

290 - Managing Your Holiday Home

Hi 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 episode 290 - managing your holiday home. There's a decent chance that while you love the feeling of the holidays in your home, you're also a little overwhelmed by it. There's the regular upkeep of one's home - the general cleaning and tidying, but there's also a lot of extra stuff around the house this time of year. There could be holiday decorations that take up a little more space, gifts that are out, gifts that are hidden, gift-wrapping stuff, trays of cookies and extra food things, even winter clothes like big coats and boots depending on where you live. There's just likely a lot of extra stuff around, and because our tendency is to be fairly extreme in our response to challenges - either try hard or give up - we stay overwhelmed. We don't create a small solution to the normal challenges of a holiday home, and therefore we don't effectively enjoy that home because we haven't tended to whatever is overwhelming us. So that's what we're going to do today.

I'm going to walk us through four of the 13 Lazy Genius principles laid out in my first book, *The Lazy Genius Way*, and apply those to our holiday homes. So let's jump into the episode with our first principle: Live in the Season.

We're starting with Live in the Season because that's why we're in this situation in the first place. This is a season of life and a season on the calendar, and the Lazy Genius way of looking at a season is to acknowledge what it's offering us and what it's teaching us. This principle helps us avoid the tendency or expectation to cram one season into the shape of another. For example, if you are busier this time of year which most of us are and if your home is slowly filling up with extra stuff, with those gifts and decorations and supplies for your holiday traditions, you cannot approach your home the exact same way you do in a slower season that naturally holds less stuff, physical or otherwise. It's a losing battle. So instead live in the season.

Name what matters about this season, and let that be your guide. This is where it's really important to name what matters most about the season. There are multiple things that can matter, and it's great to name them. But if you don't name what matters most, you won't feel the same kind of contentment and intentionality that you would with one singular focus. For example, here are things that could matter for your holiday home. That it feels cozy, welcoming, and festive. Also that it stays relatively tidy and that you're not stepping over extra things to get what you need. Maybe you don't want to see the wrapping stuff or maybe the pile of winter coats is making you crazy and you want that to stay tidy and for everything to have a place. Name whatever matters, but from that list, then choose what matters most. If you try and consistently hold both tidiness and coziness as equal priorities over the next few weeks, you will get frustrated. Maybe not all the time, but there will be times when you forget the season you're in and will make tidiness the main priority at the expense of coziness. Is it okay to prioritize tidiness over coziness? Of course it is because everyone gets to decide what matters to them. But the likelihood is that you care more about the uniqueness of this season and its coziness and the gifts and the cookies and whatever else but sometimes forget that or have to fight

against that priority because you're trying to make two different things matter at the same time. For this season, it's really important to name what matters most. That doesn't mean other things can't matter, but when you come to a standstill, you need a priority to be the boss so that you can be content and intentional in your choices and attitude. Make sense? So that's the first principle to apply to your holiday home: live in the season. It's probably going to be a touch extra because that's the nature of the season. Let that season inform what matters to you.

The second principle is Put Everything In Its Place. This is one of the most important, if not the most important principle, when it comes to your home, holiday or otherwise. We're often told that we have too much stuff, and while that might be true, the likely problem is not that you have too much stuff but that your stuff doesn't have a place. I say this in *The Lazy Genius Way*, but you don't have to become a minimalist. Just put your stuff away. And you can't put it away if it doesn't have a place. And that is certainly true in your holiday home.

If you're listening to this when it comes out, we haven't quite hit December yet, so there's still plenty of time to name what needs a place and then find that place. So think now about the categories of stuff that could contribute to overwhelm in your home. And one thing to remember here is that the place can be temporary. You're not choosing places for things that have to exist for eternity. For the next month while there's more stuff out, where will this thing go? Just name that temporary place for now.

Other things might need a more permanent home even after the holidays are over. Maybe the excess of bigger shoes because of winter has illuminated the fact that you don't have a good shoe storage place as it is, let alone for when you add bulky boots to the mix. So yes you need a place for your winter boots, but maybe you need a more permanent helpful place for shoes in general. Holiday home challenges could shine a light on areas in your life and home where something needs a place that hasn't quite found one yet.

