

299 - What's Saving My Life

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 299 - what's saving my life. We do these episodes about once a quarter for two reasons. One, it's a wonderful practice that I want to remind you of as often as possible. And two, because our seasons of life change, so do the things that save them. It's really important to me that we pay attention to seasonal practices so that we get off that train of a linear life that goes from start to finish. That's not how life works, so let's remember what is working for us, bringing us joy, and saving our lives right now. As a reminder, this is a concept coined by Barbara Brown Taylor, one of my favorite authors, so thank you, Barbara Brown Taylor, for paving the way for us to do this simple but mighty thing.

I have ten things on my list today, a couple of which are always here. Cheers for settling into what works and being grateful for it.

The first thing is the North Carolina candle from Homesick. Homesick is a candle company that makes a candle scent for every state and then even some fictional places. They have a Death Star candle, y'all. They have Harry Potter candles. They have a wintergreen mantle candle that is the best smells of Christmas all in one. I love these candles. They're a little pricier than most candles you'd find at Target, but they burn for a really long time, are simple and pretty to look at, and their hot throw, or how well the scent fills the room, is really good. But the North Carolina candle is one of the greatest scented candles ever, even if you're not from there. It's just comforting and lovely and a little woodsy and even has a hint of tobacco in it since a ton of tobacco is farmed in North Carolina. I love it so hard, and I've been burning it almost constantly.

Also fun candle tip: one of the reasons you want to keep your candle wicks trimmed is because a higher wick creates a bigger flame and a hotter burn which makes the candle burn up faster and causes the scent to diminish. So it's not just that the candle wick will break off or something. A small wick means a steady small flame which means a steadily burning candle with great hot throw. The more you know. So the North Carolina candle from Homesick candles is number one.

Number two is playoff football. I love sports with my whole heart, and I have finally noticed the importance of meaningful sports in my life. I'll survive when there's nothing of note happening, but when there is? It's like an anchor for me and my family. Before Christmas, it was the men's world cup. The women's world cup is my favorite sporting event of all time, so I can't wait for that. March Madness is up there and coming soon. But playoff NFL football is a blast. We're a big NFL family, so it's something all of us can enjoy together, it's usually really competitive with lots of storylines, it's emotional, and we all just get a ton of enjoyment from it. So personally it's saving my life because I love locking into something competitive over a period of time, but I also love that it's something connective for my family.

Number three is a new grocery pickup rhythm. I think I've had a meal planning something or other every single one of these episodes, and that's because we're always eating. Food never stops. Meals never take a break. The kids continue to eat more than they did before. Because meals are always a thing, so are groceries.

I talk about finding your planning and shopping rhythm a lot in my book *The Lazy Genius Kitchen* if you want some practical help to figure out the best rhythm for you, not just a copy of mine because that won't work, read that book. It's really really great.

But the important thing to remember about meal planning and shopping is that it goes through seasons and phases and iterations. What worked last year might not work now, and I've even found that what worked last month could still work better. I'm an Enneagram One. Literally everything can work better. So don't feel badly as you change your rhythms or choices little by little. That's natural and good. So lately I've been paying attention to the best times for me to not just pick up my groceries but plan and prep, too. I want all three of those to be connected. If I don't connect the whole process, I'll have groceries that will go bad before a plan kicks in or before we get to a weekend when I have time to prep stuff. It's been a significant shift for me to continue seeing the entire process as one cycle, not separate ones. I don't have a meal planning rhythm *and* a shopping rhythm *and* a prep rhythm. I mean I do, but all of them have to be part of one single rhythm if I'm going to have food when I need it and have it not be rotten when that time comes.

So my current rhythm that I've been doing for the last month that's really worked *and* that is prioritized something important to me - a prepped tasty lunch for myself - is this. On Thursday, I choose what lunch I'm going to prep over the weekend for the following week. On Friday, I do a grocery pickup. On Saturday or Sunday, I prep my lunch and even a dinner thing or two if I want to or need to or have the time. On Sunday, I meal plan dinners for the next week, and on Tuesday I have another pickup. I'm never more than three or four days from a trip to the store, and those trips coincide well with when I'm choosing what to eat. That broader, comprehensive rhythm has worked really really well. We also still have the little white board in the kitchen to write things we need, and I'll know that I'll be able to get them in just a handful of days.

