



## 263: How to Human with Carlos Whittaker

I'm Emily P. Freeman and welcome to The Next Right Thing. You're listening to episode 263.

This is a podcast about making decisions, but it's also about making a life. If you struggle with decision fatigue, with 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 discerning your next right thing.

Today, I'm glad to welcome our favorite hope dealer. He's host of the podcast Human Hope. It's Carlos Whittaker. His brand new book, *How to Human*, just released last month. In it, he shares candidly from his own life about how he's wrestling through some of the biggest cultural issues of our current time, and the simple ways he's learning to refuse to let our disagreements define us. In his honest, relatable, Carlos way, we're invited on a path of radical love, one that requires us to become builders rather than demolitionists. Carlos is dad of three and lives together with his wife, Heather, in Nashville, Tennessee where, in addition to podcasting and writing books, he lives a full life and shares all about it with his Instagram community, the Instafamilia, of which I am a glad member. I can't wait to have a conversation with Carlos. I hope you'll listen in.

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Emily:

Carlos Whittaker, it is so good to see you today.

Carlos Whittaker:

It's so good to be seen by you and to see you.

Emily P. Freeman:

I'm so glad. Listen, there are a handful of people, literally a handful of people in the world I can say, "Remember that time we rode Segways through the streets of Tel Aviv and we got stopped by a gaggle of Avatar fans who wanted a photo with our travel mate, Joel David Moore?"

Carlos Whittaker:

Oh my goodness. I forgot the Avatar part. I remember the Segway part. But you're totally right. And to be fair, his name hasn't popped back up in my head until recently when the new Avatar, at the point of this recording, has been released. And suddenly, my kids think that I'm so cool that I know that guy.

Emily P. Freeman:

It sounds like we're talking about a dream we had last night. Like, I had this weird dream that I was on a Segway in Israel, and Carlos Whittaker was there and the Avatar guy was there. No, it happened. We have pictures.

Carlos Whittaker:

We have pictures, we have video. I do want to ask you this question, Emily. Have you ridden a Segway since Tel Aviv?

Emily P. Freeman:

Not before or since. That was it.

Carlos Whittaker:

That was it. That was for me. It may have been a dream, to be honest.

Emily P. Freeman:

Right. Listen, when this episode is live, we will be posting photos on Instagram. I will be finding them. Because I think I have one of you and Heather together with the helmets on the Segways. It's just, it is beyond. We didn't know how innocent we were in 2016.

Carlos Whittaker:

Oh my goodness. We didn't know what was to come.

Emily P. Freeman:

We didn't know.

Carlos Whittaker:

We did not know.

Emily P. Freeman:

We not know. Well, speaking of that, a lot of listeners... First of all, you come highly recommended by so many, including me, to be here today. So thank you for joining us. A lot of listeners maybe have first met you through Instagram. I just want to say this at the top. Something that draws a lot of us in to... Obviously, Carlos Whittaker. We love Carlos. But it's also this added layer of we... Well, I've met Heather. But of course, I feel like I know Heather. I've never met Sohaila and Seanna and Losiah, but I feel like I know them.

Here's my next right thing. Here's my decision making question for you. Did you guys have a family meeting, or did you all decide together, "Hey guys, you know what? This is a thing and we are going to do this. We're going to share our life together on the internet. We're going to do it on purpose." Was that a conversation you guys had? A decision that you made?

Carlos Whittaker:

I love that question. I've actually been sharing my life on the internet way before social media, way before Instagram. I had a blog, if people remember those things.

Emily P. Freeman:

I remember it.

Carlos Whittaker:

I had a blog. I was posting videos on Real Player and sharing that about my family. People don't even know what that is. That's before YouTube. You actually had to find Windows Media Player. It's funny because Heather the other day was like, "You know what's funny? People are like, 'Oh, here you are, this Instagrammer, and you're teaching how to tell stories on it.'" It's just been something I've always done. I've just always shared. When we adopted my son, Losiah, from South Korea, there's, I don't know, about two hours of footage that I separated into nine videos from when we went to adopt him on YouTube that people would call them vlogs now. I didn't know what that was 15 years ago. And they're really bad. There's one minute of good content and 15 minutes of bad stuff that you don't want to watch. But it's just been something that I've always done.

