

# Ep #434: How to Recognize and Prevent Burnout in Schools with Jasmin Dennis



## Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Angela Kelly

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Hello, empowered principals. Welcome to episode 434.

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. Happy Tuesday and enjoy this interview with Jasmin Dennis. She's an expert on burnout. I think you'll enjoy the show.

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Angela Kelly: Well, hello, empowered principals. Happy Tuesday and welcome to the podcast. I have a very special guest here with me today. You're going to love this conversation because it's something we all talk about in education and that is burnout. And we're going to dive into all kinds of things related to the conversation around burnout, what it is, the symptoms, the signs, what to look for, what it isn't. And I have an expert here with me on the topic of burnout.

Her name is Jasmin Dennis. She works with corporations, schools, all kinds of organizations around this topic of burnout. So we want to look at it from all the facets and all the different angles so that you can really identify when you're feeling burnout. We can talk about what it is, and I also really want to help you with her expertise on how to notice it and what to do because there's some interesting ways that burnout manifests. And Jasmin was sharing this with me in our meet and greet and I can't wait for her to share it with you. So, Jasmin, welcome to the podcast.

Jasmin Dennis: Oh, Angela, thank you so much for having me. I'm happy to be here.

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Angela Kelly: Yes, so Jasmin and I met through a meet and greet. She reached out and wanted to be on the podcast to support all educators and I thought, let's do this. It's an amazing topic. She's a lovely woman. She has lots of expertise. So, Jasmin, tell us a little bit about your background and what you're currently doing to serve organizations.

Jasmin Dennis: Yeah, well, you know I've been in the health and wellness space for over 30 years. Maybe I started when I was two.

Angela Kelly: Good for you.

Jasmin Dennis: So it's in my blood, it's in my bone, it's passion. I've been directly involved in getting started in about 20 health and wellness facilities, and within those locations and including four for the former heavyweight champion of the world. And so in those scenarios, you know I was exposed like one-on-one to individuals coming in and, you know, in our facilities and they would say different things, you know, I didn't sleep last night. I haven't slept in four days or I feel so lethargic today. Oh, I don't feel like going to work. So it's a continued pattern.

But where it really grounded me and started me to really think now, you know, that we're not living to our optimum health. So I was Workers' Compensation Board and I noticed, you know, like Mondays, everybody hated Mondays for some reason. I love Mondays, maybe to get, you know, as a mother and kids and you know getting out of the house Monday was great for me, you know?

Angela Kelly: Yes.

Jasmin Dennis: Got the kids to school and what, you know, and stuff like that. So, I noticed also a pattern of people would do anything not to go to work, regardless of the, you know, whether they were in school, whether they're teachers, whether they're educators, whether they're corporate, and

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it started to turn in my head that there's something here. We are operating not at our optimal, really.

So that spun off into me working closely, you know, in the health and wellness space with, you know, chiropractors, physiotherapists. And the way we would set it up is that I'll have a conversation with an individual. And it doesn't matter, and I'm not in the education space, but they're humans. Teachers are humans like everything else.

Angela Kelly: Yes.

Jasmin Dennis: Yeah. Our profession doesn't design how we feel in our bodies. So when I speak, and I speak about to kids, I speak to adults because we are human and this burnout shows up in subtle ways. It almost becomes a buzzword.

Angela Kelly: Mhm, I agree. Yes.

Jasmin Dennis: Urgency is a form of burn, can turn into burnout. So I noticed, it's, you know, it's just like a buzzword and people would say, oh, I'm burnt out and they would go along until something really happens. So I decided to, JAZZD Health and Wellness is a company that helps organization go in and really ask the hard questions.

Angela Kelly: Mhm.

Jasmin Dennis: You know, what do you want for your organization? How do you see your staff showing up? When they come in, you know, in the morning, if it's a mother, are they tired? At school, how do your kids come back from school and how do they feel? Is it that they might, you know, feel some kind of attention, you know? Teachers are expected to be superhumans.

Angela Kelly: Mhm, yes.

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Jasmin Dennis: They're expected to be the mother, the father, the caretaker, the psychologist, and everything. So, you want to almost kind of, you know, gear it, how was your day today? And most people don't ask their kids, how was your day today, you know? We know to go to school and, you know, teach your presentation day and bring a gift to the teacher at the end of the year, but do we really touch base with them during the year and find out how can I support you?

