

I am going to teach you how to calendar and honor your fun because it is as equally important as every other meeting, every other appointment, every other task on your calendar. I want you to identify as a school leader that your wellness, your happiness, and your playfulness matters. It is significant. It is important.

Because here's the deal. It is so much easier to lead people from the energy of fun. People are attracted to people who are fun. People want to work for and be around leaders who understand the value of fun and who integrate fun into the work that they do.

So leaders, you principals out there or district leaders who are listening, those of you who embrace having fun, you give staff and students permission to have fun. You are the role model. You're the one

Ep #336: The Significance of FUN in School Leadership

who has the authority, the position of authority to say, hey, it's okay to have some fun. It's okay to be lighthearted and to make learning fun and to make teaching fun and to make coming to work fun.

This is about retention. This is about sustainability. No one wants to be in a job where there's zero fun. It's always serious. It's always heavy. It's always intense. There's always a problem. There's always something to fix or change or solve. It's always based out of lack, insufficiency, and this idea that we're not doing enough. Okay.

I want you to consider that the goal, the outcome you're looking for is to have fun, to enjoy learning, to enjoy leading. So not only is the goal to have fun at work, you also want to enjoy your life outside of work. You want to have a life outside of the workday and you need to model that for your staff and students. No teacher should be working around the clock. No principal should be working around the clock. No district administrator should be working around the clock.

Martyrdom is not the goal. Sacrificing your physical wellness, mental wellness, emotional wellness, psychological wellness. Sacrificing time with your family, time with friends, time for fun, time for play, time for rest. Sacrificing all of that does not make you a better leader. Okay.

So some of the key concepts through the Summer of Fun that we're going to talk about is that it's safe to have fun. You have permission to have fun. You are allowed to have fun, and you get to decide what fun feels like for you. I'm going to take you on a journey. The first four weeks where you're going to have these little mini homework sessions, which basically they're just prompts for you to think about during the week, and then we're going to come back and coach on it every single week and talk about what about fun is so difficult, what makes fun so hard. Okay.

So I want you to think about this. I looked up the word fun in the dictionary, and it became very clear to me why we as adults think fun is a problem. So fun is something that provides amusement and or enjoyment,

Ep #336: The Significance of FUN in School Leadership

playfulness, entertaining, pleasant, engaging, energizing, laughter, celebration, relaxation. Those are amazing, right? We all want to feel, those are kind of feeling words, most of them, emotional words. We want to feel entertained, pleasant, engaged, energized, laughter, happy. We want to celebrate. We want to relax. Okay.

But there were also, like when I went and looked at the synonyms, it was distraction, absurdity, buffoonery. What word is that? Buffoonery? Clowning, diversion, foolery, nonsense. I thought ah, this is why we are cautious about having fun. Words like distraction, absurdity, buffoonery. That word makes me laugh every time. Clowning, diversion, foolery, nonsense. The language we use to describe ourselves, our decisions, our use of time and energy, it matters.

When fun is essential, like we're worthy of fun. We deserve fun. Fun is an essential part of being a human on the planet. When we look at fun as an essential element, as a benefit, as a value add, then we embrace its value. We embrace the significance. But if you've been taught to think of fun as a distraction or unproductive or foolish or silly or immature, unfocused or irresponsible, you're going to have a pretty hard time giving yourself permission and being truly comfortable with scheduling in fun into your life, into your workday, into time outside of school.

Another reason that fun feels like such a challenge. We teach this in school, by the way, it drives me crazy. But when you think about it, we all do it. Work before play. Get your work done first, and then you can have fun. Work is always the priority. That mindset, work before play, get your work done first, and then you can go have fun, then you can go to recess.

Here's the problem with this. There's always more work that can be done. The list never ends. The tasks never end. So fun keeps getting pushed to the back of the line, and it never makes it to the front.

Because fun never gets to be first in line, fun before work, then fun just gives up trying to be included in your life, or fun will sabotage you. It's

Ep #336: The Significance of FUN in School Leadership

going to get your attention. It's going to be like you're going to start having some fun by overeating or drinking or scrolling on your phone or playing games on your phone or just zoning out to Netflix or shopping. Your desire for fun will either be extinguished or it will sabotage you, and it will creep in. It will find a way.

Think about this, play is how children learn. It is the work. Play is actually how we learn as adults. It doesn't change because of our age. We just made it change. We decided that it changed. When people grow up and they become adults, then you are no longer time to play. It's time to adult. It's time to get serious. It's time to grow up.

What does that even mean? Do we stop enjoying our life because we're an adult? Stop having fun, stop scheduling fun in, stop playing and engaging just for the pure enjoyment of it? What does that even mean? Why would we do that? That makes no sense to me.

But yet I see it as some unspoken rule, especially in education, because we're here for the kids, but we're also supposed to be having fun. We live by this unspoken rule without even questioning it. This makes no sense, yet it seems to be the unspoken rule that many of us live by without even questioning it.

I've also noticed this about fun. We've indulged in fabricated pleasure as adults to the point that we don't even know or remember what actually delights us without the indulgence. Here's what I mean by this. I've been studying myself.

