

Ep #445: New Beginnings in School Leadership and The Empowered Principal Academy



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Angela Kelly

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Hello, empowered principals. Welcome to episode 445.

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.

Hello, my Empowered Principals. Happy Tuesday, and welcome to the podcast. I am in such empowered energy. I feel new beginnings coming for all of us. I recently recorded a Facebook Live in the Empowered Principal Facebook group. So for those of you who haven't yet joined us, please join us. We would love to have you in there. We are in the middle of the Summer of Fun challenge, and we are having fun. I hope that you will join us because when you join us, when you comment, when you post, when you like, you're entered into a drawing to win \$1,111 worth of Empowered Principal credits towards any of my coaching programs.

And I'm going to be talking more about the coaching programs for the upcoming school year because July is the new beginning. It's the new month of the new contract. It's the new energy of a new school year. We are planning, we are preparing for great things to happen. And what I love about new beginning energy is that anything is possible. It's a fresh start. It is a clean slate. So, let's talk about new beginnings, and then I'm going to tell you all about the upcoming programs for the 2026-27 school year. All right.

New beginnings, what are they? When I think about a new beginning, a new beginning starts with a thought. It starts with a desire. We desire to experience something new. We desire to try something new, to start something new, to learn something new, to experience something new. It starts with a desire. And it also starts with a belief that we are capable of having or trying or experiencing the new thing, that we are capable of learning, that we are capable of having, that we are capable of

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experiencing, that we are capable of accomplishing it. We have a desire. The desire is the hunger, the drive, the energy, the fuel, the emotions behind it.

So when you think about new beginnings for you, the first year you ever taught was a new beginning. That was a first year. You had dreams, you had visions of what teaching would look like and feel like. You dreamed the experience. You had a desire to educate, to connect with kids, to make an impact on their lives and in the greater world. And then you get into that first year, and it isn't exactly what you envisioned, right? It's new. It's uncharted territory. It's trailblazing. It's the first time you've ever done something.

And then at the end of that first year, you have thoughts and feelings and opinions about the year, about that first year. And what happens with a new beginning is we go through the new beginning, it's all uncharted, we don't know what we don't know until we experience it. We have ups, we have downs, we have wins, we have fails, we have great days, we have terrible days. We shed tears of joy, tears of sadness and grief and pain and regrets or reflection. And at the end of that new beginning, what we do is we're like, okay, I don't want to experience the pain points of that new beginning, so I'm going to brace myself for the next year upcoming. I'm going to think about all the things that didn't work and I'm going to fix them so I don't have to experience that again. But I'm going to bring this year with me into year two.

But what we do if we're not careful is we bring everything with us, the good, bad, and the ugly. So we bring the wisdom. Here's what I learned about classroom management. I'm going to change these things this year. This is the wisdom I've gained from my new beginning. But I didn't like this, so I'm going to brace for that. I'm going to try to prepare because I expect that bad things could happen and I don't want bad things to happen.

So new beginnings are that fresh start. I want to offer something about new beginnings. We actually desire new beginnings. We don't want to

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experience the same year over and over and over. So for those of you who are brand new, coming into school leadership, you are already perfectly aligned with the new leadership energy. You're already in it. You don't have to think about it or to align yourself. You're right there. So stay with me here.

And for those of you who are veterans, this is especially important for you to consider. When we are veterans, it can be easy to go on autopilot. It's like learning to drive. In the beginning, you are very aware of all the gadgets, all the lights, all the sounds, all the buzzing, all the cars around you, very, very hyper-aware because we want to do it right, we want to be careful, we don't know what we're doing. We turn the radio off, we are focusing, concentrating. It's brand new. But after a few years, we just get in and we're on autopilot and sometimes we don't even remember actually driving because our thoughts were elsewhere. But it's rinse and repeat, rinse and repeat.

The same thing can be true for the school year. It's like, well, last year sucked, so this year's probably going to suck, so I probably should prepare to brace myself or try to avoid as much suckiness as possible, right? We anticipate the pain points. We anticipate what could go wrong, and then we end up preparing ourselves for the worst-case scenario while not really anticipating the best-case scenario. We're thinking like, oh gosh, this group of students, this staff, this community, this group of parents, they're really tough, so next year's going to be tough as well versus I extract what I learned from last year. I glean the wisdom like I scrape the wisdom off the top, but I release the rest. I honor the pain, I honor the learning points, I celebrate the wins, I celebrate the good in all of last year, but I release it.

