

# Ep #443: The Land of And: Embracing Abundance in School Leadership



## Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Angela Kelly

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Hello, empowered principals. Welcome to episode 443.

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 welcome to this week's podcast. I hope you are having the most delightful June ever, and if you like to have fun and you're not in our Facebook group yet, come on in. What are you doing? We're having so much fun in the Summer of Fun Challenge. I've really reconnected with myself again with my willingness to be open and alive and engaged and to have fun and to be lighthearted and to release some of the heaviness that I have been carrying for the last couple of years. I feel it. I feel the release and it is manifesting in the Summer of Fun Challenge. We are having so much fun and I'm really celebrating everyone who is participating. It's wonderful.

And if you are there, I am so excited that you are there. And if you're not there, we are so inviting you to come in and join us because you deserve to have fun. You deserve to be happy. You deserve to release the weights and the burdens of all of this responsibility we take on throughout the year, and you deserve a time and a space to slow down, to take a breath, to take in life, to take in the world around you, to laugh with the people you love, to spend time with yourself and people that you care about, to explore your communities, your world, to just be engaged with all aspects of your life, not only in your professional capacity. So, come on in to Summer of Fun Challenge. We're having a blast.

All right. I want to talk about a topic that I am expanding my understanding of and my wisdom of. So there has been a decade of you hearing me say, "the Land of And." I talk about the Land of And all of the time, and I

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embrace living in the Land of And. And I love the concept of the Land of And. So what do I mean when I say the Land of And? Originally, when this phrase came to me, it was early on in my coaching career. And I was coaching a client on having a conversation, and we were talking about having this conversation in creating and preparing for it in a way that was a win-win, a win for you and a win for them.

And then I was coaching another client on making a decision about her career and where she wanted to land and what kind of job she wanted to be in. And we talked about the Land of And. Could it be possible that you could have this and this? Could you be in the position that you want and be aligned with your district? Could you be serving in the capacity you wish to serve and still have time for yourself, your friends, and your family? Can you have both?

So the Land of And is a concept that I created around abundance. I can experience this and that. I can create this and that. I can do this and that. I desire to have this and that. So when I was coaching on the Land of And, I was always asking people like, when you're looking at a situation you're facing or a problem you're trying to solve or, you know, a conversation you are trying to express and decide how you want to communicate with that person, where's the Land of And? Where's the win-win? Where is the yes and frequency? Okay?

And lately, as I have been studying my own work and reapplying it to new situations in my life, because all of this that I teach on the podcast, if we could call it teaching, or that I share, things that I think of to, you know, concepts, exercises, strategies, tips, practices, whatever you want to label them as, the work that I'm doing here as a coach, my first responsibility is to apply the work to myself. And as a human, there are moments where I am totally locked in in alignment with the work that I teach and the coaching that I provide and the mentorship that I offer.

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And there are times where I get out of alignment, just as you feel there are times where you are in alignment and times where you are not in alignment. I'm a human. This happens for me too. Being a coach, as you know, being a school leader doesn't mean you always know exactly how to lead or that you always lead yourself or lead your life exactly in the way you think it should be done or you sometimes lose sight of where you're going on your journey. Coaches do that too, okay?

So in this work, I've noticed that I have been talking about the Land of And, and there are situations in which the Land of And doesn't actually fully apply. So what are some of these examples? So I think about life in general, and obviously I think about school leadership, but we're all one package.

So when I coach people, it might start about professional conversations or leadership conversations or vision or culture or student behavior or climate issues, but it always ends up going back to personal, personal relationships that are impacting people, whether that's at work or at home, interpersonal or intrapersonal where you are working with yourself and you're having conflicting thoughts and feelings inside of yourself and it feels like there is a dissonance within you that you can't seem to unblock or to release.

So where does the Land of And not apply? And I've noticed that it's when we are using it to have one foot in and one foot out. When you're thinking to yourself, this is working, but this isn't working. It's working, it's not working. Is it working? Is it not working? Today I trust, no, I don't trust. I don't believe. I doubt, no doubt, doubt, no doubt. It's when we're half in, half out. It's like if you were, you have a goal of losing weight. I'm losing a little bit of weight, but I'm also want to indulge. I'm a Land of And. I'm going to lose weight and I'm going to indulge. You're not all in. You're not fully committed. You've got two opposing desires, two opposing goals.