As kids, we used to have authentic fun. We knew what felt fun to us. We were attracted to fun. The default was to seek pleasure, to have fun. So we interacted with ourselves and the world in a way that felt fun and light and playful and easy and fully engaged in the pleasure of fun. We also enjoyed some of the fabricated pleasures, such as video games, right?

But our bodies and our minds and our hearts and souls were motivated by physical movements, social interactions, being outside, being

Ep #336: The Significance of FUN in School Leadership

mentally and emotionally engaged, laughter, music, reading books, playing games, kinesthetic experiences, authentic experiences of fun, and kids don't apologize for wanting to have fun. That is the way of the world for them. They want to make everything fun.

But the adults come into the room and infer and teach that having fun isn't productive. It's silly, and silly's not good. Silly's naughty. Silly's out of line. Silly's embarrassing. Don't be like that. Don't have fun. Don't be silly. That's not appropriate, right?

So as we grow up, the definition of fun changes, and we're left wondering what there is to do for fun that's not going to be judged or criticized as adults. If you think about it, teachers, educators, principals, we're often portrayed out in society as adults who crush the fun. Let's be honest. Some of us are out there playing that role pretty well. We are prioritizing the work, and we're prioritizing following the rules over a little bit of fun and a little bit of lightness.

I have a story about my dad. I just got off the phone with him actually, and he always makes me laugh because my dad was always playful. He always has been, and his dad was the same way. He always tells me, "Angela, the best diffusion is humor." He used humor to lighten up any situation, to diffuse an intense moment.

All the kids gravitated to him because of this playfulness and this lightheartedness and his ability to see the silver lining or tell the funny joke or make light of something that was really serious, right? He could turn a very serious situation into a moment of laughter and fun.

Here's a quick story that highlights his humor, his silliness. We were kids, my grandfather had a stroke. My dad's dad, okay, had a stroke. He was at the Veterans Hospital down in Des Moines, Iowa. I grew up in Iowa, and we had to drive. So for a kid to be in the car for two hours, that just felt like a year long.

Ep #336: The Significance of FUN in School Leadership

We went and then to sit in a hospital where your grandfather is not well, and he can't communicate. He's had a massive stroke. So he's non-communicative, and half of his body wasn't working properly. So my parents, of course, like a lot of stress. It was an intense situation. He had also broken some ribs. It was just a really intense situation.

The entire family gathered to visit with him, and the adults in the room had to make some really difficult decisions about what they were going to do moving forward with his life. After all of that, they take us out for like a late lunch, early dinner or something. I was pretty young. I don't really remember the details, but I do remember this.

We were at the restaurant, and the kids were kind of all sitting at a table. My cousins and I and the close family friends. All the kids were kind of at a booth table thing, and the adults were sitting. So they were kind of talking all serious and tears and all of that.

Then my dad came over to the kids table and sat down. Well, this particular restaurant, instead of serving like chips or bread as like a free appetizer snack when you walked in, they served popcorn. Well, the kids, we were all starving. They brought all of these bowls of popcorn, and we were just eating and talking and laughing and drinking lemonades and sodas or whatever.

My dad came over, and he walked up and sat at the table, but he had two kernels of popcorn in each of his nostrils. He just sat there and acted as though nothing had happened. We were like yeah, that's so funny. We were laughing. He's like oh, that's so gross. That's so funny. He's like, what? I don't know what you're talking about. He got all of the kids just in hysterics and then we were all doing it.

My mom was giving him kind of the stink eye like be quiet. It's a restaurant. It was like three in the afternoon. So it wasn't a busy time at the restaurant. So we were one of the only parties in there, and we were a large party.

Ep #336: The Significance of FUN in School Leadership

But we had so much fun. I remember that as an adult to this day. I remember that moment. My dad did this all the time. He could take any type of situation and bring humor to it, bring the playfulness and the fun. I remember my mom, like my dad always got like a little gently scolded or like playfully scolded for being too playful, too silly.

I just notice how interesting it is to see how adults approach fun versus how kids approach fun. I noticed like mom was always the bad cop. Dad was always the good cop because he was the one having fun. He's like oh, mom, just let them have fun. Mom was like time to clean up, time to eat dinner, time to do this. Time to do that. Right.

So if you join the Facebook group, the Empowered Principal® Facebook group, we are right now, we're kicking off Summer of Fun. We're going to talk about Summer of Fun. We're going to define it. We're going to untangle it from the idea of it being irresponsible. We're going to talk about what you do want your relationship with fun to be. We're going to rewrite your story around fun so that you can feel safe and comfortable and delighted and honor your fun and make it valuable, see the significance in it. Then we're going to create a calendar. We're going to cheer each other on.

This whole group. Like weeks five through eight is going to be implementing our plan. Having an implementation week of fun and then coaching each week on the obstacles. Like what's coming up for you? Are you struggling to have fun? Are you struggling to schedule it? Are you struggling to honor it? Are you struggling with having fun while you are having fun?

You know that feeling when you take time off, but you're feeling guilty that you took time off. So you're really not enjoying yourself. You're telling yourself the whole time you should be working, or you're not being productive or you're wasting your time, all of that. We're going to coach on that. Okay.

