

# Ep #402: Leadership Breakthroughs From EP Alive 2025



## Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Angela Kelly

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Hello, empowered principals. Welcome to episode 402.

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, Empowered Principals. Welcome to this very special episode of the Empowered Principal Podcast. I want to welcome three of my dearest clients, my dearest friends, my compadres in our very first live event. I hosted EP Alive 2025, which was my very first in-person event, and these three ladies were bold enough, brave enough, wild enough to come along for the ride. So I have with me Erin Bolby, Kay Reidy.

Kay: Reidy.

Angela Kelly: Reidy. And Sherry Reed. So these three ladies, we just got back from the event, and I wanted to capture this conversation for all of you listeners out there to hear because the energy at this event, it was for me, it was more magical. It was even better than I could have envisioned. And I'm going to be hosting, well, by the time this drops, I've already hosted it, but you can catch the replay of it. I'm hosting a planning mastery class and I talked about planning something versus engaging in it, and there's no amount of imagining an experience like imagining a vacation or imagining an event like this or imagining the school year that can compare to the actual emotional experience of the tangible event. Would you guys say that's true? There was imagining before and then there's actually being in the energy of it.

And really, that's what we're here to talk about today. I am still glowing from this experience, and I can't wait to hear your guys' insights and your before, during, and after experience of the live event and how it felt for you, your takeaways, and what happened. So, I want us just to go back kind of to the

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beginning, and I want you to think back to when I first decided I was going to do this live event. I was actually in Nashville at the time. My intent was to host this event in Nashville, which is a hub. It is a draw, just the city itself is a draw. It's an amazing city. It has so much to offer. It felt like the perfect place to have my first event. My son lives there and I was living there at the time, and I was all set to have it in Nashville. So, do you guys recall when it was announced that it was going to be in Nashville?

Erin: Yep, I think I remember hearing the first and I was like, "Whoo! Get to go there with my favorite people."

Angela Kelly: Yes. And what's so crazy about that is it wasn't about going to Nashville. It wasn't about getting cowboy hats and cowboy boots and going down to Broadway and running around on the strip. It was about us gathering, and that is where I happened to be, and that is where I wanted us to gather. And then as life would have it, my life has taken many twists and turns. I'm on the roller coaster, I'm riding all the rides at the amusement park the last few years, and there was a plot twist in my life, and I ended up in Iowa for multiple reasons actually, but when I landed here, there was a moment where I thought to myself, "I don't think I have the space, the emotional space, the emotional capacity, the mental space, the mental capacity to handle an in-person event."

And if I'm really transparent, I was like, "Who is going to want to travel to Iowa?" Who is going to drive to Iowa or who's going to fly to Iowa? And that's so funny because that is my own thoughts and feelings about the state in which I grew up. The bugs, the humidity, the snakes, you guys know the inside stories to all of this. But I was like, "I don't know if I can sell people on coming here for this experience." And I will be honest, it took me, I had to get on board. And this is true for school leaders. We have to be on board ourselves as leaders in order to get buy-in, which is selling an idea, right? It's getting people to buy into an idea. And I thought to myself, wait a

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minute, it's not about the place. It's about the space, the environment we're creating.

Sherry: And Angela, that's what I was going to say. It wasn't going to matter if EP Alive was in Nashville or Iowa or wherever the location was going to be. I was very committed to being able to attend and have the experience and learn from everyone on this call and everyone who participates with us in EPC because the energy of collaboration and that aliveness that we experience and how it impacts our everyday life and our decisions and our outcomes is phenomenal. So, once I heard there was the opportunity for an alive, an EPC alive, I knew the location did not matter.

Angela Kelly: Oh, that's so sweet of you to say. I'm glad you felt that way. I had to get on board with that for a minute. And it was when I went up to my friend's house at the lake and I thought, what better place than to have it here? And everything in that moment aligned for me. I grew up going to the lakes. I have had some of my most crazy life moments. I think I was sharing with you guys at the event where that was the place where I announced my pregnancy, my pregnancy with Alex, to my family. We were on a family vacation, and we were up there visiting my parents. I think I lived in Minneapolis at the time, and we announced our pregnancy with Alex up at the lakes, and we've had multiple family vacations up there from childhood to adulthood. One of the last places my mom was able to visit, before her, you know, her physical condition didn't allow her to travel. So, special memories up there.

And I realized something that there was already the energy for this container to take place, this event to happen. So, I loved being up there, but I'm going to turn it over to you guys. I, from the moment we walked in together, the moment we realized it was just the going to be the four of us. And I will say some people did drop off, and the reason was, well, it was the location or it was the expense of coming and flying here. And that's okay. What was meant to be was meant to be, and I feel like the container

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that we had ended up making it even more powerful than perhaps a larger group setting. And we've kind of had these inside jokes about, well, this is the OG group, this is the, we'll look back at a time where EP Alive is a bigger crowd, and we will have always been able to cherish this moment and this experience. So I'm just going to turn it over to you ladies and let you guys share your insights, your experience of the event, how it felt for you. So Erin, just to make it easier, right? I can just call on people. So Erin, can you share your thoughts?