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Or when you are in your, you know, daily work and you're thinking to yourself, oh, this is a problem. And you're like, well, no, maybe it's not a problem. Maybe I'll just let it sit there. I'm not going to really address it. Is it a problem? Should I address it? No, I don't want to address it. No, it's not a problem. It's not that big of a problem.

So it's when we are in the land of the miserable maybe. Maybe this, maybe that. Maybe it's working, maybe it's not. Maybe I'm going to lose weight, maybe I'm going to indulge. Maybe this is a problem, maybe this isn't. It's when you're sitting on the fence. One day I'm committed, the next day I'm not. This is a problem I should address it, but I don't know how or I don't really want to. Such a pain, right?

And then, this is where the work really landed internally for me, was looking through the lens of life, of whether that's in my business, in my personal life, relationships, financial situation, romantic situations, friendships, family, you know, all of the facets of our life. Looking through the lens of, this is a problem. This is a problem in my business. This is a problem in my friendships. This is a problem in my romantic life. This is a problem in my marriage. This is a problem with my finances. This is a problem with my business. This is a problem with my clients. This is a problem in my marketing. Problem, problem, problem.

And I'm looking through that lens. It's a problem. But then, not a problem. I'm either going to look through the lens of it's a problem and everything's a problem, and when I think everything has a problem, every facet of my life has a problem, I'm going to be overwhelmed and I'm going to either overcompensate or I'm going to shut down.

When I think of the Land of And in its cleanest form, the Land of And concept is a mindset of abundance. It's, I am expanding my capacity to hold space in my life, time, space, attention, focus, and I'm holding in, I'm growing and expanding internally my capacity to hold more tension,

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pressure, expectation, higher standards, and to hold that for longer periods of time, extended chapters of my life. And I can do both.

I can experience the highs and the joys and the, you know, ecstasies of life, the joys, the pleasures, the highest of highs, and I'm not afraid to also hold space and the tension of deep sadness and grief and loss and disappointment and defeat and discouragement and guilt and shame and, you know, bouts of regret. I've always felt like our emotions are on a rubber band. They're like a spectrum that can be stretched, but if you stretch in one direction, you have to stretch in the other.

And most people play at plus two, minus two. They're like, I can feel a little bit of happiness, but I can only take so much sadness. So therefore, like our capacity for more joy is stunted because we can't expand to the negative. I'm willing to feel the good, but I'm not willing to feel the bad. But there's duality. There has to be that dichotomy. There has to be the mirror image.

And the Land of And is like, as I'm expanding, evolving, and growing as a school leader, as the leader of my life, as a woman in the world, as a mother, as a sister, as a daughter, as a friend, as a sibling, as whatever it is. And you can flip this to whatever you identify as, whether that's male or it doesn't matter. Any type of human can expand their capacity to be both, to increase their capacity for pain so that they can also increase their capacity for joy.

When you became a school leader, your rubber band got stretched. It was like, okay, you want to try this out? Here we go. We're going to expand you. We're going to put you in leadership boot camp here and emotional boot camp, and we're going to stretch your capacity to hold the tension of having a problem that can't easily be solved. Can you get up and go to work and still have joy while also knowing there are problems at your school? Can you do both? Can you hold the Land of And there?

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Can you be lighthearted while also holding the pressure of really heavy topics and really heavy situations coming across your desk at school? Can you expand your capacity to make decisions knowing that half of the time, half of the people aren't going to like them? No matter what you decide, there will be tension, there will be people who dislike you. Can you hold space for both a decisive leader where half the people love the decision you're making and love who you are as a leader, and half of the people are disgruntled? Can you hold that? That's abundance when you can do both.

And then there is the all or none mindset where I tended to coach saying like, oh, that's an all or none mindset. You're throwing the baby out with the bath water. It's, you know, you dribble one drip of coffee on your paper and you throw the whole paper away, right? Or you, you know, you have one bad minute at work and now the whole day's shot. This all or none thinking.