So when I speak to the corporations, I dive right down to the individuals. What is your profession? What is your profession? What is your profession? And I tailor the group. If it's a, if it's, if I'm addressing teachers, then I tailor the teachers to say, you know what? You might be often overlooked by the parents that bring the kids in because you're going through something and they're going through something at work.

And so we have to meet in the middle and so we're almost using our children in the middle as a go-between to kind of test the waters. So I always say to the educators, you know, when you see the child comes in, touch base, see how they react, and then I ask the parents, how do your child react when they come home?

So I've come from a background of wellness, Angela, and I just want to see everybody healthy. I think I might have gone around in a circle there and do the whole just to give you a synopsis of where I, you know, how I see and how the burnout comes in. And I'll delve deeper into burnout and how to recognize it.

Angela Kelly: Sure. That's a beautiful introduction because it gives us a broad perspective of all of the facets that you work with. When it comes to, you know, I have been discussing this often on the podcast is the humanity behind education and that, you know, our students are humans and our teachers and support staff are humans and we as leaders are humans. And that is what comes first.

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That is the priority and that's the lens through which we need to have these conversations around not just academic success, but success as a human. Part of that is wellness, feeling well, feeling good about yourself, having a strong identity, feeling capable, feeling loved, appreciated, wanted, feeling like you matter, feeling respected, feeling safe is a real core foundation.

So the wellness industry can mean, it's very general, right? It can mean a lot of things. And what I hear you saying is that you're helping organizations have conversations at an individual level.

So an individual, what they walk away with is some introspection around what's working well in their life, what isn't well in their life, and how can they close that gap and bring more wellness to their life, whether it is at home with their relationships at home, whether it's with parenting and with their kids or with their partner or spouse, whether it's at work with relationships relating to their colleagues or their bosses, or whether that is the relationship that parents have with their child's teacher.

And that relationship is so precious because your babies as parents are going to these individuals who care so deeply, they care so deeply and they work so hard and they're being tasked with, you know, the goal, the mission really in education, what we're being told as educators is to fix it all, do it all. You know, like put society on our shoulders, educate them all, make them successful, help them with their academics, their intellect, but they're also their physical skills, their emotional regulation, their mental wellbeing, their socialization. And that's a lot of pressure on the educator.

And mom and dad are feeling lots of pressure at home. So we're trying to see each other. And that's what you said so beautifully is that you're helping, you know, corporate moms and dads see their teachers at a humanity level and here at this podcast, like it's educators wanting to see parents at a humanity level and working together in collaboration to raise these little ones here. Yeah?

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Jasmin Dennis: Oh, absolutely. You said it beautifully again. You know, the World Health Organization in 2019 at Davos, Switzerland, categorized, you know, burnout as an occupational phenomenon. It's real. It is chronic stress that has not been addressed and it just weaves into the fabric. I chose burnout as opposed to, and I'm very passionate about burnout because it can disguise itself in so many ways.

And that's one of the reasons I developed the Burnout Pie Framework so that you can look at it at a glance. You know, I want people to visualize it in their home. If it was in everybody's home and in every school board, to visualize the Burnout Pie Framework and it could be the beginning of burnout, it could be deep in it.

For instance, if I were to say to you, you know, Angela, I know you love apple pie and I'm going to give you this beautiful apple pie and you're going to be very thankful for this beautiful pie. But if you ate it, if you consume that pie, right, all at once, no matter how much you love it, you're going to feel sick. You're going to have a tummy ache and you're going to wish you hadn't, you know, you hadn't consumed that pie.

And the reason I do, you know, the pie chart of the Burnout Pie Framework is because you are going to see each, it is divided in eight dimensions, eight slices that gives you burnout.

And when I do a presentation or corporation, and I put the burnout pie up there and I say to them, you know, this is the burnout pie. If you were to feel all of those feelings and emotions at once, you can't function. And most people walk around with all eight slices of the pie, it's sleeplessness, it's depression, it's anxiety, it's hopelessness, detachment. All of that they're walking around with. And, you know, people figure burnout, it's not, it's not a breakdown. It's a signal.

Burnout is a signal because under each slice of the pie, you can go deeper and deeper to see the hidden stressors that shows up in three nights sleep.

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Most people say, oh, maybe if I go to bed early. But then you go to bed early and you still didn't sleep. Or you feel anxious all day long and you probably figure, I'm just anxious. So what happens is that one thing leads to the other. The sleeplessness leads to the exhaustion. The exhaustion leads to the irritability. And you see that manifest.

