

Ep #397: The Adventure of Creating Impact



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With Your Host

Angela Kelly

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Hello, empowered principals. Welcome to episode 397.

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 principals. Welcome to August. Welcome to the 2025-2026 school year. The Empowered Principal Collaborative begins tomorrow. And today, I'm going to provide some insight, some words of contemplation around creating impact.

As school leaders, as educators, we are in the business of creating impact. We come into education with a desire to create impact. Impact does not just happen because you are there. It doesn't happen because you got your teaching credential or your administrative credential. Impact is created.

I would venture to say it is co-created between you and a higher power of your understanding when you are tuned in and aligned with yourself. When you have awareness, you have alignment. That alignment generates momentum to overcome problems and obstacles, to overcome challenges, to be creative and find ways to approach the obstacles, the challenges, the roadblocks that come up in the game of life, in the game of education.

But the impact that we have as school leaders, whether you're a site leader, a district leader, a state leader, a county leader, whether you're an aspiring leader, impact is created. It's created by you, by your mind, your heart, your soul, your passion, your belief. Your belief in your ability to believe in yourself. You have to have belief that you can believe in you, that you can trust you. Belief in possibility, belief in your potentiality. Belief in the potentiality for your students and your staff members. Belief that anything is possible, should we set our mind to it, should we set our heart, our mind,

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our soul, our body, our passions to it. The belief that you can overcome any challenge, any setback, any failure, any mistake that you make.

You're not on the planet to avoid challenges, to avoid setbacks, to avoid failures, to avoid making mistakes. That's playing small. That keeps you small. That's playing small, stays small. Your belief that you can overcome a challenge, a setback, a failure, and a mistake allows you to go out there, be fully alive, and make them because you know you can handle them. And here's the truth: You've already handled them. You've made a mistake, you've had a failure, you've had setbacks, and you've come across challenges in your life.

As an infant, you had the challenge of learning how to walk. As a child, you had the challenge of learning how to read, tie your shoe, ride a bike. As a teenager, the challenge of learning how to drive your car, pass a test, get your driver's license, promote into the eighth grade, ninth grade, 10th grade, graduate from high school. You've failed tests. You didn't make the cheerleading team. You didn't make the sports team. You made the sports team and then were on the bench because you made mistakes in practice.

You made mistakes as a teenager when you went out above beyond your curfew and you got grounded. You made mistakes when you went to college. You made mistakes when you were a young adult. You went in, applied for jobs, got the interview, got the second round, and failed at getting the offer. You know how to handle these things. But we often don't believe that we can handle future ones, versus saying, "Hey, I'm very skilled at all of this. I can do this."

You have to believe in order to create impact that you can handle the emotions that come with challenges, setbacks, failures, and mistakes. You have to understand that you know how to handle disappointment, overwhelm, judgment, criticism, embarrassment, remorse, guilt, shame, grief, pain, loss, discouragement, defeat. You've already felt all of those emotions. They wouldn't be available to us as humans if we didn't have the capacity to handle them.

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We watch other people go through horrendous things and we say, "We can't imagine." But the truth is we can imagine. We just don't want to imagine because it stirs up those emotions within us to actually imagine what it would be like to lose a child, to lose a parent, to fail publicly. We have to, in order to make impact, to create impact, we must not succumb to the excuses our mind offers. And this is a hard one to swallow. We can't succumb to blaming and abdicating and not taking ownership of who we are, of our mistakes, of our humanness.

There must be a willingness to be fully honest with ourselves and hold ourselves accountable, even when no one's looking. To say, "Yes, I'm overwhelmed and." To say, "Yes, I'm experiencing loss and." To say, "Yes, there has been an injustice, an unfair accusation and. Who am I going to be in this moment when injustice occurs, when I'm falsely accused, when I'm blamed for somebody else's behavior, when I've been mistreated?"

Who will I be? How will I show up? If I didn't use those behaviors, those feelings as an excuse, as a reason as to why I can't create impact, then what? Not allowing yourself to get stuck. Your willingness to process emotions in real time. I'm not saying when adversity happens, you avoid the emotions, you pretend it didn't happen, you just power through, you stuff them down. That is not what creating impact is about.

The ability to create impact and expand your capacity to create even greater impact, to leave a legacy, is your willingness to process your emotions in real time, to actually lean into them, to acknowledge them, to validate them, to process them, to feel the burn of the injustice, of the mistake, of the failure, of the misstep, the misspoken words, the, you know, setback, the challenge. Actually lean in, feel that emotion, notice it, let the vibration ravage your body. It's a vibration. You were built to handle it. You were born to handle it.

But when you do that, it strengthens you. It's like going to the emotional gym, the emotional boot camp. The harder the emotion, the stronger you become. But when you lean in, it allows you to release those emotions to

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create the energy and space to move on and move forward in your life and in your career.