Erin: I think that one of the powerful things about our EP live event is that it created a space for us to be removed from our day-to-day life. And I think that removal helped create awareness, at least for me, to be able to look into our lives from the outside and see am I actually alive? Am I actually living a life that I love? And or am I just going through the motions? The day-to-day, waking up, doing the things, doing all the more things, going home, doing more things. So it gave it a moment to pull away from that, look into my life and say, you know what, I actually want to live my life alive.

And I did some reflection on like what makes me feel alive and it's tuning into my senses a lot. Being able to listen to music and feel it in my body, being able to move in my body, being able to taste beautiful things and smell smells I've never smelled before, sitting on the lake, oh, that felt refreshing, and being able to laugh with other people and to feel safe with people. And so I love that container that the EP live gave us a space to look into my life and see it from the outside.

So that's one of my big takeaways of, there's more. I got a long list, but that's my main value I think in it in attending an event is that it pulls you away and into a space where you get to connect with people and thankful, I know these people already because we've been in the Empowered Principal Collaborative all year. So I know their stories, I know the hardships they've faced this school year, and we were able to connect right away and feel safe with one another in order to get dig deep and share and

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ask ourselves and get curious. What's the purpose? Have I lost the purpose in just living the day-to-day or what's really there for me?

Angela Kelly: I love that because you know what was so great was we in the context of EPC, we get kind of down to business with the work, right? The school work, the school leadership work, and overcoming obstacles and feeling all the feels of that work. This was seeing each other as humans, as ladies, as people with lives and families and ambitions and other interests. How cool was it that Erin is a certified yoga instructor and we got to do yoga every morning? Come on. That was crazy.

It just brought us all to another element, and it allowed all of us, at least for me, to it's not that I didn't see people as humans. Of course, we did. We've been connecting all year, but to be energetically in that same space, I just I felt so close to each and every one of you. And I too felt this awayness. My it felt like my coaching hat was off and I got to be human with you. And I wasn't marketing and selling and being the empowered principal, I was being me with you. And coaching conversations, they were so organic and so natural, and yes, we had topics that we had planned and I had planned and structured this event with a lot of flow for it to be organic, and I'm thrilled that you feel that way, Erin. I felt that too. I really did feel that way as well. So what are you guys's thoughts, Sherry and Kay? I shouldn't put you guys together. I clump you together because you work together. Okay, Kay, let's go. I'm just going in order on my screen.

Kay: I would echo a lot of what both of you have said already. Just that the idea of yes, we've been working together for the past year as part of the collaborative, which shout out, major win in The Empowered Collaborative. I'm having trouble with my words today.

Angela Kelly: It's all good.

Kay: Just what an amazing experience that was for the school year. But then to be able to come together in just a beautiful setting where maybe not

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all of the noise, the awayness that you talked about away from what's happening here in the office, but also what's happening at home. We got to step away. And yes, Sherry and I worked together, but it's nice to get out of this space and our hometown and be able to experience something that now is hers and mine, which is separate from the rest of our admin team.

The topics, I think the close knit group that we had really allowed for us to go deep and get really intimate into where each of us are as leaders and what might be barriers for us to be alive in that. And like Erin, I have come home and I've done a lot of reflecting and my little journal from the Alive event has I've named it my EP journal for this year. It's getting a lot of writing time right now. So all things EPC are going to go in the journal. Other things that I would add just, I think the alive event and being in person is going to add another dimension to next year's EPC because now we have a deeper connection than we had earlier. And I'm going to pause my brain because my words are like spinning right now.

Angela Kelly: I really want to add that EPC, the container, when I was starting as a coach, I only did one-on-one. I was just building up my connections with people. My desire to be a coach was less about the work as a school leader and more about feeling connected because I felt so isolated as a principal. And when I first started this, the way to connect with people was through the one-on-one coaching experience, which I still offer that to an extent, but there was a chapter where I was coaching one-on-one 24/7, it felt like. I had to be able to scale somehow, and I thought, what would hold the container of one-on-one in a group setting, and how can I transfer and actually make a group setting just as valuable, if not more?

And then I started thinking about the reason I became a coach is to connect. I felt isolated. I saw my colleagues, my friends, my peers behind closed doors sobbing. Having on the face while they're out in front of their school and their community and their students, but the feelings and the emotional experience and the pressure and the hardship and the burdens

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that they were carrying, when I saw that, there was something inside of me that burst open because I saw them for the real person, the real experience they were having, and I realized we're all sitting in our offices suffering in this in silence, in these silos, and there isn't a space to my knowledge that brought people together in this way to have these kinds of conversations about feelings, about life, about our thoughts, about what blocks us and prevents us from breaking through and expectations that we are putting upon ourselves or that other people have placed upon us that aren't serving us or our staff or our students or anything about education, right?