You see people and you know, they say, oh, I'm just so sorry. I'm just so irritable today. I was on a phone call just two days ago with my phone provider because I'm so versed into picking up when someone is exhibiting these traits that, you know, I kind of stop and I paused and I said, sir, I don't want to interrupt you, but you know, you're in, you know, do you realize that you're kind of, from your tone, I'm not accusing you of anything, how do you feel yourself coming across explaining this to me? And he paused and I said, is your shoulders up? Or you feel tight? You know, whatever.

Because it's not about me. It's not about me that's happening. It's about what is playing in the background. So every day, you know, when someone apologizes to you over and over, has nothing to do with you. You know, it's I mean, Don Miguel Ruiz, you know, said once, you know, it has nothing to do in the *Four Agreements*. It's not about me. So I take, when I wake up in the morning, I check myself. I want to see how I feel.

And every day, I'm not like, ooh, you know, I'm not feeling any of these. But the urgency that plays in a lot of people's lives, they jump, they wake up and the alarm and I don't use alarm. I train my body not to use alarm because of what it can, you know, and the alarm... they jump out of bed and they run to the shower and run to the coffee machine and they run to work and there's deadlines to be done. And that is one of the things that shows up as the hidden stressor of burnout. You are constantly on the run.

So when I wake up, if I haven't slept well the night before, I sit down for like a couple minutes to myself. I take some deep breaths and I figure, okay, what's going on here, Jasmin? You know, what's going on here? You

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tossed and turned all last night. And I play over my day. And it could be something that I picked up the day earlier that someone said to me that didn't sit well with me that I took to bed with me. So I train people to, for instance, to not look at your irritability as just that I'm having a bad day and I need my coffee.

So in the burnout pie, individually, you know, I'll say there's a survey that is done and a self-reflection tool that I call it is self-reflection and it asks maybe one to eight questions. I say eight because it relates to the burnout pie of the eight slices. You know, and I say, you know, how do you feel?

How often do you feel, you know, detached from work? How often do you feel anxiety? How often do you feel, you know, and you just toss it off that you're having a bad day. That's another buzzword. Yes, we all have bad days. But there's a build-up when it comes to burnout and then it comes a crash.

And that corporate individual is not helping the organization anymore. And you will find some people will say, you know what? I'm not happy at this job. I'm going to leave because it must be the job. Again, it might have nothing to do with the job. You know, to thine own self be true, I always say, look at yourself first before you make, because you're going to take yourself with you to the other job. You know, when I speak to a couple at home and the wife says to me, oh, he comes home and he just goes to his man cave and crack a beer.

And it just bugs me that he does that. And I have to cook and clean and get the kids ready for... And you know, and I asked it, I asked the husband and I said, well, why do you feel like and the man cave is an escape. It's an excuse. Yes, you can want to have a quiet place. I like my reflect time where I reflect my quiet time. I can do that flat on my back in the bed. I can sit at the foot of the bed. I can go in the bathroom and I can do it, but it doesn't take four hours of sitting in there.

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You know, nothing against the guys, you know, but doing this one thing over and over, that isn't addressing what they're probably taking from work and bringing it at home. So sometimes homes become a dumping ground. I take what's happening at work and I dump it at home. And then the wife takes what happened and she goes to bed and she doesn't sleep and then resentment builds up about that.

And then your child figures that you take him to school, but when he gets to drop him off, he's hugging you really tight and he doesn't want to let go. And then he goes up to school and doesn't listen to the teacher, had his head, has his head down. So he's taking the dumping from the husband dumps it at home. The wife didn't sleep all last night. She might not be as, you know, warm in the morning and Tommy feels, you know, Mom doesn't love me anymore.

And then I don't want to go to school and then I go to school and don't want to work, I don't want to, I don't want to socialize, there's detachment. And it takes a great educator and the teachers I give them, oh my god, I give them so much credit. And I taught temporarily just out of high school at a, you know, it was almost like a, it's a private school and, you know, they were, everybody says I should be a teacher, you know.

And I remember walking in and I, at that time I wasn't thinking about anything, but I noticed this little girl just in the corner reserved. And then, you know, what do I do to help? And this is why I give teachers, you know, like, if I could put a crown on their head, you know, I give it to them because they're taking care of your most precious cargo and they themselves are human. The teacher might be the one that the hubby needs to go in the man cave and she gets to sleep at night, right?

Angela Kelly: Yes.

