

## Ep #376: People Who Want Conflict



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Angela Kelly**

## Ep #376: People Who Want Conflict

Hello empowered principals. Welcome to episode 376.

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.

Well, hello, my empowered principles. Happy Tuesday and welcome to the podcast. It's such an honor to be here with you today. I have another excerpt to share with you from Relationship Mastery. I mean, I really love this Relationship Mastery program. I created it a couple of years ago, but this year I completely rewrote it, the entire thing. I added some of the concepts that I had prior, but I really have gone through my own journey with relationships, professionally and personally. And I've gained so much more knowledge and wisdom and understanding. And I've done a deep dive in reflecting on how I want to approach relationships and who I want to be in them and how I want to speak and how I want to treat people and how I want to feel about relationships and be in relationships and connection and how I want to feel about myself moving forward.

So this portion of the module is so good because at some point you will most likely run into this scenario as a school leader. I can promise. And it can be tricky because when you're in it, it's very hard to see it. You might not be able to catch it when you're in it. So I hope that this excerpt creates some awareness so that when you're conversing with somebody and you don't seem to be getting anywhere, this episode will pop into your head and you're like, wait, I wonder if this is what's happening.

So there are people who are going to get upset, right? People who will disagree with you, people who have misunderstandings or people who will be downright mad and they'll want to discuss their concerns with you. They will come to you and they're going to express themselves and express

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some emotion, but at the end of the day, they are people who want to resolve the issue. They want to feel good. They want this resolved. They're looking for a solution. And they're coming to you to work in collaboration even though they're expressing emotions, negative energy. Okay?

Then there are folks who thrive off of conflict. They kind of seem to be energized by it. They get a lot of traction with it. They enjoy making your life a little miserable. And I want you to take note of this type of behavior. It may be coming from someone who has no intention of resolving the conflict.

And this clip will talk about how to look out for people who want to engage in conflict for their own personal benefit, for their own gains, and ways that you can identify this and then approach them in a way that can maybe shut this down for you. They can stay mad for as long as they want. We can't control that, but I want you to have some tools to be able to identify and then approach people that might be interested in conflict for the sake of conflict. So enjoy this show and again if you're interested in purchasing relationship mastering the link will be in the show notes. Have a great week everybody. I'll talk to you next week. Take good care. Bye.

One of the questions I always like to ask is, is there anything else you'd like to share? Is there anything else coming up for you? Let them get it all out. Because a lot of times they'll be like, oh yeah and then this other thing. Okay. Let it all out. Let them share. And then when they're done sharing, is anything else coming up for you? Like, okay, they kind of express themselves.

I take say to them, I want to be in partnership with you. I'm very direct about my intention. I want to be in partnership with you. I want to focus on how you're feeling and how you want to feel. How do you want to feel about this right now? What's missing? What's the resolution you're seeking? What do

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you think it is that you need? Because I want to understand where you're coming from.

Now, let me address very quickly, because I know we're almost at time here. Some people want conflict. Have you noticed? There are people out on the internet, out on the streets, out in the cars, in public. There are people in our schools who actually seek out conflict. They like it. They like the feeling that comes with conflict. They like the adrenaline rush. They like the cortisol. They like the dopamine hits. They crave it. It's almost like an addiction.

And I've thought about why would people want conflict? They'd love to engage in conflict. Well, one, it feels very powerful when you're coming in all hot and bothered and stomping around and screaming. And it feels like you have power. Actually, you're completely out of control.

But for the person doing it, it feels like a sense of control. I'm going to be the boss around here and I'm going to stomp around, probably because that's how they grew up. They probably had parents who stomped around and screamed and yelled, and that was their positional power. They had authority as parents, and that is how they exhibited their power and their authority.

So people grow up and like, well, it's my turn. Now I get to be like this. It's a sense of power and control for them. It might also be a need for attention. You can see that on the internet. You can see it in public, like people just creating a scene, undo attention seeking, and they're trying to get whatever kind of attention they can.

You probably even have kids like this who are like, they like to get in fights because it makes them look cool, makes them look really tough and strong, and people don't mess with me. It's an identity. It's a need for attention. It's a sense of power and control when they lack it in other ways.

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So oftentimes, it's coming from past experiences. It's their zone of comfort. It actually feels better to be in conflict because if there's no conflict, no drama happening, how boring is life, right? It's the only approach they've probably witnessed. But ultimately, it comes back to people who want to have conflict. It's about how it feels for them. Powerful, empowered, righteous, justified, important, significant, all of those things.

So how do you approach people who want conflict? I've had this, I've had parents, I've had teachers who have actively engaged in conflict because they liked it, because they felt a sense of power, they felt a sense of power over me. And with those people, after going through all of the stuff I've just shared with you and trying to come to a resolution and then I'm realizing, wait a minute, this person doesn't want a resolution. This person wants conflict.

So I will say to them, what's the solution you're seeking? And do you actually want that solution? What's the solution you're seeking? How do you wanna feel about this? What do you think would make this feel better and why? I make them say to me, what would resolve this for you? You seem very upset.