So look around your home at the areas where you're experiencing frustration and see if the problem could be solved by putting something in its place. And then you can name things that are about to enter your home - hidden unwrapped gifts, wrapped gifts, and other holiday things - that will need a place. Go ahead and determine what those are now so that you can manage your home a little better, and remember to do this all through the lens of what matters to you.

We'll be right back...

Our next principle to apply is Set House Rules. House Rules are meant to facilitate connection, not protection. They're not to keep things under control in a self-preservation way but to name what matters and then put a guardrail in place to protect it. For me in my home, House Rules are meant to keep me from being mean basically. I don't want to be mean to my kids and Kaz about things that don't actually matter more than connection does, but I also know myself and know what makes me annoyed. So rather than only combatting that tendency by doing the emotional labor of being a good person in a frustrating circumstance, House Rules help avoid that circumstance from happening in the first place.

So for managing your holiday home, there are likely a couple of bigger categories of frustration that could use House Rules: cleaning and tidying. Those are two different things. Tidying is just visually feeling like things are in order. Cleaning is removing legitimate dirt. You can have a clean house that's untidy, and you can have a tidy house that isn't clean.

Now one thing that is for sure a problem in many homes that have multiple people living in them, holidays or not, is that different people have different definitions of what tidy is and what clean is. How many times have you experienced walking into a room that someone else said that tidied or cleaned and it very much is not what you could call tidy or clean. And that can go both ways! You might have a looser definition of clean than a partner or a kid, and you think they're being a little cuckoo crazy cleaning this intensely when all you really expected was for the trash to be off the floor. We all have different definitions of clean and tidy, and it's when those definitions go unspoken that everyone gets frustrated with each other and for me personally when I get mean. I don't want us to get mean.

So enter House Rules. A House Rule could be super effective in helping preserve what matters while also giving everyone a shared language and expectation. So a House Rule in your holiday home could be unroll your inside-out socks after you take them off. We take our shoes off at the door and store them there, and there are always so many socks around. Now I don't mind the sock thing that much, but my husband does, probably because he does the laundry. Inside out socks don't bother me because I'm not the one who currently washes them. Now if they bother him or you enough that it makes you feel resentful or frustrated or distracts you from connection with your people, a House Rule might be super helpful. And somehow House Rules aren't naggy. It's a shared language. It's simply saying sweetly and directly "Remember turn your socks outside out!" It's not a constant surprise because it's a rule. It's just part of how you and your people live each day. That House Rule alone could help alleviate the frustration you feel around the sock and shoe clutter by the door. It could be that your frustration when you look at that pile of shoes and socks isn't so much the pile but the task that every inside-out sock represents. Fix the socks, and you might fix the frustration.

That's why I love House Rules. Make them specific, clear, and kind. Yes, you'll have to say them over and over and over again, but you're saying them not as an enforcer of some random thing just for today. Instead you're saying it as an agreed-upon rule that is for everyone in the family, and you're just the reminder. It feels less gross that way.

So look at your holiday home and notice if there are patterns or piles that cause you consistent frustration. Maybe a House Rule could help.

And our final principle for your holiday home: build the right routine. I love routines, and most of us have more than we realize. There are things you do in a certain order or at the same general time every day, and if you don't do them, the day feels off. A beautiful goal of a Lazy Genius is to slowly - and I'm talking aggressively slowly - build a routine over time. If you try and do it all at once or make it a to-do list thing, it will have a harder time sticking and therefore making an

impact. Also something important about a Lazy Genius routine is that it's more about the destination than the parts. It's more about where the routine is taking you rather than what you do to get there. So a morning routine helps you ease into the productivity of the day, an after-work routine is to help you transition from one mode to another in a kind way, an afternoon routine is to help your kids transition from one mode to another in a kind way. The pieces and parts of that routine are important for sure, but if you think of the routine as an onramp or offramp to a particular feeling or experience or intention, the pieces and parts hold less power and therefore aren't as actively required. You can skip parts and not lose the power of the routine.

