



## Episode 74: What's Your Decision-Making Style

I'm Emily P. Freeman and welcome to The Next Right Thing. You're listening to episode 74.

This is a podcast all about making decisions - whether you're chronically hesitant and tend to be a decision-avoider OR if you're someone who makes a lot of decisions on the daily and, while you may be confident in making them, the sheer volume of decisions has worn you out.

This is also a place for you if just need a little white space or a few minutes away from the constant stream of information and the sometimes delightful but also distracting hum of entertainment.

For a few minutes each week, you've come to the right place for a thoughtful story, a little prayer, and a simple next right step.

Over the past year and a half of hosting this podcast, one thing (of many) I've learned about the decision making process is this: every decision is unique to the person, and every person is unique to the decision.

Spoken plainly, we all approach our decisions from our own unique point of view, our own set of personal filters, and a particular posture that's baked in to our personality. Today's episode is my attempt to narrow all of that uniqueness down to three simple categories we'll call your decision-making style.

Listen in.

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Before I jump in to describing the decision-making categories, I want to tell you I've designed a simple quiz to help you determine your style if you don't already know. If you haven't taken the quiz yet, it's short, it's fun, and it's helpful so I'll tell you at the end how to get to it!

Think about this question for a minute.

When you have a big decision to make in a short amount of time, which of these statements is most true of you:

I tend to wait too long to make it and then I miss my window.

I tend to act too soon and then only later realize my mistake.

I ask everyone around me their opinion on what they think I should do.

I immediately start to gather every possible fact and detail.

Or maybe you haven't related to a single statement that I've just mentioned because you have zero trouble making even the most difficult decisions in the shortest amount of time and you can't figure out what all the fuss is about.

Or what about this:

Think about a decision you've made in the past that you've later come to regret. Did you regret that decision because you failed to trust yourself? Was it because the outcome negatively affected people around you? Do you regret it because you chose before knowing all your options? Did you know it was wrong and you did it anyway? Did the outcome embarrass you or make you look bad?

Or, once again, are you scratching your head because quite frankly you don't ever regret your decisions?

No matter how you answered (or didn't answer) those questions, what they all point to is that each of us approach our decisions differently and we also *evaluate* the outcomes of our decisions differently.

While there are of course as many ways to approach and evaluate a decision as there are people, I'll simplify it for the sake of conversation by saying we all see the world, including our decisions, through one of three primary postures: through our head (our thinking self), our heart (our feeling self) or our gut (our intuiting self).

I hope it's obvious but incase it's not, I did not come up with these three categories for decision making. I want to make that clear so that you know that I know that I'm not making this up. And without getting too deep into it, if you are a student of the Enneagram you may be well versed in thinking about personality and motivation from behind your choices from the perspective of head, heart, and gut or intuition.

When it comes to your decision making style here are 3 things to keep in mind:

### **1 - One is not better or worse than another.**

I don't know if someone ever said this to me directly or if I just picked it up along the way, but somehow I came to believe that feelings are not to be trusted under any circumstance and decisions are to be made based on truth and facts.

Of course, it's true that feelings cannot *always* be trusted to tell us the exact truth, it doesn't mean we should discount them altogether. Ignoring our feelings or emotions in decision making puts a muzzle on an important part of our soul. Our feelings might not always lead us to a fact, but they do always offer information. And as curious, soulful decision makers, collecting information is an important part of the process.

When determining your decision making style, be careful not to elevate one over another. That brings us to the second thing to keep in mind:

## **2 - Each style brings its share of gifts and burdens.**

For example, as a person who leads with your intuition, you bring wisdom and perspective the rest of us may be unaware of but you may also struggle trusting yourself when you're in a difficult place.

If you lead with your heart, you have an inroad to how our decisions may impact the people around us in positive or negative ways but you may also care too much what other people think.

If you lead with your head, you bring a grounded objectivity to the table when we're making decisions but you may become stuck in your decision making when you don't have all the facts.

In times of indecision, what a gift it is to have the giftedness of others to depend on when we get stuck. So, I hope you are starting to see how we need each other to make our most soulful decisions?

## **3 - Your decision making style is not a fence but a gate.**

In other words, it's a wonderful thing to know about yourself, your decision-making style, but only if it helps open you up to prayer, growth, and community.

The best kind of self-discovery assessments, even the fun ones like the one I created, they reveal something true about us but also invite us into something deeper. And so it goes for your decision making style. Though you may be one who leads with her head, this does not mean you are a head in a box (though at times you may wish that were true). This means you can begin with what comes natural and then look around for other resources to help you see what perhaps you are unable to see on your own.

Receive the gifts your tendency has to offer, and then be prayerfully open to God and the giftedness of others as you continue to be curious about what you may not naturally be able to know, be able to see, or understand on your own.

Your decision making style is a starting point, not an ending point. It doesn't define you but it can *direct you*. Listen for your strengths, look for help in your weaknesses.

Knowing your decision making style is a simple way to begin to name something that may have previously been unnamed in your life. And if you've listened to this podcast for any amount of time, I hope you know by now the importance we place on naming the unnamed things when it comes to discerning your next right thing.

Maybe knowing your style will help you better understand the conflict that always arrive in your marriage around decision about money, schooling, or time management.

It could help you understand why you put things off or, on the flip side, why you can't rest until a decision is made.

We make our best decisions when we are able to access all parts of our soul - our thoughts, our emotions, and our intuition. We make our best decisions when we are finally able to trust ourselves in the presence of God, knowing that no matter what we choose, he will be with us. We make our best decisions when we remember we are loved, we are safe, and we are free.

In closing, I'll offer a bit of truth that may sound strange at first if you've never thought about it, but here we go anyway: Though your soul is important in the decision making process, even your soul is not the deepest part of you. There is an even deeper well within you, beneath your thoughts, beneath your emotions, and all those gut feelings. This is the you that has been made new, where the river of life overflows the banks and, at the same time, where the water is still and calm and soothing. Here is where your life is hidden with Christ in God, where what you want is what he wants, where his kingdom always reigns, where your heart beats strong and sure, and where you'll always find the deepest rest and the truest welcome.

That's why we practice stillness and silence, so that we can hear that living water rushing beneath the surface, to remember our deepest reality, and to access the inner knowing that comes when we remember in Christ we are loved, we are safe, and we are free.

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Thanks for listening to episode 74 of The Next Right Thing.

If you want to take the quiz to help you know and better understand your decision making style, just go to [nextrightthingbook.com](http://nextrightthingbook.com) and click on take the quiz and you'll get your video results within minutes.

It's fast, it's free and you can take it now.

As hopefully you know, our book releases on April 2, *The Next Right Thing* book that's 3 weeks from today, and I've already mentioned if you pre-order it, not only will it arrive the day or maybe the day after release in the US, you will also get Discern+Decide, my brand new class that will help you design a personal and communal rhythm of life and it will of course, help you to integrate your own decision making style with the two styles that might not be as dominate but are equally important.

Another bonus you'll get for pre-ordering the book is when you do, we'll send you the audiobook when it becomes available for absolutely free.

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As always, thanks for listening and I'll see you next time!