Jasmin Dennis: She's not going to, you know, and then comes to school and she has to be responsible for the emotions of and especially in these

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days right now with the, you know, what's happening in school, the teachers have to be on their P and Q and they they're watched from every angle, you know, and they have to be this walk in this tight rope. So when I speak to teachers, I basically say, all you have to do is to be, take your self-reflection so that you're well. When you stand in front of the school teaching, you know you're okay. So you don't have to wonder if it's me.

Angela Kelly: Mhm.

Jasmin Dennis: And then when you realize that I'm walking in my truth, I've taken my self-reflection, I know I'm feeling okay, I'm not perfect, I might have a headache, but then I can look at my classroom in a very different lens.

Angela Kelly: Yes, beautiful. Yes. Thank you for that. Yes, there are many stress factors for families, for students, for teachers, and for school leaders out there. So for the school leader listeners out there, Jasmin, what are some of the more subtle signs of burnout that number one, they should be, you know, like monitoring for themselves?

So you did definitely mentioned like your emotions, they're not meant to be avoided or just ignored. They're information. So when you're feeling certain irritabilities or you're feeling exhausted or you're awake at night feeling anxious or you're feeling very discouraged, I'm trying to remember all the pieces of the pie that you had mentioned. But when you're feeling these certain emotions, they're a signal, they're information. Your body is communicating to you to get your attention.

So it's not a problem per se, it's just you want to explore that emotion with curiosity to understand why you're feeling the way you're feeling, what's coming up for you, and to like just be honest and acknowledge those thoughts and feelings because if not, if you're just getting up and running from the bed to the shower, to the coffee maker, to the car, and you're going, I call it, you're going robotic, right? Or you're just on autopilot.

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Jasmin Dennis: Yes.

Angela Kelly: You're actually trying to disassociate from those feelings that feel uncomfortable or feel negative because you're under pressure to perform. And that pressure, if we don't have a tolerance for the pressure or we're at our bandwidth, we're just at max capacity, that's if we're not acknowledging that we're at capacity, but we continue to overwork and overschedule and over exert, now we're hitting that threshold of burnout.

So, what can school leaders first identify within themselves? What are those subtle signs? And then the second part of that question is when they're leading staff and students, what subtle signs might they be looking for in other people that would indicate to them this person may be experiencing, you know, or approaching burnout?

Jasmin Dennis: Okay. Yes. Well, the eight slice, thank you, Angela. The eight slices, you know, goes into anxiety, sleeplessness, hopelessness. And I, I'll break it down because everyone, hopelessness is bad. You know, there's a depression, there's a detachment, there's exhaustion, irritability, and chronic stress.

So, as an individual, I have had people go through all spectrums of all of that. They're fully loaded with all of that. They're a lit match, ready to go off of anything, never sleep in, always anxious, don't socialize at work, you know, depressed, all those things are happening all at once. And what I do with an individual, if you know, I'm not asking you to say overnight, be free of all these.

But some main, and people look at this one so lightly and it is the one thing that is one of the most important slice in the pie. You must sleep. The animals sleep, the ants sleep, the birds, you must be able to, you know, six to eight hours. I hear people talk all the time, oh, I can function in two hours sleep. Oh, that's a volcano, you know, ready to like burst open. You know,

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and I wrote an article it was in Japan, prime minister that says she functions on two hours sleep.

And I remember one of the a gentleman on LinkedIn from one of the corners of LinkedIn, he said he used to say that, but he quickly changed it. He recognized that he was heading nowhere, you know, fast. So I always say to, you know, to recognize it in someone else, I recognize it on the phone because I'm so clued into individuals, not that I'm watching them, but I have like antennas going around.

And if you see someone that if they have to apologize to you, you go to work and it might be a coworker, once or twice in a day, that's a key. If you are with someone and they, you see all of a sudden they were a vibrant individual and they decide to eat lunch by themselves, you know, every day for the, for the last two weeks, you know, pay attention to that.

If you see someone that, you know, is just constantly feel hopeless and teary when you talk to them. I was in the elevator the other day talking to someone and I know the person was the brink of crying, okay? So when you see that and if someone is saying, you know, exhaustion, you know, is a thing to where someone says, I don't know, it must be the weather. I just feel exhausted, it must be the weather.

But then the sun comes out, I'm exhausted, you know, I feel like I have a headache, I didn't. And so you're kind of and it's you don't go up to someone and says, oh, you must be in burnout.

Angela Kelly: Right. That's not the approach we want to take there.

