



Episode 43: Receive Silence

I'm Emily P. Freeman and welcome to The Next Right Thing. You're listening to episode 43.

Our next several weeks will look a little different, as I am working hard to create space in my own life so that I can help you do the same.

For me, that means even shorter episodes than I usually offer on Tuesdays - less directive, more reflective.

So if this is your first time listening in, just know we're operating on a summer schedule around here.

For that reason, I won't have our usual outro at the end of these episodes in order to allow you to transition into your own time of reflection if you wish.

Because of that, I'll tell you now if you want to connect with me beyond the podcast, you can find me on Instagram [@emilypfreeman](https://www.instagram.com/emilypfreeman) or online at emilypfreeman.com. You can also find a complete transcript of all of our episodes at thenextrightthingpodcast.com

In a brief bit of show news, this month marks the 10 month anniversary of The Next Right Thing podcast. This time last year I remember sitting with my friend Kendra on the side of our neighborhood pool. She knew I was planning to start a podcast and we were talking about what that might look like.

"I think I'm gonna call it *The Next Right Thing*," I told her matter of factly. We both had on sunglasses, facing the pool with our eyes on our kids but our ears tuned to one another.

"Yeah, that sounds right to me," she said. And that was that.

I wouldn't have believed just 10 months later, that this podcast would have over one million downloads. Just this week we crossed that huge milestone and this is my heartfelt thanks to you for understanding what I've been trying to do here, for coming back each week for more, and especially for your reviews and your kind notes and emails, telling me how this podcast has helped you through a big decision or a time of transition.

What a gift to serve you in this way.

So let's get to it! If you're in a season of transition, waiting, general foggy or if you've ever searched "how to make a decision" on the internet, then you're in the right place.

We, all of us, are always making some kind of decision from simple things like what to make for dinner tonight to more complicated ones like how to best care for an aging parent or the pros and cons of a career change.

My hope for you is that for these few minutes, you can take some time off from all the planning and scanning you've been up to, all the measurements, the calculations, predictions, estimations, and considerations.

Receive a little space for your soul to breathe so that you can discern your next right thing in love.

"Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts; And see if there be any hurtful way in me, And lead me in the everlasting way." Psalm 139:23-24

This is the Word of the Lord, it is absolutely true, and given to us in love.

When we sit in silence, it's true, we may not be doing anything. But we are un-doing so much.

The soul is made to receive. In the presence of God, we experience a right fulness. But like a bucket left out in the yard, it will hold anything that comes along to fill it - rain, pollen, a leaf, a stick, a bug, a chewing gum wrapper, a popsicle stick, petals from a flower blowing around by the wind. The soul receives input all day long, from both welcome and unwelcome sources.

Where is the output? When are we regularly disposing of the soul clutter we no longer need? Silence is the act of picking up the bucket and dumping it out onto the ground, then listening for the voice of God. Asking God to search and know our heart, our anxious thoughts, and any hurtful way within us is one step toward releasing what we no longer need - fear, bitterness, comparison, inadequacy, outcomes, control, and all those timelines.

In silence, the way is made wide for us, and a willingness grows to continue to face the life within and not worry so much about what we may or may not hear.

This wide way leaves room for courage to move toward others in love without a complicated agenda.

It leaves room for energy to be ourselves in the presence of others without fear, pretense, or defensiveness.

It leaves room for a hopeful vision for the future, one filled with the companionship of Jesus rather than the accusations of fear.

May we find a few moments to sift through all the input our soul has received.

As we walk through the events of yesterday in our mind, the conversations, the interactions, the love expressed or withheld, the praise given and received, the harsh words spoken, the times we bit our tongue - may we be willing to hold on to what we need and let the rest fall gently away.

May we receive the space to access courage and creativity, and quiet to hear the voice of God.

“Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts; And see if there be any hurtful way in me, And lead me in the everlasting way.”

May our friend, Jesus, meet you in the silence as he gently leads you to your next right thing in love.