

Ep #354: Emotional Regulation



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Angela Kelly

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Hello empowered principals. Welcome to episode 354.

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. Today's podcast is going to be slightly different than my other podcasts. I'm not going to teach you a concept or explain a situation or try to inspire you into something innovative.

Today, I want to offer a practice for grounding yourself. You can use this practice at any time of the year. And I know that the beginning of the year is very stressful, and then you hit October, the fall dip happens, and then there is another cycle that you're in. You're in a fatigue cycle. You're worn out.

So while this podcast may be dropping here in the fall season of your school year, you can utilize this practice at any time you feel emotionally dysregulated, if you feel any kind of fatigue, or if something has triggered you. So I'm going to give you the practice in terms of the fall dip, the fatigue, because that is what is relevant right now. But as I speak, I want you to consider how these questions might apply to when you are triggered by something or someone, or when you're feeling emotionally dysregulated.

Because at the end of the day, empowered leadership, empowered school leadership, is all about the ability to regulate your emotions. Because our emotions are the fuel that drive, that ignite the decisions we make and the actions we take. So we want to be in control of the fuel driving our decisions and actions. And I know that in schools we do not spend a lot of time talking about emotions, expressing emotion, and certainly we do not

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talk about how to regulate our emotions because as adults we feel embarrassed that we do not know how.

But we should not feel embarrassed because we have never been taught the skill. And if there is any legacy that I would like to leave on this planet, I want to be known for bringing emotional regulation to the mainstream practice of our educators so that we can educate students. It is the gift of a lifetime to any human on the planet, is to be able to regulate emotion.

So in this fall season, you're either going to be feeling completely overwhelmed, completely fatigued, or something has triggered you, it has taken you off course. You feel a little discouraged or defeated or disappointed. The first thing I invite you to do is to just sit down, whether you're at school, sit in your office, close the door. Nobody is going to die if you close your door. I need 10 minutes, tell your secretary, I need 10 minutes to myself. Close the door, close the blinds, close the shades, whatever privacy you can create for yourself.

I want you to just breathe. Take a deep breath in. Take a slow deep breath out. This is the first step in regulating your nervous system and your emotional energy. I like to put one hand on my chest, my heart, and another hand on my belly. And I put my feet flat on the ground and I just take three deep slow breaths. I already feel different and from there I can ask myself how am I feeling right now?

See if you can label the emotion in your body, the energetic energy in there, the little zippity-zappities that you feel inside. Another question you can ask is, what is coming up for me today? You might find it easier to brain drain all of the thoughts zipping through your mind than to actually label the emotion. You might say, I do not know how I'm feeling right now. I'm a little this and a little that, and it comes out in the form of thought versus emotion.

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You might say, I'm really upset because da da da da da da. Those are thoughts, not emotions. The upset is emotion and the thoughts are why. So you can ask yourself, what am I actually feeling right now? Why am I feeling this way? Or what is coming up for me? And just let the mix of thoughts and emotions pour up.

Another question you can ask is, what do I need right now? What is coming up for me and what do I need? What do I need physically right now? What do I need emotionally right now? Another question you can ask yourself when you're feeling exhausted. If you're feeling fatigue, I want you to ask yourself what kind of fatigue am I feeling right now?

Am I physically tired? Like could I just crawl into bed or take a nap? Do I feel that tired? The answer might be yes.

You might have been burning the candle at both ends and what your body honestly needs is a good sleep. And if that is the case and you're at work, you have two options. You can go home and get some sleep or you can take a walk, energize yourself to get through your day, get a cup of coffee or soda or something that perks you up, drink some water, get a snack, regulate yourself physically until you can go home.

If you're not able to literally say I'm not well I need to take a half day and you go home and sleep. I want you to consider that your physical fatigue matters and if you do not listen in to it, it will start to manifest in other ways. Physical illness, physical energy loss, mental cloudiness. There are so many ways that physical fatigue can impact you.

But as school leaders, there are other kinds of fatigue. There is mental fatigue. You're just tired of making decisions all day long, tired of solving problems, tired of thinking of solutions, tired of figuring out hacks and tricks to get the systems working properly. You might be emotionally fatigued. Drained from situations with students, behavior issues, teacher issues,

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teachers complaining, teacher conflict, parent conflict, the school board coming down at you, the district coming at you sideways, the district changing priorities.

You might be mentally, physically, and emotionally fatigued. You want to ask yourself, what is coming up for me? And then my favorite question of all is to ask, What do I need right now? What do I actually need right now? Do I need food? Do I need water?

Do I need to take a walk? Do I need to go be in a classroom with kids? Do I need to take a moment for myself?

Do I need to send that email? Do I need to schedule that phone conversation or that teacher observation? What is nagging at me? What would bring me back to center? What would help me feel grounded right now? What is the one thing that would just feel so good if it were not on my heart, my mind, my soul? Is it something at home that you need to take care of? Is it something personal?

You have not been to the dentist or the doctor or a hair appointment? Is it you have not been spending time with your partner or spouse? Is it that you have not been spending time with your own children because you've been so busy with your kids at school? Is there a new teacher that you forgot to check in with? Is there something weighing on you that if you just went and did it right now in this moment, you would feel so much better?

The most important skill that you can learn as a school leader is the practice of emotional regulation. And you do that by tuning in with your body. And you can say some things to yourself. When you are triggered, you can calm your nervous system down. When your nervous system is triggered, typically what is happening is that you feel unsafe. There is something that is telling you ding ding ding, alert, alarm, there is danger ahead, I do not feel safe.

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You might not feel physically safe, you might not feel emotionally safe, or you might not feel mentally safe. Somebody may have said something that has got into your brain and you cannot get it out and you're spinning on it. Or maybe somebody has triggered you emotionally. Or maybe you do feel physically afraid of a parent. I've had this happen.

Or you can put your hands on your legs and ground your feet and just say right now in this moment I am safe. It is safe for me to be here. It is safe for me to lead this school. It is safe to be a school leader. I am safe. And then list how you are safe.

I'm in this space. I'm all alone. There is nobody here. I will be okay. I'm safe in this moment.

The practice of self-regulation is one of the most empowering practices a school leader can invest time and energy into. If you want to learn more about how to regulate your emotions and become a master at emotional regulation, I invite you into EPC. Doors will be opening in November. We teach this skill. We do it as a practice every day, every week. You will be a different leader, a more empowered leader when you master the skill of self-emotional regulation.

Have a beautiful week. Take care of yourselves. I care about you. I love you deeply. Thank you for the work you're doing. Have an amazing week.

I'll 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.