Here's the next right thing decision. It's in every season, asking my family, do you want to do this? This could just be me. This could be all of us. There have definitely been seasons, especially with my son, where people are like, "Hey, is everything okay with Losiah? I haven't seen him in a year on your Instagram." It's like, well, he's 13 and he's just not into that. So I am making those next right thing decisions with my family when it comes to sharing our lives.

Emily P. Freeman:

I love it. I figured you were, and that that was something that you guys were talking about, especially with the age of your kids. But it is fascinating to watch. Sometimes I think, I'm not just there with them. They're choosing to let me in. Sometimes it gives this feeling of like, oh, here I am. I'm walking around with my family. Here we go.

Carlos Whittaker:

I love that.

Emily P. Freeman:

Thank you, though, because there's a certain amount of sacrifice to it, to bring people into your lives like that. I know you share what you want to share, what everybody agrees to, but at the same time, there's still a level of intimacy. Or vulnerability, I should say, maybe not intimacy, that you have to enter into do that.

Carlos Whittaker:

I appreciate that. Knowing also, as people that do jump on and are following around, knowing that there are... These are conversations we're having as a family. These are like, "Hey, you know what?" If you see me disappear for three days, it's probably because I had a conversation with my family. "Hey, we want you, Dad. We don't want this to be for anybody else." Those are moving targets. Those are just life shifting conversations that are constantly happening, and there's never an overarching right answer.

There's always a right answer in the moment.

Emily P. Freeman:

Well, especially now with your brand new.... Am I going to say it? Yes, I am. National bestseller. How to Human. What did he do? Well done. Congratulations, by the way.

Carlos Whittaker:

Oh my gosh. Thank you. This was the scariest one for me, I think. This was the scariest book for me. I've definitely maybe left some of the people that have read a lot of my books. Their expectations were maybe for something a little different than what they got, and so it was terrifying. But I am grateful that it seems to be hitting a felt need in this season.

Emily P. Freeman:

Well, speaking of that, I pre-ordered your book way back when I heard it was coming out. But I read it within 24 hours of getting it. So it was one day, and then by the next day, I was done. I'm saying this to the person listening. If you follow Carlos on Instagram, particularly during 2020, this book reads almost like a behind the scenes of what was happening offscreen. You cover a lot of the things that maybe those people who maybe found you in 2020, things that they might remember that you talked about, that you were experiencing, and that were happening in the world, and the cultural conversations that we were having. But then also, you bring in this other layer or two of what was happening within you, within your family, and your spiritual life and your walk with God, all the things. That's something that I think is... Just reading the book, that's something I noticed. This is like peeking behind the curtain a little bit. Did it feel that way writing it?

Carlos Whittaker:

Yes, and I definitely wrote it that way. There were some editorial decisions that were made where my editor, the first run through, was like, "This is way too traumatic. I don't know if everyone is going to want to just remember 2020, Carlos. What are the chances that we can," and I love what you said, "go two or three maybe levels deeper into your heart and what was happening inside of you as opposed to just triggering?" So yeah, that was very intentional. I had a great editor, Paul, that helped me with that. As you know, editors are just the greatest gift when it comes to writing a book like this. So knowing that this book does that.

Also, I know that some people don't want to go back there yet. Some people don't want to remember. A lot of the reviews that I'm seeing, it's like, "Carlos is talking about 2020." Because 2020 is like a cuss word. You say that and people are just like, "Oh my gosh, don't say that. I don't even want to think about it." So I tried to, as gently as possible, lead us through that, it's the story arc of the book, right into January of 2021. But I tried to make it and use it as a way that if we experienced some traumatic things, which we all did collectively together as the human race, how can we use those things to step out? How can we use those things to accelerate us towards healing and accelerate us towards freedom? Really, no matter what you believe about, I don't know, politics or religion or Jesus or love or whatever, I feel like this was a universal message that everybody maybe needs just a little bit of a recalibration. That's what I really tried to have the book be.

