

ENCOURAGEMENT FOR *Real Life*

65. Real Life Truth: A Delay Is Not Defeat

You're listening to episode 65 of the Encouragement for Real Life Podcast, titled Real Life Truth: A Delay Is Not Defeat. Thank you for joining me today. I'm so glad you're here. Well, this episode is late. Not just hours late, but days late. And for this girl who doesn't ever like to be late, that bothers me. That doesn't set well with me when I'm one who does what she says she's going to do. Because when I say a new podcast episode will be available every Tuesday morning, you better believe I'll do everything I can to make that happen. Until I can't. And that's where I'm at this week. Or, at least that's where I was. I couldn't. I share in this episode what exactly happened, and I invite you to join me for the next few minutes as we ponder the delays in our lives. A delay is not defeat. I think you'll find some real-life encouragement and hope today. So, let's get to it.

John Lennon once said, "Life is what happens when you are busy making other plans."

I would agree. When we are going about our days, doing what we're doing, crossing things off our lists, keeping things moving forward, life can throw us a curveball. We try to swing at it, but we miss. Because who is ever ready for curveballs? And we wind up a little off course or off center in the process. It's been quite the week over here. No, wait, it's been quite the couple of weeks over here. I swung at the curveball that was thrown at me, but I missed it terribly. I think I swung so hard, I might have ended up on the ground in a twisted-up pile of myself.

At least that's how I felt.

You see, two weeks ago my grandsons, who I care for weekly, both came down with RSV. The three-month-old ended up in the hospital with it for three days. Let me tell you, that was a scary thing to experience. Such a little guy trying so hard to breathe. While he was in the hospital, my husband and I cared for his holder brother, and well, we three had a ball together! But I could tell by the end of last week that I wasn't feeling my normal self. And I wasn't surprised when my doctor told me in her office that Friday, "You have RSV."

RSV is a nasty virus. Her words were, "It's the virus of snot," and goodness, it is. I'll spare you the details, but no wonder a friend of mine who had it years ago described it as if she felt she was drowning in her own mucus. No wonder little babies have such a difficult time with it. It's an awful virus, and it took me down.

By Monday I had lost my voice.

I couldn't sleep lying flat. I couldn't breathe out of my nose. And my head felt like it was going to explode. So, I realized I physically could not produce this week's podcast episode, ready to go by Tuesday morning. It was not possible. And I had to come to terms with that.

But the thing is, one of my biggest irritations is when people don't do what they say they are going to do. When people don't follow through on their words/promises. And I can't tell you how often in my life

I've experienced this. How often others in my life haven't been people of their word. It bugs me so much, that I go out of my way to always be a woman of my word. So when I was facing the reality that I couldn't physically produce this week's episode on time, I felt like a complete and utter failure. Like I was letting people down.

Now, I fully realize people aren't waiting by their apps on Tuesday morning to hit play when the next Encouragement for Real Life Podcast episode drops. And I reminded myself a delayed episode wasn't a life or death situation. In the big scheme of things, this was not a big deal.

But it was a big deal to me. Because this is what I do. This is what *I said* I would do. Every Tuesday. Without fail. But I had to let this go. To embrace reality that was before me, that maybe it was okay to delay the episode to a time when I could feel stronger, have a clearer mind, and have the energy to do it. I trusted God had a plan.

I reminded myself, "A delay is not defeat."

And so I became okay with the delay.

Because I had a big thing I was responsible for coming up at the end of the week. I was officiating my nephew's wedding on Saturday! And at that point, remember, I had lost my voice. I needed to rest, to do what I could to care for myself, and to trust God with what I had no control over. Because who would stand in my place if I wasn't healthy enough to walk them through their vows?? Who, at the last minute, would be willing to step in my shoes? And quite frankly, I didn't want to give that role to anyone else. I wanted to be the one to marry these two, to help them begin their lives together, to point them to the God who brought them together?

With much coughing, blowing my nose, resting, and following my doctor's regimen to get over this virus, my voice began to return on Wednesday. I still didn't have much energy or appetite, but I was able to talk. I was thankful! Prayer for healing and wholeness kept me going. I still wasn't great on Friday morning, but a friend and I had been praying I would be 100% by Friday night, the rehearsal. Well, I wasn't exactly 100%, but I was able to feel like a human being again and wasn't coughing and blowing my nose as much.

So, there was progress.

My prayer on Saturday morning was, "Lord, please help me get through the ceremony without coughing and blowing my nose." And thankfully, He graciously answered that prayer. Adam's and Mariah's wedding was beautiful. They said their "I do's," and were joined as husband and wife. And I pray they live happily ever after. (And I thank God for allowing the focus to not be on me and my coughing.)

As I reflect back today, I can't help but think about the delays in our lives. We all have them, and we usually don't like them. Delays aren't in our file of favorites. Delays aren't fun, in the airport, in our successes, in our timelines, or in our lives. We don't care for delays and we'll do all we can to avoid them.

But sometimes God uses delays to get our attention.

He uses them to refocus us. He uses them to show us there's a better option. And He reminds us delays aren't always terrible. Delays are His training ground for good ahead. Sometimes we just can't see it yet.

Robert Schuller once said, "God's delays are not God's denials."

But if He's allowed the delay, we can be assured, He'll use it for our good. A delay is not defeat.

I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord. Psalm 27:13-14 NIV

I don't know what delay you're facing today, and it certainly might be bigger than a delay of a podcast episode. But no matter what it is, friend, I invite you to trust God with it. To trust Him in it and through it. He's got good plans for your lives and for this delay.

I'm also reminded of another delay I'm experiencing now. I'm stuck in this delay of writing my book and taking the next step. And I get frustrated at times when I see that progress isn't happening. But yet, maybe progress is happening and we just can't see it yet.

Getting sick was never a part of my plan. But delaying what I could not physically do allowed me to take the pressure off myself. It allowed me to step back and focus on rest and recovery. And it gave me the opportunity to reevaluate exactly what I do and why I do it. And this morning it gave me the eyes to see just how God was faithful in healing me, in working through me yesterday at my nephew's wedding, and giving me a fresh perspective today.

This delay was a good thing for me.

I will still do all I can to be a woman of my word, but next time when a delay comes, I might not fight it so much. I want to remember that God's delays can be one of His greatest blessings.

I'm still not 100% yet, but goodness, I'm so much better. And I praise God for it all.

Come on over to our Encouragement for Real Life Community on Facebook. There you will find hope and encouragement for every single day. The link to this group is in the show notes.

And if you found encouragement in this episode today, would you please rate it and/or review it? So others can find this encouragement too?

In closing, a delay is not defeat. It's also not God's denial. May you and I not only remember this today, but also in the days to come. God has good plans for our lives, friend. We can trust Him always. Thank you for being here today. I appreciate you. God bless you!

Julie Lefebvre