So how does that work for managing your holiday home? There could be a seasonal challenge you face consistently. Let's say it's cleaning. Now you've already named what clean means to you and even what rooms need to be cleaned at all. Some can wait. But let's say the seasonal challenge is keeping the living room clean - not just tidy but clean - during a busier season where you don't have nearly as much time as you used to. Maybe the day you usually clean outside of the holidays is Saturday morning, but your weekends are all full of shopping and travel and gathering now. Instead of just giving up on something that matters to you, like cleaning your home if that matters, you can add one cleaning task to an existing routine so that you can deal with this seasonal challenge for now. So for example, you could vacuum the living room while you wait for your morning coffee instead of just standing next to the coffee maker. Right? You're already doing your morning routine, even if you don't call it that. You're already making the coffee and always will. What is something you can do for now within that routine that can help with a seasonal challenge like cleaning during off times? Vacuum during coffee. Or have a container of Clorox wipes in your bathroom and wipe down your sink and toilet while you wait for shower to warm up. Maybe outside of the holiday season, you just clean your bathroom on a Saturday and call it good, but your Saturdays don't function the same way right now. Add something to an existing routine that can help. Make sense?

So as you manage your holiday home, remember to live in the season. This is a season of different schedules, commitments, and likely of extra stuff being around your home. Live in the season of extra, and also name what matters most as you live in it. That's the first principle. Second, put everything in its place. Maybe there are things that temporarily need a place during this season, so go ahead and decide those. Or maybe an extra holiday season is showing you places where your regular life things don't currently have a good place. Find one and start putting the stuff there. Third, set house rules. If there are situations where you're consistently frustrated, see if a specific, clear, kind house rule can keep the mean person dominoes from falling. And fourth, build the right routine. If you have something that's hard to fit into your holiday schedule, take the most important element or elements of it and add it to an existing routine to help alleviate the overwhelm.

And that's how to manage your holiday home. I hope the reminder of these principles helps.

Before we go, let's celebrate the Lazy Genius of the Week! This week it's Shannon McGowan Ralph. Shannon writes this: "Here's my Lazy Genius tip: it's so small I feel like it's not even

worth mentioning.” Okay hang on I’m going to stop right here. This is the theme of these Lazy Genius of the Week tips. Brianna said the same thing last week. “You probably already do this” or “it’s so small it doesn’t matter.” PALS. LISTEN TO ME. THE SMALL STUFF REALLY MATTERS. In fact, it’s the small stuff that actually makes our lives consistently better and easier and more like us than any big thing can. Share your small stuff! Okay, back to Shannon. “I use the Magic Question principle ‘what can I do now to make something easier later.’ Mornings are rough, just like every other family. We have to get out the door to school without anybody shouting. We have to make sure we have everything we need. There’s breakfast, lunches, snacks, etc. One thing that sends me over the edge during the busy morning is my dog pawing at his dish for food. The noise and the inconvenience of me stopping what I’m doing to take care of that drives me bananas. And I can’t ask my kids for help because if they get distracted for one second while trying to get ready for school, it’s all downhill. One night as I was cleaning up the kitchen, I realized that I could just fill his dog dish right then and leave it up on the counter. Then the next morning, I just put the dish on the ground. I don’t have to stop what I’m doing in the morning or listen to that noise. It’s so simple I can’t believe I never thought of it before.” I could not be more obsessed with this. You guys, this is what it means to be a Lazy Genius. Do the smallest thing that seems so ridiculous but that solves a tiny problem well. Shannon wasn’t trying to solve “how can I make my entire morning easier” because that’s too big. The biggest problem was the sound of her dog pawing at his bowl, and the solution is so small and doable, eliminating that frustration. This is what I want you to keep doing, y’all. Pay attention. Name what tiny tiny thing is driving you crazy, and then apply a Lazy Genius principle to solve it. It is ridiculous how helpful those tiny choices can be. And as you find one small solution at a time for whatever challenges you have in your season of life, you’ll find a lot more peace in your life than you’d ever experience from trying to build it big and solve everything at once. Start small. I love this so much, Shannon, and congratulations on being the Lazy Genius of the Week.

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!