Ep #336: The Significance of FUN in School Leadership

So come on into Summer of Fun, and I'm going to teach you some really powerful thoughts and mindset shifts that are simple. They're going to blow your mind. I've been doing this work myself, and it has blown my mind. So come on in.

And here's the best part. For those of you who participate in the Summer of Fun challenge, which is starting right now. So dive on in, jump on into Facebook and find the Empowered Principal®. It's an open group. You have to just answer a couple of questions. I just want to filter out, make sure we're school leaders in here. It's not robots, or it's not people trying to scam us or sell us crap.

But every week in the Summer of Fun challenge, I draw names. So for people who participate, who they post pictures, where they cheer other people on, every time you make a comment, a post, and you engage in the Facebook group in the Summer of Fun challenge. If you raise your hand for coaching, if you show up to the live calls. If you participate 20 times in one week, your name goes in 20 times. So the more you participate, the more chances you have of winning.

I'm going to draw one winner per week for the eight weeks of the Summer of Fun challenge. You're each going to get a \$50 Amazon card as a gift. I used to do this big gift package, but this year I'm keeping it simple because I know what you guys all like. Everybody loves an Amazon card. You're going to get \$50 worth of Amazon card.

This is the best one. You're going to get a year of EPC. You get to register for the Empowered Principal® Collaborative for the entire year for only \$199. Yes, you heard me right. Registration in EPC as a client of mine for only \$199. That is 90% off the full price of the \$1,997 price. I feel like this is insane, but I'm so excited. It just delights me to say yeah, you're going to get 90% off. You can join EPC for \$199 for 12 months of coaching.

Here's why I decided to do this insane offer, to give this as the gift for those who participate. I work with school principals from all across the country,

Ep #336: The Significance of FUN in School Leadership

and they share a very similar story. They all want to feel empowered, but they actually feel a lack of agency and authority. They feel disempowered. They want to create an impact. They want to be influential. They want to make a difference. But what they really feel is that they're spinning their wheels, working their tails off for very small amounts of progress or stagnation.

They want to love their job. They want to enjoy school leadership. They want to feel good about themselves. They want to have a very strong self-efficacy in who they are. They want to create inspiration and motivation and a positive culture. They want their teachers to feel good about themselves. They want to raise teacher efficacy so they can raise student efficacy so that we can create progress.

But what they really feel is very weighed down by the demands, the pressures, and the responsibility of the job, which leaves people overwhelmed, exhausted, and unsure if what they're doing even matters. This is true across the board, from all the states. I coach people from coast to coast, top to bottom, north to south, east to west. People who are in pre-K all the way through 12th. I have district leaders. I have site leaders, private schools, public schools, charter schools.

The overall energetic state for administrators tends to be overwhelm and frustration because they feel stagnant. They feel like they're putting in time, effort, energy. They're committed, they're dedicated, but they have a sense that they're not able to move the needle and create the level of influence and impact that they want to see.

If this is you, you want to join us because here's what's happening. The Empowered Principal® program has changed the trajectory for dozens and dozens of school leaders. Every single one of my clients for the past seven years has indicated growth impact. They've built a legacy. They have better time management, better balance, better planning skills, better relationships, better communication skills, better onboarding skills, better hiring skills.

Ep #336: The Significance of FUN in School Leadership

They get bonuses, raises, promotions faster than ever before. They get their coaching paid for through their district. They change the way they think about themselves, the way they feel about themselves. Their entire perspective of education, of their job. They change the perspective of what they think about their teachers, the goals that they have for their school. They change the understanding of what to focus on and why and what matters most.

These clients of mine, they come back year after year, round after round, because the impact of coaching, the impact of the Empowered Principal® programming that I have created continues over and over, year after year, to expand their capacity to lead. It's not just a one year thing.

This type of development, professional and personal development, it's an evolution. It's a lifelong learning process. They come back because it works. It gives them the tools to create the impact they want and to enjoy themselves in the process so much more.

So I'm inviting you into this experience. Join the Facebook group, participate in the Summer of Fun, try to win EPC. Gut either way, make the decision to sign up and join EPC. I will tell you this, I've also added an additional feature that makes it even more accessible. There is now a monthly payment option.

If you don't want to pay in full, the \$1,997 price, what you can do is sign up for 10 monthly installments of \$199.70 for 10 months. That equates to \$1,997. You're not even getting charged anymore for the monthly payment option because I want it to be equal and accessible. I want you to pay the same price.

So if you would prefer monthly payments, you could do 10 monthly installments of \$199.70 and that will get you 12 months of EPC access. Come on in. You know you want to come. We're having fun over here.

We are changing the way we approach school leadership, one thought at a time, one belief system at a time, one dismantling at a time. Come on in. I

Ep #336: The Significance of FUN in School Leadership

can't wait to meet you. Have a great week, and let's go have some fun. Talk to you guys next week. Take good care. Bye.

Thanks for listening to this episode of *The Empowered Principal® Podcast*. If you enjoyed this episode and want to learn more, please visit angelakellycoaching.com where you can sign up for weekly updates and learn more about the tools that will help you become an emotionally fit school leader.