It's just kind of like old stories and old, I don't know what they're called, just old ways of approaching education. It just isn't serving us anymore. So thank you for sharing that, Kay. There is something that we can no longer disconnect. There is a connection that was built and what I feel EPC is evolving into is an alliance where you can come to this safe space with people of like minds who are calibrated to the energy of being willing to be open and vulnerable and to drop some of these stories and some of these old belief systems that when we dissolve them and examine them are really no longer valid. I think EPC is going to get deeper next year. The conversations are going to be richer and we are going to feel more alive and feel more supported and feel more loved and connected than ever before. So this is a feeling podcast if you can't tell guys, we are feeling it here. Feeling it. Sherry, can you share what your takeaways were?

Sherry: Absolutely. And so Angela, you touching on it, we're all this universal human experience, right? All of us are coming together this universal human experience, but what EP Alive and what EPC provides us with is the opportunity to experience obviously the universal human experience, but with that lens of what does this look like and mean as a building leader, as a school leader. How do we take our experiences and be able to in this EP alive, basically container as we've said, we can put that lens of tell me more and we can focus that on ourselves as individuals, right? Tell me more, this is a value that you have. Tell me more of how this

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value was developed in you and why it's so important to you and how does that reflect and come across then in your leadership style and how do you communicate that with your staff and is that helping you or is that causing a hindrance?

But being able to unpack and discuss, the tell me more as it applies to me as an individual so that I can come out knowing that we're living the universal human experience, but I can come out stronger and more ready to lead my school and be everything that I want to be as a leader and as a human for my students and staff. And so just that opportunity of being able to take that time out to be able to go to EP Alive and focus that lens of tell me more on myself individually to grow my capacity and build my skills as a leader and as a human, right?

Angela Kelly: That's so good because we talked a lot about tell me more in the context of a tool as a leader, but I love that you turned it with yourself to say, when a feeling comes up for you, hey Angela, what's coming up for you? Tell me more about that. Where is this coming from? And as we all know, the intimacy of the in-live event allowed us the space to identify that things that are weighing on us professionally, they're coming from a personal place.

All four of us shed tears that weekend, but they were tears of release, tears of joy, tears of almost like enlightenment, like an aha moment where this personal thing was what was impacting decisions and actions that we were taking or not taking or kind of sidestepping around as leaders. And when we just the awareness of that, it was so beautiful to see that, and it's something we don't talk about emotions are coming up for me that we don't talk about in school leadership because people are afraid to cry, they're afraid to express emotion because we've labeled it as weak or we've labeled it as soft or we've labeled it as kind of fluffy, but it's the most powerful thing we can do.

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And what I think we have done, ladies, is we have redefined what professional development looks like, what going to a conference, a retreat looks like. We worked hard, not going to lie, but we also played hard, and we redefined, we recalibrated the entire experience of a school leadership retreat. What school leaders should be doing on their summers and what it should look like and buns in seat for sitting at a conference with your little notepad. That's not how we did life in EP Alive. That's not how we learned. And we're learning as lifelong learners that we don't have to learning doesn't have to look one way for the adults in the room. So as you're going into professional development, as you're planning your professional development, or you're thinking about professional development for yourself, it doesn't have to be boring. It doesn't have to be buns in seat. It doesn't have to be 8 hours of grind and then your brain hurts so much that you've got to go lay down in your hotel room. That's not what it has to be, right?

Sherry: There's an opportunity there, right? And we talked a lot about this, shining the light on our strengths, shining the lights on our insecurities, shining the light on shame or things that we are concerned about and that once we shine the light on it and we can reflect on it and then we can learn and grow from it. And then that light helps us lead the way because again, we are all, I mean, we're all working together in this and experiencing the human experience and wanting to be the best human we can be.

Angela Kelly: Yes. I guess we dove into the depths of it, the deep learning stuff, which we did. But we had so much fun. So much fun. And even the hard work, I would say, felt light and it felt inviting and it just felt open. It felt like we were four old friends on an annual girls weekend trip together, sitting by the fire pit outside in the evening, taking in the lake views in the morning with our coffees, sitting around the table, laughing till we cried, just all of it. Just it was so much fun. And let's talk about the fun that we had, especially because I'm a big proponent of fun. I love the Summer of Fun Challenge. I would like for us to have every season of fun for every season

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to be fun. And we're going to bring fun into the school year, but let's talk about the fun that we had. For you guys, I know the fun that I had with all of it, but what was the fun that you had over the weekend? I guess it was during the week, but I'm calling it the weekend.

