



Episode 77: Do The Next Right Thing

I'm Emily P. Freeman and welcome to The Next Right Thing. You're listening to episode 77.

This is a podcast about making decisions. It's also a podcast about making a life.

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.

And today? I hope your next right thing is to go pick up a copy of *The Next Right Thing* book!

Today is the official US release date of my new book, *The Next Right Thing*, born directly out of this podcast. You guys, you can now go to a bookstore near you and get a copy of *The Next Right Thing* in your very own hands. And? I'm thrilled to tell you that I recently found out after publishing 5 books, this will be my first book that will also be available in airports! I think one of my books was in like airports for a hot second but this is my first real airport book and I'm strangely super giddy about it.

So, if you're traveling, pop in to one of those airport bookstores and grab a copy or at least snap a photo and tag me @emilypfreeman so I can see the proof! It's a beautiful book if I do say so myself - hardcover, charcoal black, green inside cover, no book jacket — I am obsessed with the design of this book.

Short story shorter? The Next Right Thing book is here and I hope, if this podcast has been meaningful to you in any way, I hope you'll grab a copy for yourself and one to share with someone you love.

More good news? We're extending the offer for the free bonuses through Friday, April 5th! That's this week, so if you get a copy of the book from your local bookstore or from your favorite online retailer, just grab your receipt number and go on over to nextrightthingbook.com to redeem your free gifts by this Friday night - that includes the audio version of the book.

Last night I gathered in my own hometown with a small crowd of around 200 people to celebrate the book release and the good news for you who couldn't join us live is we recorded it! We'll be sharing portions of the night later this week in a bonus episode but first today, in this special release day episode, I wanted to share a simple story that I hope will encourage you in your next right thing

Listen in.

My last two years of college I was a commuter student and every day I dreaded the task of finding a decent parking space. I tried to arrive on campus almost a full hour before my classes started so I could ease the frustration of frantically circling campus for a space. To my great delight, I discovered a radio program hosted by author Elisabeth Elliot that helped me pass the time. The program, you might remember it, was called *Gateway to Joy*, and it was broadcast daily from 11:15 to 11:30 a.m. Countless mornings, I sat in my car before class and I listened to her open her show with these words: "You are loved with an everlasting love and underneath are the everlasting arms." At that time in my life in college, her daily assurance of God's everlasting love was a welcome mantra, one I embraced and repeated often.

Well, something else she quoted, both on her show and in some of her books, was a poem called "Do the Next Thing." She never offered the author of that poem only citing it as an anonymous writer.

Years later, when I started work on this podcast all about doing the next right thing, I became real curious about where that poem came from, the one I heard her repeat so often on that radio show.

One afternoon I was determined to use the powers of the world wide web and do a little digging until finally I found it. The poem was, as far as I could tell, originally printed in a little book called *Ye Nexte Thynges*, spelled in Old English, by Eleanor Amerman Sutphen, published in 1897.

Now the book itself is a bit odd but also sort of charming, about a group of young people who wanted to see other young people active and involved in their church and committed to God. They were led by a minister named Rev. Mr. Bacon. Here's a few lines from the book about him:

“His desire was to get his people out of the old ruts, and to start them forward along new lines. But the spirit of self-satisfaction is a hard ghost to lay; and the young minister realized, therefore, that his task was not an easy one.”

The story goes on and it's not exactly a riveting page-turner, but a close read shows a depth of spirit and truth that a casual glance doesn't at first reveal. But more than the contents of the book, I was most interested in what comes before chapter 1-because there in the first pages of the Sutphen book is the poem that Elisabeth Elliot quoted so often on her broadcast. It's printed in its entirety and at the end credit is given to its author, Mrs. George A. Paull. A little more research showed her name is actually Minnie and she was a musician, a minister's wife, and a writer.

I tell some of this story in chapter four of my book, but what I don't include in the book is this next part. The day I found this quote on the Internet, I clicked to the front pages of the Google book to find out who the publisher was. And when I saw it printed there I could hardly believe it. That little book called *Ye Next Thing* by Eleanor Amerman Sutphen, the one with this poem by the writer Minnie Paull printed inside, was published in 1897 by Fleming H. Revell company, the very same publishing company who published my book, *The Next Right Thing*, releasing today.

