

# Ep #450: The Stories You'll Tell: Creating Your Legacy as a School Leader



## Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Angela Kelly

## **Ep #450: The Stories You'll Tell: Creating Your Legacy as a School Leader**

Hello, empowered principals. Welcome to episode 450.

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 New Year. Happy first month of school. It's official. We're in August. We are at it. You're busy. You are spending a lot of energy on setting up school. So when we are fulfilling a huge to-do list and we are on autopilot, our energy, our mind, our feelings go a little subconscious. And I'd like this podcast to be a moment of consciousness, of awareness for you.

So take a deep breath and settle in. And I want to start by grounding you with a story, a true story that recently happened with me. So I've created a brand new program called the Empowered Principal Academy. Now, I didn't heavily market this because I'm testing it for the first time. So I've mentioned it on the podcast, I've mentioned it a little bit on social media, and my deepest intention was to have a smaller group of school leaders who have coached with me already before.

And the reason for that is because this program is an academy. It's instruction, it's intense on how to coach, how to be a leader who also coaches. Leadership, mentorship, coaching, they are different hats. And we dissect the difference between a leader who directs and leads, a mentor, and a coach, and why all three of those hats are important and necessary for extraordinary leaders.

So we dove deeply into that. We're actually in the middle of it right now. And in creating this program, along with a conversation I had with my financial planner, those two actions in my life, creating this program and

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working with my financial planner has created a lot of consciousness in my life, a lot of awareness.

Because for a period of time, and I've been pretty open about my personal experiences, I've gone through a lot. You know, I've gone through a change in marital status. I lost my father almost a year ago, to date. He passed away August 15th, the day after his 75th birthday. And then eight weeks after my dad passed, my grandmother had a fall and succumbed to her injuries, two weeks shy of her 90th birthday.

So we've had some pretty significant losses in our life, pretty significant emotions and grief to process, and also moments of extreme contemplation and awareness. At the same time, that extreme awareness of who am I now without my dad, without my grandmother, without my marital status, without so many aspects of my life that I used to think were permanent, that felt permanent, that felt safe, that felt certain, I was now faced with the humanness of uncertainty.

And it invited me into very deep reflection on who I am and how I want to live my life, how I want to experience life, how I want to serve in the world, who I want to be as a mother, a daughter, a sister, a friend, a coach, a colleague. I really deeply contemplated that. And I also went on autopilot for many things just to get through a day of grief, just to get through a day of sadness or frustration as I was processing through the human aspect of all of these changes in my life.

But what it's done in creating something brand new that is to me my most epic masterpiece to date, and along with sitting down with my financial planner and talking about the future, and who I want to be, and why I want to be that, and where I want to go, and what I want to do, and how I want to contribute to the world, it really deepened my consciousness.

And I recently wrote a post that I shared on Instagram and Facebook, and it was titled, I think I also sent it in an email for those of you who are on my

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email list, it was called The Stories You'll Tell. And this post was generated from a deep reflection on why I coach in the first place, who I am as a coach, why I coach, but more importantly, how coaching impacts lives, my life, your life, students' life, teachers' life.

Every person in our sphere who's anywhere near our existence, our energy, is impacted by the coaching that we do. You listening to this podcast impacts you, which then in turn impacts those around you because you think differently, or you have new contemplations, or you consider a new perspective, or you have an aha. And because of that, your energy shifts, your mindset shifts, your emotions shift, your actions shift, your decisions shift, everything about you can shift in a moment.

And so when I do this work, and this is a great time to contemplate that because we're right here at the beginning of the school year. When I do this work, when I work with school leaders, whether you're an assistant principal, an aspiring leader, a building principal, a district leader, I work with people at the county level, at the state level, at the federal level. I work with leaders throughout education all the way up to the Department of Education.

And when I think about why we all do what we do, it's because of the stories that we get to tell, of the memories that we get to create, of the impact we generate. It's a conscious decision to put our energy into the empowerment of our staff, our students, our families, our communities, our colleagues, our industry as educators.

We aren't just here to get through the grind of the kickoff of school, which is coming up. You're in it right now. You're in the energy of a new school year. You're kicking off a new year. There's a lot of energy involved in that, and it can feel like a grind, and it can feel exhausting. But there's something beyond that surface.