Kay: One of the things that I really, really enjoyed was our experience listening to the Big Band music at the Roof Garden. Many years ago before my grandma had passed, she would always play big band music in her kitchen. So that kind of brought me a heartfelt memory. But then it also reminded me that once upon a time, I said I was going to learn to swing dance. Since I have come back, I've been trying to find different places in my poor little Midwest town. It's real slim pickings. But I did find that if I watch the UNI dance page, they offer some things. So it was a fun memory and it has sparked the there is more to life than just coming to work and doing the every day kind of like what you had talked about, Erin.

Angela Kelly: yeah. Okay, I'm going to ask you guys something. Everybody unmute and stay unmuted unless you've got construction going on or something. And here's why, which is probably all of us. But I want people to feel the energy of the four of us together in conversation. This isn't EPC. We don't have to mute. So I want you guys to just talk like we talk. Pretend we're sitting around the fireplace talking because even though we well, the fireplace we couldn't get to work. But the fire pit we did.

Erin: The outside one we did.

Angela Kelly: The outside one we did. But yeah, I want them to feel this energy because - and for the listeners out there, you guys, yes, of course in EPC, there's more of us and so we mute because people are coming in walking in and out of the office, so we tend to mute ourselves unless we're actually speaking. But today, I want you to pull up a chair, grab your coffee or your glass of champagne and listen to this because we are having a conversation about making school leadership actually fun and making learning fun and feeling connected in this work that we're doing together.

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We are across the globe. Erin is from Arizona. Now, the three of us right now are technically all in Iowa. I'm from Iowa. That is my home state. I'm back caring for grandmother and my dad and helping my sister out and I'm rebuilding my life, but I'm from California. My heart, my soul, my life is still out there with a bunch of friends and family out there. So we are from around the globe connecting and this is the goal. We want to connect.

School leaders out there, I cannot tell you I know the pain of this isolation. I know the pain of even when you go to a conference, when you're so excited, but you go alone and there's 3,000 other people there. You might say hi to people and sit at a table, but you kind of dine alone, you go alone, you're in your room alone. It can be a very lonely experience and you get these ideas and you're excited, but you bring them back alone and then trying to implement them alone feels like you're pushing a boulder up a mountain because you've been sold on this idea or experience or new approach to something, but because you're alone, the momentum required for you to get in there and sell that can that can feel isolating in and of itself. So, yes, we had fun.

The big, okay, what I love about you loving the big band is that I never would have thought to go to big band, but when I started going back to the lake in the last two years hanging out with my friend Eric, he, obviously a musician, he loves it. And so he started taking me to Big Band and then he started taking swing lessons, which reminded my little body that way back in college, I took swing lessons and I actually know how to dance. So while he's been learning, I've been re-engaging in swing. Now maybe we'll have to have a swing session here at EPC. But this is EPC is more than just school leadership. It's about life. It's about leading our life and taking ownership of living a life that we love. And that's what we did. We lived a lot. So you loved Big Band, Sherry, what did you like?

Sherry: I loved the delicious food, the laughter, the walks, the momentum of and the energy of the space, right? I mean with us four and then what I just

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kept thinking about is, I know how much I enjoy being around people and being with people, but how much fun it is to meet new people, right? And make new connections. And I mean, I'm talking about the people that we got to know really well or just the people that we met when we were out and about, just that interaction and all of the energy. That's what I really enjoyed. But I mean truly, delicious food.

Angela Kelly: So, good. Well, what's really cool about Sherry is that, okay, so we did, we ate, we went to all the restaurants. We went to the formal downstairs restaurant, which, okay, let's give a shout out. Was it Maverick? Oh my gosh.

Sherry: He was so sweet. So sweet.

Angela Kelly: He looked like he was 12, but he said he was a college student working for the summer. Was he the most attentive? He was, oh my gosh. He just, before you knew it, you had food on the table and drinks in your hand. He was great. So we had that experience. And then we, I'm trying to remember all the places we went. I know we went to the tiki bar and had lunch. That was fun the day we went to...

Sherry: It felt like you were in any place in the world. Like you just you could have been, I mean, anywhere in the world. I mean, obviously tropical and it was beautiful and delicious and...

Angela Kelly: So good. We had Maxwell's. So I have to give a shout out to Lake Okoboji. It had great restaurants, the weather, okay, the weather served. It was beautiful and perfect. The food was outstanding. We didn't even get to try all of the places, but we did get to experience the donuts. So, and next time, if there's a next time at Okoboji, we'll go to the other donut shop because now I have to do a comparison to see what the difference is. Erin, what did you love?

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Erin: Oh, I we went sailing. I just love that. That was oh, such a great experience just being on the water and it really makes me feel alive. It's like, water, what's happening? But like I said, my senses are really important. So like that smell and the breeze in your hair and we were laughing and he was having fun. I love that. That was great.

