

# 351 - How to Lazy Genius Your Whole 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 351 - How to Lazy Genius Your Whole Life.

Let's make one thing clear right off the bat. You can Lazy Genius your whole life, but you can't do it all at once. If you've been around awhile, you're like "Kendra, what's this whole life business? That's not a thing!" You're right... it's not a thing all at once. And if you're new here and you're like "Kendra, this is so fun let's Lazy Genius my whole life!" it's not all at once. But it is possible and even something I'd encourage you to pursue. Living with this mindset is a lifelong gift, so let's jump into how to Lazy Genius your whole life.

I like to think of being a Lazy Genius as like riding a bike. Once you learn to ride a bike, the saying goes you kind of always know how to do it. Not only that, the basic ability of knowing how to ride a bike equips you to navigate different kinds of roads easier. Sometimes the road is smooth and paved, sometimes it's rocky, hilly, or a mountain bike trail. Regardless of the road, the basic act is the same, and you can learn to navigate different paths the more you ride.

This analogy works fairly well with Lazy Geniusing your whole life, so even though I haven't personally ridden a bike in decades, we're going to ride (no pun intended) this analogy as far as we can.

So what is the basic motion of Lazy Geniusing your whole life? What is the foundational practice that helps you learn to navigate all kinds of roads? Basically, what's the peddling and balancing essential to riding a bike? It's naming what matters in your season with kindness. Name what matters in your season, and do it with kindness. Respect what needs to be done, but also respect your humanity in doing it.

If you don't start there, if you don't kindly begin with what matters to you in this current season, you won't get very far. It's like getting decked out in gear to go on a mountain biking trail when you don't know how to peddle. Similarly, none of your systems or tools or hacks or tips will get you very far in Lazy Geniusing your life if you don't pursue the basic practice of naming what matters in your season with kindness. And thankfully, just like riding a bike, the more you do it, the more natural it becomes.

So that's where we start. If you want to Lazy Genius your whole life, start small by simply naming what matters in your season with kindness whenever possible. Get comfortable there. Every instance builds on itself.

If you struggle knowing what matters, especially if you're in a season of life that's muddied the waters a bit, like parenthood or a lot of big changes at once, listen to episode 255 - How to Name What Matters. It'll help you if you haven't done this before or you're out of practice.

Okay, so now that we generally know the foundational principle of Lazy Geniusing your whole life, of naming what matters in your season with kindness, what comes next? You likely have a lot of things in your life that you'd like to apply a Lazy Genius lens to. How do you triage those things? How do you know what principle to choose in what scenario? When is it good to use the five step Lazy Genius Method or just pick one principle at a time? How do you know when you've gone from kindly managing your life to trying to control it? Life has a lot of layers, and knowing how to Lazy Genius every single one of them at once is tough. I understand that it can sometimes feel overwhelming, especially if you're the kind of person who wants to get it right. Basically, the Lazy Genius principles, the mindsets we talk about here, the different pathways I've helped lay out for you over 350 episodes can be a lot to see comprehensively without a little help. Today, you get that help.

If you imagine getting on your Lazy Genius bike, I think there are three main roads you might be riding on. They're roads you're on intentionally. They're purposeful destinations. We're going to call them proactive roads. These three proactive roads are: moving towards a big change, transitioning into a new season, and wanting something to be different. Moving toward a big change, transitioning into a new season, and wanting something to be different. Those are all proactive paths to Lazy Genius something. You're thinking about it ahead of time, proactively. Make sense?

Now on any of those paths, you're going to have moments where you're avoiding a crash. That's Lazy Geniusing something reactively. You're responding to an obstacle in the moment. See the difference? Proactive and reactive. We'll come back to reactively Lazy Geniusing something. First, let's break down the three proactive paths.

The first path is moving towards a big change. You're getting a new job, moving to a new home, having a baby, a kid is graduating and moving out, a parent is moving in with you, you're moving to a new city, starting a business, getting married... there are a lot of big changes in our lives, and they're usually easy to mark. You know they're coming, right? It's an anticipated big change.

Unfortunately, part of that anticipation might include feeling overwhelmed. Sometimes a big change makes us feel like everything needs to change, and, frankly, sometimes a lot has to. If you're moving to another city for example, your home, your job, your mode of transportation, your friends, your grocery store... a lot is changing! Be kind to yourself as you experience that overwhelm because it's very normal.

But when you know that you're on the path of moving towards a big change, how can you Lazy Genius that particular thing?

There are four principles of a big change. One, you don't have to wrap your head around every part of this. Two, you don't have to anticipate every need. Three, you don't need to expect everything to be smooth all the time. And four, you don't have to have all the answers right now. Episode 323 is called How to Lazy Genius a Big Change, and it breaks these principles down

even more and also offers two questions as you move forward, but ultimately Lazy Geniusing a big change is not a nuts and bolts problem to solve. It's too big for that. You can't apply a single principle to a big change and call it done. Instead, the way you Lazy Genius a big change is to remember these principles and be kind to yourself in the process. Name what matters, and live in your season.

