

## Ep #353: Leader, Teacher, Student



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Angela Kelly**

## Ep #353: Leader, Teacher, Student

Hey there, empowered principals, listen up. I have a very special, very time sensitive offer. I will be hosting a three part series called Flip the Fall Dip. Look, we're all tired. We're all exhausted. It's only the beginning of October. We feel burned out and there's so far to go. I know the feeling. The honeymoon is over and we're fatigued.

I'm going to show you how you can turn this around and change the trajectory of the fall experience this season. I don't want you guys feeling depleted, feeling discouraged, feeling like you're never going to make it. That's not the case. We've got your back. Please sign up. It starts today. It's at noon.

Flip the Fall Dip. It is free for members who are in the Empowered Principal Collaborative and it's given to you at the magical price if you're not a member of EPC for \$111 for all three sessions. So join us today. I'll see you there. I can't wait to support you. Have an amazing day and we'll see you at Flip the Fall Dip.

Hello empowered principals. Welcome to episode 353.

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 today.

And I want to welcome you to October. October during the school year is exhausting. I am not going to sugarcoat it. It is the month where we enter into the fall dip. We have been riding on tons of adrenaline from July

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through August into September and we hit October and we are exhausted mentally, physically, emotionally.

I work with clients all across the country, I see the dip happen every year, I am calling it out now because it is the beginning of October, and if you start to experience the fall dip, or perhaps it has already started for you, for your staff, your students, your families, when you start to see energy waning, you see attitudes shifting, you see people's moods adjusting, you see the fatigue people are dragging, they may start to vent or complain a little bit, you might not feel the excitement and enthusiasm and energy that you did in the beginning of the year.

You are not going to perhaps feel that people are as committed or that they are not tuned into their problem-solving potential. We slip out of empowerment when we are tired. At least I know I do. I have seen it in my clients. I have seen it in staff and students. When we are exhausted, whether it is mental, physical, or emotional exhaustion, we slip out of our empowerment. We slip out of belief that we are strong, we are capable, we are happy, we are problem solvers, we are successful, we know what we are doing.

Either we slip into some frustration and doubt and uncertainty, we feel overwhelmed, or we might slip into the feelings of disempowerment where the job is happening to me and this teacher said that, and my colleague did this, and this parent sent this email, and the kids are like this, and the district office is doing this, and all of it is happening to me, and we step into disempowerment where we feel out of control, we feel like things are happening to us instead of happening with us or for us, and that also can happen when we are tired.

So we are in the beginnings of, or maybe you are already in it, the fall dip. So if you are on Facebook and you are not in EPC, I have a public Facebook group, non EPC Facebook group called the Empowered

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Principle. You can be in that group. I am in there. I am posting, I put Facebook lives up and videos just to keep you going, keep the momentum going. We are having the fall of fun over there. So we want to keep energy high, keep your spirits high.

But really this is the time of the year you have to manage your brain, manage your emotions, and manage your fatigue because you need that capacity to be able to hold space for all of the other adults on campus who might not have the emotional regulation or the emotional maturity or the emotional bandwidth tools that you have here on this podcast, okay? So you need to really dive into this work, emotional regulation, physical regulation, mental regulation, managing your thoughts, managing your emotions, being able to process them so that you can hold space for other people who are learning these skills. Okay?

Now, with that said, if you are struggling in any way, shape, or form, the good news is that the doors for EPC, The Fall Dip session, are opening. So the doors are open for a very brief time. If you want to slip into EPC between October 1st and November 1st, jump on in. We have got your back. Okay?

Today I would like to talk about three different hats that you wear, three different identities that you embody as a leader. The first one you know about, it is the most obvious one, because it is leadership. You are a leader, right? As a school leader, you are a decision maker. You guide others, you inspire others, you have influence to create impact. You are building a legacy. Whether you understand that or not, whether you are consciously doing it or not, with intention or not, you are building a legacy.

People will remember you for being a school leader. You get to decide what that narrative looks like. You get to decide. You get to create the script. You are the main character of your movie and you are the main character as a school leader and you are writing the script of what it looks like and how it

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feels and the impact that you have as a leader. So when you think about yourself as a leader and you have your leadership hat on, there are many aspects to that identity, to the leadership aspect of your identity.