And so I would, you know, point this out to say, is this how you want to experience the day? You've had this one bad or this one uncomfortable conversation. Can you hold space for both? Like to have that hard conversation and then to go out and connect with somebody in a way that feels really, really good, and then there's the duality in your day. There's the 50/50 of the school leadership experience.

So when we're working on our goals, we can use the Land of And to not fully commit, to say we're all in, but then not be all in. I want this and that. So we have to be onto ourselves and be honest with ourselves in that the all or none concept when it's you're making a decision, I'm all in or this is not the right time, I'm going to release that. And that requires trust and faith and commitment. So when you're all in, it requires a lot of trust, faith, and commitment, and when you're out, it requires trust, faith, and commitment. You got to stay out, right?

It's like staying out of somebody else's lane. You want to go micromanage somebody? You got to get in their lane. If you want to commit to

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micromanaging them, let them go and then do their entire job. Be all in their lane, 100%. Or if you're making a decision, I'm no longer a leader who micromanages, I have to have trust, I have to have faith, and I have to have full-on commitment that I'm not going to start swimming in their lane.

It doesn't mean I don't check in on them and talk with them and ask them where they're at and discuss the standards of the position and discuss the expectations, but then you release that because you're trusting and you're having faith that they're committed because you're committed. You're committed to not micromanaging them, but you are committed to trusting and believing in them, which then they raise up. Hopefully, that's the plan. They rise to the occasion and they are fully committed because you're not in there trying to take away their job by telling them how to do it.

So I think of this as even when, even when things are not going the way that I want them to right now, I trust that this is working. Even when there are problems to solve at my school, I have faith that we're going in the right direction. I have faith that we are doing what's best for kids to the best of our ability. Even though I've experienced a failure, I am committed to figuring this out. Even though I've experienced a loss, I have faith that I'm going to be okay and that I can handle this and that I'm on the right path, even when something isn't perfect.

And it's interesting because we so desire for our school to be perfect. We want everyone in attendance. We want everyone loving their job and fully, you know, 100% committed, 100% of the time. We want every parent happy. We want every teacher happy. We want every support staff happy. We want every meeting to go smoothly. We want the scores to always be going up. We want everybody to be making progress in the way that we measure it. Otherwise, it doesn't feel like it's considered growth.

If we're not measuring it, then it doesn't matter, right? So even though a kid has made tremendous progress, if we're not progress monitoring that and

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putting it down onto paper and measuring it, it doesn't feel as significant. Can I hold space that even when the scores on the paper aren't moving, that my school is moving, that we are serving the students with what they need, not with what other people think they need, or how other people want us to measure their growth.

Whenever everything feels like it's falling apart, you can either believe that it's falling apart. Now let's play this out. Everything's falling apart. And that is your belief system. You wake up and your nervous system says, "Oh hello Miss Angela, everything is falling apart." I want you to feel that in your body. Say it out loud with me. Oh my gosh, everything is falling apart.

Where do you feel that in your body? For me, as I say this in this microphone to you, my heart starts to pound. I feel panicked. Everything is falling apart. That sentence, to say it out loud, I feel panicked, and in the reaction to that panic, I have an urge to do something very masculine, lots of energy, lots of doing, fixing, changing, stopping, stopping the bleeding, stopping the leak, make it stop. Make it stop not working. Make it stop falling apart.

And when you believe everything's falling apart, you will react in fight or flight, and you will do everything you can to stop it from happening. Why? Because when things are falling apart, even when things fall apart, because they do, you lean into trust, into faith, and to commitment, to the belief. A commitment to the belief, not a commitment to action right now, a commitment to the belief that you're going to be okay, that you can handle this, that you are equipped with the tools, the emotional regulation tools, and that you can handle the emotions that are coming up when things are in fact falling apart.

But when you continue to tell yourself things are falling apart, things are falling apart, things are falling apart, that storyline is going to make you feel disempowered because the reaction, what the mind wants you to do is go

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take action. Very masculine energy to run in and to save the day, to stop the leaks, to solve the problems, to fix whatever it is.

Versus when something happens, instead of going to, everything's falling apart, all or none thinking, it's all working or it's all not. You can say, "Here's what just happened. I have an angry parent. Why are they angry? They are angry because their student got in trouble. Why did the student get in trouble? Well, the student got in trouble because we observed this behavior. That behavior is against rules."

