



## CASE STUDY

How a school leader deepened trust by shifting her leadership stance from intense to open.



### CLIENT AT A GLANCE

#### Facts:

- Three years as an elementary school assistant principal
- Located in the Northeast
- Reputation of being “intense”
- Logic is the mechanism for understanding
- Three months of coaching

### THE CHALLENGE

KA came to coaching already on a journey to her authentic self. She had reached a point of inner turmoil that she could not reconcile on her own. Intuitively she knew that she could no longer do this work by herself. She recognized that she was outgrowing life as she knew it and was ready to move closer to the life she desired.

### THE RESULT

KA decided to work with a coach for 60-minutes each week for three months. Prior to coming to coaching she had identified the principles that governed how she lived life (honesty and truth).

The weekly coaching sessions focused on supporting KA as she developed

- **awareness** of who she was and who she was becoming,
- **alignment** of her values with her daily interactions
- **actions** that would bring her closer to her authentic self

### THE LEARNING

#### Learning One

Strengthen the connection between her heart and mind by recognizing and valuing the signals her heart offers.

#### Learning Two

Letting go of values and beliefs that no longer served who she is becoming.

#### Learning Three

Creating space to fully feel her emotions so that she responds from a place of clarity.

#### Learning Four

Navigating the world as her authentic self and being heard.



*“I’m not changing who I am, I am learning how to be my authentic self and be heard. I am an emotional being and now I understand that it’s not a bad thing.”*

**KA**

Assistant Principal

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### The Challenge:

KA came to coaching already on a journey to her authentic self. She had reached a point of inner turmoil that she could not reconcile on her own. Intuitively she knew that she could no longer do this work by herself. She recognized that she was outgrowing life as she knew it and was ready to move closer to the life she desired. Prior to coming to coaching she had identified the principles that governed how she lived life (honesty and truth), however whenever she spoke her truth she felt like, **“I was always fighting and my message was being misunderstood.”** This did not sit well in her soul, hence the inner turmoil.

***“I’m very reflective because of the teacher training I received. I was taught that if I am not getting the outcome I’m trying to achieve, I need to look inward to see what I might be contributing to the outcome. I wanted to find out what was going on with me.”***

KA makes sense of the world in a logical and linear way. In her mind logical thinking was directly connected with what was right. Logical thinking was valuable. For her, logical thinking was devoid of emotions, however, she often found herself emotional.

***“It did not make sense to me that people could follow my logic and disagreed with me. I wanted people to see me as a good person so I was relentless until they agreed with me because if they disagreed with me, I thought they would see me negatively. I was trying to do what was right or perceived right instead of responding as my true authentic self. Doing what I assumed was the right way was causing more issues for me and others. I was not responding from my heart. Logic thinking kept me in my head and I ignored the information from my body.”***

She found herself becoming angry and shutting down or avoiding the person or situation. Growing up she learned that emotions were a sign of weakness and vulnerability.

***“I was raised to believe that emotions were bad and you need to push them down. It became my way to cope with how I feel about things.”***

Coaching helped her see that the inner turmoil she was experiencing was because she was fighting with herself by ignoring her emotions and what was happening in the other parts of her body. Through coaching she learned that it's okay to feel emotions. She noticed that when she leaned into emotions, things fell into place for what she needed and desired.

***“I was trying to give people what they wanted or fighting them. Now I fully feel emotions and respond in a way that feels right for me, letting my moral compass and values guide my decisions.”***

### **The Learning:**

She learned to respond with logic and heart.

***“When I notice myself becoming emotional I take a step back and question and name what I'm feeling. I experience the emotion fully and articulate what I want, need and desire. I am more present in the moment and giving 100% of my attention to what is in front of me.”***

As a leader, coaching has helped KA be more accepting.

***“Because of the way my brain works, I thought that if someone followed my logic they would agree that something didn't make sense. It was impossible for them to have a different opinion if they followed the logic. It was very clear. However, if they had a different opinion it was hard for me to accept their opinion. I needed to understand so that I could agree. Coaching helped me learn that understanding doesn't have to be agreeing.”***

She recognized that holding on to her old beliefs about agreeing kept her in turmoil. She was able to let go of the attachment to agreeing.

***“Once I accept that even with understanding someone's thought I can easily say I disagree and choose what I use my energy on. I now know how to deal with things. I know what to put down and release. I understand that we can disagree and still be whole. I can validate myself. I don't need external validation. Understanding is acceptance of different perspectives. I've learned to understand perspective by looking for connections between the different perspectives.”***

By looking for connections she learned to seek common ground between perspectives. Now she is better able to pick up on clues about how people work. She asks questions to uncover the stories that people hold on to. She has become more collaborative. Most importantly, now she speaks so that others can hear her without being intimidated by her.

***“I’m not changing who I am, I am learning how to be my authentic self and be heard. I am an emotional being and now I understand that it’s not a bad thing.”***

**The Result:**

To be a transformational leader who can support teachers, she had to learn how to create restorative relationships. She has learned to put down the “you’re an adult, just do it” mindset because she understands that everyone needs space to feel emotions. She shared with me that she is noticing that since she is her authentic self, teachers trust that they can come to her because she holds space for emotions.

***“I’m being true to my core values of honesty and truth. I can make space for them to be who they are.”***