So as a leader, you really step into the role of a visionary. You create the vision with your mind, your heart, and your soul. As a teacher, you are not necessarily creating a school-wide vision. You might be creating a classroom vision. But as a leader, you are stepping into the role of visionary. Every time you up-level into a leadership position, a bigger and bigger leadership position, you are expanding your capacity to visualize.

So in a classroom, you are doing it at the classroom level. As a grade-level department chair or a leadership at your grade level or your department site, you are developing vision for your entire department or grade level. You step into a site leadership position, you are developing a vision for the site. You go into a district-level position as a district coordinator or a district director or a district assistant superintendent, now you are expanding your vision to include those departments district-wide. And then you get to the superintendency, and now you are developing a vision for an entire district.

Past that, you can look at any leaders in any organization. As you move up in the leadership positions, you are expanding how much visionary work that is required of you. You create this vision, you map it out, you plan it out, and then you have to execute it. But you are getting paid not to just lead, you are getting paid to be a visionary, to inspire others to develop a vision for themselves and plan it and map it out and execute it for themselves. One that is hopefully in alignment with the entire vision, with your vision as the leader.

You want to communicate that vision with conviction and drive and authenticity, because the authenticity is what connects people to the vision. You have to learn that as a skill, how to communicate with conviction and drive and authenticity. You have to present possibilities for people to inspire

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them when people feel stuck, or they feel like they are in the grind and they cannot see out of their tunnel vision or where they are stuck in that silo, you present possibilities and you tap into their potential for them.

You show them, you model this, you reflect, not just on things outside of you. A lot of times I caught myself contemplating and reflecting and ruminating over a situation that was externally outside of me. The situation at the IEP meeting, or the staff meeting, or the district level meeting, or what this parent said, or this grade level did, or what this teacher did or did not do in their classroom. Things outside of me, systems outside of me, lunchroom, dismissal. We want to contemplate externally what is happening around us.

But not only that, exceptional leaders, empowered principals, they reflect on what is happening internally. You deepen your awareness at an internal level as a leader. Just like you ask teachers to reflect on their self-efficacy as a teacher, and their identity as a teacher and their teaching practices, their teaching skills and their practices, internal practices. You are asking them to develop themselves. What is working? What is not?

What do you want to learn next? How do you want to develop? How do you want to grow? What is coming up for you?

We need to do this as leaders. And there are not enough people asking us as leaders to contemplate and reflect internally. You want to contemplate your purpose, intention, what matters to you, and why. Your leadership values. As a leader, the value that you provide is much more visionary than it is execution. It is a different kind of planning, a different kind of visionary work, and a different kind of execution.

Your role as a leader is now to inspire people into action, just as a teacher's job is to inspire her students into action. When you take action, you model that. But the action that you are taking at a leadership level is different than

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the action you took as a teacher. But here is the fun thing. You do not throw away your teacher hat to put on your leader hat. You keep on your teacher hat

and you add on top of your leader hat. It is like caps for sale, except it is more than 50 cents a cap. I promise.

You are still a teacher out there, leaders. You did not turn in your teacher hat, your teaching ability, your teacher certificate, when you stepped into a leadership role, you are still a teacher. You are a mentor, a guide, a coach, a model. You provide support and access for other people as a teacher. Your grade level as a leader is now your fellow administrators and your office staff at your site. And perhaps you have an admin team at your site as well.

What was your classroom is now your campus. So your new classroom is your campus. Your new class is your staff. Your curriculum that you are learning to teach is leadership and human development. And you study that curriculum to know what to plan and how to deliver with execution, excellence, and precision to your students who are your teachers and your support staff. You hone those teaching skills and techniques and knowledge just like you did in the classroom.

You collaborate and connect with your fellow teachers, your admin, your fellow admin are also fellow teachers. You are prepared and planned just like you were as a teacher, and you are also open to teachable moments in the leadership role and the teacher role. You allow for flow and spontaneity within your systems and structures. So yes, as a teacher, you plan system and structures in your classroom, but you also allowed for some flow and spontaneity.

You were prepared and planned with your lessons, but also there were magical, teachable moments where you went off course, and that was the

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best thing you could have done. The same thing applies to leadership. Leading is teaching. Teaching is leading. And the bottom line for you, as a teacher leader, is to empower your students, to empower your teachers. You want to inspire and up-level their identity as a student, and they are a student of teaching, and you are a student of leadership, and you are learning how to lead them by teaching them how to teach, and they teach by learning how to be a student, and we all learn how to be better at what we do by being a student.

