



182: One Fun Decision (The Shoe Episode)

I'm Emily P. Freeman, and welcome to The Next Right Thing. You're listening to episode 182.

This is a podcast about making decisions, and 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.

But before we get started, a word from this episode's sponsor Skillshare:

If you've been a listener for a while, you might already know about how I like to set up theme days for my work. It helps clear the clutter and distractions that sometimes come with moving from task to task. So I was thrilled to discover Mike Vardy's class on Skillshare called Using Time Theming. Skillshare is an online learning community that empowers you to accomplish real growth in areas you care about with interesting classes, real projects to create in a supportive learning environment. Skillshare's catalog helps you explore new interests and make progress in topics that matter to you.

But back to Time Theming and Mike Vardy. Mike is a writer and productivity strategist. And in his 45-minute class, he teaches you how to theme your days to establish habits that help you whether you're working a traditional 9:00 to 5:00, or looking for an easier way to manage things at home. The class is called Productivity Habits That Stick Using Time Theming. And if you've been curious about batching your work, it might be a great place to start.

Skillshare makes working towards a creative goal achievable with short lessons and hands-on projects. And it's affordable too, with annual subscriptions available for less than \$10 a month. Right now, Next Right Thing, listeners can get a free trial of premium membership at skillshare.com/next-right-thing. Explore your unlimited trial access to classes like Productivity Habits That Stick, for free, just for being here with me today. Go to skillshare.com/next-right-thing to claim your premium trial, or tap the link in today's show notes.

Now onto today's episode. Listen in.

In our last episode, I joked that I wanted to find a way to do an entire show about shoes. Turns out, I couldn't stop thinking about it. So, surprise, you get an episode all about shoes today. But here's the thing:

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it's actually not about shoes. I mean, no, I'm not going to talk about shoes on an episode for a podcast that's all about decision-making, and then try to turn it into a metaphor for the love of God. Although I think I could, and it wouldn't be super hard, I am ashamed to admit. But that does not mean that this conversation isn't important. It's an important one to have, even though it's fun, and kind of surface-y, and might not be at the top of the things that matter most. But I'm here to tell you, Emily P. Freeman has been writing fairly serious content for about 15 years now, and girlfriend's got to have a little bit of fun so that's what today is.

Here's what I know: For all the talk about decision-fatigue, chronic hesitation, and the important practice of doing the next right thing, you know I'm all about it, but it could be easy to overlook some areas in life where overthinking isn't something to avoid, but something to indulge. In certain situations, overthinking can be fun and maybe even necessary. When that's the case, we don't really call it overthinking. That's kind of a negative word. Maybe we call it, "research," or "a hobby," or maybe even, "indulging." Call it whatever you want. Some decisions just get to be fun. Can we go overboard? Yeah, sure. Just like anything else. But we have to be adults about so many things in our lives. Every decision doesn't have to be so efficient.

I think everyone needs to have at least one recurring decision in your life that gets to be kind of over the top. You get to be ridiculously extra about it. I hope you know I'm not advocating that we live beyond our means, or overspend, or go into debt for the sake of fun. I hope that you know me well enough by now to know that's not what I'm saying. But what if, in some designated areas of life, or a particular decision that you make over and over again, what if we decided ahead of time to let it be fun? Let it take what it takes to allow ourselves to take our time not because the decision actually takes that kind of time to make, but because the process itself is one that we enjoy. Maybe for you it's planning a gathering, reviewing books, putting your TV shows in order from most to least favorite. Whether it's purchasing, planning, collecting, or researching, having one fun decision means our next right thing is to take our time and enjoy the process, no matter how inefficient it might be.

I know examples help, so here are a few:

I've seen author, Sarah Bessey talk on Instagram periodically about her vintage collection of Ella Montgomery books. She has a self-imposed rule, she says, that the collecting is pure serendipity. She comes across these books at used bookstores, garage sales, thrifting. Now could Sarah go online and search for every single title that she could ever want and probably find them? Yeah, she could. But for her, it's not really about having the books, although it is about having the books. But it's also about finding the books, over time, in various places all over the world.

Well last year I interviewed author and teacher Beth Moore for our Hope Writers membership community. And she told us about a specific fountain pen that she uses for all of her journaling. How much do you want to bet that Beth Moore did not choose just the first pen right out of the gate? Y'all, it's a fancy fountain pen. I have a feeling she had to try different pens, experiment with how they felt in her hand, how they wrote on the page, before she finally found the one she loves.

Kendra, The Lazy Genius, makes an excellent chocolate chip cookie. But she didn't settle with the first recipe she tried. In fact, she says it took her seven years to declare that she had found her favorite combination, flour, sugar, eggs, and all the other things that go into cookies. It's not because she's

indecisive or chronically hesitant. It's because this was a fun decision for her. So it was worth her time. It was worth her focus and her energy. As she would say, this was something she decided to be a genius about, instead of being lazy.

Speaking of Kendra, years ago, she came over to my house. And I can't remember what it was for, but she brought basically her whole wardrobe so that we could plan her outfits for something I can't remember. I know you're probably thinking, "Emily, why didn't you go to her house?" I don't remember why. It was probably back before she had kids, and my kids were younger, and they were asleep, and ... Some combination of something; I don't know. But anyway, she came over and she brought all her clothes and she spread them out in my living room. And I remember asking her, "I mean, this is great, but where are all your shoes? How are we supposed to pick a full outfit without your shoes here in this room?"

And slowly, she pointed to a sad little pile of brown shoes on the floor and she said, "I did bring my shoes. There they are. That's it."

These were all of her shoes. I believe my response was something to the effect of, "Girl, I've lost more shoes than you own."

You can imagine my delight, by the way, when I got a text from Kendra just a couple of weeks ago that simply read, "I now have enough shoes to lose. You have been my guide in this quest, and I thank you."