Jasmin Dennis: No. You empathy. So you, I train the organization, the leaders. I said, if you can lead with compassion, meaning that you can have your privacy, create an open door for your team. Let the door crack. If you have to work, you address your team and you say, I'm going to need these three hours because I have something important to do, otherwise

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leave it open, right? Try to socialize. You know, the Japanese call it, is it Ikigai? never pronounce it, but a sense of purpose.

Most people walk around without a, they wake up without a sense of purpose. They're on this hamster wheel every day and they really don't have a sense of purpose. Except I'm going to work today and I'm getting a paycheck at the end of the week. So you see all that motions going down. You train them to get rid of and I, on one-on-one, I said, okay, chronic stress is not easy to treat. It's sustained stress that has not been taken care of.

So let's start with, you know, what you're experiencing today. Look at the burnout pie and I have them physically look at the burnout pie and someone must say, you know what? I feel teary, you know, I don't know why I feel teary. I don't feel, I want to cry. I don't jump to treat them right away because depression is a finicky thing and that is beyond my scope, you know. So I go to something else that might be causing them to feel depressed, right?

And I might say, okay, why are you constantly irritable all day? The animals, if you look at a dog, he wakes, when a cat, they wake up and they stretch and they move around and they whatever. And I said, I said, you know, let's work on that. How often do you feel irritable or what makes you feel irritable?

You don't have to feel irritable if it's raining all day. You don't have to feel irritable if you miss the bus. You don't have to feel irritable if you get to class late. You don't have to feel irritable if someone in the class is acting up. So how often do you feel like it just takes that thing to send you off?

Then you have to apologize and backtrack, right? And how, you know, for instance, you know, I was talking to someone the other day, it was in a group environment, right? And someone brought it up and she said to me, so when my husband comes home, do I tell him to get out of the man

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cave? I said, no, that is his space. You might say, well, honey, you know, what can I do to help you? Empathy comes in.

So the fabric all the way through to identify and help others in burnout, first display empathy. How can I help you? I see that, you don't say I see you're heading for, oh, I see you're anxious today. Oh, I see you're a little bit detached. I just sense something different from you, I always say. I can walk into an organization, walk right through the door and I can pick out right away when I'm walking around who is detached, who is irritable, who is, I can spot it, you know, and I can see that team is in burnout. So I start with the leaders first.

Angela Kelly: Yes. Absolutely. Leaders go first and we go often. So there are definitely, like tuning into your emotional experience and feeling the energy from others that that emotional energy from others, that's definitely a telltale sign. So I'm going to venture to say that when you're noticing it in others, your key strategy is empathy first. And I would say that's the same for yourself.

So if you are feeling stressed, overwhelmed, exhausted, you know, hopeless, depressed, any of these feelings, irritability, checking in with yourself starting with empathy for yourself. What's coming up for you, darling? Like, I try to be very kind to myself and ask what is coming up for you? How are you feeling? Like as though I were my own best friend, asking myself, how are you doing truly and letting myself be honest with myself with that empathy in mind.

As a school leader, we can start there because we want to have the bandwidth when we go out to lead to be able to, number one, spot these subtle burnouts in other people. And then two, we're starting to go into like, what do we do when we notice this? It's not to say, hey, you look really burned out.

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Like that's not going to help someone feel amazing. It is, it's that, hey, you matter to me. I'm concerned, like empathy, what's coming up for you? Are you okay? Is there something that you need today? And letting them communicate to you what their needs are if they're able to articulate it.

And if not, perhaps are there ways where leaders can proactively in terms of creating a work culture where they're proactively monitoring how people are feeling and putting things into place so that burnout isn't the norm, that it may be happens, you know, there's always ebbs and flows to the school year and so there are times like the beginning of the year where there's a lot of extra work we put in and then maybe at the end and during testing season, like we have certain seasons that are busier than others.

But are there things that you can share with school leaders where they could be proactive in supporting a culture where burnout isn't just the norm, the normal way of existing?

Jasmin Dennis: Oh, it's not the norm. I'm going to tell you just a little bit of a story quickly. It's not a long story, but this story will stay with me forever. And I was in one of my wellness centers and someone tapped my glass window and says, there's a lady and her son, you know, outside, would like to speak to you. And the son is an adult son.