Angela Kelly: Good. So I surprised them with a sailing adventure. My friend Eric has a sailboat and he kept saying, "Bring the ladies over and let's go for a sail." But sailing requires ideal weather conditions, particularly on the lake because his boat is in a hoist. It's not you can't just kind of tie it up. So I knew the conditions had to be just right. So that was another reason why we let the week flow for us, and then when he texted and said, "It's today's the perfect day, be here at one," I just told everybody, "Okay, there's a surprise coming. We're going on an adventure. We're going to be alive.

And we had, you know, as part of the fun, you guys got these little gift baskets with the what did we get? The little beach bags and the beach towels and sunscreen and, yeah. And Erin brought yoga mats for everybody. So we took our little bags and we went on a little adventure when we ended up going sailing and yay for Kay for being brave and getting on the water. She did amazing. Eric checked back in and he was like, "How did Kay do? Was she okay? I didn't want to put I didn't want to put the big sail up because I didn't I was afraid." I said, "She was fine. She was fine."

Kay: Just for all the listeners, the inside story is there, I'm really afraid of deep water. So, but the sailing was beautiful and did a phenomenal job taking care of us.

Angela Kelly: Yes, he kept us calm. He kept everything calm. We didn't tip the boat. It was a it was a beautiful day.

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Sherry: And then, I mean, the last day Eric came then to the rescue to help me when I went out to the parking lot and tried to start the vehicle, which did not start.

Angela Kelly: Oh gosh.

Sherry: So Eric came and he also helped me, you know, try to get my vehicle jumped and get things going in the right direction so that, you know, we could head home. Yes. So once we got it started, we even then took a detour and we took Erin to the airport. And so it all went excellent.

Angela Kelly: Oh my god. We all made it home safely. Okay, if you're listening, if you're ever going to host a live event, one, have a best friend in your back pocket that lives in the area who doesn't who has a separate skill set than your own. Like this guy sailed. He was he was so charming. He takes us to the big band. He invites us into his home. He like, and then we had such the perfect week that we wake up the last morning and now, like a thunderstorm had come through the last night and the and the morning was a little misty and gray as we were packing up and leaving. It was just kind of like this beautiful like bow on the end of this week. And then we're like, nothing had gone wrong. And then Sherry's car battery decided to go to permanent sleep. Yes, permanent sleep. Or something, wasn't it? Deep rest mode.

Sherry: Deep rest mode is where it was. And we're all - we were reading and researching how to get this vehicle out of deep rest mode. Turns out that new battery is how you get the vehicle out of deep.

Angela Kelly: A new battery. And I felt horrible because my grandmother was moving from her home into a retirement community that morning and so I needed to be on the road ASAP. I had a long day that late. So I was I was up there and I would not have left. If I did not have a commitment of that magnitude, I wouldn't have left. I would have stayed with you guys. But Sherry said something to me that I was like, this is the embodiment of

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empowerment. She's like, "We've got this. You don't need to stand here and look at us and watch us read the manual. We can figure this out." Standing in the rain and figured this out. So I threw all the things in the car and I took off and I was looking back like, "Oh, my babies." You know, I feel like I'm leaving everybody behind, right? But Eric was there to the end and I asked him, okay, this is crazy because I asked him, how did Erin, my big fear was how did Erin get back to Sioux Falls? And he goes, "Oh, I think she had to just get take an Uber or lift or something." And I was like, "Oh, bummer. That's too bad that they couldn't get the car fixed in time." So I'm delighted. We made it anyway. We got to ride. You guys got to have your chat.

Erin: Yeah, that was great. It was.

Angela Kelly: You probably didn't make it in time for lunch, but

Erin: No.

Angela Kelly: What time did you get on the road?

Sherry: Oh, was it - I'm trying to think. It was probably 11:00 before it going. It might have been later than that because I don't think we had Erin to the airport was it maybe 2:00 or 2:30? I mean, she had plenty of time but it was it wasn't done too early and it was funny because I you know, I also contacted my husband to let him know, "Hey, the vehicle's not starting." And so he has the app and he knows then that we got the battery replaced and everything, but then he calls me because he's like, "Are you headed home?" And I'm like, "Well, eventually." And he goes, "Well, it shows that the vehicle's in South Dakota. Are you with it?" I'm like, "Yes. We are all still with the vehicle, but we went the opposite direction for a little while and then we got turned back around to head home. But he's like, "Did you did you sell the - did you fix the battery or do we no longer have that vehicle?"

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Angela Kelly: Oh, that's funny. Well, luckily for you guys, you intentionally went to South Dakota before you came back to Iowa. It's funny because you go through three states. You drive through Iowa and because we're right on the border, and then you go through Minnesota and you go through into South Dakota. So I was telling Erin, "Wow, welcome from Arizona. Welcome to the Midwest. You get to see three states in a 90 minute drive." And you know, you can put that in your little adventure book. But I'm thrilled that you guys got to take her there. And I'm glad that your car made it home.