If we can go into the new school year as an actual new school year with a brand new fresh lens, imagine going into your school and meeting your teachers again for the first time, meeting families and students again for the first time, being on that campus again for the first time, looking around,

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noticing the little things, being the first-day driver, being in that seat where you're looking around, noticing such awareness, such deep awareness of every little detail. Because here's the truth, your students coming in are not the same students they were at the beginning of last year. They're different humans. They're different little people. Your staff, they are not the same staff that you had last year. They have changed, they have grown, they are different people.

Just as you, over the summer, have grown, have evolved. You might not think so, but you have, whether that's you've gotten physical rest, you've spent time with your family and friends, you've filled that emotional bucket, you've had a lot of fun in the Summer of Fun challenge, you've gone on your trips, you've been to leadership retreats, you've done strategic planning with your community and your stakeholders, whatever it is that you have done in the last month, six weeks, eight weeks, you have evolved, you've changed.

So nobody coming into your school is the same human, and yet we label people based on the past all of the time. We label ourselves based on the past all of the time versus looking through the lens of a new beginning, a fresh start, truly a fresh start. Because the truth is every single minute of every single day is a fresh start, a fresh opportunity. And our experience as school leaders, our experience as students and staff and families, community, the experience that we have is based on how we're thinking, what we're focusing on. Are we focusing on the past? Are we making assumptions about the past? Or are we putting on a new lens and looking through the lens of fresh starts, new beginnings?

I'm telling you, school leaders out there, you have the opportunity in your hands to create an entirely different experience this year simply by going into your mind and into your heart and allowing things to be brand new, looking through the lens of newness, fresh starts, not labeling kids, trusting that they have changed and evolved, treating them with empowerment,

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treating them with respect in the sense of honoring who they've become, giving them a fresh start, a clean slate.

You know when you make a mistake with a friend or a partner or a colleague and you feel terrible about it and you've apologized, you've made it right, you've tried to repair and move forward, and you're telling yourself and telling them, "I'm going to be better, do better." You want to be forgiven. You want a clean slate. You want people to not continue to label you for that thing that you did back in last October. You want a clean slate. Our kids want that too. Our teachers want that too.

And so if you're having a hard time giving people new beginnings, why is that? That's the internal work. What is the fear? Usually, in my work with clients, the fear is they'll do it to me again. Shame on me. Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me, right? And we are afraid to trust. We're afraid to think of people with a clean slate to remove the labels because what happens if they do it again?

So let's go down the path. Let's say you come in with the old lens on, the lens of last year, the lens of, new school year, same stuff, same people, same game, same cast of characters here. So you're going to come in with predetermined expectations of who's going to behave well, who's not going to behave well, who's going to achieve, who's not going to achieve, who's going to be in an intervention, who's not going to be in an intervention, what teachers are going to do well, what grade levels are going to do well, what departments are going to do well. We already kind of come in with the script already written for the school year. And that script will play out if this is what you believe will happen, because what you believe will happen is what will happen.

So this work is about playing a new game, a new beginning. What if we wrote a new script? What if we tried something different? And you can play around this summer right now. You can try a new food, you can try a new way to work, try a new coffee shop, try a new department store, try a new

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grocery store, whatever. Try something new just to get comfortable and normalize trying new things, new beginnings, fresh starts. Start a new morning routine. If you love your morning routine, start a new evening routine. Pick a routine you'd like to try something new at and just try it because what we do in school is we brace ourselves for what we think already is. We already have decided what it will be and then it plays out that way.

You don't want the school year to look like last year. And even if you had an amazing school year, you want this year to be a different kind of amazing, with new heights, new achievements, new accomplishments, new connections, new collaborations. You still want new, even when it's good. We try to avoid change when things are good, and we desperately beg for change when things are bad, yet we don't really believe they'll turn around for us.