And so, as I've said, and as we have established at this point, one of my fun, I-always-overthink-it-and-I-don't-care decisions is all about the shoes. Loving shoes goes way back to elementary school when my friends, Tara and Darla, had the same patent leather slip-on flats with exactly three colors: white, pink, and purple. Y'all, I had dreams about those shoes. There was a season in, I think it was, third or fourth grade where all three of us had those shoes, and it was just the most delightful connection I could imagine. Is it any wonder to you that my favorite movie of all time is the Wizard of Oz where the path to home, to true self, to belonging, was literally found in a pair of shoes covered in rubies? Yes, please!

A few years ago, I saw Kristen Bell's character, Eleanor Shellstrop, on *The Good Place*, wearing a pair of wedge clogs, that I went into an absolute internet deep-dive and I finally found the exact brand that she wears. Now today it's easy. If you Google it, you can find it. The fashion designer for *The Good Place* has now written blog posts about it. But at that time it was not easy.

For interested parties, the clogs she wears in the show are No.6 New School Clog on Wedge in Palomino. Note, I did not say mid, or high heel, and not flat-base, but the wedge version. You'll know when you see it. Once I found the brand, it took me months to decide which color I wanted to purchase. These were not cheap clogs, is what I'm saying, and the color seemed to really matter. Like I said, hers are the Palomino, which is like a brown. I got the same style, but in celery. Upon reflection, I wish I had ordered bone.

But that internet deep-dive to find Eleanor's shoes was actually the culmination of a several-years-long clog phase, that I'm still in, but I'm not researching as much as I was then. But I was determined to find the best clog out there, at least for me and what I liked. Now be mindful: I prefer a closed toe clog, for what it's worth. But between the No.6s, and the Lottas, and the Swedish Hasbeen, the low wood, brown oil Lottas from Stockholm ... Brown oil nubucks, those ones, the nubuck, those are my favorite ones. And they're the most comfortable I've worn them almost all the way out. But so far, of the clogs that I've

found, I love them. And they are the least expensive, so, yay!

I went through a Tieks Ballet Slipper phase. I read tons of articles and reviews on them before I finally picked my first pair in gold several years ago. But that ended up being the only pair that I ever bought. I know Anne Bogel loves her some Tieks, and she has them in lots of colors. But I wore them for traveling and for walking. But for me, they just weren't as comfortable as I hoped they would be, and they didn't really live up to the price tag.

Well I also went through a Pons phase that I'm still in. This is a shoe made in Spain. I found them in San Diego because I bought a pair online, they felt too big but I wasn't sure if that was actually the right size, so I wanted to try some on in-person without having to order them online. Anyway, I found them in San Diego at this little shop called The Gold Leaf. And I tried them on and I realized I was wearing a size too big. So I got a size that fit and I wear them all the time. I'll probably buy more of those.

I wear Corkys Wedge Heels for nearly every speaking engagement. I have a pair of black Sunita boots I wear all winter, every winter; probably I'm due for a new pair because they're worn almost out.

I'm now on my second pair of Skechers BOBs Slip-on shoes, in leather. Well, fake leather. I wore them on two trips to London and one trip to Israel. They look like Toms shoes, but they aren't as benevolent. But I love them, and they're comfortable. And I saw that they changed their style so, before they changed their style completely over, I went and bought a second pair and saved them in my closet, like an old lady.

So there's a lot of clogs I mentioned before. I've brought them on every overseas trip I've ever been on since I bought them, and I've been shocked at how they have quickly become the pair that I choose to wear when I'm walking around foreign towns. It's really interesting how quickly my feet adapted to essentially walking on wood all day, but there you go.

Well I am not a fashion blogger, obviously. But for those interested, I will compile a list of all of these shoes with some photos and links on my blog, because that's just fun. And people are often asking me about shoes when they catch a glimpse of them in my Instagram photos, or wherever, and where I found them. So I'll put those all in one place for you.

But again, as I have rambled on about shoes, the shoes aren't necessarily the point. The point is being inefficient on purpose. It's having fun. It's engaging the thrill of the hunt. It's about taking our time, enjoying the process, and not being so obsessed with the outcome. Do I enjoy the outcome? Do I enjoy the shoes? Do I wear them almost all the way out? Yes I do. But I also really love finding a great shoe.

I wonder, what's your one fun decision? Is it planning a trip? perfecting a recipe? Choosing a journal? Organizing your books? Finding the perfect puzzle? Might I recommend Wooden Liberty Puzzles to you for that?

I wonder if there's an area of your life, or work, or play, that you like to take your time about, not because you don't know what to do, or you're chronically hesitant, but because you enjoy doing it so much, you don't want to rush the process. If you don't have an area in your life like that, well maybe your next right thing would be to pick one fun decision today.

Thanks for listening to episode 182 of The Next Right Thing.

Well I hope this simple practice of picking one fun decision 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 you know the bigger truth is our daily decisions are actually making our lives. As always, you can find me on Instagram @emilypfreeman, and online at emilypfreeman.com. A lot of the daily/weekly conversation happens on Instagram. If we aren't friends there yet, I hope you do find me, @emilypfreeman. It's where we often take the topic of the podcast episode that week and expand it in conversation, photos, videos, and more.

Well as I mentioned before, I've collected all these shoes mentioned in this episode, and then some. I did that not because I'm a shoe influencer, but because picky shoes is my one fun decision. And maybe it's yours too. Maybe I'll save you a little bit of time if you're searching for a great clog.

Well in closing, I hope you'll do a little brainstorming this week. Make a list about some possible fun decisions that you could enjoy making. Or if you already have a decision that you've been enjoying, but even feeling a little bad for taking so long about it, maybe today is the day to let yourself off the hook.

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