Emily P. Freeman:

Well, I think that's what it is. There are a few key points. First of all, I would encourage everyone to read the book. We're not going to give any spoilers away. But we all lived through 2020, so we know what it was about, right? But there's a few key things that happened before that took place that you share about, but also that really set you up to have the year that you had, and that we then also reflected upon as you reflected upon in real time. In 2019, and I'm curious if you're willing to share this story, two things that happened in 2019. One is you write, and this is almost mind-blowing, you write that in 2019, you realized that you were Black. Can you tell us that story, Carlos Whittaker?

Carlos Whittaker:

Yes. I love it. I love it. It's so funny. Anybody that looks at me from the outside, or say I walk into Walmart and I just run into a security guard. There's no question from them. But the story for me is I grew up. My father is a Black man from Panama. He's an Afro-Latino from Colón, Panama, immigrated to the United States in 1960 as a Black man that didn't speak English and only had \$20 cash and a shoe shine kit. So my story is the story of immigrant parents. My mother's from Mexico.

My dad, after he has me, my parents have me in East LA, which is a very... We were very thick in our Mexican roots at that point. We were surrounded by my Mexican side of the family. My dad's Black side of the family, I wasn't really around a lot. To be honest with you, I think maybe that was a little bit on purpose. When we moved to Atlanta when I was, I don't know, four or five years old, I just remember my dad looking at me, my Black dad looking at me and saying, "Hey, Carlitos. You're not Black, you're Mexican." I remember thinking, okay, so my dad says... So here I go. I into kindergarten, I go into elementary school. Some of my friends were like, "The Black guy, I want him on my team." And I'm like, "Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa. Wait a second. No, no. My dad says I'm not Black, I'm Mexican." And everyone's looking at me and my little Gary Coleman Afro and they're like, "Wait a second. What's going on?"

All that to say, my entire adolescence, all through high school, I am just trying to not be Black because the reason why my dad said that, hindsight being... I don't want to say 20/20, we keep triggering ourselves. But hindsight being 20/20, is because he knew in 1980 or whatever that his little Black son would have a lot harder time than his little Mexican son in the Southern culture. So there I was, ignoring the Black part of who I am all the way through high school, all the way through college, all the way through... Even who I dated. I didn't date any Black girls. I was just dating white girls and trying to be as white and ignore the Black part of me as I can until 2019. Well, to be honest with you, it was more like 2016. We had some things in the country began to surface and bubble up. I was like, I suddenly feel Blacker than I ever have in my life. I'm just seeing these things on the news and seeing these people yelling these things.

Then 2019 comes and I take a DNA test. I don't know if this is a part of the story you wanted me to share or not, but I take this DNA test. Heather, my wife, just gets it for us because we're like, "Oh, let's see where we're from," not even thinking twice. I just remember pulling my result after I swabbed my mouth and sent it in, and just my jaw hitting the floor because... I have the number in the book. I can't remember what it is, but it was 90% or 80% something Nigerian. Suddenly I was like, "What the heck?" I remember looking at Heather like, "Babe, I'm Black." And she was like... It was so funny because she was like, "Yeah." And I was like, "What do you mean yeah." She was like, "Well, have you not been to your Uncle Danizio's gumbo loving Christmas celebrations with all your Black cousins?"

It's so funny that I literally brainwashed myself, brainwashed the Black out of me, in order to assimilate into the culture that I had been in. It shook me to my core. I called my dad. We had a heart to heart. There were tears and there were apologies and there were all sorts of things. I'll just never forget being like, "Dad, can I be Black now?" And my dad goes, "You can be Black." It was such a powerful moment that allowed me, therefore, people did start following me in 2020, to step into some spaces and into some

conversations that I think because I assimilated so well into the white fabric of society, there was a lot of those people that followed me. Suddenly when I became more Black and started speaking, it made them very uncomfortable. A lot of them left, but a lot more showed up and allowed me to lead them in that conversation.

