



## Episode 35: Be Kind (with Candace Cameron Bure)

I'm Emily P. Freeman and welcome to The Next Right Thing. You're listening to episode 35.

If this is your first time joining me, I'm especially glad you're here. I often say this is a podcast for the second-guessers, the chronically hesitant, or anyone who suffers from decision fatigue.

But even if you aren't one to second-guess yourself or never have trouble making a single decision, it could be that you may just need a little white space in your day, a speed bump in your week, a few minutes break from the constant stream of information and entertainment.

Today's episode is a little different than the previous 34 episodes. I'm trying something new this week and because of that, you may have already noticed that today's episode is a little longer than our usual ones. But it's worth it because while I love sharing my own perspective each week, I'm also always on the look-out for someone who would make a great guest for this show. That's right, I said guest. Well, this week, I found her.

I know, I don't host guests on this show, ever. At least, I haven't yet. But I'm fascinated by the decision-making process that other people go through. And so while I don't intend on changing the format of this podcast, I'm so grateful today for the opportunity I got to sit down with actress, producer, and author Candace Cameron Bure and ask her about some pivotal decisions in her life and career.

We'll hear the answers together and I'm so excited about it. We'll also dive deep into a character trait that is not only helpful but vital for us to develop as we make our decisions both the small decisions of everyday life and the big ones that could *change* our life.

Listen in.

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I tell people all the time to pay attention to what makes them cry. Not because it unlocks some kind of deep secret meaning of life, but because it simply helps connect us to the deep, secret parts of ourselves. When something moves you enough to bring tears, lean in and listen up.

Maybe our tears are tiny messengers, secret keepers of the most vulnerable kind, sent to deliver a most important message. Here is where your heart beats strong. Here is a hint to your design. Here is a gift from your inner life, sent to remind you those things that make you come alive.

I have a long list of moments where tears have served as arrows for me pointing to something I needed to embrace, a truth I longed to remember, or a part of myself I had somehow forgotten. Sometimes it's a conversation, sometimes it's a scene in a movie or a quote from a book. Sometimes, it's a song.

Two songs, in particular, come to mind that brought tears the first time I heard them. The first was when I was at a retreat and the worship leader, Bryan Morykon introduced his band and said he loves playing with them because he can “lean back into them. He doesn't have to carry the burden of leading alone.”

I was feeling particularly lonely at that retreat and considered the gift it is, to be able to trust people enough to lean back into them shortly after that, he played a song with these lyrics:

“Be kind to one another  
Jesus will show you how  
Keep those words of life in your heart  
So they spill right out of your mouth.”

Years later, singer/songwriter Andrew Peterson came to our church and sang songs from his album, *The Burning Edge of Dawn*. He sat at the piano and told a story about this 12-year-old daughter, how she was in a particularly emotional season of life and tended to be super hard on herself.

He started to sing the song he wrote for her it's called *Be Kind to Yourself*.

As he played, I felt like that 12-year-old girl, wanting so desperately to believe that I could be kind to myself but not exactly sure what that would look like.

So what does kindness have to do with making decisions?

I don't know about you, but when I'm standing on this side of an unmade decision, I can become pretty hard on myself. I scold myself for being indecisive. I lose patience with myself for being unsure.

If it seems the decision should be simple, I question why I'm making it so hard. If the decision is obviously a difficult one, I play out harsh scenarios in my mind of what might happen if I make the wrong one.

When we aren't yet sure what our next right thing is, a place that's always safe to start? Be kind with yourself and with others.

Today, I'm happy to try something a little different than we've done before on this podcast. I have a guest joining me who has written a whole book about kindness.

The book is called *Kind is the New Classy* and the author's name is Candace Cameron Bure. For years, we watched her play DJ Tanner on *Full House*, the second show in the TGIF lineup — please tell me you remember that?! Perfect Strangers, Family Matters, Full House, and Step by Step. Yes, I watched them all. Now my kids watch her in the same role on Fuller House on Netflix.

But in the time between the teenage DJ Tanner I remember and the grown up one they watch today, a lot has happened.

In fact, there were a lot of pivotal moments in Candace's career that could have led to a lot of second guessing.

When it comes to kindness she writes this “Kindness isn't looking to climb the social ladder, win a debate, or gain something from the relationship. Rather kindness seeks to *give*—without

thought or condition of return. A one-size-fits-all policy toward all people, in the recognition that all people are made in the image of God.”

