

Ep #458: When Your Empowerment Takes a Hit



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Angela Kelly

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Hello, Empowered Principals. Welcome to episode 458.

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. Happy October. Welcome to the podcast. It's a delight to be here with you today. And hey, if you love this podcast, if you find this valuable in your school leadership journey, please share it with some colleagues, share it with friends, share it on your social media platforms. I'd love to get this podcast into the hands of every school leader who desires to feel empowered.

And this episode is exactly that. I want to talk with you about moments where your empowerment takes a hit. I speak from this very personally. I'm very candid. I tell the truth of my experience because we are all here living this human life. We've all had the school leadership experience. And we've all, as humans, had moments where our empowerment, our personal power, takes a blow.

And you question it, you doubt it. I want to talk about that because so many of us are getting up every day, putting on our shields, going out into the world, pretending everything's okay, working our tails off, running around, doing the very best we can for everybody else, trying to take care of ourselves, taking our vitamins, brushing our teeth, and trying to eat healthy most of the time.

And then we go to bed and we get up and we do it all over again. Sometimes our empowerment slips away very quietly. We just didn't really see it coming. Other times, it's a big blow that feels like it hit you, like a Mack truck. So if you're in this moment where things feel good, you're in flow, things are in motion, you're feeling good about the school year, you're making things happen, you're being productive, you're being efficient,

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you're being effective, maybe you're really proud of yourself, where you are in your life, where you are in your career, or maybe you had a chapter where things felt good. This was me.

I felt after I resigned from my position in school leadership and I launched this business, a lot of things happened. My son went off to college, we sold our primary home, we moved into our beach house, and I was starting this company. I was writing the book, starting this podcast, coaching my very first clients. And even though the business was brand new and it was hard, I had no idea what I was doing. It took me hours to write podcasts and I would be so nervous to get on social media or to post something because I didn't want to be judged, didn't want to be criticized. I was afraid of all that and I was new. I didn't know what I was doing.

So I was in the thick of being new and feeling all those feels. But it was also one of the best chapters. I felt in flow. It was wonderful and it was new, it was exciting. So even though it was scary, it was a good scary. And I was genuinely excited for everything lying ahead. I had big dreams back then, my sweet little self 10 years ago. I was so eager and hungry and just enjoying the anticipation of more good things to come. And somewhere below the surface, like almost far below to where it was unbeknownst to me, maybe this has happened to you, things are really going well.

But underground, where you don't even feel it happening, you don't even know it's happening, you're not aware there is something shifting, like way at the core of your life, where you cannot feel it, it's like an underground rumbling, and it's shifting, you know, I think of like the earth, right, where there's like little earthquakes down below, the ground is shifting around, and we can't even feel it, they're so low, they're so deep, we're not aware of them.

And sometimes, you know, there's little mini earthquakes where the ground shifts and we don't even feel it even though it did shake the surface or maybe there was a little tiny shake, but we go about our day, we don't think

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about that. Of course, I'm here in California, so I think about earthquakes, I relate to them. But in our lives, right, we have these little mini quakes that are happening, but they're undetectable to like the naked eye or we don't feel them. and we're not aware, we're just not tuned in.

And then like you might notice once in a while, hmm, there's something little over here or there's a little crunchiness over there, but they're not getting your attention. They're not grasping your full attention because they're small, they're infrequent, they're happening ever so slowly, that it's not very drastic. It doesn't feel like it requires urgency on your part, right? Little wobbles here and there.

And you might feel yourself start to self-correct, but you're riding on the high of the good. Of all the good things, you're riding on the high, and these little things bubble up, and you're like, meh. You know, it's that resistance to awareness that I talked about earlier, where things are going really good. I don't want to think about the problems or the little wobbles, or I feel something stirring inside of me. You know when you start to have a gut feeling about something? You're like, hmm, no, uh, things are good. I don't want to do that. But eventually you start to compensate. So instead of dealing, we compensate and we try to circumvent and we try to put band-aids on and work around it and make it be as good as it was in the good time.

But something's brewing underneath and it's something that's maybe not in our control or it's something that is in our control, but we just are resisting the awareness to it. Okay? But eventually what happens, whether this is personal or professional, I've had both where I only could see it in hindsight. In hindsight, I knew the dots connected, but in the moment I could never have connected the dots. I could not see it coming. And eventually there's a breakdown of some kind. There's a collapse. There is an identity quake that shakes more violently and gets your full attention in the midst of all that you thought was going well.

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And after that hit, when your empowerment takes a real blow, you go back in the cave for a minute, you hide a little bit, you play a little smaller, you doubt yourself, the fears start to come to the surface. You're not sure if you can trust yourself, if you can trust others, you're doubting yourself like who am I? And did I create this? Did I do this? Should I have done this? Should I have not done that? You know that story? The thing that keeps you up at night where you just go over it and over it and ruminate about what could have been, what you should have done, what you shouldn't have done? You wanted to just stay in the good times and not deal with the bad times.

