

#251 - What's Saving My Life Right Now

Hey there! You're listening to The Lazy Genius Podcast! I'm Kendra Adachi, and I'm here to help you be a genius about the things that matter and lazy about the things that don't. Today is one of my favorite episodes - episode 251 - what's saving my life right now. That phrase was coined by the amazing Barbara Brown Taylor whose writing I love so much, but this idea is to help us think beyond favorites and splurges - which can totally still save our lives - but to think about what is actually grounding us, making us feel like ourselves, what is making our lives feel good or even at a bare minimum just function. What is saving my life. I have a list that I'll share with you now, and I encourage you to make your own whether you share it with others or just name it for yourself. As we know, the naming is often where the magic happens. We think things are terrible all the time, and while they very well could be, naming what is saving our lives changes our posture towards our circumstances.

Just so you know, one of the things on this list is a very exciting Lazy Genius Kitchen related announcement, so keep your ears peeled.

Also if you listened to last week's episode about how I make this podcast, you learned that sometimes I record a couple of episodes at once, this episode included. And at the time this episode has to be recorded is when my neighbor is building a garage. So there will be some light hammering as you listen do not be alarmed also I am so sorry.

So let's jump into what's saving my life right now.

Number one, pants that fit. Pants that fit are very much saving my life on many levels. So I hold most of my weight in my middle, so one big meal moves me up a pant size. I can wear two different pants sizes within a week easily. But most of my pants are the smaller size, and I have one pair of jeans for big meal days. Well, I think my big meal days have officially become my regular days. But because I only have that one pair of bigger jeans, I have been reaching for sweatpants a lot more than I usually do. I have this feeling every day of "ugh, I don't want to wear those pants AGAIN." Now I love soft pants. They are a gift from above. But on certain days when I need to get a lot done or want to feel a little more polished than what sweatpants can give me, I want hard pants. But hard pants that fit. The one pair is fine, and a lot of people have only one pair of jeans and survive just fine. But because it was mentally my back-up pair, I have a mental block in choosing it daily and wearing it as Plan A rather than Plan B. No matter your size, pants that fit and are comfortable on your body should always be Plan A. Always. So once I made that shift, I started wearing those jeans more and more. Now, I begin my slow process of going through my existing pants and seeing what's still wearable and what never is. Like, I have a pair of high waisted blush colored wide legged jeans that I adore, but they are for days when I am very much not bloated. They only work occasionally. Well, those occasions are now over. A lot would have to change in my body for those pants to work again, even though I could wear them a year ago, so to a friend they will go. But that is the process - I'll go through my pants knowing that what matters most is that my pants comfortably fit. Then I'll get rid of what's in the

way of that. Once I see what's left, I'll know what new pants to start looking for. But it's amazing how a day can feel more alive when your pants aren't too tight.

Number two, eating lunch. A couple of weeks ago, I was sharing with my therapist about how I was doing managing the stress in my life, of which there is much right now, and she said, "Taking a lunch break has always been good for you. Are you doing that?" Shots fired. I had not been doing that. I *had* been eating lunch, and sometimes even really wholesome, nourishing food. I'll share one of my current favorite lunches in number three, but even though I've been eating food I love, I've been eating quickly on my way out the door or while I'm working. In the last month or so, I have not been stopping to eat lunch, to read a novel or sit on my porch or eat slowly and in silence. Part of the reason for that is obvious - because of the whole "your books might be in the ocean" situation, we had to shift the launch date of The Lazy Genius Kitchen from March 22 to May 3 and things have been a little crazy since then. I'm cramming a lot of extra work into my standard working hours, so lunch has been the first thing to go. But once my therapist called me out, I was like "yeah okay I should stop for lunch." I have been for a couple of weeks now, and it literally has saved my life.

Number three, salmon in the air fryer for lunch. Really it could be salmon in the oven or on the stove, too, but the ease of it in the air fryer has been the best thing. So one of my favorite meals on the planet and also one that I always feel good after eating is steamed white rice, a piece of salmon marinated in east Asian pantry ingredients or even just soy sauce, and spinach quickly sauteed with sesame oil. If I have avocado, cucumber, or pickled ginger, I'll sometimes throw those on too. But white rice, flavorful salmon, and spinach sauteed with a drizzle of sesame oil is stupid good. But the air fryer has made this a more accessible lunch on a weekday.