Personally, being kind takes courage I haven’t fully understood until the last few years. For a long time, I used the words “nice” and “kind” interchangeably. But over time, I’m beginning to see the difference.

That’s where I want to start with Candace.

**Candace:** There is courtesy which is very nice it’s also being very kind but it’s more meaningful than just being nice. Being kind really looks at a person for who they are. It helps them inherently feel valuable and being kind in ways of putting other people before yourself. Kindness, kindness it has a ripple effect because it makes us feel loved and is joyful and it is something that makes us want to extend it and give it to other people.

**Emily:** I think one of my favorite things you said about this is kindness is seeing people. That is such a nice and simple definition. I think that is so true.

**Candace:** I should’ve just said it that way. (laughing) It’s in my book.

**Emily:** Aw, that’s good. I think you bring this out in it, it makes sense to me Niceness can sometimes be a little bit more about fear and kindness is a little bit more about love.

**Candace:** Yeah, yeah.

**Emily:** Would you agree with that?

**Candace:** Absolutely. That is what I was trying to say, you just say it so much better.

**Emily:** I knew you were and we are just going to give that to you and we will just quote you on that. How bout that?

**Candace:** OK.

**Emily:** You write how, in your line of work in Hollywood, and probably just in the world, in general, we are always just looking for the next best thing. But for you as an actor, you really need to discern what the next best thing is for yourself. And you say when you are on a roll, you don't leave this industry. But that is exactly what you did. So I would love to hear how you kind of take us back to that time when you say you were working since you were five years old, you were a baby. And then sort of if you can just kind of walk us through the trajectory of five years old to twenty-one and kind of what happened next.

**Candace:** Sure. So I really was working my whole life starting doing commercials at five and of course was on Full House between the ages of ten and eighteen and then continued on with ever famous TV movies in my young adult age and then I met my husband when I was eighteen. Married at twenty and had my first baby at twenty-two. That was when I had a really big decision to make and I had always thought I was going to continue working and I would always be a working mom. And yet after having my first child and having the kind of career that I did as well as the kind of career that my husband had where he was a professional hockey player for twelve years in the NHL. I knew that I wasn't going to be able to be the kind of parent I wanted to be if and we wouldn't be as a couple if we were both working and traveling because that is what both of our jobs involved.

And so, we had to make a decision who was going to stay home and it was one of those decisions that I knew I wanted to. I wanted to be that person and also recognize that the life of a professional athlete has a very small window of when they can do that. So it was a really obvious choice. And yet my career had been really flourishing because I was on one of the biggest television shows in the 90's and had gone into the TV movies. It can be a very tricky time to transition from a child actor into an adult actor and that is exactly what I had been doing and was now in my early 20's and it had been going smoothly. And then to decide, Hey, I'm now married and have children or my first baby and we will probably going to have more and I want to be with them, but I'm going to have to drop my entire career and I don't know if it is ever going to be there for me again.

*Candace would say it's a gift to be able to make this decision at all — continue working or stay home with children. But no matter which way you look at it, these choices come with their own version of joy, of grief, and of fear.*

**Candace:** It was really scary, I'll admit, because I had always wanted to work and so it was a really difficult transition for the first few years to surrender to motherhood and not just for fear of losing out on ever working again but also having a day to day life of working every single day to then being at home full time, changing diapers, making meals. Like that is all my life involved. It was like I felt like I had lost my identity and I didn't know who I was anymore.

*It took about 2-3 years before she was able to fully embrace her new role as a mom. She says it was during this time that she finally slowed down enough to explore what her faith was all about.*

**Candace:** I had called myself a Christian for many years but I wasn't actually walking with God. It was just a category, a list of who I am. Oh, I'm a mom, Oh, I'm a Christian, or whatever. It didn't really change who I was in any way. But because I wasn't working anymore I started thinking about religion in the sense of oh how am I going to raise my kids and what do I want them to believe and know and that is when I thought I should probably read my Bible and see what that even says. And it started, that's what really started my walk with God. And it changed me from the inside out. It made me who I am today. But I know that had I not stayed home for those ten years, that is foundational to developing a relationship with Jesus.