So in order to inspire your teachers to be the best versions of themselves, your teachers need to be also wearing their student hat. They need to be students and teachers, students of their craft and teachers of their craft. Your job as their teacher is to ignite their empowerment by inspiring their identity to develop themselves. And the way that you do that as a leader is you are also a student. You do not give up your hat as a student when you became a teacher. You are a student and a teacher. And now that you are a leader, you do not throw away your student hat and your teacher hat. You have your student hat and your teacher hat and your leadership hat.

Learning does not end when you graduate or obtain a degree. I find it so fascinating, the human mind, when it becomes an adult. When you graduate from college or get your master's degree or your PhD, whatever degree that you have or your certification and obtain that degree, you have it, you have achieved it, accomplishment, that is not where the learning ends. That is where the learning begins. As a human, we are wired to learn from the day we are born until the day that we are no longer on the planet.

Yet, because learning is so uncomfortable from the beginning, it is hard to learn to walk when you are an infant. You fall and you fall and you fall and you go boompsey on your bum.

And you have got to get back up, and you scrape your knees, and you trip, and you fall, and you cry. Walk, but they do it anyway. They never stop



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trying until they do it. Babies get frustrated when they are learning how to put puzzle pieces together and their fine motor skills are not cooperating with their brain. Their brain knows which puzzle piece it wants to pick up and put it into the hole, but it cannot figure it out. And they scream and they kick and they throw things until they figure it out. Same with riding a bike. Same with learning to drive a car.

Everything we do as a human is learning. We are a student of life. We are a student of knowledge and wisdom and skill set and mindset and emotional regulation and communication and relationships. This is why we have the Mastery Series in EPC. There was always something new to learn. And being new at learning something, it is super awkward. It is super clumsy. It is really uncomfortable because of what we make it mean about ourselves and what we think other people are thinking about us, so we might feel a little embarrassed or we get a little frustrated.

That is because learning new things might also be very taxing to our brains and to our bodies. So it is awkward, and it is embarrassing, and it is clumsy, and we get frustrated, but it is also taxing mentally, emotionally, physically, to our bodies, to our brains, to our hearts. So we get confused. We get unsure. We get exhausted. And because of that discomfort in the learning process, now think about it.

We ask kids to do it all day, every day. Be new, try it again, fail, fail, fail in front of all your peers. And then as adults, we are like, well, that really sucked. I am not doing that ever again. I am going to not learn and be vulnerable and be awkward and clumsy and be embarrassed and frustrated in front of all my peers ever again. I am going to cocoon and just hide the fact that I do not know what I am doing. I am going to fake it till I make it.

It is because we are trying to avoid the emotion of embarrassment or the emotion of frustration or disappointment or awkwardness, clumsiness. And you can see this in our human culture. Some people, as soon as the law no

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longer requires them to attend a learning institution or a learning environment, they shut down. They avoid learning new things as much as possible. Other people decide that they have had enough learning once they graduate college or obtain that degree. Like, I will do just enough to get that degree or just enough to say I graduated college.

Other people, they are more comfortable and they will go all the way through the formal education system. And once they hit the max of that, they feel like, well, I have done it all. I have gone to my PhD or I do not even know the highest. I think it is PhD. But formal education has a beginning and an end. It is finite in the formal education world.

And then there are others who choose to be a student of life, who let life be the curriculum. They become a student of themselves, a student of humankind, of human beings, of human education. And as educators, we are in the business of humans. We literally develop humans, big and small, older or younger, all of them, every single day. There is always something to learn about being human. That is why people study it generation upon generation upon generation upon generation.

There is so much depth and complexity to the human experience, the entire learning experience, just to study learning as a human. That is a lifetime achievement award. We never run out of curriculum. Ever.

And in the Empowered Principal Collaborative, an EPC, we study the human experience to deepen your knowledge, your wisdom, your skill set, your strategies, your openness, your intentions, your mind, what it means to be a leader, a teacher, a student, from all perspectives. From the leader perspective, the teacher perspective, the student perspective, how it feels to be a leader, a teacher, a student, all the feels from the entire spectrum of emotions. In EPC, there is no emotion we are afraid to feel. We do not avoid emotion. We do not run from them. We do not hide from them. We lean into them.