I buy a big salmon filet at the store - I like sockeye salmon - I cut it into a few pieces, season with a little salt, and marinate it in a plastic bag with usually soy sauce and a little mirin. Recently I had some extra Korean barbecue sauce from takeout we had, and I just used that as the marinade. But I put it in a freezer bag and into the freezer. Then when it's time to make lunch, I turn on the air fryer to 400 degrees and cook the one piece of frozen salmon for about eight minutes. While that cooks, I heat up some rice because we always have extra rice in the fridge, and I saute the spinach. Just a touch of canola, let the spinach wilt, sprinkle with salt, and add a drizzle of sesame oil or better yet hot sesame oil. The whole thing takes ten minutes max, and it is magnificent. I've eaten it so many times, and every time I'm so happy.

Number four is a skincare product. It's the Peter Thomas Roth Retinol Fusion PM Night Serum. I can't always remember Peter Thomas Roth, and I have been known to accidentally call it the Phillip Seymour Hoffman retinol serum. I miss him by the way. Anyway, the most important thing I do for my skin is to use sunscreen every day. Without question. I learned from Jamie B. Golden and from Caroline Hirons who is a skincare expert that most of the skin damage we experience is from the sun. It's from the sun. So I wear sunscreen every single day, no matter the weather, no matter if I'm going outside, I always wear it. The second most important product that I started using is retinol. I'm not an expert, and I'm probably going to say something wrong, but retinol can be harsh and you need to work your way up. You don't go from no retinol to

prescription retinol. You need to ease into it. I've been easing into it with Olay Regenerist Retinol Max cream, and that was good. But it wasn't great after awhile, so I decided to level up my retinol game a little, read a ton of reviews, and tried this Peter Thomas Roth serum, and I have never seen such a radical difference in my skin's texture and brightness, even some of my wrinkles are chilling out. Now, I'm fine with wrinkles. Aging is normal, and we don't have to be against it. I also think it's okay to care for the skin on your face and keep looking as bright and healthy as you'd like. If that means injections, do it. Do what matters to you, but for me what matters is to tend to my skin in intentional ways with good sunscreen and good retinol and then let the rest do its thing. This product is something, and I'm really loving how it makes me feel. Again, it's okay to look older. We're all getting older. I'm not against that. I think I like feeling like myself, and when my skin is bright and glowy and healthy, I do. I feel a little more like myself. I'm so in love with this product that it's the one I'd choose to the exclusion of all others. I'd find something else in all other categories even though I love my skincare products. This one is stupid good. For me! For me. I look forward to putting it on every night, and that alone has been a nice thing that's saving my life right now.

Number five, not using my phone in the afternoons. I've mentioned this before, but I started actively ignoring the Internet for the couple of hours between the end of school and when I start making dinner. My kids come home at different times, they have different amounts of homework, they need different things at the end of their days... there's a lot for me to be present to. And when I am distracted by important and unimportant things on my phone like work emails or answering a vox or whatever, I become resentful when my kids need something. Which I do not like that. I do not like feeling that way. So I have been actively ignoring my phone between 2:30 and 4:30pm most afternoons. I do have an Apple watch, so I can see when texts and calls come through, but unless they are legitimately urgent, I just leave them for later. It has been, as is appropriate for the theme of this episode, a lifesaver. Also if you'd like some helpful, non-shaming thoughts on adult screen time, we have an episode for that, and it'll be in the show notes.

Number six, my planner, my pens, and my highlighters. One of my favorite things about getting older is finding things I really love and just sticking with them. And I guess that happens more as you get older because you've had more time to experiment and try stuff, so when you find something - when you find a planner or a pen or a highlighter that you adore - it truly is magical because you've had years of trying planners and pens and highlighters. You have the receipts that these choices are your best choices. And that's where I am with my personal office supplies.

I use my paper planner every day and have for years and years, but this particular planner which I have mentioned in several places over the last couple of months is my favorite ever. It's the Moleskine Pro Weekly Vertical Diary, and I am obsessed with it. It's exactly what I need. I also have decided to go all in on Pilot G2 0.38 pens. I have other pens that I do like, but if a .38 is close by, I'm gonna use the 0.38 always. So that is my ride or die pen, and I love writing with it. I will search far and wide to write with one when writing is needed. And finally on the highlighter front, I've never actually been a huge highlighter person, mostly because I'm not a

