



## 160: The Welcoming Prayer

I'm Emily P. Freeman, and welcome to The Next Right Thing. You're listening to episode 160.

This is a podcast about making decisions, but also about making a life. If you struggle with decision fatigue, chronic hesitation, or if you just need a few minutes away from the constant stream of information, and this sometimes delightful, but also distracting hum of entertainment, you're in the right place for a thoughtful story, a little prayer, and a simple next right step. The Next Right Thing guided journal officially releases today. I'll tell you more about that at the end of the show. And, of course, you can visit [emilypfreeman.com/journal](http://emilypfreeman.com/journal) to learn more. But first, a word from this episode's sponsor, KiwiCo. The new year is upon us, and many of the conversations happening in my life right now are focused on looking ahead. I'm more at home in a space of reflection, I'll be honest, but even I can't resist the exciting energy surrounding a new year and the potential for things we might discover.

That's why I'm thrilled to partner with KiwiCo, as they continue to bring exciting new discoveries to kids of all ages. KiwiCo creates innovative and accessible art, science and geography projects that are delivered right to your door each month, and there's a great line for everyone. As you may know, my kids are growing faster by the minute, and all are well into their teen years, but that didn't stop any of us from loving the clay that arrived in our maker crate. I loved working together to turn an artistic vision into a real fun and functional product. If you're looking for new ways to encourage your child's creativity and curiosity, KiwiCo will do the legwork for you. With different crates for kids of all ages, there's something for everyone on your list, even yourself. KiwiCo is redefining learning with hands-on projects that build confidence, creativity, and critical thinking skills. Get 30% off your first month, plus free shipping on any crate line with code, *nextrightthing*, all one word, at [kiwico.com](http://kiwico.com). That's 30% off your first month at [kiwico.com](http://kiwico.com) with code, *nextrightthing*. Now, onto today's episode. Listen in.

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Well, I don't know about you, but I have a lot of songs in my head today. Songs like Frozen's Let It Go, and Taylor's Shake It Off, and Kelly Clarkson's Stronger. And if I'm not careful, I might just break out in song, but I don't have the rights to use these songs on the podcast so, we're just going to move on along. In fact, that's what all the songs are about actually, and often, what this time of year encourages. A moving on along, a new start, a letting go, a shaking loose of old skins and embracing a new kind of strength. There's a subtle message in there. I don't know if you hear it like I do. That growing and maturing means releasing. And maybe it does, eventually. But what if part of releasing is allowing? What if shaking it off without first holding it out, only means it will come back around again? And maybe not in very kind ways next time. What if letting go starts with letting in?

My word for the year in 2020 was the word welcome. In January of last year, I was prepared to open my arms to whatever the year would bring, optimistic about the future and ready to welcome the gifts and the anxieties alike, at least I thought I was ready. But January came riding in on a tidal wave of loneliness, and I nearly thought I'd drown in the flotsam. I reached out, I made an effort to connect, I cried a lot, but things weren't working out the way I wanted them to, and nothing really seemed to help. My only option was to revisit that centering word that I had pre decided was going to be important to me somehow that year, the word welcome. I talked about it here on the podcast, at least I sort of did. You can check out episode 114, Welcome Your Loneliness, if you want to hear more of that in real-time.

I still don't think loneliness always has a straight line to an answer like I said then. And a year ago, I mentioned that when we feel lonely, the goal isn't to get rid of the lonely feelings. So, what is the goal? And what is our next right thing then? There could be a lot of different answers, but I think every one of them has to do with welcoming the loneliness in. It already is, so let it be. For some, that might not seem like a very empowering message, especially this time of year, but aren't we tired of pushing away what's really true? Aren't we finished with pretending? With bootstrap pulling? With believing we're already behind? With the shame that comes with comparison? And the anger that comes with unforgiveness? And with feeling everybody else's feelings except our own?

Don't we maybe want to move forward in a different kind of way? Not just letting it go, whatever it is, but letting it be, and then letting ourselves become the person we're becoming. There's a prayer by father Thomas Keating called, The Welcoming Prayer, and it's one I have held dear, and have also wanted to push away. But when you choose the word welcome, for your word of the year, as I did last year, then it's a prayer you will come back to, for better or for worse. Today, I want to invite you to pray The Welcoming Prayer along with me, and consider whatever you might be holding today, or even more, what you might be working hard to let go. Is it loneliness? Fear? Confusion? Anger? Is it angst? Heartbreak? Heaviness? Or sorrow? For a moment, let's make a little space for it. Tip your hat to it. Say hello. And let's pray this prayer together.

Welcome, welcome, welcome. I welcome everything that comes to me today because I know it's for my healing. I welcome all thoughts, feelings, emotions, persons, situations, and conditions. I let go of my desire for power and control. I let go of my desire for affection, esteem, approval and pleasure. I let go of my desire for survival and security. I let go of my desire to change any situation, condition, person, or myself. I open to the love and presence of God, and God's action within. May it be so within and around us, as we do our next right thing in love, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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Thanks for listening to episode 160 of The Next Right Thing. I hope this simple practice of praying The Welcoming Prayer can be just one more rung on the trellis upon which your rhythm of life can continue to grow, because while it's true, this is a podcast about making decisions. The bigger truth is our daily decisions are actually making our lives. As always, you can find me online at [emilypfreeman.com](http://emilypfreeman.com) or on Instagram at Emily P. Freeman. As I mentioned at the top of the episode, that journal I've been talking about for months, well, it's available for real, starting today.

You should be able to find it online or in bookstores. And if your favorite book seller doesn't have it, you

could always request it. If you're like, "Emily, I was all ready to let it go and shake it off, and now you're telling me to welcome. Oh, why are you the worst?" Well, put down that shaking fist, and pick up a pen and a copy of *The Next Right Thing* journal, because I really and truly believe, down in my bones, that following the simple practices in this journal will make welcoming and letting go a more natural part of your monthly rhythm, so that when the end of the year comes, there may not be so much you feel the need to shake off after all.

I hope you'll check it out. Again, you can learn more about the journal and find links of bookstores that are carrying it right now at [emilypfreeman.com/journal](http://emilypfreeman.com/journal), and I hope you'll check it out. If you do get a copy, tag me on Instagram at [@emilypfreeman](https://www.instagram.com/emilypfreeman) or even better, or both, leave a review on Amazon or Barnes and Noble, or wherever you purchase the book. That's always helpful for other readers to be able to find it. Well, thanks so much for listening in and I'll see you next time.