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So embarrassment has got nothing on me. Do you know how embarrassed I felt putting this podcast out into the world when I first started? I was horrified that my friends or my previous colleagues or my previous bosses would hear this and laugh and say you are the biggest joke on the planet. You were not a great leader. You were this, you were that, whatever their opinions were of me. I feared that.

I was horrified and my coach said that is the perfect reason to start the podcast. Because if you feel this way, there are thousands of other school administrators who feel just like you. The only difference between people who succeed and people who do not is that they feel that feeling, they lean into it, and they do it anyway. That is the only difference.

Successful people, successful students, successful teachers, successful leaders, they do not avoid emotion. They are not void of emotion. They are not void of fear, void of embarrassment, void of clumsiness, void of frustration, void of disappointment, void of failures. The opposite. They are full of it. They are full of vulnerability and failure and disappointment and frustration and so much embarrassment.

The fear. Think of the emotions that lock you down into fight-or-flight. Everyone feels those. You have the capacity to feel them. If you did not have the capacity to handle them, you would not have been gifted with them. Emotions are a gift. It is an internal compass that guides us.

So in EPC we study emotion. We lean into it and we leverage it as a tool, as a strategy to become stronger mentally, emotionally, physically, psychologically, as a leader in our relationships, in our communication, in our identity, in our confidence. The decisions and actions of a leader, a teacher, and a student, we study them through all the lenses. Every lens, every angle that we can imagine, we look at how and why we make decisions and how we decide our approach and the actions we take in that approach and then we look at them. Did they work? Did they not?

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Let us test a theory. Let us see if it works. Oh, did not work. Let us adjust. That is it. It is as simple as that.

We come up with a theory and a plan. We execute it. We evaluate it. What worked? What did not? What do we want to adjust and do differently?

Let us go. Oh, there were some emotions that came along with that. I have got your back. We support you. We love you. We care about you. We care about your experience as a leader and as a teacher and as a student.

We look at what motivates and drives us as leaders, as teachers, as students. We need to study all of the angles. What motivates students? What motivates teachers? What motivates us as leaders? What motivates us as a student?

Us as a teacher? From all different backgrounds, from diverse backgrounds, diverse experiences. We want to study the human experience.

EPC is a new learning experience. It is a new offer. It is a new type of learning opportunity. It is based on introspection. And what I love about it is that it is the fascination of the human experience. I am fascinated by humans.

I am fascinated by how we learn, how we think, how we engage, how we interact, why we do things, why we do not do things, why we do things we say we do not want to do and we still do them and why we do not do things we say we want to do but we still do not do them. Why is that? Study it. Be a student of it. And then you can be a teacher of it. And then you can be a leader of it.

EPC is designed to help you design and create your vision for yourself, for your career, and for those you lead. I want to help you learn how to lead

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and how to teach and how to be a true lifelong student. Not because you want things to be hard, but because you want to master them. You want to expand your capacity to handle everything that comes your way. To practice skills and strategies. To embody empowerment, curiosity, and delight. To love your life, love your job, love your students, your staff, your families, your community, your district leaders.

Can you imagine going to work and loving your district leaders instead of talking about them? I know some of you have great relationships, but on the regular, I get some feedback that says otherwise for some people. But I truly want you to learn this skill because it is delightful. I want you to be happy, to have so much joy in your life, to have energy, to have hope, to have charisma and focus, determination, empowerment. I want you to celebrate failures just as much as you celebrate your wins.

Let us hold space for one another when we hurt. Principals, district leaders, we need a space to be supported, to feel held, to feel understood when we hurt, when we ache, when we fail, when we lose, when we fall down, when we get publicly scrutinized, or publicly embarrassed, or publicly humiliated. We need a space. EPC the space. We listen, not to respond to you, but to understand you. As leaders, we want to listen to understand, not to respond or react, but to understand.

So, the doors for EPC, the Fall Dip's session, they are open starting today throughout the month of October. If you want to sneak in, I am leaving the doors open for this month only. They will not open again until 2025. I hope you are coming. I would love to see you. I would love to support you, but I would love, most of all, to empower you.

Have a beautiful week. Take great care of yourselves, and I will talk to you next week. Bye!

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