And, you know, because we're in a wellness center, we tend to judge people's by the outlook, right? You so first of all then you, you tend to look at someone if they're coming to see me, they're probably over, you know, they probably want to lose weight or they want probably want to do this. So she comes into my office before she comes into my office, I went to the door and I greeted the son and I greeted her and instinctively I said to the son, do you mind if I, this is for your mom, right? Yes.

Do you mind if I speak to your mom alone initially and then you can join us? And, you know, she came in and she was, I think the super it's an in Canada we call them but she is like an area supervisor for, you know, the

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universities, right? So she comes in and she sits down and I look at her and something told me, don't say a word. Do not say a word.

And I sat there and she sat there and it was an uncomfortable couple minutes. And I sat there and it was five minutes and it was 10 minutes and it was close to 20 minutes, but from the three minutes in, she just started crying.

So it's easy for me to prolong the silence. And she cried and she cried and she cried and she cried. And at the 20 minutes, I see the son looking, he was, you know, see me not talk. And, you know, I said to her, I said, do you mind coming back? I said, we're going to end this here today. But do you mind coming back to see me? And promise me you'll come back to see me.

This is not me pushing you off. Promise me you'll come back and see me within the next two days. I'm going to write you in my book. I'll, you know, plot out a time, give me a time when we can sit for two hours. Not an hour, for two hours. And I know she was in deep burnout. Deep. And, you know, so she came back and we sat and the first thing out of her mouth, she said to me, thank you for giving me the space to cry.

She says, I do need to lose 60 pounds, but that wasn't the end all. It was taking her work, taking home and not getting the support from hubby and the family. The son decided to come with her because there was probably the pressure, well, I'm going to make sure you go to the gym. They didn't verbally say that to me, but I can almost play the conversation in my head.

And we went through a series and we talked and we said, you know what? First, we're going to get you well. We're going to get you well. Not by, you know, not a cold, not that kind of a diagnostic well, but we're going to make sure that up here, a checkup from the neck up, we are going to make sure you're okay up there.

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So, you know, I went through the series of questions and everything is fine and, you know, she was coming in, she was motivated and by herself, son wasn't escorting her. Long story short, she became at her age at 56, a professional bodybuilder.

Angela Kelly: Oh my gosh.

Jasmin Dennis: She was so into loving herself and she would have blown the burnout pie away. In one of the conversations, it was close to a marriage breakup. Oh, he was, I mean, he has a hot wife now, right? But, you know, and her head is right and you know, and that rubs off on the family. So it's emotional and my book in *The Hidden Signs: Identifying Emotional Burnout*, I use the word emotional because it all starts here.

And so I always say to someone, check in, spot the signs. You're going to know when your hubby is in burnout. The hubby's going to know when you and that's what burnout is. That's why it's a buzzword. It's a buzzword. When somebody says hurry, it's not in the burnout pie, but urgency also leads to burnout. And if you can just calm and in your podcast, I listen, you know, love yourself, sit in that space, check in with yourself.

And once you do that, you're going to heal everyone else around you. Her name was Angela [unintelligible]. She healed herself and her entire household. And that's the beauty of identifying and recognizing in yourself, you know, you don't have to have this detrimental going to the doctor, it's so bad that now you have all these diseases.

You, we're mentally free and happy. And that's why the Japanese say socialize, talk to your friends, at school. Don't forget, you know, I'm eating my lunch. Don't want to talk to anybody. You know, eat your lunch and then just walk around and smile and laugh with somebody. You know, it really is. It really helps, you know? Most people go to work all day and they don't laugh or smile all day long.

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Angela Kelly: Mhm. Mhm.

Jasmin Dennis: You know, I remember I was giving someone a ride and I was introduced to her as a client and she, I was driving and she was one of these individual that was very prim and proper. You know, I didn't know her before I picked her up. I had to describe my car, she described what she was wearing.

She comes in the car and I am driving and five minutes into the drive, I said, I hope you have a strong heart. And she just started laughing her head off. You know, she said, just dying of laugh. She says, but because I thought today was going to be the last day of my life, the way you were driving. You know.

So it's even creating humor in someone else. You know, poke fun at yourself if you want to, you know, create a laughter with someone else. Poke fun at you, you know, I've often said, oh my God, my this big hair today. And somebody will laugh. You know?

Angela Kelly: Yes.

Jasmin Dennis: So, yeah, poke fun at yourself to get, instill laughter in someone else.

Angela Kelly: Yes. Yes. Oh, you, the two things I really want to emphasize that you said was number one is the release of the emotion. It's the acknowledgement of how you're actually feeling. So that woman who came into your office, she didn't feel she had the space or the permission to simply feel all of those feelings and let them come to the surface and let her eyes leak water.