So that's the first path: moving towards a big change. Again, episode 323 is a huge help in that area if you need it.

The second proactive path you might be riding your Lazy Genius bike on is transitioning into a new season. It could be an actual new weather season, a season of travel baseball for a kid, a season where you're being trained in your new job, a season where money is tight and you have to adjust, a season where everyone in your house keeps getting sick, a season of having little kids at home and never feeling like anything is ever done.

Remember that Lazy Geniusing something, especially a new season, is not about controlling it. It's not about managing every single component so you can have full control and no problems ever. That is an unreasonable expectation and also one that will leave you tired and disappointed and quite possibly rather mean. The point of this is to help you know what matters, know what doesn't, and make wise decisions about how you spend your time and energy, all while remaining grounded and feeling like yourself. So in the start of a new season or even a season that you've been in but hadn't really named yet, I think this is a perfect place to use the Lazy Genius Method.

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The Lazy Genius Method is a five step process that helps you see where you are and manage the pieces and parts with intention and kindness. I use them all the time as a structure for episodes. They really do help you Lazy Genius anything.

The five steps are one, prioritize or name what matters. Everything begins with what matters, right? Name what matters in your season, and do it with kindness. Step two, essentialize or get rid of what's in the way. Only keep the essentials. This idea of essentialism was first coined by Greg McKeown in the sphere of business, but it's a beautiful principle to pull into regular life, too. Have only what you need and get rid of what's in the way. Step three, organize or put everything in its place. Step four, personalize or feel like yourself. And step five, systemize or stay in a flow.

When you move into a new season and walk through these five steps, your season will absolutely feel better. People message me daily with proof of this. Naming what matters in your season and then actively seeing what you can let go, what needs to be in place, where you can feel like yourself, and how you can keep all that in a flow makes any season, even a super tough one, more manageable. And even if that management is about simply being present enough to see that good is here right now as you just survive doing the basics, that's still living

wholeheartedly. So Lazy Genius your new seasons. You'll know what to say no to, what routines or rhythms mean the most, when and how to spend your energy, and you also live in the freedom that this season won't last forever. You're here now and that matters, but no season is forever. Seasons by nature come and go, and the more elasticity you give your life, the more content you'll be where you are *and* the more empowered you'll be to get your stuff done. Because you're mostly doing what matters most to you in this season.

So that's the second path, the path of transitioning to a new season, and the Lazy Genius Method is a fantastic tool to use there. If you'd like to see this method in action, check out episode 297 - 5 steps for more ease at work. If you're here from the Office Ladies, this is one of Angela's favorite episodes. It's practical in helping you think about more ease at work, especially if you're trying to get back into the swing of things after a busy holiday season, but it's also a great example of how the Lazy Genius Method can be applied to a specific situation.

So you could be on the path of moving towards a big change, the path of transitioning to a new season, or the third path, wanting something to be different. This is where many of us live all the time. There's always something in our lives we want to be different. It could be something intangible like our mood in the mornings, or something super tangible like where you store your shoes. At the end of our episodes, we highlight a Lazy Genius of the Week, and those folks are often addressing something small in their lives they want to be different. And as you know from those folks as well as from 350ish episodes and from your own life, there are a multitude of scenarios you'd like to be different and another multitude of how you might do it.

So what do you do? If you are on the path of wanting something to be different, you might not know where to begin. Your first job is to, again, name what matters in your season with kindness. Then notice what single difference would help support what matters to you right now. Then make it smaller. Almost always we start with challenges that are too big.

Let's say you want your mornings to be different for whatever reason. But if that's where you stop, it's too big. Why do you want your mornings to be different? Is there too much to do in the mornings? Is it your mood? Is it that you always feel like you're running late? It could be that you are just so tired of having to drag your teenager out of bed to go to school. If you try and impact the general broad problem of your morning, you won't get anywhere. But if you make it smaller, you'll get closer to solving a problem. Let's say it is your teenager and trying to get him out of bed. Okay, what's the smaller problem there? Do you need to figure out how to actually get the kid out of bed? Is it that you're doing it and no one else is helping? Is it that the scrambling to be a human snooze button is keeping you from doing what you need to do? Or maybe you have an unrealized expectation that maybe this morning will be different and when it's not, you get huffy? So even the problem of getting the kid out of bed can be made smaller. Instead of "I'd like to make my mornings different," it's "I'd like my response to my reluctant-to-get-out-of-bed kid to be different." Make sense? So if you want something to be different, first make it smaller.

Then I'd encourage you to choose a Lazy Genius principle or two to help move you towards that difference. Because your problem is so small, a single principle can be applied easy peasy.

Now, there are many ways to choose your principle. You can just choose. No rhyme or reason. Simply read about the 13 Lazy Genius principles in my book *The Lazy Genius Way* or look at a quick list of them and pick one that sounds like it could work for your situation. Try one and see what happens. The longer you think like a Lazy Genius, the longer you keep riding that bike, the more familiar you'll become with the principles and be able to pretty accurately choose one that works for you.

