



152: Say Words With Your Out Loud Voice

I'm Emily P. Freeman, and welcome to The Next Right Thing. You're listening to episode 152.

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.

Last week, I shared that we're celebrating 10 million downloads of The Next Right Thing, and I invited you to share in your own words what the podcast has meant to you, or about a particular decision that you've made as a result of listening. And I'm pleased to say that we received so many wonderful messages in your own voice. And I don't know if I was just particularly emotional or if it was because of these pandemic times that we're in. But listening to you in your own words, talk about what the podcast has meant to you. The podcasts that I just make in my literal closet. Well, it was emotional for me. Like I said, it was a combination of things as to why, but mainly I think it was just evidence that we are all struggling right now that we're lonely, physically, vocationally, relationally, all kinds of ways. And then even the smallest word of encouragement can go a really long way. As I reflected on that experience of hearing your voices and receiving your words true to form, I was inspired and I was inspired so much that I wanted to explore why and talk about the power of using our words here on the podcast.

Yes, I know I'm getting super meta right now. It's all I have to work with. So I hope that you'll travel with me. But before we get started, I'd like to tell you about this episode sponsor Skillshare.

Skillshare is an online learning community dedicated to inspiring both the creative and curious with thousands of interesting classes. You can explore at your own pace. As we head into a season of shorter days and more crowded schedules. Skillshare could be the perfect opportunity to take a break and learn something new. Two classes in particular caught my attention this month. And I think you might like them too for sup is find your style by Andy J Pizza. Andy is an illustrator and designer and he's created five exercises for you to unlock your creative identity. Spoiler alert: He encourages you to use style dice. And let me tell you, they are so fun. The second class is iPhone photography by Amelie Satzger. Amelie shows you how to create gorgeous conceptual photos on an iPhone without clunky gear or expensive software. She even touches on color psychology, which I loved as a Skillshare member. You'll get unlimited access to thousands of inspiring classes, featuring hands-on projects and community feedback. Explore your creativity [skillshare.com/NRT](https://www.skillshare.com/NRT). The first 1000 people to use this special Next Right Thing link will get a free trial of Skillshare premium membership. That's [skillshare.com/NR](https://www.skillshare.com/NR). And the first 1000 users will receive free access to premium classes for a limited time.

Now onto today's episode, listen in.

Core values at hope writers is clarity. Brene Brown famously said, "Clear is kind. Unclear is unkind." We tweak that a little bit. So we often say, "Clarity is kindness," but either way the remains the heart of the message, loving, respecting, and honoring other people cannot be separated from clarity. When we lack clarity, we're left to fill in the blanks for ourselves. And I don't know about you, but generally, we fill those blanks in with bad news.

That's not to say that everyone who isn't being clear is being unkind or unloving on purpose. Sometimes that's true, but certainly not always, but we all know how confusion, heartbreak, resentment, misunderstanding, and fear often grow in the shadow of someone else's unspoken good intentions. So clarity is kindness. That's something we say a lot among our team. We'll often start sentences out, for example, by saying, "For the sake of clarity..." or "To give some clarity..." or "I need clarity on this."

In fact, our COO is so good at fighting for clarity for the team that we actually call her Clarity Carla, and a phrase Carla says a lot in meetings is this, "Just so we're clear I want to say with my out loud voice..." and whatever comes after that is always an important point of clarity. In my life, I've never not once, not one time, wished I had less clarity. I always want more.

There might be many ways to get clarity and also ways to offer it. But today, I want to focus on the one that I've already mentioned, and that is this the importance of saying words with your out loud voice. It might not be the way to get clarity for yourself right away, but it is a kind way to offer clarity for someone else. And in something I don't expect often ends up happening in my experience when I speak up and offer clarity on behalf of someone else, well, it has a way of lightening my own load, the dense fog lifts just a little bit and I feel a little bit more confident, more sure, more empathetic, more understanding.

I guess that's what I'm trying to say is that your words of encouragement to me about this podcast? Well, they provided some clarity for me in my own work, because you said them out loud and maybe for your part, at least I hope taking the time to say the words gave you your own bit of clarity as well. You named a transition, you labeled a gift, you reflected and looked back on something that was meaningful to you and why. And then you took a risk by recording your own voice and sending it in. Way to go, you!

When it comes to saying words with your out loud voice, they may not always be words of encouragement or of clarity. My friend, Kendra and I, yes, that Kendra, the one that you know, the Lazy Genius, but she and I have made an agreement that we're not going to stop saying words to each other during this pandemic.

