

Ep #447: Secrets of the Successful School Leader



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Angela Kelly

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Hello, empowered principals. Welcome to episode 447.

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 leaders. Happy Tuesday. Welcome to the podcast. And hey, if you're a brand new school leader and you're just now learning about *The Empowered Principal® Podcast*, we welcome you. I'm so happy you are here. Thank you for joining us. Thank you for sharing your wisdom, your strength, your gifts with your school, your colleagues, your students, the world. It is such a delight to meet you here through the podcast. So, definitely shout out, say hello, come say hello on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, wherever you find yourself hanging out with fellow school leaders. We would love to have you a member of our empowered principal community. So welcome.

Today, I'm going to drop the secrets of successful school leadership and successful school leaders. These secrets were inspired by my own failures. Everything that I've done wrong as a school leader and the insights, the experience, the wisdom, the knowledge that I have gained in my own mistakes, my own coaching while I was a principal, I had a coach, a life coach, but life and leadership go hand in hand, and in my experience and in my learning over the last decade as a coach helping other school leaders become very successful.

And I thought, I'm going to write these out in terms of how I experience them and things I've observed and things I've read, things I've experienced. And I'm saying them straight away. And I want to preface these secrets in that some will really resonate with you. Others won't. That's okay. These are just my personal experiences, what I have learned, what I believe to be

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true, and what I've observed in other people. So some will hit, some will land, some won't. That's okay.

Some of them, they will feel very aligned. You'll be like, yes, that's so true. I believe that. And others will trigger you. They will awaken you. They will jolt you. You'll have a little identity shake for a minute. That's okay. They're not intended to make you feel any kind of pain. They're intended to create awareness and to create alignment and to just awaken you and engage you in who you want to be, how you want to feel, and the approach you would desire to take in leadership. That's simply what these are.

These are the secrets I have found. I would love to hear what you think when you listen to this podcast. So, if you would so delight me in sharing your thoughts, your questions in either the Facebook group or you can message me personally on Facebook or Instagram. I do hang out on LinkedIn every now and then, but primarily Facebook and Instagram. And tell me what you think, because they're here to support, to empower, to help you, okay? All right. I'm just going to read them as I wrote them, and I will leave it at that.

Successful school leaders believe that they have power and agency, regardless of their title, position, or status. They believe that they always contain personal power, personal agency.

Struggling leaders, on the other hand, believe that other people, situations, circumstances, things outside of their being have power over them and that they lack personal agency.

Successful leaders focus on their successes. They think about them, they study them, they celebrate them, they acknowledge them.

Struggling leaders tend to focus on their failures, the disappointments, the not reaching the goals, the disappointments, the rejections, all of the things that didn't go right. That's where they're spending their time, their energy, their attention, and their focus.

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Successful leaders are committed to empowerment. They're dedicated to it. They're convicted to experiencing and expanding their personal power.

Struggling leaders are very committed to comfort. They don't want to go out of their comfort zone. They like to stay in what they know.

Successful leaders stay connected to their vision and allow the vision to grow bigger and to be bigger than they think they can even achieve. They let it go big.

Struggling leaders tend to dim their vision when challenges arise. They don't want to dream big because they don't want to be disappointed. They want to be there, not here. And they feel like they're chasing the end of a rainbow. And when challenges arise, they dim. They go small. Successful leaders play big. Struggling leaders play small.

Successful leaders frame obstacles as opportunities for improvement. They look at it as an awareness tool to say, oh, I didn't realize this was a problem, but now that it is, let's create a solution. Let's create an answer. Let's improve this.

Struggling leaders frame obstacles as reasons why things can't improve. It's either themselves, the obstacle itself, other people. That's the reason. That's the excuse as to why we can't improve, that things will never change.

Successful leaders collaborate and seek to engage with like-minded leaders. They connect with fellow leaders who are positive and empowered. They want to connect with people of the same mindset.

Struggling leaders will isolate and hide for the fear that they'll be seen as incompetent, ineffective, or incapable. And they want to protect and hide themselves, so they will self-isolate, and then they say that they feel lonely in the job. But successful leaders don't feel lonely. They're out there

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engaging and collaborating and having conversations and joining groups and going to conferences and calling their friends and colleagues.

