



## 142: Start With Your Senses

I'm Emily P. Freeman and welcome to The Next Right Thing. You're listening to episode 142.

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 the 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.

In our last episode, I shared how I'm redoing my morning routine, or maybe more accurately, how my morning routine is undoing me, inviting me to rethink and reimagine what it means to start my day. When I shared this on my favorite social media, Instagram, a reader, Amy, left a comment. She wrote, "I changed my morning routine to begin with a walk I've never done exercise or movement as the first thing ever. I'm amazed that has actually generated energy and clarity for me in ways that sitting for an hour with a drink and book hasn't."

Well, first of all, thank you Amy, for leaving that comment. And when I read it, I realized I could deeply relate with that thought and it paired really well with what I've been paying attention to in my own life, which is how I often get stuck inside my head and how particularly over the last few months, this has not served me so well.

If you have decisions to make, but feel like you're just circling around the same thoughts, fears, ideas, and possibilities, and you've been stuck inside your head, but you can't find an action to take, to get out of it. Well, I wonder if you would like to journey with me over the course of the next several episodes toward discovering better decision-making habits by engaging our bodies, particularly our five senses. I don't know where this is going to lead us, but I'm ready to find out.

But first a word from this episode sponsor KiwiCo. School, as we've mentioned before, is just slightly different this year for everyone. Whether the kids in your life are going back to school or logging into their virtual classroom from the sofa, that's why KiwiCo is here to help with hands-on science and our projects delivered straight to your door. A few episodes ago, I shared how excited my older kids and I were to make these colorful clay organizers that came with our Maker Crate. I forgot how much I love clay. Our Kiwi crate was a welcome invitation to take a break, put down our screens, work with our hands and stretch our creative muscles together. KiwiCo is redefining play with hands-on projects that build confidence, creativity, and critical thinking skills, whether you're four or 44.

Right now you can get 30% off your first month plus free shipping on any crate line@kiwico.com/nextrightthing. That's K I W I C O.com/nextrightthing. Kiwi co has something, every kid or kid at heart.

Now onto today's episode, listen in.

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I have always been more comfortable inside my head than inside my body. That might sound weird, but if you know, you know. I've lived entire lives inside my head, made choices, and regretted them and changed course inside my head. I've created and recreated scenarios that have never happened in actual real life, but did very much happen in my imagination. And I've had the emotional scars to prove it.

On a day off, I have the capacity to sit in a room for an hour and stare out the window and when I get up, feel physical exhaustion, because I did so much work inside my head. If you were to walk through the room while I'm sitting there, you would think I'm doing nothing and you would be wrong. Recently, I really listened. I don't do this often, but I really listened to an episode. I recorded a year ago with Suzanne Stabile, who is an expert on the Enneagram.

And I can link to that episode, but in it, we talked about my book, *The Next Right Thing*. She had read the book. She pulled out all of this Enneagram wisdom from my book, which maybe I subliminally put in there. Some of it was on purpose, but not all of it. But in that course of relistening to that conversation that I had with her about being a four on the Enneagram, a lot of this came out in the conversation and some of what the giftedness of doing the next right thing has been for me specifically and my personality type.

Well over the years, I've talked at length about my most natural way in which I see the world, which is first through my feelings, then my thoughts. And finally, as a last resort through engaging the world through action. I'm not passing judgment on this tendency of mine. I've talked about that before too, but I am stating this as a starting point for our conversation because while I fully believe in the gifts of being a feeler and a thinker, I also want to spend some time this month with the spiritual practice of paying attention to my five senses, of not valuing the invisible more highly than the visible, of remembering that Jesus came as a human person to earth, even though he was fully God in heaven.

So what does that mean for us that he had a nose, two eyes and a mouth? How does my faith shift and settle when I remember that Jesus had brown skin, food preferences and fingernails?

If you've been stuck in decision fatigue or chronic hesitation, or like me, if you just maybe been stuck period, inside your own head, we talked in our last episode about being maybe in a state of non-routine or, uh, maybe not knowing what your next right thing is, because maybe you've been stuck in your current thing for so long.

Maybe moving out of our heads and into our bodies will do us a fair amount of good. Maybe it will open us up and invite us to uncover something of God or of ourselves that we've yet to see. As we enter into a new month, into new rhythms, a new season, a new routines, it's important to pay attention to what the season not only requires, but also what it invites. So consider this your introductory episode to a four-week series about using our five senses to help us make better decisions. And we'll do it as it applies to several areas of our life.

I hope you'll continue to learn along with me. In her book, *Embracing the Body* (I've quoted this book before in the podcast), author Tara Owen's purposes to communicate how our bodies teach us about God. She quotes Pope John Paul II who wrote this, "The body, in fact, and only the body is capable of making visible what is invisible, the spiritual and the divine. It has been created to transfer into the visible reality of the world, the mystery hidden from eternity in God and thus to be a sign of it."

Tara goes on to write, "It is only in our bodies that we experience God at all. Without them, we cease to exist. When we focus only on our spiritual lives, the interior realm of thought and feeling, we lack foundational understanding and attentiveness to that, which is at the center of our very lives the only vehicle through which God reaches us and we reach others are incarnate, bound in time, utterly beloved bodies."

As we move through the next few weeks together, may we be grateful for our bodies that bear the image of God. May we be grateful for our ability rather than cowering in our inability. Maybe be curious to consider where our five senses might be leading us as we continue to do our next right thing in love.

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Thanks for listening to episode 142 of *The Next Right Thing*.

I hope this simple practice of using your five senses to make better decisions can be just one more rung on the trellis upon which your rhythm of life can continue to grow because it's true, this is a podcast about making decisions, but the bigger truth is that our daily decisions are actually making our lives.

It's been a long time since I've done any type of series on the podcast, so I'm actually really looking forward to this one. I'm sure I'll be sharing reflections and stories on Instagram, where you can find me at @emilypfreeman, which is also my favorite place to hang online. If you haven't caught onto that yet as always, you can also find emilypfreeman.com and click on "Podcast" to find a transcript to this and every episode we've ever done.

In closing, a short, but not so simple question for you to carry into your day, if hope had a smell, what would it be?

Thanks for listening. And I'll see you next time.