

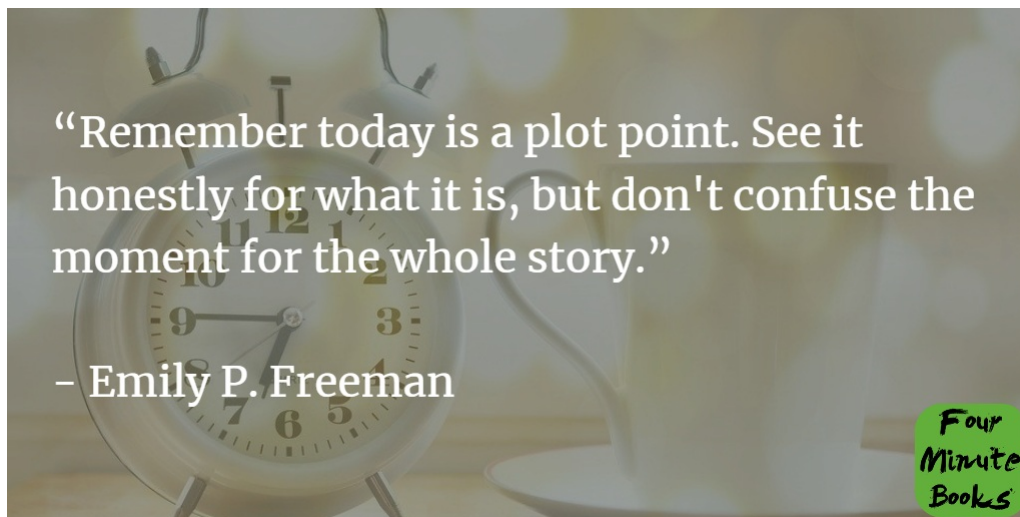
The Next Right Thing Summary

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1-Sentence-Summary: *The Next Right Thing* is your guide for making wise, thoughtful, and intentional decisions simply by looking for the single best action to take at the moment.

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



Do you have problems making decisions? It's okay, most of us do. Studies show that your average person makes about 35,000 decisions every day! It's no wonder so many of us suffer from decision fatigue. Some are pretty simple for us, but others, like buying a house or choosing a career, are tougher.

If you suffer from chronic hesitation or even just struggle with indecisiveness, *The Next Right Thing: A Simple, Soulful Practice for Making Life Decisions* is for you. Emily Freeman is a best-selling author, creative director, and spiritual mentor who is passionate about helping people make good decisions.

She gives simple, actionable advice to help guide your decision-making process. Her path to calming the inner chaos of the choices is to simply take the best action at the moment. She shows how shifting our goals from being about the outcome to looking only at the step in front of us brings clarity and direction.

Here are the 3 most insightful lessons I got from this book:

1. The next right thing is all about focusing on the present and not the long-run.
2. Eliminate inner distractions and questions your inner motivations.
3. Surprises can give you unexpected clarity in the decision-making process.

Are you ready to stop living your life in uncertainty and start making intentional decisions?

Lesson 1: Instead of focusing on the outcome, try looking at the present and just doing the next right thing.

You've probably had to make a decision at some point in your life where you had to spend a significant amount of time worrying about possible outcomes. But Freeman says if you want to really do what's best, stop worrying so much about the distant future and just worry about the next right thing. It's a principle that both Alcoholics Anonymous and Martin Luther King Jr profess.

Freeman uses the story of Jesus raising Jairus's daughter from the dead to illustrate this. After the miracle, instead of giving a sermon or telling them to kneel at his feet in gratitude, Jesus just says, "Give her something to eat." As obvious as this request sounds, the author feels he was helping them see that they needed to be focused in the present moment.

"Rather than a life plan, a clear vision or a five-year list of goals, the leper, the paralytic, and Jairus and his wife were given clear instructions by Jesus about what to do next – and only *next*," writes Freeman. Rather than stressing about mapping out our futures as we so often do, we are better living our lives one next right thing at a time.

The author used this advice when deciding whether or not to get a graduate degree in her 40's. She struggled over the decision because she was worried about it taking a toll on her time with her family, but she also felt she would regret it if she didn't do it.

Rather than worrying so much about every detail of her future, she decided to do what was best for her then, which was enrolling. The truth is, we can't know what exactly the future will hold, which is why she says to make decisions regardless of it.

Lesson 2: Clear yourself of inner distractions and try to find what your inner motivations are before making a decision.

In an age where the internet lies in the palm of our hands, sometimes it's almost impossible to just sit with our thoughts. If you want to find what your next right thing is, you need to be able to declutter your mind and allow space to think. In other words, become an inner minimalist.

As Joshua Becker says in *The More of Less*:

“Minimalism is not that you should own nothing, but that nothing should own you.”

For Freeman, this meant silencing her notifications. Instead of her phone deciding when she thought about things, she was the one in control. It helped her have the silence and clarity to reflect on decisions in everyday life. She suggests you declutter your mind from distractions and embrace the silence.

Another thing that Freeman says will help you in the decision-making process is first by asking yourself a simple question: “am I being led by love or pushed by fear?” Sometimes our true desires can become clouded by negative emotions like jealousy or fear.

When the author contemplated going on a service trip to the Phillipines, she had some pretty valid reasons not to go, such as her writing. But when she really thought about why she was so hesitant, she saw that fear keeping her from going. A fear of flying was masking her love of helping others. By realizing that it was a “fear vs. love” situation, she was able to overcome the fear and lead with love.

Lesson 3: Sometimes surprises will give you the most clarity.

Maybe a few of the tips above will help you find clarity in whatever decision you grapple with, or maybe not. But something to remember about clarity is that you can’t rush it.

Sometimes it’s best to be patient and contemplate things longer while you wait. If you expect clarity now, you might make the mistake of closing yourself off from the way life unfolds. Even if you aren’t religious, sometimes we find answers in all sorts of unexpected ways. Call it a surprise, or a sign, but they will help guide you along the way.

For Freeman, a surprise came to her when she was feeling lonely and insecure on a trip away from her family. She mustered up the courage to attend a local Sunday service.

While there, she ran into singer Sarah Masen, whom Freeman had loved since high school and even titled a book after one of her songs.

This goes to show that when you’re feeling insecure, don’t close yourself off. When you stay open to opportunities and don’t rush clarity, resolve can come in unexpected ways.

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The Next Right Thing Review

The Next Right Thing contains great advice for any of us who struggle with making decisions in our lives. There are 24 chapters, all with different and valuable advice, so I would definitely recommend reading the whole book. Though it does contain quite a bit of religion, there are good tips for those who aren't religious as well.

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Who would I recommend The Next Right Thing summary to?

The 24 year-old recent college graduate who is navigating a new time in her life, the 43 year-old Christian who wants some spiritual guidance on how to overcome decision fatigue, anyone who struggles with being decisive.