*Altogether, Candace stayed home with her kids for a full ten years. As they got a bit older, she began to say yes to some speaking engagements. It wasn't acting, but it checked the boxes of some of the categories of the kinds of things she most loved to do.*

**Candace:** Yeah, so I started speaking at women's conferences when I really grew in my faith and I just wanted to share Jesus and my testimony with everyone. And my brother really had encouraged me to start doing that. Because I was just like I'll share with my neighbors, I'll share with the ladies in Bible Study because they will listen to me. But my brother, Kirk, was like hey Candace, they have these conferences and maybe you could go share at a conference, and I was like wow, I didn't know those existed. That is what started me on the conference circuit.

*She says she loved speaking because it gave her a place to share Jesus. It provided the interaction with people that she so craved, and it also gave her the opportunity to be on stage again.*

**Candace:** So I really did enjoy it but there came a time when I was just burnt out from the speaking circuit and I actually felt guilty thinking well, God you gave me this platform and I love sharing. I love sharing You with everyone. What if I stop doing this? Are you going to be upset with me? I mean a billion questions came into my mind. Also the security of knowing I'm going to have that interaction with people. I'm going to be on a stage and I'm doing it for kingdom goodness. I don't really want to leave that unless I try and go back to work in the entertainment industry, and it doesn't work out for me then maybe the speaking events won't be there anymore either.

*A billion questions. Waffling back and forth. The what-ifs lingered. She has already quit acting once. Now, even though she was burnt out on the speaking, what if she let it go and was left with nothing on the other side?*

*She was at a crossroads. Here's what happened next.*

**Candace:** And so you know we get scared to take that leap of faith, and that's when I don't even know who gave me your book. But I read a book called *A Million Little Ways* and it changed my life course. And you made so much sense to me and while I was reading this, it was, and I read a lot of books but yours was everything to me at that moment and time that I just felt God saying here I dropped this into your lap because I am going to help you wrestle with these decisions and actually make one.

**Emily:** Aw, that is so kind.

**Candace:** So, I was so grateful for your book, because you showed me the difference between primary purpose and secondary purposes and I then had made the decision, Huh, okay, I'm just going to let God take care of all of my fear and worry and this is what I really want to do. What I really want to do is go back to acting. And the timing had been right because my husband had retired from professional hockey and my husband could be home if I needed to travel for work. And we had talked about all of that. And so I thought this is what I really wanted to do but I'm not putting one hundred percent into it because I have to book these speaking engagements a year out, and I might not be available and I don't want to cancel and all of those kinds of things. So I decided, hey I'm just going to put all of the speaking stuff, I'm going to not accept no matter how great or grand it is, and no matter how much they beg or offer, I'm just going to say

no so that I can actually have the opportunity to test the waters if my first love and desire and passion will work out. And It did. And it was like so like right away. And I was like God, Thank you, thank you, I don't know why I didn't trust you.

**Emily:** That is such an ultimate kindness. Talk about Kind is the New Classy. Oh, I love that. You demonstrated such a beautiful kindness to yourself by giving yourself permission to listen to the heartbeat of your own life and to trust that your image bearing identity was worthy to be trusted and could have faith in the God who made you and the way that he made you. And I know that you have talked to women like this because I have to. Women who are afraid, and men too but mostly I talk with women about this, to tap into what makes them come most fully alive because they are afraid that it is selfish, self-motivated, they just want the attention, blah, blah, blah. I am sure for you it is tenfold since you are literally on stage and spotlights and cameras and all that. I imagine that would be magnified but what a lovely kindness to give yourself that time, which felt like a risk, to say no. I'm curious, did you have people asking you to speak, I'm sure it felt like this opportunity was too good to pass up, I can't, or was it like immediately, No, this is not right.

**Candace:** Well, it's both. I had some incredible offers that I could have booked years of my life on conference tours. And yet that wasn't the goal to be working every day of my life or be away from my family but they were wonderful opportunities and I think the challenge for me was always distinguishing, making a choice out of a specific need or want and what I thought God was giving me. I thought God do you want me to do this because it is kingdom work, it is directly kingdom work. I'm talking about you. That has always been the biggest struggle for me. And yet, when I made the decisions to stop and not take any of the offers, I felt like like weight I did not know I was carrying around, fell off of me. So, when the offers did come in that were really great, I was like NO, wow, I am so happy to say no. It was like such a relief for me.