If there's one thing, one gift I could leave in the world of education, it is the understanding that our thoughts are energy. Our emotions are fuel, energetic fuel for our actions. So our thoughts are energy that trigger emotional energy, that trigger actionable energy, that trigger outcomes and results. If we could see that what we believe is what we create, is the outcomes we create, if we could really harness that, you would have a new beginning every day, every week, every month, every season, every year. You would look through the lens like a child looks through the lens. Every Christmas is the best Christmas. Every birthday, they're excited. Every school year, right? Until they also start to realize same year, same school, it's going to just be the same thing over and over. "I didn't like school last year. I'm not going to like school this year." They too get into that kind of vortex of negativity, of stagnancy.

So why don't we do this? Why don't we simply decide that we are going to look through the lens of new beginnings? This is a new beginning. This can be an entirely different school year, whether you are technically brand new

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in the job or whether you've been doing this for 20 years. Look through the lens of brand new, different. What is it you want to see? Pretend you're putting on brand new glasses for the first time and you're looking through your campus, you're meeting people. Can you imagine going up to the person that you struggled with last year and being genuinely happy to see them, shaking their hand, looking forward to working with them because you know that they've gone through change? And your energy and you believing in them will be reflected back to you. And because people have free will, even when people, when they human, and they make mistakes or they behave in old patterns, you can know that people will still behave in old patterns, and you can still respond differently. You can change and make it new by changing the way you respond even when they respond the same way. That's how you create new.

So, yes, people have free will to behave how they want. We don't control their behavior, but your energy coming in, assuming positive intention, assuming professional and personal growth, assuming evolution, involvement, assuming desire in them, you can meet them and they can meet you however they're going to meet you, but the way that you interact, the way you set your intentions, the way you project your energy, that's the new thing. And that's what we're doing in the world of the Empowered Principal. That's what this podcast is about. That's what the Facebook group is about. That's what my programming is all about, my paid programming.

So if you desire to see through a new lens, to experience school leadership in an entirely different way, to feel the excitement and engagement of being new, anticipating great things, preparing, expecting that great things will come. You know how you go on vacation? The anticipation is half the fun. When you're shopping and you're packing, you're anticipating a good outcome, a positive experience. You're expecting great things, great memories. Very few people plan a vacation so that they can doom and gloom and anticipate everything going wrong. I'm sure there's people out

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there who do that, but most of us, the reason we go on vacation, we are preparing to receive a positive experience. I want us to do that with our school year.

We're going to pack and prepare and plan as though everything's going to be amazing, even though we know it might rain a couple of days on our vacation, or even when a suitcase goes missing and shows up a week late, there will be hiccups in our vacation, but we're focused on the great things. We're preparing and expecting for an amazing school year. We're packing for it, we're planning for it, we're preparing for it, we're onboarding for it, we're showing up in the anticipation of amazing accomplishments, amazing connections, amazing collaborations. We are expecting it. That's what new beginnings is about.

So, for this coming year, there are some new beginnings in the world of the Empowered Principal. Are you ready for it? Okay. I have three offers for this coming year. Offer number one is my standard, classic one-on-one coaching. This is where I started. It's the foundation of my work. For the first few years of my business, I only coached one-on-one. I started with one client, and then two, and then I had four, and then I had six, and then it was 10, and then it got up to 24. I had 24 one-on-one clients, which I was bursting at the seams because I was coaching for an hour per client plus extra bonus calls as they needed them.

So I was coaching over 24 hours a week plus all of the back-end work. That's when I decided to launch EPC, the Empowered Principal Collaborative. It's a group mastermind. It's a group coaching program for people who love to connect, who love to collaborate, who love to be around like-minded people. It's a more mastermind experience. It's a weekly group coaching program. We meet via Zoom. It's once a week, but the beautiful thing about EPC is that it's a collaborative. You are hearing other people's wins, fails, successes, trials, challenges, and they're getting coached on it, which coaches you. You feel not alone in this group. Other people are

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going through some of the similar things that you're going through. It's synergy. I think it's one of the most empowering ways to learn and to be coached.

One-on-one is excellent for very high-level coaching, and it's excellent for beginning coaching. It kind of hits on the ends. If you need confidential, private coaching because you're going through something very sensitive in nature and you need to discuss things, but you can't discuss them publicly or in a group, one-on-one is perfect. EPC, the collaborative, is for masterminding, working together, synergy. It's for momentum, making motion, and to have fun along the way. We have a lot of fun. We laugh, we cry, we do all the things. But this is a group where you get to talk about the real emotional experience, the real experience of school leadership. That's EPC. It's a mastermind collaborative.

