

Ep #429: The Movement of Staff Members



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

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Hello, empowered principals. Welcome to episode 429.

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. So happy to be here with you today. Welcome to the podcast. Happy Tuesday. If you're new, we're so happy you are here. And we are continuing our conversation around all things HR. 'Tis the season, and I was coaching this week on the topic of the moving of employees.

Now, this is the time of year when all things HR go into full motion. There are retirements, there are leaves of absences, FMLAs, there are resignations, and that opens up positions. There's a lot of employee movement. So, there might be people who choose to move to another position within your school or over to another campus within your district.

And each district, each corporation, wherever you work, they have specific policies and procedures, protocols for choosing to move that allow, you know, the free will of your employees to apply for or raise their hand and be offered a different position for the year. So, this is normal. There's a lot of movement this time of year.

Again, I feel like a broken record, but if you're starting to feel unhappy, uncomfortable, if there is negativity inside of your body, check in with yourself. What are your thoughts and feelings around it? Now, sometimes when people move, you're happy. You're happy for them. You think it's a best fit for them. You think it's a best fit for students. It's a best fit for you. It's all around a grand slam. It feels like a really good fit for the person, the students, the community, the school, the team, and you're thrilled about it. So it's a best fit for you, right?

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That's pretty easy to navigate. Now, you might not feel as enthusiastic about the decision if you don't believe it's in the best interest of either your students, your staff, the grade level, the department, the community, or if it's impacting you in a way that you don't prefer. So, for example, let's say you've got a really great teacher who decides to accept a leadership position. And you're like, no, I love this teacher. She's so great. She runs the grade level or the department.

And of course she's going into a leadership position because she's such a great leader. It's good for her, but I'm so sad. You can feel both the joy and the pain of this movement of employees, right? So, it's just really important to acknowledge that you can feel both things about the same situation. You can be joyous for her and excited for her new adventures, and feel sad at the loss because it impacts you and it will impact your school. And you may have to hire someone new or rebuild the team or move some staff around or something, okay?

So, in this case, just be mindful of your own thoughts and feelings that come up. Honor them, acknowledge them, of course. But if you lean on to reacting to that disappointment piece, even though you are happy for her, technically, but if you're more disappointed because you have another position open and it was such a great teacher, you might not interact in the way that you most desire.

And it can come into the hiring process where you're frustrated that you have to hire and you're disappointed that she's leaving. And there might be that little tinge of bitterness and discouragement. And people can pick up on that. They can feel that and it might drive ideal clients away. So just be mindful. Just notice, am I a little irritated, am I a little sad for myself? Feel the feelings, acknowledge it, and then shift back into, okay, happy for her, and what do I want? What's the next chapter going to look like? What's this phase of this position going to be? And what if somebody is amazing and is out there waiting for just this job? You never know, right? So just acknowledge that it's okay to be glad for them and disappointed for you.

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And they actually are in alignment. When you think about the duality of these feelings, they're actually in alignment. And it's because you care. You care about the teacher and you care about you. And you're sad. It's because you care about them, because you enjoyed working with them. You want them to stay. You love them. You care. You care about your students, you care about their impact, and it was a win-win. So, of course, you're happy for them and you're sad for you. You are capable of feeling both that mixture of disappointment and happiness, okay?

Now, there are situations where someone you're not so fond of moves into a position under your leadership. So, let's say somebody from another school says, I want to go work at her school. That's a great school. What an empowered principal she is. Well, person's coming in and you're like, oh no, this is not a match. It's not, it doesn't feel good for me. I've heard these things, or I've experienced this, or I've witnessed this, or here's my take on this person.

Now it's time for some self-coaching, okay? You've got to be willing to explore what about this individual's bothering you? Why are you focusing on what you don't want versus what the possibilities could be? Because one thing I tell all of my clients, and I said to my teachers was that just because a person isn't a fit for one position within our school, or they weren't a fit at another school, doesn't mean they can't shine here, or doesn't mean that if we let them go, that they can't shine somewhere else. They still are a person with talent and gifts to offer. They just have to find the right match for them, okay?

Just like dating, not everybody's a fit for everybody and not every position is a fit for everybody. So, be willing to notice, have you already decided this person is not going to be successful at your school? What is it that bothers you? And maybe you have genuine concerns that you do want to bring up with your leadership team. But if it's just this, I've heard, it's hearsay, or somebody told me, or you know, I used to teach with them and I didn't like them. You know, we have a lot of feelings from the past. So, consider

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what's coming up for you and notice how you're reacting and how you would like to respond, okay?

Also consider how a leader, when you are in your most empowered state, how would you handle yourself? How would an empowered principal handle this situation? How would they leverage this as an opportunity to create a relationship with them, to build them up, to put them on the right seat on the bus, and to coach, mentor, and support them into their most empowered version as a teacher? So think about that as well.

Now, there's another aspect of employment, of employees moving around, and that's really the reason that I wanted to record this podcast and address this topic. It's happened to me personally. So when my client brought it up the other day, I really felt the burn of emotions that came up for me with this situation. And I had to really put my emotions in check and coach from a squeaky clean place because this has happened to me and I can remember the feelings that came up when it happened.

So, one of my clients in EPC brought up the topic of her staff being full. She had worked really hard to attract and retain support staff in her district, in her school. She did the hiring, she did the interviewing, the hiring, the onboarding, and she felt very proud of her capacity to create this staff. Well, the district came in and said, oh, across the board, there are more support staff positions filled at your school than there are at other schools.