We'll be right back...

The fourth thing that's currently saving my life is fleece lined leggings. I live in North Carolina, and it's for sure winter here but it's not like Minnesota or anything. Still it's usually pretty wet in the air, and even if it's only 48 degrees outside, if the air is wet, the cold feels colder. I am always so grateful to have a home with a good HVAC system and try to not complain about temperature problems in my house because I have a heated house. A lot of people can't say that, so I'm grateful. I also have noticed that even with the heat on and sometimes a degree higher than our usual, I'm still consistently chilly. I'll throw on a sweatshirt or cardigan or something, but you can't do that for your legs, you know? Pants are pants. If I'm wearing jeans, I can't put on a pant cardigan. And if I'm wearing my Vuori joggers which are still going strong or some other soft pant, my legs are still cold, and I'm not going to wear two pairs of soft pants.

That feels excessive in a way that makes me uncomfortable. So basically in the winter, my legs just have to deal. Until I recently bought a pair of fleece lined leggings off Amazon. They're nothing special, but they're also incredibly special. These things are spandex furnaces. I love them. If I know I'm going to be in the house all day on a cold day and can't just sit under a blanket the entire time, I tend to put these leggings on, and they warm me up so much that I don't have to layer my top half. They do their job very well, and I wear them so often that I need another pair so I have a spare when it's time to do laundry.

Number five, my new favorite lunch which I've called The Sunniest Sunshine Curry. You might remember Sunshine Curry from my Instagram account. I'm pretty sure there's a video in there of me making Sunshine Curry in real time. It's incredibly simple. Red bell peppers, sweet potatoes, chicken, coconut milk, and red curry paste. That's pretty much it. Super delicious. But I have been on a cauliflower kick lately, and also chickpeas are an easier protein source for lunches than chicken if I don't have any thawed chicken. So one day I went live in our paid community called The Neighborhood and made my lunch in real time while I answered questions and stuff. I had never made this particular dish before, but I figured it wouldn't be terrible because it was a riff on Sunshine Curry. I kept the bell pepper and sweet potato, dropped the chicken, and add cauliflower and chickpeas. I kept the coconut milk and red curry paste but also added some ginger, too. Y'all, this thing is ridiculous. Ridiculous. Chrissy Anderson, an OG LG listener and reader, asked me if I could come up with more hearty, easy, delicious recipes like this, and I was like not until I get tired of this one and that might be never. It's just so good. I can meal prep it so servings are ready to go, and it's just warm and hearty and delicious and doesn't have any dairy or gluten which I'm not necessarily sensitive to but that can also throw me a curveball on occasion. It checks all the boxes and is just magical. MAGICAL. I'll put the recipe in the Latest Lazy Listens email that goes out next week. The link to sign up for that is in the show notes!

Okay, number six! I've shared this before in a couple of other contexts, but number six is scheduled monthly workdays with Emily P. Freeman. For you, you could just call this a scheduled time on the calendar with a friend. Emily P. Freeman is someone you likely already know about and follow. She's an incredible writer and author and hosts a podcast called The Next Right Thing where she helps you discern your next right thing in love. She's very good at her job. She and I have similar jobs obviously, writing books and making a podcast and doing Internet work, and Internet work is sometimes very deep, creative work, and sometimes it's a lot of logistics and maintenance and checking boxes. It's work that can adjust to your setting depending on what you're doing. Emily and I used to co-work at a coffee shop years ago when both of our jobs were hobbies becoming side hustles as opposed to now when they are capital J jobs. We both have offices and people, and coffee shop work just doesn't really happen anymore. Well, right around Covid, our relationship rhythm went through a transition like many things did for many people. Before Covid, we usually saw each other fairly regularly, about once a week. Then during Covid and as we've all slowly transitioned kind of out of it, that weekly-ish rhythm stopped. Up until a few months ago, Emily and I would go days and days without talking, let alone see each other, and while that's okay and natural in transitioning rhythms, neither of us liked it. So a few months ago, Emily was like, "do you want to plan on doing coffee shop work together once a month?" and I've never said a faster yes to anything in my life. Like I said, I've

mentioned this before, but it's important to name the things that we slowly begin that continue to save our lives and support what matters. We're half a year into our monthly co-working mornings that we follow with a long lunch, and it's just been the best thing. Obviously I love Emily and want to regularly be together and keep up with each other's lives, but having that monthly anchor where we both know we'll get several hours together is the best kind of safety net. It's something to count on, and it makes the text and Voxer check-ins less desperate, at least from my end, because we know we're going to be together for a long stretch in no time. Having regular rhythms with people that matter to you, even monthly which might seem like not very often, is still so valuable to your life.