We must have the courage to move beyond emotional fragility. I've noticed a lot of comments in social media around, "I just can't do this anymore. Teachers are ungrateful, students are ungrateful, parents are ungrateful. I'm being mistreated." And all of that is true. And who are we in response to that? What will we stand for? Do we take care of ourselves? Do we get the rest we need? Do we have boundaries, have standards? Do we practice our strength, our ability to create impact when others are dysregulated?

Can we hold space for other people's behaviors, actions, words, and not make it mean something about our fragile egos? Can we separate our self cycles, who we are, our identities, who we are, what we think about ourselves, what we believe to be true, separate from the self cycle, the behaviors, the thoughts, the words, the actions, the emotions of other people? Do we have the bandwidth and can we expand that bandwidth to strengthen ourselves, to create impact in spite of the humanness that happens in our schools?

Can we create impact in spite of injustice, in spite of false accusations, in spite of mistreatment? Can we in fact use injustice to fuel our desire and our actions toward creating impact? Can we go through public failures and mistakes and continue to show up for ourselves? Can we drop the need for other people's approval and accolades and acceptance of who we are and what we want and how we lead? Can you take accountability and ownership to strive for your goals, your dreams, your desires, even when other people put them down because they don't believe in themselves? They project their lack of belief in themselves onto you and your goals and your desire to create impact.

Have you noticed that? The people who are busy criticizing you and demanding that you seek their approval tend to be people who aren't as committed to their own ability to make an impact as you are committed to making an impact. Don't let their excuses and lack of motivation, lack of

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ability, lack of desire to create an impact put the fire out in your desire to create impact.

The people who are out there judging you, rejecting you, criticizing you and your efforts, they are projecting their dissatisfaction with themselves onto you. Because the people who are actually out there, who are aligned to your values of striving to create impact, to change the world, to do amazing things, to overcome obstacles, to do the impossible, to be an example of what is possible, those people, they are cheering you on.

They are with you in solidarity, shoulder to shoulder, hand in hand. They are out there busy creating impact. They are not sitting on their little thrones on the internet, watching you fail, waiting for you to fail, criticizing you every step of the way, hating on you, being a stalker, being whatever they're called, a troll on the internet, right? They're not doing that with their time and their energy. They're out there actually creating impact, just as you want to create impact.

So the question becomes this: Do you want to create this level of impact? Do you want this experience for yourself as a school leader in your career, in your life? Do you want it? Be brutally honest with yourself. And for some of you, the answer is no. I don't want to go through the discomfort of creating impact. I want to come in, have life be easy, enjoy my creature pleasures, and be okay with it.

If you should decide you don't have the bandwidth right now to create impact or this school year's not the year where you have the energy and the space to step into an empowered identity and to create impact and to take ownership of creating that impact, allow yourself the peace that comes with accepting the truth of where you are right now.

It does not mean you will not be there in the future. It means I've got a lot going on right now. I am at full capacity. And at this moment in my life, at this moment of time, at this moment in my career, I'm going to go on autopilot. I'm going to do what I need to do and then get the rest I need, get

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the recovery I need so that I can create space, get the healing that you need. Maybe you've had a traumatic year and you just need a year to heal, or you need a month or you need six months. Think about the rebound time that it might take for you. We're not trying to avoid or to bypass a traumatic experience. We're leaning into the feelings and you might need a minute for that. You might need some space.

I've had to do that in my life. You've noticed it in my business. I took a big step back to recalibrate, to process emotion, and now I'm back, bigger, better, stronger than ever, ready to go, ready to create impact, ready to take ownership of my life, of my coaching, of my clients, of their success, all of it.

But for others of you, the answer is yes. Yes, I'm ready. There is a calling, a yearning, a fire inside of me, a restlessness that compels me. I feel the burn. There's an itch that needs scratching. It's demanding that I do something. There is a yearning for adventure into the unknown. And that unknown is your untapped potential. You have no idea what your potential is until you explore it, until you go on the adventure of impact.

So if you feel this burn from within you, EPC is the container for you. It's the Jeep. We're going to jump in and go on this impact adventure together this year. It is the place where fellow educators, fellow school leaders, and fellow impact creators gather. We gather to discuss ideas, to break through limitations, to cheer each other on, to support one another when we are experiencing difficult emotions, and we hold space and expand our capacity for greatness in our lives.

This year in EPC, we are going on an impact adventure, and you are invited to come. We begin tomorrow. The link to sign up is in the show notes. If you are ready, if this is yes, if you want to take ownership and create impact, join EPC today, get started tomorrow. We're going on the adventure of a lifetime. I can't wait to have you come along with us. Take good care. I'll see you next week. Bye.

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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.