Sherry: Just a new battery. That's all it needed. So thank you to everyone who helped with that. That was a group effort right there.

Angela Kelly: Yes, it was. It was. Well, shout out to my buddy Eric. He was he was amazing. He made the, I mean, he really made the weekend extra special. So that was great. But we literally, I mean, we I mean, I'm trying to think about how the flow went. We kind of worked in the mornings and then we were out for the afternoons. And then one morning, we spent kind of just chatting it up and then taking a midday break and then going back. And then we went to the pool one day. That was so fun too. Yeah, that was really fun too.

Sherry: Yeah, that was really fun too.

Angela Kelly: I haven't been to like a pool resort in a very long time where I actually get in the water. I'm the gal who sits in the shade and watches everybody else splash about. But the water was like perfect temperature and they had that little adult section so we could, you know, hang out, have a beverage and not be around the children because children are coming. We'll have plenty of time with the children. I can't remember who said it, but somebody said, "It's so fun to be around kids that we're not responsible for managing," right? Like other people are keeping them alive. We don't have to.

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Kay: What is that Taylor Swift thing you know, she says, "I'm off." Well, we were principal off.

Angela Kelly: Yes, we were principal off for sure. We were, yes. EP Alive was all about turning down the volume of, what would it be called? Like just oversight. And just tuning into us having fun. We had so much fun. I actually can't wait to have another one. I thought it was it was so fulfilling in a way that I didn't really anticipate, right? You know, I show up and you guys show up with your clients, my clients, I call your clients, your teachers, your staff, your community, your kids, but we hold space for them and we come in expecting to hold space for them, but what we can open ourselves up to is what we receive also. And I've learned this in so many layers just in the last few months. Giving and receiving are separate.

So we - it's not a tit for tat. We don't come in and give and give and give of ourselves and then because we gave, we receive. We can give because we choose to give, because it feels good for us, it feels in service, it feels in alignment for us, but we can also receive as school leaders because we're worth it, because we're worthy, because we deserve it, because it's the natural way of the world, and the way of the human experience. And for me to just be as open, there was like flow between coach, client, it just became four women having conversations, coaching one another, and holding space and listening to the stories and feeling with one another and talking them through and then adding input. It wasn't a coach holding a class for three people. It was four empowered principals holding conversations about life and leadership.

And it was like such a beautiful experience, and I'm just so honored to have had it and I'm so proud of myself for when the doubt crept in, when I felt like, "Oh, this last move," you know, moving from Nashville to here in a week's time, more on that another time, but having to make big decisions about my personal life and make the move and keep holding space for clients, and to decide with 100% certainty and it was almost like it was a

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calling beyond me that said, hold this event, and be in alignment with it because - not because of any other reason than it feels good and you need it as much as they need it, and the group collective, the four of us, needed that time and that space together. I've attended as a client coaching events, coaching retreats, but this to me felt more, it's almost hard to put it into words. It felt, magical is the word that comes up, but it was almost spiritual, if I can say it that way, or it felt so alive. I guess that's the word, right? We felt so alive in all of it. Down to our beds at night, the sheets, everything. I didn't want to get out of bed because it was so awesome and but I wanted to get up and I was so excited. And there wasn't a moment of my life in those three days together that I didn't cherish.

Kay: The energy even, you know, I think I commented on last Friday's notice in our Facebook group. I was still buzzing from early part of the week by the end of the week. And just that constant, oh, yeah, remember how this sparked this part and yes. I have a little stack. I have not done it yet because the weather has not really cooperated. One of the things that we had talked about was really, really weighing on me and it's three years old. I have all the documentation that I need and I'm going to light it up. And goodbye and that is it no longer serves me. And because of this experience, I was able to process it in ways that I haven't since the event happened. So I am incredibly grateful for that because it makes me lighter.

Angela Kelly: Yes. Oh, that warms my heart so much.

Kay: So when you get a picture later of flames, check the box.

Angela Kelly: I love that. This is one thing I failed to do, which was capture this event in picture form. I am a person that is so present that I often am not thinking of capturing it. And I looked back and I have like a few little snaps and most of them are from Erin. And so I was like, and then I took snaps, oh, I need to share those with you, Erin. I took, I remembered in the middle of yoga, "Oh, get some pictures for her for her yoga business." But most of it was just like we were so present.

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And I talked to my coach about it, my business coach afterwards and she was telling me how she's able to like be in presence and take the photos at the same time. So I was like, "Oh, I will expand my capacity to do that because I literally have to practice generate awareness to capture that moment." But she said, when you realize the value of having the photos and the memory, it not just the memory, but the emotional experience you have when you view the photos, the connection comes right back, right? So the connection of those moments, those laughter, those breakthroughs, that experience, the photos are what allow you to relive this and to bring home the energy because now we can literally imagine those moments and that time together and bring that buzzing back into our bodies and bring it back to school, you know?