fan of neon as a concept. But I prefer to highlight things that are done on my to-do list rather than cross them out, I prefer highlighting in books as opposed to underlining with a pen, even a G2 pilot 0.38. And the way that I use my favorite planner lends itself to some simple color-coordination using highlighters. I was using Crayola markers that weren't super great, I tried actual highlighters that we have at home that were just too bright and clunky for me, but I had the practice. Remember, I mentioned that in the 5 essentials of time management episode a few weeks ago. Focus on the practice, not the planner. If you don't already have a practice of making your list a certain way or making a list at all or meal planning or whatever it is, a fancy new tool isn't going to give you the practice. It's probably just going to clutter your desk. Focus on the practice first. Well, I have a practice of how I make my lists and read my books and use my planner, and I've tried a few different tools to enhance that practice, but like I said Crayola markers weren't cutting it. So I tried the Mildliner set from the brand Zebra, and I am in love. These highlighters are in super chill muted colors, really beautiful, they're double-tipped so there's chisel end and a fine end, they're skinny, I just love them. I use them every single day with great affection and enthusiasm. So my planner, my pens, and my highlighters are super dupe saving my life.

Number eight is my husband, Kaz. Yes, this is maybe a sappy part of the list, but also it would be completely disingenuous to not mention Kaz is a vital part of my life always but especially right now. The last two years have been hard for everyone, and my family is not an exception. The last two months especially have been particularly hard around here, and Kaz has been an incredible partner in that. We share the household chores. He asks me how he can help me. He doesn't complain in the slightest when we have spaghetti twice in one week. He rubs my back when it hurts and plays with the kids and listens to me when I verbally vomit all over him. I wouldn't want to have a life without him, but these last couple of months, I believe it even more. I wouldn't have made it out of all the things we've experienced the last little while without him being who he is, so he gets a mention. Don't let the number eight thing fool you.

Number nine, the collaboration with Olive and June. I mentioned this last week, but there is a Lazy Genius Olive and June nail polish collection. We have three new colors called TLG for The Lazy Genius, Start Small, and You're Doing Great. I love these colors so much, I love the quiz that we developed to help everyone choose their best six colors for their mani system, but really the life saving thing has been how fun it's been to put together. The team at Olive and June is ridiculously talented at marketing and PR and all the things that go into a lot of what we all see on the Internet but don't fully grasp. There is just so much thought and talent and time that goes into the tiniest thing we see on TV or in an Instagram ad that seems effortless because of all the effort it took. Working with this team has been just amazing. They have been incredibly collaborative and supportive and patient and excited and generous. Even when I was drowning a little bit with all of the books at the bottom of the sea news, I had this collab to be excited about, and it's just been the best.

And number ten, something that's been saving my life is planning fun stuff to look forward to. Some of that is personal, like a family trip to Disney and a spontaneously planned but a long-time-coming trip out west with some new Internet friends. Planning fun stuff is so very fun.

One of the fun things I've been planning that has been giving me so much life has to do with the release of The Lazy Genius Kitchen! Drumroll please!

I would like to invite you all to the Lazy Genius Kitchen Pub Crawl! More specifically a publication crawl. We are going to party from one publication date (March 22, the original release date of The Lazy Genius Kitchen) to May 3 (the new release date because of the boat thing). All the information can be found at thelazygeniuscollective.com/pubcrawl, but let me give you a few highlights and one important date. We have four events - a virtual party on March 22, a live event in Chicago on April 7, a cooking demo event with Bri McKoy in DC on April 22, and a launch party in Greensboro, NC (which is where I live) on the release date, May 3. Those last three events are ticketed, and the first virtual event is free for everyone who has preordered The Lazy Genius Kitchen. All the details are available at thelazygeniuscollective.com/pubcrawl, and tickets go on sale this Wednesday, March 2. Because I'm recording this episode a little bit early, I don't know the exact time of day those tickets go on sale, but if you join the mailing list and/or preorder the book and let us know you did at thelazygeniuskitchen.com, you will get an email the minute tickets are available. Also, when you go to the website, we'll have specifics there. I just don't know what they are at the exact moment of this recording because that's how podcast recording goes sometime! But I am just so excited to see y'all and meet you in person. We crawl from one publication date to another and have the best time doing it. And if you can't travel to any of the three events or tickets aren't in your budget, remember that the virtual party is available for free for anyone who has preordered the book, and I'll be visiting some independent bookstores in the Carolinas in late May and doing signings and stuff. So if you live in the south, that could be a great chance for us to meet, too! All the details will be on the website, and again we will also contact the mailing list first with that stuff so if you don't want to miss anything, head to thelazygeniuscollective.com/join.

And those are the ten things saving my life right now. I hope this inspires you to make your own list or to start small and even name just one thing today. There is good to be found in many many forms, even retinol.

Okay, y'all, that's it for today. Thanks so much for listening and until next time, be a genius about the things that matter and lazy about the things that don't. I'm Kendra, and I'll see you next week!