And then the teacher forgot to tell the parent, and now the parent's upset at the teacher for not communicating and upset that the child's in trouble, and they don't believe, okay, that's what's happening. So even when a parent is upset at me and is angry at the situation, I have the space and the capacity to handle it. Land of And, abundance. I don't like the thought a parent's angry at me because it doesn't feel good and I want to go in and fix it so I don't feel bad, but can I hold the space? Like this parent is angry, but they can be angry. I will work with them and it's okay if they're angry. They can be angry at something I have found evidence for the truth of.

So if it's true, you have evidence that their child did in fact conduct this certain behavior that's against standard. They can be angry and you're okay. And you can be upset with your teacher because they failed to communicate and that's okay. And you can have a conversation with your teacher, and they might be uncomfortable about what happened or their lack of action, and that's okay. It's okay for other people to have feelings and you still be holding space for all of it, for how you feel, for how they feel, and everyone's going to also be okay. Land of And.

And you're also 100% committed to communicating with the parents, with the teacher, with the student for as long as it takes for everyone to at least come to peace with what is. They might not like what is, but they're at peace with it. They've accepted it. The student accepts their consequence.

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The parents accept that you're not going backwards on the consequence. The teacher accepts responsibility and apologizes to the parent.

So the key in all of this is how it feels. So here's where the Land of And works in school leadership. It's when it feels abundant. When you can have this and that and feel good, you can trust, you can believe you're on the right path. I can be a school leader and leave my work on my desk, no later than 5 p.m. each night and be okay. The Land of And. Now in the beginning, when you're brand new, that might not feel true. You might be taking your work home. You might be checking email from 8 to 9 or whenever you fall asleep.

You will expand your capacity to believe that the emails will always be there, everything will be okay, and you will start to schedule email checks in your work day, and you'll be able to expand your capacity to be a school leader and not be working 24/7 and have boundaries around your time. You'll expand into that belief.

And it feels abundant to think, my goal is to, this is a feel-good goal. My goal is to be a school leader. I don't want to be a teacher anymore. I want to be a school leader, and I want to figure out how to manage my time and to honor my boundaries and to have a life outside of checking emails all night long. I want to be with my kids, my family, my friends, my partner, myself, and that feels good. And I'm expanding into that identity of the person who can do both.

So let's go back to the weight loss issue. Let's say you want to lose 10 pounds, right? You can decide you're going to lose 10 pounds and have a scoop of ice cream once a week and put that in your plan if it feels good. If it feels good to give yourself that indulgence and still lose 10 pounds, and it feels good, Land of And. Or you can do all or none.

You can have a goal of losing 10 pounds and decide that you're going to cut out ice cream as part of your plan because you're either willing to miss

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it. You love ice cream, but you're like, I am eating three ice cream cones, whatever, every single night. I just can't help myself, and I'm committed. I'm willing to feel the deprivation of my love for ice cream in order to lose these 10 pounds. I've got a wedding coming up or whatever, right? We do all kinds of stuff.

But let's just say, I'm committed to the 10 pounds and I'm willing to feel the deprivation of the ice cream. Or maybe you're like, wait a minute, of all the things that I could cut out in my food experience, my dining experience, I'm willing to give up ice cream. I'm willing to let it go. I'm willing because I realized of all the things, that's what I would rather cut out. I'd rather be able to get a slice of pizza than a scoop of ice cream. If I had to pick, ice cream's way easier. That feels good. So you can go all or none if it feels good and the Land of And when it feels good.

Now, thinking back to school leadership, thinking about this, I have a problem or I don't have a problem. Which one feels more abundant? This is a problem and I have the capacity to solve it. Land of And. Or, this is not a problem. I am not going to make this a problem. All or none. If it's working and it feels abundant, great. If it's not working and you want it to work, problem solved, Land of And. Either way, if you believe it's working but inside it doesn't feel true, or you're like, "Everything's a problem," and that doesn't feel good, you'll know that you're using the wrong approach here. And not really wrong, it's just the approach that doesn't feel good. It's not a feel-good goal.