We'll be right back...

Number seven is my necklace separator. How many of you have struggled with trying to layer necklaces and they end up being an unintentional choker by the end of the day? Y'all know I love Wind Blown Jewelry, and I have three different necklaces from them that are all just slightly different lengths - I think I have a 12 inch, a 14, and a 16. They look beautiful layered together, especially if I'm wearing a button-down shirt that has a more of that area showing. The problem is the necklaces get all tangled and sad, and I end up taking off two out of frustration, even though my outfit really wants all three! I had asked a couple of people if they had tried necklace separators which are basically little clamps you attach all your necklaces too and it turns it into one necklace, and no one I knew had had a lot of success with whatever necklace separator they had. Well, I was desperate to try for myself because of how often I want to layer necklaces, so I went on Amazon and poked around. Now, there are a lot of options, many of which are really inexpensive. But I of course checked reviews and poked around, and the necklace separators from Lucky Brand, while definitely more expensive, seemed to offer a lot of success. So I got one, and it works like a dream. Like an actual dream. I have been wearing all three of my necklaces all at once on many days over the last couple of months since I got it, and it has made getting dressed so much more fun. So if you're wanting to layer necklaces, the Lucky Brand separator is fantastic.

Also just a reminder, all of these links will be in the show notes.

Number eight is a cashmere beanie. I don't know the brand because I didn't buy it. My sister, Becky, told me it was her Decide Once Christmas gift for people this year, and I've got to say that is a fantastic gift to give. No one buys themselves a cashmere beanie, but would everyone want to wear one? Umm, absolutely. She gave me one for Christmas in this beautiful cornflower blue, and I am obsessed with it. We're currently in a slightly milder stretch of winter weather where it's not super duper cold, and I'm kind of sad about it because I want to wear my beanie. The thing I love about it other than that it's so soft and really light and not bulky is that it doesn't give me hat head. Beanies of other materials are cute, but they're usually more form-fitting to your head, and you don't really want to wear one and then have to take it off in front of people. This cashmere beanie eliminates that problem just because of how chill the material is. Cashmere is such a vibe in that way. It's got a personality on your head. It's like, "Hey, girl, we're chic and effortless but also we're cool and chill and not tightly wound. Your hair will always be

great.” It’s a great vibe, and I love my cashmere beanie. I imagine because of cashmere being cashmere and beanies being beanies that any cashmere beanie will do this. It will treat your head very well.

Number nine is my morning reading. I used to be a relentless morning reader, especially when I had tiny kids at home. If I don’t read during the day and spend time in quiet, I am a shell of a person. When you’re home with littles, the early morning before they wake up is your only shot. So I used to get up early, like 5:30am or so, and read for 45 minutes before the kids were up. Well, I have full days in front of me now that my kids are older and in school until mid-afternoon every day. I also have a day off of work each week. I take lunch breaks where I read. I have that kind of solitude and reading enjoyment built into my rhythm each week, so the early mornings were less important. But over Christmas break, I noticed that I stayed in bed until a kid got me out of it, usually Annie. And even though I wasn’t resentful of her for doing it, it was also a slightly bumpier road to feeling like a person. Once school started back the first week of January, I decided to try getting up a little earlier than them to read again, just to see if it helped me be a little softer in the transition to being a mom and making lunches and getting everyone out the door. I’ve been doing it for almost a full month now every single weekday, and it has really been quite lovely. It’s not super early. My alarm goes off a touch before 6am, and I have my coffee mostly ready so I just have to press a button to get it. Then I spend about 20 or 30 minutes reading before the kids start strolling in or, in the case of my middle school son, I have to call him out of bed at least three times before I actually see his face. But I feel softer and kinder and more present in the mornings now, and I believe it’s because of that time of solitude and reading before I see anyone because that’s the only thing I changed. It’s been quite lovely.