Now I know that sounds weird to say, but what I mean is that it can be easy to look around and see how hard all this is for everybody. And depending on your personality, it might be tempting for some of us, not naming any names myself, but it might be tempting for us to shut down or close up or retreat and decide that since everybody is having a hard time right now, it's up to me to stay quiet, to stay small and to stay alone. So what I'm here to tell you is that is no good.

So Kendra and I sometimes just trade heartbreaks on Voxer. And sometimes in person though, lately, that's more rare. There's never judgment or eye-rolls or frustration in it. There's only space made for honest reflection, lament, grief, and always understanding. Even if we don't understand, we understand it's important to say words with your out loud voice to get what's going on in here out.

This is not always appropriate with everyone. Let me repeat. I would not advocate for us to say all the words all the time to all the people with our out loud voice, but it is important to do it with someone. And there has to be a level of trust. Sometimes it's for the sake of clarity for you or for someone else. Other times, it's for the sake of connection, always it fosters kindness because of love.

I wonder what you need to say today with your out loud voice. What do you need? What do you want? What do you miss? What are you hoping for as you consider your next right thing today?

I'm grateful that for some of you last week, your next right thing was to say words to me with your out loud voice. I would love to share some of those now.

I'm Nicola Hampton, and I live in Capetown, South Africa. I first started listening to the podcast when my 23-year-old sister's life was hanging in the balance. She lives in Australia, and I had to take two long-haul flights via Dubai to go and be with her in the hospital. The hours I spent on the airplane were filled with grief and terror. And so my next right thing at that time was to listen to a year's worth of episodes all in a row. I had a year's worth to catch up on. Emily's voice was a kind companion in my earbuds for 20 hours of flying time. And I wept my way through them. I've never missed an episode since. The idea of creating space for my soul to breathe was a new one for me. And it has transformed my life, helping me to do my next right thing in love every day, one step at a time.

This is Dale from New Jersey, and I've been listening to The Next Right Thing Podcast for about three years. It's been really impactful for me, particularly in the last eight months at the end of which I decided to leave my job of 13 years. It had become a really toxic place for me, but there were also a lot of rewards to it. So it was a difficult decision. And the podcast helped me to think through, journal through, and pray through that decision. And now that I'm temporarily unemployed, I have such a peace and I'm spending quality time with my family and I'm using my favorite episode, 135: Fill The Vault to keep quotes and thoughts that maybe someday I'll use to write something, which is a cool thought. And last, but certainly not least, I love Emily's mellifluous, soothing voice. It is a great start to my day. Thank you for this podcast.

Hey, my name's Amy. I'm from Oklahoma three years ago. I went from teaching kindergarten to becoming the director of a new pregnancy center. God pushed me out of my comfort zone and I found myself out of my depth, building something brand new from the ground up and mostly on my own. Six months in, I was struggling with burnout. I felt so overwhelmed with juggling countless decisions each day. The Next Right Thing Podcast became a lifeline. I found myself crying each week as Emily not only gave words to what I was feeling and experiencing, but she also helped to give small practical tips for doing the next right thing. I've recommended this podcast to so many people, including my daughter, as she embarked on her freshman year of college. It has helped to keep her grounded and reduced her anxiety. I even got her the book and she did it with her small group. My favorite episode is an oldie, but goodie, Wear Better Pants. Sometimes I make decisions harder than they need to be. And this one

continues to be a great reminder.

Hi, I'm Heather from California. I do love everything about The Next Right Thing Podcast, but the thing that has been most life-giving for me has been the call to my dreams as sacred. Whether or not they come true, I now have permission to see my dreams as a gift from God. And that also gives me permission to name them and to own them. And that has just been super transformative for me. So thank you, Emily.

Thanks for listening to episode 152 of The Next Right Thing. I hope this simple practice of saying words with your out loud voice 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 that our daily decisions are actually making our lives. As always, you can find a transcript of this and every episode at thenextrightthingpodcast.com. And you can find me emilypfreeman.com and [@emilypfreeman](https://www.instagram.com/emilypfreeman) on Instagram.

Well in closing, I was going to share a quote about God's word, and God's saying words out loud or the importance of speaking the truth out loud, but upon reflection, I realized that the reason why saying words with our out loud voice for me right now is so important is because I'm weary and I'm tired and I'm lonely. And I bet you are too.

So I wanted to share a verse from Scripture. that's familiar, but maybe there's something new in it for you today, as there was for me.

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I'm gentle and humble in heart. And you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light. Matthew 11: 28 to 30. This is the word of the Lord. It is absolutely true and given to us in love.

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