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There's a reason we care about school being ready for kids. There's a reason we care about our staff members being on the right seat on the bus to start the year. There's a reason that we care that the campus looks welcoming and tidy and clean, and it's safe. There's a reason we will overwork and over-prepare so that families feel welcome, teachers feel comfortable in their spaces, they have what they need, students know where to go, what to do. There's a reason we overthink processes, dismissal, drop-off, the cafeteria, master schedules. There's a reason.

So I like to think about each and every one of you and the stories that you will tell about your school leadership experience. I already have my stories as memories because I no longer actively lead a school building or I'm not in a district office at this time. In this moment, those are memories. I have stories I created about my school leadership experience. And you are creating stories about your school leadership experience.

So yes, coaching in real time, it's the best thing that ever happened because you do get to tackle problems and solution, create solutions in real time. I'm dealing with this scenario. We discuss it, your thoughts and feelings about it, your considerations about other people's thoughts and feelings about it, we make empowered decisions, we plan an approach, and we move forward. That is the activeness of coaching.

But the outcomes of coaching, the stories that you tell, the good, bad, and the ugly, the funny stories, the horrible stories, the enlightening stories, the inspiring stories, the contribution stories, the failure stories, the experience of school leadership is in the stories you're creating, the stories you're telling, the memories, the stories you're going to tell at your retirement party, or when you resign from this position because you got promoted or you got another job or you were offered something bigger for your next chapter, and you're going to have a party and you're going to have memories and stories, and it will feel so sad to say goodbye.

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Even though there were moments you're like, I don't think I can handle this job. The stories that you're going to tell your grandchildren one day when they're like, "Wow, granny, grandma, Nana, Nona, what was it like to be a school principal when you were back then in the day? What was it like? Did you have chalk?" Right? They're stories. What were the kids like? What were the classrooms like? Even though it's maybe only 10 years or 20 years from now, they'll think it was, you know, you were writing on stone tablets.

Great stories will emerge from students and families and memories and meetings that went great, meetings that went horrible, events that you held. Think about the things you remember already. Are you remembering the joy, the fun, the reason that you're here? All of the moments of empowerment, of educating, of teaching and learning and inspiration and breakthroughs and transformations in students or staff members? Think of the stories that you sit around and tell with your colleagues, friends. I have a girls' weekend, they're all teachers. We tell the stories over and over. We laugh at them every time. The kids are hilarious.

What matters most to me as your coach, whether I'm your coach through this podcast or whether you have worked with me in the past or you work with me right now or you desire to work with me in the future, what matters most to me is not that I just simply support you through the grind, which is what I do on the surface. What matters most to me is why you do what you do. That you're connected to your why. That you're connected to the story you're creating. This is not permanent.

You as the school leader of this school, in this district, in this community, is not permanent. What matters most to me, my why is your why. I want you to create consciousness around your why. To remember why you're setting up school, why you're running your, you know, around crazy on your campus, why you're connecting, why you're developing relationships, why

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you're putting out the class lists the way that you do. There's a why behind everything. And we go on subconscious, we go on autopilot.

I want your stories to have deep meaning. I want them to matter to you. Not matter to the people you're telling. When you tell your grandkids the stories, they will be enamored with the stories at their developmental level, but they're not their stories. They're just entertainment for them. They're like, "Wow, it's one way to feel connected to grandpa or grandma."

But to you, it was your life. This job is your life. And are we spending our life focusing on how awful it is, how hard it is, what we can't get done, what's in our way, the obstacles, the people, the negative energy, the subconscious tapes running in the back of our mind that are just driving us? Do we actually believe there's a different outcome for tomorrow for this school year? Or do we just expect the kids to act the same, the teachers to be the same, the test scores to be similar? Where are we in our story?

I believe that for us to have deeper meaning, to create influence that has further impact and to create experiences with the best memories possible is through coaching. Coaching changes the storyline, and not just this day's storyline. You're listening to this now. You're consciously aware of the words that I'm saying and you're contemplating how these words impact you personally or your experience personally.