But then the bad times became worse times because in hindsight you didn't deal with it. And so your empowerment went right out the window and you're left with processing these emotions that you didn't want to feel. You're having to deal with situations you didn't want to deal with. You're questioning if you can ever recover from it. Wondering, do I have what it takes to bounce back from this? So whether that's a conflict you've had with a teacher or a parent or a conflict with a district administrator or a conflict with a community member or a school board member, or it's a conflict with somebody personal in your life, but it really shakes you and empowerment feels out of reach.

There's a moment where you wonder, does this moment, does this circumstance that I'm in right now, this chapter, is it going to define me forever? Am I forever damaged? Is my empowerment ever gone? Is it going to be accessible to me again, or has my personal power left the building? It's that time that you really failed. Probably publicly landed on your face. It's the time you lost, whether you lost a relationship, you lost a job, you lost income, you lost on an investment. You lost a loved one. You actually lost them. You lost your kids to college. Like there are blows that we take in our lives that it feels unbearable. It's when the time that you feared the most actually happens.

The one thing you never wanted to experience in life happens, or maybe there's a series of them. And they hit you back-to-back-to-back, like what

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has happened in my life recently. And it's like, whoa, I thought that was the worst thing. Oh, wait, now this is the worst thing. Oh, this combination is the worst. Oh, wait, now another one. Oh, wait, another one. Oh my gosh. And you look through the lens of, can I take any more? Can I handle this? Where is my empowerment? Because I feel none of it. Everybody else just seems to be empowered except me. My personal power has drained down to zero, and I have no idea if I'm going to be able to recover.

And as you're combing through your past, looking at what happened, as I said before, it's only in hindsight that you could see the signs, the little waves of misalignment, the times you didn't listen to your gut, your intuition, the moments that you avoided the truth, telling yourself the truth, looking at yourself in the mirror, and speaking the truth to yourself.

The glimpses of chances that you had to embody your personal power, but it felt uncomfortable to do so, so you declined. And now? Perhaps you're in a chapter, maybe you've experienced this before, maybe you're in it now, or maybe you save this podcast knowing that a time might come like this, or a time is coming like this, it's speaking to you. But if you're in a chapter where empowerment feels out of reach, first of all, I feel so much love and compassion for you and I send all of my love your way because I know that feeling, where the empowerment feels unattainable.

And look, my entire brand, the world of the Empowered Principal is founded upon personal power and empowerment. That's what life coaching is. It's embracing and embodying and tapping into and leveraging your personal power. So imagine how difficult it is to coach people on empowerment when you yourself feel that all empowerment is lost and that empowerment feels unattainable. So what happens now? Is this it, or is a comeback possible?

So let me offer this. It takes a minute to catch your breath after your empowerment sustains a significant fracture. It's supposed to take a minute. If you've been in it for a month, two months, six months, a year, it's

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okay. That's normal. You're not broken forever. It's not permanent. If you were supposed to overcome it in a day or a week, then it wouldn't have created the impact that it did in your life, but it also created potential. Hear me out. Because whenever your empowerment takes a hit, that hit is initially viewed as permanent, right?

But that hit can be viewed as permanent permanently, or you can feel the burn, process the emotions, contemplate, reflect, learn, ponder, grow, knowing that this was a temporary sting that was designed to build you, that happened to enlighten you, to create awareness, to drop the resistance to the awareness resistance and bring it into your full attention so that you can strengthen your standards, your boundaries, your convictions, your commitment to yourself and your dreams.

It was the test that reminded you who you are, what you want, and what you don't want. And look, this test also is designed to remind you that you have what it takes. Even when you believe you don't, even when you think this is it, this is the end. This is all I can handle. The test happens to empower you. Your disempowerment is so that you can remember your empowerment, leverage your empowerment, choose empowerment. Because just as empowerment can be chipped away one microscopic moment at a time, like death by a thousand paper cuts. It can also be rebuilt one microscopic step at a time.

There's one moment of realization. There's one moment of declaration, one moment of action that you take, one moment of reconnecting with yourself, reconnecting with your personal power, because just as it can be chipped away when you're not even seeing it happen and all of a sudden you and you wonder how you got to where you are, your empowerment can grow day by day, minute by minute, week by week, month by month, even when you're not seeing external results yet, because they're compounding over time.

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And then eventually one day you're going to look around and you're saying, wow, I'm back. I'm bigger, I'm better, I'm stronger, I'm wiser. I'm ready, let's go. It's like watching a child grow. You don't see their body physically growing up. You don't see them expanding and getting taller right before your eyes, or their arms stretching out, or their hands getting bigger, or their feet getting bigger.

But when you go school shopping, you're like, wow, shoes are bigger, pants are short. Pants are too short, shirts are too tight, shoes don't fit. And you look at them and think, how did you get so big? When did that happen? It was all of the internal changes that we couldn't see happening, but they were happening, compounding one day at a time. It was all coming together. Their growth, their strength, their size.

So if you're in a moment where your empowerment has taken a real hit, please know this. It is not permanent. As permanent as it feels right now, or as permanent as it felt back then, the hit to your empowerment is never permanent. It's simply the next phase of empowerment. So remind yourself that. This hit isn't permanent. It's the next phase. I'm here for it. Have a beautiful week. Enjoy your October. And we'll talk next week. Take great care of yourselves. 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.