So you're either like, "Yes, things are working. I'm going to look for evidence that things are working. I'm going to build upon the things that are working to address the things that aren't working as well as we'd like them to." They might be working at 10% capacity or 40% capacity, but they are working. Or we're like, okay, these things are working. Let them roll. This is where I want to work. This doesn't feel good. I want to commit to this. I'm all in at solving this problem this year.

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So you either have a problem and you're working to solve it, or it's not a problem. You're going to let it go. You're going to focus on trust and faith that it's working and will continue to work until it doesn't. And then you'll be committed to adjusting it.

So leaders, listen, I'm a person that has struggled with this for a long time. I have believed for many years of my life that things were happening to me, that I was a victim, a victim in my childhood, which I actually was because there was a huge imbalance of power and authority. And as I became an adult, I carried that with me and I used adult experiences and applied that thinking that things were happening to me, I didn't belong, I didn't fit in, I wasn't good enough versus looking for an alternate truth. What else is true?

It could be that hard things happened and they're happening for me. Land of And. It could be hard things are happening right now, but I'm committed 100% to figuring it out. I'm 100% in belief that I can handle this and I was made for this, and I'm 100% certain this is happening for me to either give me information or teach me a skill or provide me information and wisdom and knowledge and experience so that I can apply it moving forward. Expansion. It's going to expand me, it's going to greater empower me, and I'm going to hold the faith that even in the most uncomfortable moments or days or weeks or months or years.

There are chapters, there are seasons of our life that are uncomfortable for an exceptional amount of time. You have the capacity. Even when you don't feel like you're handling it well, you're handling it. If you're waking up each day and you're putting your feet on the ground and brushing your teeth and getting a shower and getting dressed and getting in the car and serving in whatever position you are currently serving, you are handling it. Even if you cry, let yourself cry. That's healthy. Even if you go to bed at 7 p.m. and cry your eyes out until you fall asleep, you're still handling it. Even when you feel the melancholy and the sadness and the grief and the loss, you're handling it.

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And sometimes those chapters take a minute before the joy comes back in. But boy, when you experience a negative 10 on the emotional scale where it feels like you're not going to make it, and yet you do, when the plus 10 comes in, there is an appreciation for that joy, for that pleasure, for that satisfaction, for that happiness like never before. So have faith, even in the most uncomfortable moments, that it is for us as leaders. It is for them, those we are serving, and it is for the greater good.

If you find that this work, this conversation, deeply resonates with you, if you feel connected to this work, if it feels like something you would like to dive into, you would like to explore, you would like to study, the Empowered Principal Collaborative or one-on-one coaching, depending on your preference, one of those two programs is the most aligned program for you.

So I offer several programs, but this work that I'm talking about right here, the deep internal work can be done one-on-one and the balance is in the Empowered Principal Collaborative. So the collaborative is the balance of that direct professional development. It's focusing on your leadership skills, but it also focuses on self-led mindset. So it's skillset, all the mastery of the leadership skills, the actions you take, kind of the masculine part of your leadership position, but it also includes the self-led, the internal work, the feminine side, the emotional regulation work, the energetics. So those two programs are most aligned if you want to develop this within yourself.

So if you are interested in one-on-one coaching, there is a link in the show notes to schedule a one-on-one consult with me. We will have a conversation and I will work with you and I'll let you know very honestly if one-on-one is appropriate or if another program is more appropriate. We'll find out what suits you best. If you feel called to the Empowered Principal Collaborative, there will be a link in the show notes to sign up for the group coaching program.

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And that's where you'll get a lot of the leadership mastery skills. That's a lot of the application in your leadership position. That's the work we do on the daily. And that program runs from September to the end of May. It's basically Labor Day to Memorial Day, but we have bonuses in the month of August for planning and preparing because you're doing a lot of that work, okay?

All right. I wish you the most aligned, beautiful day. Happy June, happy summer. Come on into Summer of Fun. We're doing so much over here in the world of the Empowered Principal, and I would be delighted for you to join us. Have a beautiful day. We'll talk soon. Take care. 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](http://AngelaKellyCoaching.com) where you can sign up for weekly updates and learn more about the tools that will help you become an emotionally fit school leader.