But coaching week after week, over time, changes the storyline. It changes the entire manuscript of your life. It changes the lens through which you look, the perspective through which you consider, the narrative in which you write, the direction that you take yourself and your school and your career. The experiences that you file in your mind, the ongoing legacy of your work that goes far beyond your human existence. The people that I've impacted in my life will live longer than me. The students that you're serving are going to live, maybe, longer than you. That's the plan.

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Our impact goes so much further than the traffic you're in right now listening to this podcast, or the conversation that didn't go well, or the conversation you're anticipating is not going to go well. We create our tomorrow in our mind. Tomorrow hasn't happened yet. We have no idea what's going to happen. But our brain wants predictability because it feels safe, it feels certain, and we just expect tomorrow to look like today, when in reality we have no idea.

And the only reason we ever think like, well, I guess it's possible for things to be better next year is because something unexpected would have to come up. Something out of this world that we would never see coming would have to come in and save the day or change the trajectory of our experience, of our story. So contemplate this. Your story is why I coach. It's why I created the Empowered Principal. I don't want to be just another educational consultant who offers professional development and helps you, I don't know, what everyone's out there doing.

But what I'm here to do is to help you create a story. Knowing that you're not permanent, that your impact isn't permanent. None of this is permanent. So why not make the best of it? Why not focus on what's working? Why not focus on feel-good goals? Why not focus on what we want to be, what we're striving to be? Why not create more awareness, more stories? Why not create stories that we love versus stories of all the hard, all the grief, all the pain? Because it's both. We're going to have moments of grief, moments of pain, moments of sadness. That is the full package of this experience, no matter what. But we can create our stories with intention and with consciousness.

My desire for you is to have the most satisfying and rewarding story. That's yours to own. The one that you love to share, that you would laugh with your friends year after year after year. The same stories, doesn't matter. They're great stories because you love them. You love to share them. You love to relive them. You cherish them. And some of the hardest stories



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become our most cherished stories. The stories of triumph and overcoming, or the stories of failure and how we learned from that.

And what can feel so bad in a moment last year, we don't have to pack that up in a suitcase and bring it to this year. Only pack up the wisdom, leave the rest, leave the trauma, and anticipate possibility versus predictability. Because here's the best part about you having a great story to tell. The stories that others can tell because of your commitment to having a great story becomes an outcome beyond measure.

When you show up and you identify as an empowered principal and you're committed to having a great story this year, full of possibility, full of potential, anything's possible. We have no idea what tomorrow brings or what this school year will bring. And we're here for it. We're anticipating the best. We're showing up as the best version of ourselves today. When we do that, that energy is contagious.

People want a piece of that. They want a leader who inspires them just energetically through their energy, their words, their motion, their positivity, their willingness to believe in possibility, in our potential, in new things. That tomorrow's a brand new day, anything could happen. You know, we find it really easy to be like, "Yeah, the bad things could happen." And we believe that that's possible. But when it comes to the good stuff, we don't believe that's possible. We're like, "Well, that probably won't happen, but this could happen."

So decide to live a great story, to create a great story, one that you can tell now and in the future so that other people, your staff, your students, your community, your families will look back and say, "Wow, what a great school leader we had. My kids' school was the best. What a great experience we had as a family attending that school. What a great experience teachers had teaching at that school because of her, because of him, because of them."

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Teachers whose careers thrived because of you. Support staff who served the school community with joy and care and a love of being at your school because of you. Parents and families who felt heard, seen, appreciated, all because of you. Students who kept trying and failing and trying again until they got it, until they succeeded. Why? Because of you.

Your story includes them and their story includes you. Have a beautiful school year. Create the story you want to live. And if you're so inclined, we would love to have you in EPC. The Empowered Principal Collaborative, this is what we talk about. This is the energy. We look at possibility, not predictability. We create stories on purpose. We create experiences on purpose. Consciousness, alignment, awareness, intention, that's where it's at.

So you can choose to lead your school on autopilot, or you can choose to lead with intention, awareness, and consciousness. That is what creates a beautiful experience. Because you decide in every moment and every day, "This is who I am. This is how I lead. This is the experience I'm creating. This is the story I'm living to tell."

Have the most beautiful year. I love you all. I look forward to meeting you in EPC. Take good 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.