And just let the emotion fully flow through her for a good 15 to 20 minutes and then eventually, right? And it's interesting, like we're so afraid to feel those painful feelings and the worst thing that really happens is we kind of

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cry it out or we, you know, cry ourselves to sleep or we scream into a pillow or but there's nothing other than just allowing that emotion to kind of go in waves through our body.

So there's that feeling of that emotion, giving ourselves that permission to actually feel and not go into autopilot and robotic mode where we're trying to suppress it all and keep it all together. And I think that's such a disservice that we tell people like that we should be professional. We have terms where it's like basically don't show emotion, don't feel emotion. And if you're emotional, that's a sign of weakness.

But that's the opposite of what is true. Like the courage to feel your emotions, to acknowledge them, to process them, to allow them to be present, to let them flow through you. That's step one. And then the other thing you said is I think it was the same woman where you were saying like she ended up becoming a bodybuilder. It's when you can let yourself feel your emotions, then you can get more physical and part of the turning burnout around is one, feeling the emotions, and two, getting more physical in your body.

Whether that's taking a walk or, you know, taking a yoga class or just even simple stretches when you wake up in the morning. You were saying about getting up and we stretch and, you know, the cats and dogs when the first thing they do is stretch their bodies. They go from that sleep mode into like movement mode and they walk around and that's what we can do as well is to take a moment, breathe, stretch, and then direct our thoughts.

I would think that this is the third step is when you're feeling your emotions and you're moving your body, it's directing our thoughts to what's possible and the possibilities of the day ahead and the week ahead. And, you know, looking forward to lunch with a colleague or, you know, making sure like you're going to look for the fun in the day and make light and just create

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some levity in your workplace. Everyone can bring that to the table. You don't have to be a comedian to do that.

Jasmin Dennis: You don't.

Angela Kelly: You can laugh about, you know, there's so many times where as a teacher, as a principal, we would joke like somebody would have like two different pairs of socks on or two different shoes, like shoes that looked similar in the morning when you were, it was dark and you came in with a black shoe and a navy blue shoe and you know, like funny things like that. You know, just like or you know, your sweater's inside out or you know, like silly things that we do when we're in the hurry of teaching and learning and leading.

So I really appreciate these tips that you've provided for our school leaders today and our educators. They're going to be so grateful. Are there any last words of wisdom that you would like to share with our school leaders today, Jasmin?

Jasmin Dennis: Like you, your last words, you brought stretching up. I believe, you know, something happens. There's a release. I love stretching. And, you know, you hold it. Most people, no, it's not a static move. It's like the cat is long, slow. And if, you know, if I could just leave this with you to say, if you make it a habit to take five minutes out of your day to just stretch.

Right now, thinking about it, I'm getting goosebumps because my body has become so used to it that it's looking forward to it to say, yes, you've given me what I want. Now go out and serve others. So that five minutes of breath, they say the yogi says, if you lose your breath, you lose your life. So that five minutes, you don't have to stop and do them separately within the stretching, you do your breath. The eight breath.

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If you were to just to do that every day and to promise yourself that you will check in with yourself every day, see how you're feeling. It's not a weakness to feel burned out. And, you know, this is one thing I would love to change all organization to make it okay for someone to go into work one day and say, you know what? I am not going to serve you well today. I'm not at my best today.

Please give me permission to go and take care of myself without chastising that person without reminding them of the deadline and the work. I wish and I pray that they feel, that's why I say to leaders, lead with compassion. That freedom, and I guarantee you, if you give that individual that day to just take care of themselves, they're going to be 10 times better the next day.

Angela Kelly: Mhm. Absolutely. And that's true for ourselves and for our staff members. So keeping in mind that everyone on your campus goes through moments of intense pressure or fatigue or exhaustion, maybe something's going on at home. So we want to keep that in mind. The humanity part of education is that teachers are humans who have lives outside of teaching and leaders are humans who have lives outside of, of leading their schools.

And we want to first give ourselves permission and we also want to create a culture of permission to be human. And education really has become so pressurized, pressure for the testing, pressure for academic success, pressure to always be improving benchmark assessments and meeting the grade so to speak and getting the kids, you know, to achieve academic, primarily academics, but also socially. And then we want them to be of service as they get older.