So, when the district gets involved into your hiring and starts moving people around because they don't see it as equitable or they need somebody over here, and you have done all of the work, it can be quite frustrating when there is an employee decision made at the district level, somebody you've hired, you've attracted, you've curated, you have onboarded, you have coached, you have mentored, and you've integrated them into your staff as a productive, welcomed, contributing member of your team. And then they're asked to be reassigned to a different school, different team within the district, it's a real blow and it can bring up genuine frustration and some resentment.

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And I know this feeling. It feels really unfair. And I feel that the emotion of injustice, when something feels unfair, when it feels unjust, it's such a challenging emotion because we're wired to want to make it right. We're wired to want to bring justice to the situation, but we don't always have the authority or the power or the agency to do what we think is just, okay? So I want to acknowledge that. I'm not saying it's not fair. I'm not saying it's not a form of injustice, because you worked really hard to get your staff full. So what do we do when it happens, right?

Now, from the district's perspective, you might be able to coach yourself and say, look, they're not doing this to me personally. They're simply trying to solve a problem from their level, their perspective. I guess over at River Valley, they don't have enough people, but over here at Sunnyside, we have enough people. And so they email you and they say, hey, you know, here's the situation. We really need somebody. We need two people reassigned over to River Valley. I'm making these names up. They just sounded fun.

So you might be disappointed, be frustrated, but then they, okay, I understand mathematically that they're trying to plug the leaks, fill the holes, whatever, and that from an equity standpoint, that whatever I said, River Valley needs a couple more people than you. And they move them. You might be able to understand it from a math standpoint, but nevertheless, you also are going to feel frustrated and disappointed. And you're like, what's the point? Why do I do all of the work to attract and curate and hire and onboard and get these people on board? And I'm doing that work to have them pulled. Acknowledge those feelings. Know that you can see the math and also be frustrated, okay?

I just want to say it's okay to understand the math and also not be happy about it. So what do you do? Bottom line. You can, number one, you can be mad about it, and you can go and blow some steam off at people. So from a place, from the fuel of frustration and anger, you can go into the district office, you could fire an email, you could make a phone call, you could go

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to somebody directly, and share your thoughts and feelings. Before you do that, you just want to ask yourself, does this end up presenting the version of me that I want to be?

Now, some people would say, yes, it aligns to my style. I don't mind expressing my anger to others while I'm in the emotion of anger. Even if I have to apologize for it later, I'm mad. I want everyone to know about it. I'm going to blow the steam off. I'm going to go and tell them what I think and whatever the consequences. Some people work that way. If that feels in alignment for you, by all means, do you, boo.

However, before you do that, just be mindful of the potential outcomes. And some people don't even mind, like they don't mind getting mad, blowing off steam, having to apologize, they don't even mind what people think about that because it works for them. If that works for you, of course, by all means do that, but do it with intention and do it with the understanding that it could have outcomes. I don't recommend that in The Empowered Principal programming because I want to be in an emotional state where I feel I'm being proactive versus reactive.

So just be really tuned in to, is this a short-term feel-good solution? Like it feels good to say it in the moment and to get it all out, and then you get called in because you were on a rage? Or do you think twice about it and figure out what to do with those feelings, okay? So option one is to react and to be in the emotion of anger as you're communicating your frustration. Option two, you can be mad, but you don't say anything about it. This tended to be me. I would stew, I would complain, get into my head, I'd spin out on it, and I don't recommend this. Here's why.

When you're mad, but you don't acknowledge it, and you're mad and you don't say anything about it, maybe you can coach yourself to like, okay, they took them, I'll just hire two more people. If you don't need to say something because you've self-coached yourself all the way through and you're like, you know what? I'm a principal who can hire anybody, I can onboard anybody, I can bring anybody onto my team. If they keep taking

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my people, I can handle it. Brilliant. Beautiful. Godspeed to you. Go be forth and be merry.

However, that's not all people, and you have to be authentic with yourself. Are you angry? Do you want to speak in anger? Or do you want to be angry and not say something because you can handle it when really you're not actually angry anymore because you're proactive and you're empowered and you're just going to go hire more people and not worry about it and it's not even a problem for you? I'm talking about the kind of silence where you're angry and you're silent. And it doesn't get resolved. You just get more and more angry every time they do it to you. And because you don't say something, they don't know you're upset, so they think it's okay with you and then they just keep plucking your people away. You get more and more upset and then you wonder what's going on. Okay? Be clear about the difference.

Number three, you can be mad, you can be frustrated, you can be upset, process those feelings, honor them, acknowledge them, validate them, feel them in your body, let your body vibrate with anger, and at the same time, ask yourself, who do I want to be? What do I want to do? What is the goal here? Get below the surface of what's bothering you and why, align to what feels true for you, decide the outcome that you want and how you want to articulate your concern. If you want to articulate it at all because you can handle it or if you do want to articulate it because it's an ongoing problem and you want to open up the conversation because perhaps it's happening to somebody else and they're not sure how to communicate it and you can be an empowered leader, you can be the role model of, here's what it looks like to communicate my frustration around switching employees and moving employees around without conversation or without input. Here's my thoughts about it. I would like to invite us into a conversation around input and staffing as a whole district.

So, I know it can be hard. I know when you've put your time, blood, sweat, and tears, energy, focus into curating a team that works well together and

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you've got a well-oiled machine in terms of staffing, and then people get pulled to different sites, that can be discouraging. So, think that through, self-coach, work on it, really find out what's coming up for you, and in the end, align to the version of you that feels the most empowered.

Good luck out there. Love you all. Have a beautiful week. We'll talk to you next week. Take good care. Bye-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.