You know what? I guess I would even say for your listeners, what are the parts of you... Let's get into next right thinging right now. Let's use that as a verb. What are the parts of you that you've been ashamed of for so long that are actually beautiful parts of who you are? And what's a decision you can make to maybe reclaim some of that? There's all sorts of things that we've hidden from people that maybe aren't bad, but maybe we know won't fit the conversation. Just lean into those things and maybe be a little bit more of that.

Emily P. Freeman:

Well, first of all, thank you for sharing that story.

Carlos Whittaker:

You're welcome.

Emily P. Freeman:

It's a powerful story. And it's like you said, how Heather was like, "Yeah." Even this person who knows you so well, just the fact that it had never really come up to the degree that it needed to for you to take it down deep into your bones. Maybe you just weren't ready yet. That's another thing. There is something that maybe your body knew, protecting yourself from something that you weren't quite ready to wrestle with or to realize or to embrace to see the beauty of it. And then until 2016 to 2019, until you were.

Carlos Whittaker:

Right. Until I was.

Emily P. Freeman:

Until you were. But there was a decision that you made, which was you stepped into that. And thank God you did, Carlos Whittaker. Thank God you did, for all of our sakes. I wanted to mention one more thing in the chronology, because I think it leads us to a powerful place in your story, but also in our story. And that is, you share about and a lot of people found you when Sohaila came down with a mysterious illness that quickly escalated, and you and Heather ended up having to rush her to the hospital. Can you just tell us a little bit about that? And what it looks like in your experience with fellow humans during that terrifying time?

Carlos Whittaker:

I talk about a lot how every human, no matter how horrible of a human you think they are, has this gut level reaction of helping and of desiring to rescue. When we were in this season where we had my daughter, at the time, she was 17, we rushed her to Vanderbilt Children's Hospital. I think we were in their 20 something odd days and they couldn't figure out what it was and she was in massive pain. It was so dark. It was just such a scary place that I saw humans just from everywhere. People started posting our story and people were commenting in the comments thread, and they were praying for us and they were lifting us up. They were surrounding us in all this love and it was this beautiful...

This was right before the pandemic. Hindsight, to be honest with you, I've talked to the doctors at Vanderbilt. This was November 2019. There's a thought that possibly she had COVID in that season because it was all the same. Just lungs, she was about to be on a respirator, the whole thing. But it was a season of me seeing the power of collective community coming together to serve me and my family. It was beautiful. It was this beautiful thing.

But I share that also saying that when 2020 did hit, and I did start speaking to a lot of the things that I was able to speak to now because I was stepping into the Black part of who I was. And when people left, I just remember being shook because these were the same people that showed up to pray for my daughter, that showed up to encourage me. Emily, the things they were writing in my DMs when I was putting up videos about how my white friends can help the Black community right now, it was the same people. I look at that and I think... And then they left, and then a lot of them are back again.

And so I'm like, man, our humanness, every facet. Which is why I wrote this book, because we can get knocked off course so easily. I do believe that it's a lot less complicated to course correct where we're heading than we think it is. I hear from people all the time, we've never been as divided as we've ever been, that things are as bad as they've ever been. I'm like, "Well, let's just open up the history books to, I don't know, Joan of Arc. Let's go back and look at how people were chopping their heads off for what they believed." Yes, things are bad, but we're not actually as far off as I think a lot of us think we are. Hopefully this book is going to give people some of the tools to maybe reconcile some of the things they need to reconcile in their own life and in their relationships in order to maybe start finding some freedom again.

Emily P. Freeman:

For you to write a book called *How to Human*, and you have personally experienced, like we all have, but I think you, in this particular story in a really profound way, which is you have seen the beauty of humanity, and you have seen the devastation that can come when people don't embrace what that beauty can be. You say, "2020 was created by a cocktail of fear and injustice." That's a Carlos Whittaker quote. And you also say, just like you did, I'm going to reiterate it because I think this is a powerful line that gives you even more credibility in writing this book. You said, "Many of those same people who had gone into battle with me in prayer on behalf of my daughter, Sohaila, suddenly sent me messages telling me how horrible I was and how they wished they had never prayed for us." That was their response to you after you made a conscious decision. I want to talk about this conscious decision that you made to talk about anti-racism on your Instagram account.