We've talked about this multiple times. You continue to drag it on. You know, this is continuing for you. I can see this continuation of stress and frustration and unhappiness. And I'm really curious, what do you think would make you feel better? And is this resolution that you think that you need? Is this what you're actually seeking? Do you want a resolution right now? Because sometimes we don't want it. We don't want to make it better. That's okay.

You don't need for this to feel better right now. You might not actually be ready to solve this problem. If that's the case, if you need to feel the feelings and process it, I'm here for you. You can feel however you want for as long as you want. What I want to do is the leader as the school, the

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principal, or your boss, you know, what I want as your leader is for you to feel good. But I also understand on a hold space for your feelings. So what does that look like?

Now, people who want conflict, who love it, who engage in it intentionally, they are fueled by reaction. When you react when you meet them where they're at energetically, they love that. It's like putting gasoline on a fire. But if you respond versus reacting, it doesn't feel as fulfilling for them. Okay? So notice if people are not wanting to give it up, they might be doing that because the conflict is what makes them feel good. You're not feeling good, but they're feeling good.

So you can ask them directly and you can say to them, it's fine for us not to solve this. And then we're going to set some expectations. And sometimes they don't even realize they're doing it. There's some people who are like, No, you're actually right. I kind of want to just be mad about this right now. Okay, fair enough. I'll give you some time. As long as the way you feel is not impacting your students, your colleagues, then you set some parameters around their emotional response. Okay?

So one more time. For team, tune in. E is express emotional energy. A, align your goals with agreements. And then M, meet them in the middle. Because the goal is harmony. The truth is you actually are on the same team. You're on team human experience. We both want to feel good.

We all want what's best for the students. We want to be in harmony. People want to feel good. Even people who love conflict. They actually want you to be in harmony in conflict with them. They want you to engage in battle, but that's a form of harmony for them. And you can decide, I'm not going to engage in that. That's just not my standard. But when you're ready, I will engage in harmony because harmony doesn't mean perfectly aligned, perfect agreement. It means you have different perspectives, but they can blend together kind of in a way that works.

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There is a difference and I've said it, but I want to be explicit about it. There is a difference between reacting and responding. Reacting is when we act on our initial emotional experience of an exchange with someone. So it's when somebody sends you an email and you email them right back, or someone yells at you and you raise your voice, or a teacher talks behind your back and you call them out for it in anger. Or a parent complains about you and you defend yourself, right? The reacting, like a responding to the gut reaction, that is a reaction.

Empowered principals, our goal is to respond. We want to pause long enough to shift from our amygdala into our prefrontal cortex. We need a couple seconds to do that. Responding is basically just pausing, pushing pause when you feel a reaction coming. When you're feeling the reaction coming, you push pause, which is, this is what push pause looks like. Pause yourself. Do not fire off a text. Do not fire off an email. Do not march down to that person's room. Do not get in the car and go over there. Do not pick up the phone. Pause. Breathe. A-A-B-C-D. Take it back down a notch.

Creating a response comes from the A-A-B-C-D method. It's how you create awareness, centeredness with intention. How do I want to respond? And you craft a response that's based on centeredness and then directing your thoughts back to the outcome you desire. Because the goal is to feel good. It has to be an alignment. Whenever you're in conflict, if you react, we're going to raise the energy and raise the conflict, we're going to fuel it. Nobody feels good.

Even the person who loves the conflict, they're like, whoa, that felt good in a little bit. But also like, now I've got to keep this up. It's a facade that they're playing because that's all they know. That's how they know. They only know how to react. But deep down, people want to feel aligned. They want to feel calm. They want to feel at peace. They want to feel happy. They want to feel good for us as leaders, for them as staff and students, and for the greater good of our communities.

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The goal is to feel good. Imagine a school where people felt good, felt good about themselves. They weren't trying to keep up a facade. They weren't pretending to be somebody. They were just feeling good about who they were. They felt good about the school they sent their kids to. They feel good about their teachers. Teachers feel good about themselves as teachers. Students feel good about themselves as students. They feel good about their friendships. They feel like they understand how to navigate them. Imagine a school like that. For us, for them, for the greater good.

Relationship mastery. It involves awareness. It involves alignment. It involves momentum. And it involves knowing how to overcome obstacles. You start with awareness, what you're thinking about. What am I thinking? What's going on for me in this relationship? Am I creating this conflict? I feel unaligned, I feel misaligned. What's happening for me? I start with awareness. What do I value? What are my priorities? What is the desired outcome I want? That's step one.

And then alignment is knowing those desires and those goals, getting clear about what you're, you know, looking for in this connection, this relationship, how do you want it to feel for you? How do you want it to feel for them? Creating a win-win environment, creating a win-win connection, looking for a meet in the middle, understanding the goal, how it's a win for them and for you, aligning your actions and communications with that desired outcome.

When you are able to do that, you gain momentum in building relationships, maintaining them, cultivating them. Relationships are alive. It requires you to nurture them with time and attention, to be engaging with them, checking in with people, genuinely caring, listening, being in how energy, honesty, openness, willingness.

And of course, you're going to have to learn how to overcome obstacles. That's what we talked about today. All relationships have speed bumps.



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They have detours, they have speed bumps, they have road delays, it's just like a road trip, right? We have to navigate that.

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](http://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.