Successful leaders believe they can handle whatever comes their way and that their ability to problem solve is greater than the problem itself.

Struggling leaders believe that the problem is greater or bigger than their capacity to handle whatever comes their way.

Successful leaders give feedback and are equally willing to receive it.

Struggling leaders fear giving feedback and they fear receiving feedback. They fear feedback because they label it as insufficient. If you're getting feedback, you're insufficient. If you're giving it but you're insufficient, then you're an imposter. There is a relationship with feedback that determines success and struggling leaders.

Successful school leaders trust that they are equipped with the resources they need, and they leverage those resources, the ones that they actually have.

Struggling leaders will lack trust in themselves and in the resources available to them. They think that something outside of themselves or outside of what they already have available to them is the answer. This leaves struggling leaders chasing, always chasing external answers, the next shiny object, the next prize, the next solution. They think that it's outside of them. They don't understand that the solution is within.

Successful leaders trust in the ever abundance of time.

Struggling leaders focus on a lack of time.

Successful school leaders plan and prepare, and then they allow for that plan and all those preparations to go right out the window. They plan and prepare, but then they detach from the plan, trusting that what does come up is now the new plan.

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Struggling leaders will plan, prepare, and then attach to the plan and become very frustrated when the plan changes, and then give up on planning and preparing because what's the point? And then they are underprepared.

Successful leaders empower their teams to work for the greater good. They will onboard, train, and delegate.

Struggling leaders disempower themselves and other people by trying to do it all, know it all, be it all, and control it all. Onboarding plus delegation equals success.

Successful leaders manage their emotions and their minds very well.

Struggling leaders allow their emotions and their mind to manage them.

Successful leaders understand that fear is just a normal part of the leadership emotional experience. They allow it to be present, and they move forward anyway.

Struggling leaders will interpret fear as something's gone wrong, and I need to steer away from this, to avoid the actions that bring up fear.

Successful leaders embody lifelong learning. They embrace being new, and they value personal and professional development and evolution.

Struggling leaders will prioritize comfort, ease, and the familiar.

I'm going to leave it here and allow you to ponder. And I know some of these may feel triggering for you, but let them in a good way, a very healthy way. Notice, did any of these feel offensive or anger you in any way? If so, why? What comes up for you? Is it defensiveness? Do you feel the desire to try and justify yourself or explain it away or reject it all together to argue it, to avoid it, to ignore it?

Because remember, all of these came from things that I have done. I have pretended to know. I have had a lack of time. I've had a lot of scarcity

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around resources. I've believed that the solution was out of me. I didn't think I was capable enough. I've had all the thoughts, and they lead to inaction or small action, less impactful action.

You can see these secrets as opportunities for awareness, alignment, momentum, and growth. And as I've said, I have been on the struggling side of each of these, personally. And I have also been able to embrace the successful mindset. And not in a way that I've arrived and I'm never going to struggle again, but really as just an awareness tool, like, oh, I recognize this pattern of thinking. I've done this before. I've seen this before. I'm aware again. Now that I'm aware, I can redirect, reframe, realign, and get back into momentum.

Because this list, and it's just a list, there's a million more truths out there in terms of leadership secrets, but these are for me personally, they allow me to adjust and to focus on successful trains of thought. And at the end of the day, this list of secrets is really nothing more than just at least for me, truths that I have observed in both myself and in the hundreds of people I've worked with over the course of my career.

And now, they're no longer secrets. I've given them to you. They're opportunities, and they are available to you. So listen to this, print out the transcript, read it over, notice which ones align, which ones feel a little crunchy, and work with them. See if you can get into alignment with them. See if they work for you. And if they don't, drop them. They're not etched in stone. They're just my personal experience.

But if this really resonates with you, if it ignites you and excites you, then the Empowered Principal programs were designed exactly for someone like you, a school leader like you, whether you join the Empowered Principal Collaborative, which is a group coaching program, or you decide to jump into EPA, which is a deep dive intensive instructional coaching and mentoring program, or if you're personally drawn to one-on-one coaching, which is very private, customized, and personalized to your specific

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experiences, whichever way you're leaning, these programs were designed for you. Have a beautiful week. I love you all. Take good care, and we'll talk next week. Bye.

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