Sherry: Yeah, that's absolutely true and I wanted to say, Angela, you know, K and I talked on the way home exactly what you were talking about, you know, the experience of this, like we can take a moment and we can reflect and we can go right back to that energy and that emotion and how that feels us moving forward. And but also we talked about, I mean, we talked about a lot of things, but another we talked about how, you know, the hardships that we experience, I mean in life or in leadership or wherever it is, like knowing the gifts that provides us to prepare us for the future and to give us strength for that. And we talked a lot, but having to be aware and open to the gifts that can provide.

Angela Kelly: Yes. That is so beautiful because this job, this career that we have selected, I feel like we all we get to choose a board game of life and we the game that we chose was school leadership and we're in the game of life as school leaders and it requires us to be constantly open, constantly vulnerable, constantly transparent, constantly evolving ourselves. And you can, you can shut down and play small. You can definitely do that. And what you'll find, and I know this because I did this personally until I started putting cracks into those old belief systems, was when you play small, you

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stay small and your school is a reflection of your energy and your and your openness.

So if you feel stagnation in your school, look for the - where are you stagnating within yourself, right? When your life starts to feel a little stagnant, where is the stagnation here? Where did you forget to be alive? Where did you forget to put fun into the calendar? Where did you forget that it's okay to have a play day. It's okay to laugh at school. It's okay to not make everything so heavy and so urgent that we can breathe a little. We can give space to just be human in this game of school leadership. It's not to say that we're dismissing or making light of there's real problems and real challenges and we're dealing with human development. We're dealing with people who are struggling and in crisis and trauma, but we cannot be in that energetic space all of the time. It doesn't serve us, it doesn't serve them. It doesn't serve the school, it doesn't serve the community.

So we invite back into our leadership, in our professional development, the joy of learning, the joy of learning, making it fun, having it be a balance of work and play and we're integrating. I promise you, as you're sailing, you're integrating what you've learned. As we're listening to the Big band, you're integrating what you learn. As we're sitting around the fireplace or we're, you know, going into the pool and all of that was just as much learning as it was play because play is learning, learning is play. And if we can remember this for kids, recess is not a break from learning. Art class is not a break from academics. It's an integration time. When we go to sleep at night, our brain is processing. It's thinking. It's integrating what we've done for the day. When we physically move our bodies, we're integrating mind, heart, soul, spirit, all of it is integrating.

So I invite us as leaders as we're going into this new school year to bring play back into collaborations, into PLCs, into our, you know, staff meetings, into our professional development to remind ourselves adults and children alike. We are humans in just different size bodies having had different, you

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know, chapters around the sun, but we still learn through play. We still learn by being alive, by being engaged. We don't learn by sitting buns in seat for 6 or 8 hours a day. And we're asking kids to stay focused and stay emotionally regulated and stay, you know, physically confined when our bodies don't want to do that. It's kind of insane what we're asking little ones to do.

That's why I put us in the space of adult play, of aliveness, to remind ourselves as leaders, imagine the requests we're making for five, six, seven, eight, nine, 10-year-olds, or even 15, 16, 17, 18-year-olds, to sit and focus all day and produce the amount of work and the amount of thought required and the amount of emotional regulation that school demands of young children when the adults have a hard time with it, right? It's such an eye opener to go to an event and to be the learner and to be the client and to be the person who's having to be vulnerable because you're learning something new or you're having to like contemplate something that feels very scary or it feels hard to believe it's true or your brain is resisting the truth of it. All of that is what we ask of students.

So putting ourselves in a space that's one, safe, two, it's fun. It's in the environment. I picked a really cool condo. I did, I picked the best one I could pick because when you're in an environment that feels good, this is why I invite people to like create fun spaces in there, you know, your office. Make it a place you love because it feels good. And when that feels good and you feel good, you show up in a different energy. Leadership is energetics. It's not what we're doing, it's who we're being when we're doing it. And we got to play and laugh and live and love and hold space for one another.

It was a sacral experience to it's just a very sacred experience to be in person together and I'm really grateful and proud of each and every one of you because wow, some of the things you guys broke through, I thought about it all the way home on my drive, each and every one of you shared

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vulnerably, honestly, and genuinely wanting to see the light, see just the cracks, the hairline cracks that help you break through so you can start to release and just to see the truth of those beliefs and how they're holding you back and loving them and releasing them. It was it was really beautiful.

And for me, being witness to that allowed me to also share the truth of my life, the truth of my experiences, and the vulnerability that, you know, I'm going through it and I am a product of what I teach. I don't preach it. I only teach what I have personally experienced, witnessed, and practiced in my own life. So thank you for allowing me that space to be vulnerable too as a coach. It was great.