**Emily:** That is remarkable. Isn't it amazing that our bodies know things sometimes before our minds and hearts do. Your body was carrying this weight of a thing and you didn't even know that until you made the decision. I love that. I love how it points out, I think sometimes we wait for that feeling or assurance before a decision is made and actually, it often comes like you just said, after the decision is made.

**Candace:** YEP!

*Sometimes our bodies know things before our minds and hearts do and though Candace wasn't sure if it was best to take herself out of the speaking circuit and step back into acting, once the decision was made, her body gave her the signal she had been waiting for. It was the absence of burden and the presence of peace.*

*In her book, Candace shares a few practical steps to take when confronted with un-kindness that I think can also apply beautifully to decision-making as well.*

*First - take a breath.*

*Second - take a beat. There's no need to rush. Give yourself permission to slow.*

*Third - always consider other people and think about how what you do next will affect them.*

*Fourth - turn to God no matter how small the request.*

**Candace:** There are no little prayers, there is no little anything to God that is too small for Him. I encourage everyone to pray over everything even if you think it is so silly because God is listening and waiting and wants to engage. And then, the last step is to ask for what you want. I think well, it can be for both men and women, sometimes as a woman that wants to be kind and sensitive and compassionate, we think we can come off as arrogant or rude or mean if we ask for what we want, if we are too direct and people are going to think that we are well, you know, a word that I won't use right now, that starts with a 'b'.

(Laughing)

So, learn to have confidence. When you are coming from a place of having thought it through, you have thought of it from the other side of compassion. You have gone to God in prayer, it's okay to be confident and ask for what you want.

*I love her story of finding her way back to acting because it's another example of how a lot of the time, we are forced to decide between two good things and it comes down to simply a question of which one do you want to do? One thing is not better or worse than the other.*

**Emily:** What a kindness, first of all, you have shown to us by joining us for The Next Right Thing Podcast and I also thank you for your kindness in sharing *A Million Little Ways* over the

last couple of years. That's really been, you didn't have to do that but I just love that you are a champion for other voices and I'm just personally very grateful for that. Thank you.

**Candace:** You are so welcome. Thanks for having me on. It was so nice.

*I'm always grateful to hear about other people's decision making process. What about you? What does it look like to extend kindness to others and yourself when you are in the midst of making decisions?*

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In a world where the rhetoric of leaders often sounds more like the taunts of a playground bully, it's easy to lose hope for kindness.

We admit it feels a bit like bringing flowers to a gun fight.

Teach us, Father, how to respond in love and not fear.

Teach us what it means to speak with conviction without using words as weapons.

Teach us to carry both strength and gentleness, to offer kindness even in our anger, to listen before lashing out.

Remind us that kindness is not a nice thought but a natural outcome for every image bearer who lives life in the Spirit.

As we offer kindness to others, may we never forget to extend it to ourselves as well as we make our decisions, walk through the fog, and figure out our next right step.

When we stand at what feels like a crossroads, in every moment of decision, every temptation toward shame or overwhelm, help us to remember you have given us a spirit of love, kindness, gentleness, and self-control.

Show us what it means to offer these gifts to our neighbors, teachers, families, and leaders with confidence, conviction, and a sound mind.

May Your kindness be our steady filter and our sure companion.

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Thanks for listening to Episode 35 of The Next Right Thing.

Candace's new book, *Kind is the New Classy*, released just last week and is available wherever books are sold. I especially love the story that she tells at the very beginning, of a time when Whoopi Goldberg extended such a kindness to her that it made me cry.

And my favorite chapter in the book is Chapter 4 where she talks about Inspiration + Aspiration and how kindness can play a part.

Again, you can grab a copy of *Kind is the New Classy* wherever books are sold.

If you would like to connect with me beyond the podcast, there are several ways to do that.

I post almost daily to Instagram where you can find me @emilypfreeman

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As you consider your own next right thing today, remember its not always about making a right or a wrong decision. Sometimes it's simply about this — are you moving forward in love and not fear? Are you choosing gratitude? Are you choosing to be kind?

A final reminder from Candace's new book, *Kind is the New Classy*. She writes:

“Kindness is a choice. Sometimes it’s an easy one to make, and we reap immediate benefits. Other times it’s one of the hardest choices you’ll ever make, and extending grace to someone who has hurt you or riled you will go against everything your heart is telling you. My advice? Choose it anyway.”

Thanks for listening, and I’ll see you next week.