400: Something to Celebrate!

I'm Emily P. Freeman and welcome to The Next Right Thing. You're listening to episode 400.

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 discerning your next right thing.

I'm an author, a spiritual director, and an occasional workshop leader. I live in North Carolina with my family and through my work have helped thousands of spiritually thoughtful people overcome decision fatigue so that they can discern their next right thing in faith, work, and life.

Today we hit a big milestone in the life of the podcast: 400 episodes! If you thought I would let this milestone pass without an announcement, you thought wrong my friend! Fun news loading in 3 2 1 . . . Listen in.

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For years I've talked here about ways that a regular practice of reflection leads to more thoughtful, grounded, and informed decision-making. We've traded the pro-con list for the life-giving and life-draining lists. We've made sure to record our These are the days lists, too. We've explored and re-explored our faith, trying on some unconventional spiritual practices that fit our life with God now in ways that maybe didn't fit when we were younger in our faith.

One of those more unconventional spiritual practices was a list I've talked about a few times in recent years and that is the Monthly Celebrations List.

I start it at the beginning of every year and add to it things to celebrate each month. This list, though simple, does not always come easy. Ask me to name the grief, disappointment, tension, and struggle I AM YOUR GIRL. But ask me what brings joy, delight, and celebration? I'll have to get back to you. Noticing, naming, and remembering moments of joy and accomplishment is one of my trickiest personal practices.

Engaging joy on purpose means to set aside the fear it triggers in my nervous system that to name and notice joy is somehow a threat. Joy is something I'm learning to cultivate and celebration is how I'm practicing it.

Mostly my monthly celebration list consists of milestones (big moments with big feelings) and inch stones (smaller moments with either small or also sometimes big feelings): family gatherings, personal trips, a goal met, a clean bill of health. Something I'll write down this month is what I'm doing right now: recording the 400th episode of this podcast.

But every now and then, something we add to our celebrations list deserves marking in a way that goes beyond just writing it down. It begs to be savored and embodied. And listener, we have a milestone approaching that I refuse to let pass by uncelebrated.

Because in the summer of 2017 I started The Next RIght Thing podcast with nothing but my laptop, a microphone, a closet off our laundry room, and an idea I couldn't let go. That means next year, 2027 is our 10 year podcast anniversary.

And we are going to mark it in a way that the tech bros and the AI bots could never: Your girl is throwing a party! Or let's be real I'm an introvert so we're throwing a mindful celebratory gathering for friends of the podcast. That, I hope, is YOU!

Will you join me in real life person on Sunday March 7 2027 in Greensboro North Carolina?

The details for this celebratory event are in the link in the show notes but the gist is we are gathering in actual human person as human people in my hometown. Make it a friend weekend away, come on a Friday and explore our beautiful city. It's usually lovely-ish in March.

We'll make a list of some of my favorite places to eat, favorite thrift shops, and other things you can do around here while you're in town – and then on Sunday night we'll gather in one place for stories, have a few special guests, a handful of surprises and we'll share a toast to 10 years of doing our next right thing in love. Are you in?! There are a limited number of tickets so if you think you want to join us, I hope you grab one today to save your seat and I would love to see you there.

As I've anticipated this 10 year anniversary, I've nearly talked myself out of marking it in any significant way. It seems too something, maybe? But about 2 years ago I told myself that if I make it to 10, I wanted to mark it with listeners, to take a few hours and honor this work, this practice of doing our next right thing, this podcast that has been a gift to me and I hope to you as well. We've been through a lot together in 10 years and while my natural move would be to write and reflect about it in a room by myself, this felt like an opportunity to lean into a version of what AJ Sherrill calls one of my upstream practices, or those things that don't come as naturally. That is the practice of feasting and celebration.

This was my next right thing and I hope that joining me is yours too. Here's to planning a celebration as we do our next right thing in love.

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Thanks for listening to Episode 400 of The Next Right Thing.

I hope this simple practice of celebrating milestones can be just one more rung on the trellis upon which your ROL can continue to grow. Because while it's true this is a podcast about making decisions, the bigger truth is our daily decisions are making our lives.

Our gathering isn't until March but tickets are on sale right now. You can visit emilypfreeman.com/10years or click the direct link in the show notes. We will have a limited number of tickets but we would love to see you make a weekend of it and bring a friend, sister, mom, partner or person along. We've been planning this for a while now and are so excited to finally share it with you! We hope to see you there on March 7.

As always you can also find me on line at emily p freeman dot com or on instagram at emily p freeman. This episode was edited by the team at Unmutable and organized by Ashley Sherlock.

In closing, a few words from Oprah Winfrey who said,

"The more you praise and celebrate your life, the more there is in life to celebrate."

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