But I want to highlight that, and you mentioned it, and I wanted to bring back just for a minute. To sit with the reality that here's a guy who could really have taken, rightfully so, great offense, pain, put up huge walls and said, "Forget it. If people are going to be so hateful as to say they wished they had never prayed for us." I know that's an extreme thing, and probably that wasn't the majority of people. But even just to hear that at all, as a person, that's devastating. To still be able to see the hope in humanity, that's profound, truly.

Carlos Whittaker:

Well, just even hearing you say that, even though I know I wrote it, but hearing you read that. I just remember seeing that. Because I just remember those statements came after I decided to put up a video about the Ahmaud Arbery shooting. I watch it now, the most vanilla light video I've ever posted about anything about race. I was just like, "Hey, guys. I just want to let you know I love you. Please don't take

offense to this.” I just had all these things around it, and then that’s what I got from it.

Now, I want to give credit where credit is due. My father, I went straight to my dad. Now, my dad had begun suffering with dementia at this point in his life, but he was definitely more with it than he is now. I went to my dad and I’m like, “Dad, how have you done this? You’re the one that came to America in 1960 when you couldn’t speak English and you were Black. Strike one, strike two. So how do I deal with this?” My dad, he’s just the guy that’s just like, “They’re speaking to you from a woundedness, Carlos. That is coming from a place of pain in them.” And just knowing that, hearing that from my dad, suddenly, Emily, every single person that destroyed me in my DMs, I wasn’t mad at anymore. Because I knew that, you know what? They’re going through a pandemic for the first time too. They’re triggered. They are saying things they don’t want to say.

So do you know what I actually did? I haven’t shared this with a lot of people. Whenever I would get those, I would open my Instagram, I would hit the camera, and I would put it on my face and I’d hit record to every single person that went off on me. I would just look them in the eye and just say, “Hey, I just want you to see my eyes. I know that I probably offend you in some way. I know that you’re leaving because you told me that you’re leaving. But I just want to say that I appreciate the time that you’ve been here.” I can’t remember all the messages I was saying. But I wanted them to see my eyes as they were saying these things. And the beautiful thing is, some of them, it took a year. Some of them, they never came back.

Some of them have been as recently as a month ago. I got a DM from somebody where the last thing... Because you can see the history of DMs. The last thing I see was my video that I sent them after the Ahmaud Arbery, and they came back and they say, “Hey, I just want to let you know I’m sorry. I want to let you know that I see clearly now.”

Sometimes it’s just going to take work. I didn’t know at the time that I was called to do this work. That was the moment that I realized I was called to do the work, because I lost tens of thousands of followers overnight. But I knew that, okay, Carlos. For such a time as this. It’s now time. I know you’re 47 now, or 46 however, but now it’s actually time. I know you thought you’ve figured it all out, but actually now is the time. You’re going to have to get to work. So there I was.

Emily P. Freeman:

Well, and you’re not exaggerating, Carlos, because I wrote the numbers down for this conversation. 6,000 followers, you lost overnight; by noon, 8,000; and within 24 hours, a total of 11,000 people had unfollowed you. An account that had taken you six years to grow. You and I know, who cares about followers? Whatever. But it’s people. These are people, right? Every number is a person. And that’s what we know. But I think about that decision because you talk about you made the decision to post the thing, sweaty palms and all, this video, how to help the Black community in this moment if you’re not Black. I remember it. I watched it. And not only that, let me just tell you, I had no idea that was the first time you’d posted about it. To me, it was the most natural thing in the world for you to be saying. Which goes to show, oh yeah, dude, you’re going to have to keep doing this. Sorry, but you can’t stop.

I say that because I think a lot of times when we’re making decisions and trying to discern our next right thing, sometimes we are tempted to judge whether or not we made the right decision of what the outcome is. And in that moment, if you would’ve judged it within 24 hours, you might have been like, “What have I done?”

Carlos Whittaker:

Yes. I did judge it. I did freak out. My hands were on my head. I don’t know if I wrote this in the book or not, but I actually the next day, after I saw that, freaked out and was like, “Oh my God. I got to delete it.”