Sherry: And Angela, just thank you. I mean, even our conversation today, I mean, it just lifts us up and gives us that time and that space to, yeah, to be ready to go.

Angela Kelly: Yeah. So, is there anything else anybody wants to share before we wrap up? I just want to make sure everyone's been able to share all the things because it truly was a wonderful, wonderful experience.

Kay: But I think what's really amazing is too, when, yesterday I had a really big emotional experience. I'm like, "Oh, I have an emotional experience today. I'm human." But I was able to totally take a pause and almost remove myself from that emotional experience and I'm asked tell me more, why is it so emotional for me? And maybe it's okay for me just to let it go. Thank it and ask the question, what bad will really happen? If I try this thing, what's the worst that could happen? Really? It'll be fine. So I think it just every experience like that allows you to level up and continue to seep in and understanding ourselves because the more we understand ourselves more, I think we can lead better.

Angela Kelly: Oh. That's such a great message because anytime a big emotion is coming up for you, personally or professionally, if something has triggered an emotional intensity, that is the invitation. The emotions are the

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compass, they're the conversation, they're the flag to get your attention to say, "Hey, let me ask myself, tell me more. What's coming up for me? What's coming up for me that this is triggering me, that this is bothering me? Let me just explore that a little bit."

Sometimes all you need is to be able to say it out loud or write it down and like physically get it out of your body from your mind down onto paper or your mind just, I like to sometimes just record myself ranting and then I just delete it. It's like, got that out.. Or sometimes, most of the time, something else will be uncovered. Oh, that's why this is bothered. that teacher's comment. That's why. Oh, because there's a little grain of truth in there. Can I see can I lean into that truth? Yeah, I did snap at her or yes, I did forget to do this or, oh yeah, she's, you know, is there a grain of truth?

Something my master coach taught me when I became certified to The Life Coach School, she said, there's always a grain of truth and so say yes to it all. So when someone says, you're this, yes. You're a good person. Yes. You're a bad person. Yes. You're such a bitch. Yes. You're such a nice person. Yes. We're all of it. It's all of it's true. And then the best part, so when a teacher would say something about me and I would look for the truth in it and yes, that is true. I have forgotten things. I have misspoken. I did oversee, you know, I missed something. Yes, it's true. Then when I say yes to it, my need to defend or deflect or to blame or to abdicate responsibility or to jade in any way, to try and justify myself, argue it, defend explain it any of that, it just goes away.

It's like it frees me from the need to jade, the need to get in there and try to clean it up or hide it or protect it or something. Yes, I'm sure there is an oversight here. Boom. And that emotional intensity when you ask it, tell me more, and listen, it'll tell you what why. You might not like it, but what's harder is avoiding it and resisting it and trying to dance around it and not listen to it is harder because it'll keep knocking. It'll keep showing up at your door until you, "Okay, let me let you in. Let's have a cup of coffee. Tell me

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everything." And that's when that's when you acknowledge it, you process it, and then you can release it. So, what a beautiful way to end.

So, for those of you who are listening to this, number one, why aren't you in EPC? Get over here. Let's go. Number two, EPC's going to be, I just think, I know, I don't think. I feel it. It's going to be deeper. It's going to be more transformative and more connected than ever, and more fun because we're going to laugh at ourselves more. We're going to we're going to share the embarrassments. We're going to talk about the shame. We're going to just put it out there on the table, shine the light under the bed, and the minute that we do that, we can laugh at ourselves for the craziness of this job, for the wild rides that we're on. You know, as I say to the girls, we're at the amusement park and we're choosing to ride all the rides, even the ones that have deep water, right, Kay? We're going for it.

So, for EPC, we're going on a journey. It's going to be amazing and I look forward to the next EP alive. We don't know where or when it will be, but stay tuned. We'll keep you posted. But thank you ladies for the most amazing magical first experience of a live event. I learned so much of what to do and what not to do and how much help I really need and all hands on deck. Thank you Erin for all of your extra help. It was so fun. And I just want to shout out too like one of my favorite parts beyond all that we've already shared was just my drive to South Dakota to go pick up Erin and our little chats we had on the way back and over lunch and that little extra time together, we really got to talk about deep things and making schools like Disneyland and, you know, figuring out what life might look like if we were in the land of Walt Disney's brain. So that was really fun. So I just wanted to share that as well. Have an amazing school year. Congratulations to all of those who have started the year. If you're not in EPC, I'm going to open the doors. after you've heard this, if you want to come in, come on in, we'll let you in, and it's going to be an amazing year. So thank you ladies.

Kay: Don't take Angela's word for it. EPC is epic. We'd love to join us.

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Angela Kelly: Yes. So fun. It's so fun and we might let you come to EP Live. We're a little partial to our foursome, but we will definitely, if you're cool, no. We'll open the doors and allow you in. So come to EPC, it's going to be amazing. Love you guys. Take good care. Love you all. Bye.

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