And finally number ten which will always be on my list is books. Nine was about a time I read. Ten is just books in general. I never want to grow complacent and ungrateful in my love for reading and books. It is my personal favorite hobby and the thing of leisure I love the most. By naming it as important and that books do save my life day after day, I’m staying centered in that gratitude rather than reading just becoming the stack of papers on the table that you didn’t notice for so long that now they’re practically invisible and just part of your decoration now. You know what I mean? When things become so commonplace in our lives, it’s so easy to forget their significance. Books are a core piece of what brings me joy and presence and contentment and fun and consistency. I never go a day without reading, and I’m so grateful for that.

I’ve read 19 books so far in 2023 which I know is absurd, but that’s how much I love it. If you’re interested in knowing what I’m reading and what I think about, I share my book reviews in my newsletter once a month. It’s called The Latest Lazy Letter, and it actually goes out this Wednesday! It lands in your inbox the first Wednesday of every month, and it’s very long and personal and helpful and full of book reviews and a lot more. It’s a favorite thing for a lot of you, and I’m really honored that’s the case. If you’d like to sign up to get it, go to thelazygeniuscollective.com/join, and you’ll get it on Wednesday!

And speaking of emails, the Latest Lazy Listens, a biweekly email of all things podcast, went out last Friday for the first time! I hope you enjoyed it. It’s an email that offers a summary of the last

two weeks' worth of episodes with some additional thoughts and practical steps, not to mention additional helpful links and resources that aren't in the episode show notes. It's something that we're all really sparkly about on Team LG, so if you'd like to get that email, go to thelazygeniuscollective.com/listens. Like I said, I'll share the recipe for the Sunniest Sunshine Curry in the next one along with the full list of what's saving my life and a few extras to help you figure out what's saving yours. We really seek to honor your inbox by only sending you emails that are super helpful and clear and also fun, so if you're interested in either of these, the links to sign up are in the show notes.

Okay, before we go, let's celebrate the Lazy Genius of the Week! This week, it's Lisa Culver Bartlett. Lisa writes this: "Here's my LG hack for showing up for people in the form of comfort food (which matters to me).

Decide once = my go to meal to bring people is mac and cheese (unless they are gluten/dairy free). It's vegetarian, economical, kid friendly, great as a side or meal.

Batch it = my recipe is scaled to use a 2lb box of macaroni, 2lb velveeta and 1/2 a gallon of milk (so no weird amount of leftover ingredients, is anything more annoying than a 1/8th block of velveeta in the fridge?!). A single batch makes 2, 9x13" pans (or 4 8x8" pans or any combination therein).

Magic question = It freezes BEAUTIFULLY with plastic wrap and foil and sits in my chest freezer for "mac and cheese emergencies". If a friend could use a hand, I can say "Can I bring you dinner?" on pretty much a moment's notice.

I just have to take it out of the freezer to thaw in the morning, and bake it for about 45 min when I get home. I pick up a bag of salad, and maybe bottle of wine to round out the meal. (Other LG's suggest picking up a rotisserie chicken as an add on, which is genius if your friend appreciates meat or if they have ravenous teenagers). Alternatively I can bring the frozen mac and cheese, and they can keep it in their freezer and bake it whenever they want.

Also, full disclosure, sometimes the "mac and cheese emergency" is my own."

That last line got me. We all have mac and cheese emergencies. I don't even have to break this down with what principles Lisa used because she already did it for me! This is obviously a great idea, but it's a great example of how thinking through something that matters to you and then applying a couple of Lazy Genius principles to it can offer such life. Thanks for sharing, Lisa, and congratulations on being the Lazy Genius of the Week!

Don't forget that links to both the Latest Lazy Letter and the Latest Lazy Listens are in the show notes, and if this is your first time listening, thanks so much for being here. I hope you keep digging around in the archives of the show, and if you're curious about where to start in general in this Lazy Genius space, I highly recommend getting my first book, *The Lazy Genius Way*. It lays out the 13 Lazy Genius principles that are the foundation for everything we do here. And if you're feeling super overwhelmed in your kitchen with all the planning and having what you

need and feeding the people again and again and again, try The Lazy Genius Kitchen. It's not a cookbook. It's a lifeline to help you Lazy Genius your kitchen so that it will work for you and bring you life again.

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. I'll see you next week!