Emily P. Freeman:  
Yes, you did write that in the book.

Carlos Whittaker:  
I went to hit delete, and when I hit delete... I literally made the decision. My next right thing is to delete this thing and wipe it off the history of the internet. I went to hit delete and Instagram said, "Are you sure?"

Emily P. Freeman:

Are you sure?

Carlos Whittaker:  
And I was like, "Oh, crap." I just was like, "No." That was the moment. If that wouldn't have popped up, honestly, we wouldn't be having this conversation right now because it would've been gone.

Emily P. Freeman:  
Wow. That would've been it.

Carlos Whittaker:  
That would've been it. But because it said, "Are you sure?" And I was like, "Actually, I'm not." So I hit cancel, I left it up, and here we are.

Emily P. Freeman:  
Well, in our work to being human together, you talk about the shift from me to we to everybody. How can we begin to make that shift?

Carlos Whittaker:  
Well, our primal, carnal parts of who we are as humans is me. You come out of the womb, it's like, me. Feed me, bathe me, keep me warm, all the things. That's normal. The thing is, though, we have to continue to grow. You should be shifting to we at some point. If you're still me, then it's like, oh, okay. Maybe there needs to be some work that needs to be done. So shifting from me to we is a little bit natural. We find our tribes, we find who we belong to, who we vote for together, what we believe about love, all the things, and God, and we find our we's.

But the hardest part is moving from we to everybody. It's just like, oh. That is the hard part. Especially the last few years of people being so vocal, and maybe just us having more opportunity to see what people's inner hearts and beliefs truly are. Maybe some things that we were never even supposed to know, we suddenly know. That's for another book. But I just think that that shift is going to take purpose, it's going to take intent, it's going to take getting uncomfortable. It's going to take the tagline that I use all the time, don't stand on issues, walk with people. The more I think we walk with people that don't... This is the everybody piece. Walk with people that don't look like us, don't think like us, don't vote like us, don't love us, all the things, that's going to be the only way for us to move to everybody. Because I think that is the truth of what we were created for.

I'm a man of faith. I believe in God. Not everyone that follows me believes the same thing I believe. But I do believe that intrinsically as humans, no matter what you believe in faith, you can see that there is something unifying about human beings and humankind, and that we've lost a little bit of it.

So how do we get to that everybody piece? It's going to take some risk. It's going to take some being uncomfortable. It's going to take hanging out with people that aren't like you. I just think it's getting easier and easier to just hang out in our silos and in our bubbles. But I'm trying every day to help people move from we to everybody. But it's hard. It can be a bumper sticker, but I'm telling you, it's not as easy as putting a bumper sticker on your car. You're actually going to have to do the work and have these conversations.

Emily P. Freeman:

For someone who maybe can resonate with the first half of your story, which is, hey, I've been hurt. It's risky to move towards humans. I don't like humans. Humans cause pain. But they're resonating with what you're saying. And we, they, listeners, whoever it is listening, we want a piece of that vision that you seem to be casting, which is from me to everybody. What would you say might be just one thing, one movement, one next right thing, to consider to do, to think about?

Carlos Whittaker:

I love that. As we think about, okay, this is difficult. Carlos is saying move from we to everybody. I'm thinking of five people right now that it's going to be impossible, Carlos. There's just no way. I know this feels right, the bumper sticker looks good, but I don't know if I can do it. I'd say this. A, remember you got to protect your own mental health. I'm not just saying, "Hey, listen. Don't stand on issues, walk with people. Go walk with everybody." I'm not going to the local KKK rally tomorrow night and walking in and being like, "Hey, guys. My name's Carlos." Why? Because that's not good for my mental health. But there is one person, there will be one person in your life, that you can move from we to everybody with. They're going to be maybe your Aunt Nancy or the one that posts some things on Facebook that you're just like, oh my gosh, I can't believe she thinks that. I'm not even saying that you have to change their minds.

Moving to we everybody isn't making everybody a we. I think a lot of times, we think that, right? It's like, oh, okay. Moving from we to everybody means I got to convince everybody to be my we. And it's like, no. Actually, I've never said that like that before, but it's making sense as I'm saying it. Just moving from we to everybody may just be just spending time with...