So there's a lot of pressure we're putting on the little people, which puts pressure on the adults. And if we were to keep in mind that the real solution isn't some externalized program even, it's really within yourself. It's giving

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yourself permission to feel, giving yourself permission to breathe, giving yourself permission to take a five-minute walk around campus or a three-minute stretch in your office or for teachers, perhaps, you know, while the kids are at recess, take a five-minute stretch, actually take your lunch.

And I know I was notoriously bad at eating lunch because I, as a kindergarten teacher, I was prepping for the afternoon, so I would like eat and work at the same time. But on the days where I was consciously choosing and intentionally choosing to go into the staff room, I felt so much better than I did on those days where I was rushing through my lunch. So I started noticing that. And I appreciate you reminding us again to take care of the body and the breath and the leadership and the teaching will follow.

Jasmin Dennis: That's absolutely true.

Angela Kelly: Well, thank you so much. I really appreciate it. It's so interesting the way that you serve, it's in the wellness industry, but it focuses on burnout and it's helping people identify for themselves at an individual level, where am I at on the pie chart today?

Jasmin Dennis: Yes.

Angela Kelly: And then they can, you know, each day is a little bit different and they can focus on one slice of the pie maybe a week at a time or, you know, doing it daily or maybe monthly they have a monthly goal for one of the pies and they're able to start moving a little bit more and doing things that make them laugh a little bit more and little by little, step by step that burnout can, you know, can turn the volume down there on the burnout. So.

Jasmin Dennis: Oh, yes. The goal is to get over to the well pie, you know? Goal is you know, Angela went out on the well pie because it's not a matter that like a bodybuilder, you know, well, you don't have to be a bodybuilder to be healthy, but she was so in tuned and feeling such good thing that her workout, you know, extended to that. And now she's competing, so in a

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more different, endorphins are coming in. So we want those endorphins to come in. Find a way to get them coming every day.

Angela Kelly: Yes. Yes. And that's an, you know, in my program, I talk a lot about your identity as a leader, your leadership identity. And this person was able to completely re-identify herself as a woman, as a professional, and the way you do one thing is the way you do everything. So one slice of the pie can really have a profound impact on the other slices. Is that true?

Jasmin Dennis: Absolutely. Absolutely. If they're a great sleeper, right, I and I quickly want to say this because people categorize, oh, I sleep nine hours per night, so I'm good. I always say, when you wake up from that nine hours, how do you feel? So you have to watch how you feel when you sleep. You don't have to have the, watch how you feel.

So even though someone says, oh, I'm fine, I sleep. I sleep like crazy. Oftentimes, if I continue speaking them long enough, there is some underlying of depression setting in or hopelessness setting in. So even though sleep is crucial, I always watch when someone says, oh, I have no problem sleeping.

Angela Kelly: Yeah, because oversleeping could be a symptom as well.

Jasmin Dennis: Yes.

Angela Kelly: Yeah. So we want to find the sweet spot. I call it the land of and. Where you're not too much, not too little, just right.

Jasmin Dennis: Yes. Just right. And you feel so great when you get it just right.

Angela Kelly: Yes, yeah. Yes. I love those mornings.

Jasmin Dennis: Yeah.

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Angela Kelly: Well, thank you for your time today, Jasmin. It has been such a pleasure to have you. It's a delight to meet you and I thank you for the work you're doing in organizations and supporting them at an individual and at a corporate level and really bringing in the concept of parenting and connecting with the school.

Like that full circle helps educators when they feel seen and heard and they matter through the parents, that burnout can turn down very quickly when people feel connected and they feel engaged with their students and with their families and at a school level, right, with their colleagues and their leaders. So thank you again for all the work that you're doing in the world and for being here today.

Jasmin Dennis: Thank you for having me. This is fantastic. I love it.

Angela Kelly: Such a great pleasure. Well, thank you listeners so much. I hope you've enjoyed this conversation with Jasmin Dennis. I will put all of her contact info and links in the show notes so you will have access to that.

And we hope that this has provided some insight on different subtle ways that burnout might be showing up in your life or on your campus so that you can be on the lookout for that and to give yourself a little grace and some compassion along with your teachers. You know, this time of year in the spring season, people are tired and people have been working hard since August, July, and August, and we've been pushing through. It's testing season.

So be mindful of that and allow your teachers just some graciousness and some empathy when it comes to this particular season of the school year. So you guys are almost at the finish line. Take good care of yourselves. Be well and we look forward to talking with you next week. Have a beautiful week. Take care. Bye.

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