And the new and upcoming, I'm so excited, the new and upcoming program, this is brand new, new beginnings, fresh starts, is the Empowered Principal Academy. Now, listen up. This is the first week of July. The Empowered Principal Academy is starting in two weeks. This is not a program that you're going to sit on and think about and wonder if you should or shouldn't. You either are going to do it this year or you're going to wait until next year. The Empowered Principal Academy was developed to help school leaders like yourself bring out the best in those you lead. The art and science of coaching is the practice of embracing empowerment for you as a coach, as a mentor, as a leader. Those are three different roles that you play. I'm teaching the art and the science of coaching to bring your people up, to empower them.

I want you to imagine each member of your staff and student community fully embodying their own empowerment because coaching at its soul, at its heart is the beauty of evolution and creation. It is a gift that you give to your staff of expansion, where you have the opportunity to provide others the experience of expanding and evolving and developing and creating their

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new beginnings, their new opportunities. You want your teachers to expand and grow. You want them to be continually evolving who they are, what they do, how they do it, what they believe, what they accomplish, the lives that they touch, because coaching is opportunity for us, for them, for the greater good. It's about our identity evolving as a leader and adding the mastery of coaching into our identity. It's about providing opportunity and identity expansion for our staff and our students because we want them to own their own empowerment. Mastering the art of coaching is going to develop you as a master at school leadership.

And I have been coaching for a decade. It is time that I share the tools, the tips, the strategies, the questions, the communication, the conversations, the how of coaching. And the Empowered Principal Academy is going to offer you just that. We're starting mid-July. You're going to learn, there's going to be several sessions where you learn by firehose, and then there will be a monthly meeting. We will focus on a particular aspect of coaching. We will be integrating that particular aspect of coaching into our work that month, and you will be connecting with me and receiving feedback and being able to ask questions so that by the end of the year, you will graduate with a certificate in the art of coaching through the Empowered Principal Academy.

So here are the details. For one-on-one coaching, there is a link in the show notes for an individual consult. You and I will jump on the phone for about 45 minutes to an hour. You're going to tell me everything that you think I need to know so that I can help you at an individual level and expedite your situation, expedite your coaching, expedite your leadership. If you're considering the Empowered Principal Collaborative, there is a registration link in the show notes for EPC. If you are interested in the Empowered Principal Academy, there are two ways that you can connect with the academy.

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Number one, if you have more questions or you want to talk with me directly, there is a link for a 20-minute meet and greet session. We can Q&A, we can talk about all the things. I can get you the information you need. You can schedule that. The link is in the show notes to schedule a short Q&A conversation with me over the phone. If you're ready to sign up for EPA, there is a registration link in the show notes. Every link that you need is in the show notes. Simply click on the link, you will get more information from that link, and there's also the link to schedule a personal phone call with me. I will answer any questions you have. I'll take the time you need for you to explore what option you feel is best for you.

I personally believe with all of my heart, this is the most impactful professional development you could ever engage with because it's not a one-and-done. It's not about platforms and curriculums and what you should be doing that you're not or what you should stop doing that feels essential. It's about energy, leadership wealth, leadership energetics. It's about you, developing you so that you can develop them so that you can develop the world for the greater good.

This is unlike any other leadership experience I've ever had, and I've developed it through my own work, my own study of humans, of communication, of my thoughts and feelings, of life coaching, of leadership coaching, and I've combined it into one package for you. That's what the podcast is for and all of my paid programming is all about. You will come out of these programs, regardless of which one you choose, a different person, new beginnings, all of the time. You're ever-evolving, you're ever-growing, and these programs simply help guide you, help strengthen you, help you see what's already there within you. You have what it takes. Your empowerment is there, accessible, ready to go.

Let's have the most beautiful new beginning of the 2026-27 school year. I can't wait to meet you and work with you. Have the most beautiful, beautiful week. I'll talk with you soon.

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Thanks for listening to this episode of *The Empowered Principal® Podcast*. If you enjoyed this episode and want to learn more, please visit AngelaKellyCoaching.com where you can sign up for weekly updates and learn more about the tools that will help you become an emotionally fit school leader.