I talk about one of my friends in the book that we vehemently disagree politically, even to this point, and our relationship had crumbled. I had moved away from everybody with guys like him. But then I said, "You know what we're going to do? We're going to find something that we can root for together." Trust me. I know you may think it's impossible, but there are things that people that you vehemently disagree with and you agree on. For us, it was as simple as a soccer team in Nashville. So I was like, "Okay, we can't talk about politics, we can't talk about race, we can't talk about LGBTQ. We can't talk about anything because we disagree. But we do cheer for the same team, so let's buy season tickets." So we bought season tickets together. We sit next to each other. It's so cool that we're high-fiving and cheering for the same thing. Even though it's as silly as a sports game, it's helping us move from we to everybody.

I guess that's a long next right thing. But just think to yourself, who's a person? And then what can I do? Again, it doesn't have to be drastic. What's a simple step I can do to help us walk together? I think everybody that listens has that person and has that action step.

Emily P. Freeman:

Final question. This one's for you and there's no wrong answers. Carlos, what is your next right thing?

Carlos Whittaker:

Oh, wow. You know what's funny? You ask that many times just in your regular podcast and I'm just constantly thinking, okay, what's Emily going to ask me to do this week? What's my next right thing? My next right thing today is to Marco Polo both of my daughters back who are in Paris that sent me Marco Polos on Monday, but it's now Thursday and I haven't taken the time because I want to give them a long 20 minute, this is who I am. Guess what? I just haven't had it. So I just need to open up my Marco Polo app when we hang up and just send my daughters, who deserted me and moved to Paris, some Marco Polos so that they feel loved.

Emily P. Freeman:

I love it. That's a great next right thing. Okay, final assignment. We would love for you to read us out with a little section from How to Human. I'm going to read the subtitle. Three ways to share life beyond what distracts, divides, and disconnects us.

Carlos Whittaker:

Be human. Become who you are created to be. And who are you creator to be? The answer, my friend, is unfortunately, often buried deep within. Buried beneath years and years of trauma, trials, and triggers. Buried somewhere beneath years of slowly growing opinions on issues that may or may not affect you. Buried underneath years of being surrounded by people who look like you, think like you, talk like you, and vote like you. Buried underneath years of watching your favorite television news anchor. Buried underneath years of trying your very best to be human.

Now, I'm not saying anything about whether your years of being buried were good or bad. It could very well have been some of the best years of your life. But the true you, the one I want us to get to and unlock, was around long before the world around you had any influence over your opinion of politics, policies, or people. That version of you existed long before that scary or traumatic thing that happened to you happened. That original version of you is what we are trying to recover and bring back to the surface. And that version of you is the first step in remembering how to human.

Emily P. Freeman:

Amen.

Carlos Whittaker:

Amen.

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Thanks for listening to episode 263 of The Next Right Thing.

I hope this simple practice of learning how to human 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 our daily decisions are always also making our lives.

As always, you can find me at [emilypfreeman.com](http://emilypfreeman.com) and on Instagram @emilypfreeman. You can also find Carlos and learn all about his book, *How to Human*, online on his website at [carloswhittaker.com](http://carloswhittaker.com). And be sure to follow along on Instagram @loswhit, that's L-O-S-W-H-I-T. That's where he shares more authentically human encouragement on how to be a person in this mad and beautiful world.

Thanks to Leah Jarvis who keeps track of our show notes for us. Thanks to the team at Unmutable who's always faithful to edit our sound. And thanks to you for listening. If you have a few minutes to leave a review at Apple Podcast, that is always helpful, and it gives potential listeners the chance to know if *The Next Right Thing* might be for them too.

Well, in closing, I'll share a few more final words from our friend Carlos, all about legacy. "Building something is not nearly as enjoyable as watching it collapse. It takes a lot more work. It takes a lot more conversation. It takes a lot more planning. But if we do it right, then at the end of all the work, planning, and conversation there will sit something we can be proud of. Something for generations to come." Thanks for listening and I'll see you next time.