Here we are, 122 years later, still hanging on to this wise advice, still paying attention to what is right before us, still trusting God to tell us what we need to know when we need to know it. When we do our work, offer a prayer, lend a hand, or continue to move through the ordinary tasks of our regular days, we never know how people years from now may be impacted because

of our faithfulness. That's not to say we have to get it all right in fact, Minnie, the woman who wrote that poem, struggled deeply with doubt.

Part of her own journal reveals that. She was a writer so she wrote down a lot of her experience. Here is part of what she says.

"THERE is just one thing to keep me from being blissfully happy, and strangely enough it is the last thing that I ever imagined would trouble me. I wish I could make up my mind about the reality of God. Though I believe in a vague sort of way, I have hours of anxious self-questionings, and cannot bring myself to the intense realization of the truth which I feel to be necessary. I am groping blindly, and though I am trying to see God, yet a cloud is before my eyes, and I cannot even believe that he is behind it."

Isn't that how it goes? This woman who wrote a poem so thoughtful, so faith-filled, she herself recorded her own struggle with doubt and with questions. But she continued forward through mixed motives, through the shadows and the sun, through her own next things even in the midst of her struggles. And now her words continue to encourage us today, all these many years later. She could never have known the impact.

As you continue to carry your decisions with you, we'll use a portion of Mrs. Paull's poem as our prayer. Imagine God walking with you, issuing a kind invitation to release the burden of both heavy and daily decisions into his care.

From an old English parsonage down by the sea
There came in the twilight a message to me;
Its quaint Saxon legend, deeply engraven,
Hath, it seems to me, teaching from heaven;
And through the hours the quiet words ring
Like a low inspiration: "Do the next thing."
Many a questioning, many a fear,
Many a doubt, hath its quieting here.
Moment by moment, let down from heaven,
Time, opportunity, and guidance are given.

Fear not tomorrows, child of the King;
Trust them with Jesus: Do the next thing.
Do it immediately, do it with prayer;
Do it reliantly, casting all care;
Do it with reverence, tracing his hand
Who hath placed it before thee with earnest command.
Stayed on Omnipotence, safe 'neath His wing,
Leave all results, do the next thing.

Thanks for listening to episode 77 of The Next Right Thing.

Can you even believe that story? It might not seem a big deal to you but I got to tell you when I turned to the front of that google book and saw who the publisher was of that book, I could hardly believe it. John came home shortly after that and I was like, John, you are never going to believe this, well I had to buy a copy of the book. I found one on Amazon.

I'll post a photo of the book *Ye Next Thyng* on Instagram and FB today if you want to see it because of *course* I had to buy a copy. You can find me @emilypfreeman on IG or at emilyfreemanauthor on facebook.

I mentioned it before but I'll say it again now — even though the book has officially released, WOO to the HOO!, we've decided to extend those pre-order bonuses through this Friday. So if you got a copy of *The Next Right Thing* today or any time before Friday, whether you ordered online or went into your local bookstore be sure to get all of your free gifts we're offering, including the audiobook, my online class *Discern + Decide*, the 35 page printable workbook, and a special behind the scenes video we created.

Remember we won't know where to send those bonuses unless you tell us, so once you get your book or place your order, head on over to nextrightthingbook.com and enter your order information and email so we know who you are and where to send your gifts. Again, one last

time, that's nextrightthingbook.com and enter your order information and your email and we'll get those bonuses heading your way.

Well, I can't thank you enough for your kind support over the past 19 months — and, I hope, in the months and years to come. It's a joy to serve you each week through these episodes and now I'm grateful to be able to offer you a whole book that I hope will serve as a kind companion to both you and to people you love and want to support in their own decision-making.

I'll close now with the line of dedication in the front of the next right thing book: for anyone who's ever made a pro/con list in the middle of the night.

This books for you. Thanks for listening, and I'll see you next time.