You might also remember a past categorization of the principles: out of order, out of rhythm, or out of sorts. When you're out of order, you need a quick win, something like Decide Once or Ask the Magic Question. When you're out of rhythm, you need the change to be repetitive and ideally easier. That's where you can use principles like Build the Right Routines or Essentialize. And out of sorts is when you're just mentally overwhelmed. You can't seem to, as they say, get it together. Here, you might utilize principles like Schedule Rest, Let People In, and Be Kind to Yourself.

There's also a pathway for the principles that would take too long to explain here, but if you're new and would like a deeper dive into not just the principles themselves but how they can work together comprehensively, listen to episode 244 - how to choose the right Lazy Genius principle for you.

So those are the three proactive paths where you are Lazy Genius something: moving towards a big change, transitioning to a new season, and wanting something to be different. And sometimes you get all of them at once which can be a bit of a bummer if we're honest. But you will always be on at least one of those paths, *and* you will also always hit obstacles. Which is our segue to talking about Lazy Genius something reactively.

You're on your bike. You're riding along, doing your thing on any of your paths, and then suddenly you're avoiding a crash. That is real life.

When you need to Lazy Genius something reactively, that means you're in the moment, reacting to something that's just happened. You're running late for a work meeting when you're teenager texts you from school that he forgot part of his project that's due today. You have a plan for the week and then your dad who lives in town breaks his foot and you're scrambling to reorganize your time to help him out. You make a new recipe and you can tell halfway in that this is not a good recipe and when you taste it you almost spit it out because the marinade for the chicken is so aggressive with chili powder that you don't even know how you and your family will eat it and it's already 6:30pm. That didn't happen to me last night at all.

In order to Lazy Genius your whole life, I encourage you with all my Kind Big Sister Energy to embrace the practice of reacting to obstacles and unexpected situations like a Lazy Genius. This is why one of our time management mindsets is that learning to pivot is more important than learning to plan. Learning to pivot is more important than learning to plan. You can plan your life to the nth degree, but never ever does that plan happen according to plan. There is always something that goes off center a bit, and you have to react. You have to pivot.

How do you do that? Well, the full process is in episode 310 - how to pivot around any obstacle, but here's the cereal box version. You pivot around any obstacle by quickly going through these steps. One, breathe. Deep breath, baby. Two, actively seek softness. The unexpected often makes us tense up, get mad, resent something or someone, and lose our you know what. Actively seek softness. Three, name what matters. We already talked about that, and we can do that more easily in the moment when we're calm and soft. Four, make the problem smaller. We've already talked about that, too. You see how these practices all work together in different ways? Love it. Five, put everything in its place. It could be expectations, the spilled juice wiped off the floor before it dries all sticky, or an easier dinner plan since you now have to take your dad and his broken foot to the doctor. Six, stay connected to yourself. And seven, ask the Magic Question. What can you do now to possibly prevent this obstacle from happening later? Sometimes nothing. But it's nice to ask in case something can. Again, that is literally the shortest version of that episode ever, and it's a really good episode so listen to 310 if this is something you struggle doing.

Okay, so let's bring all this together. You *can* Lazy Genius your whole life. I hope that's the direction you seek after because in my experience, it's a beautiful, grounded, dare I say efficient way to live. Shockingly, you can feel like yourself, still get your stuff done, and not be swayed by your circumstances when you think like a Lazy Genius. And if you fall absolutely apart, you're also being a Lazy Genius because you are being kind to yourself when that happens. There's system and soul, plans and pivots, calendars and compassion. You can hold all of them at the same time. You don't have to choose between lazy and genius. Those used to be our only options, but I'm here to tell you that they are not. You can hold them together and live your life, as Brene Brown says, wholeheartedly.

So as you're going about your day, remember the basics of this whole thing, the motion of simply peddling a bike. Name what matters in your season with kindness. Just keep doing that. Once that becomes easier to do and you've biked up and down a street over and over again, you might be ready to venture out onto different roads. The process of naming what matters in your season with kindness will help you no matter the road. But what kinds of roads might you be on? The three proactive roads are moving towards a big change, transitioning to a new season, and wanting something to be different. For a big change, remember those principles of a big change and maybe get a refresher from episode 323 - How to Lazy Genius a Big Change. For a new season, use the five steps of the Lazy Genius Method: prioritize, essentialize, organize, personalize, and systemize. And for wanting something different, make your problem as small as you can and apply a Lazy Genius principle to it. If you need a refresher on that, again try episode 244 - How to Choose the Right Lazy Genius Principle for You. And finally, as you're on these paths, you will absolutely hit obstacles. Things will make your big changes, your seasons, and your daily rhythms wobble a bit. No worries. Expect them. Expect the obstacles. Learning to pivot is more important than learning to plan. And in those moments, remember the steps from episode 310 - How to Pivot Around Any Obstacle. Honestly, if you just breathe, actively seek softness, and name what matters, you'll be in amazing shape.

Knowing where you are on the bike and on the path will help you see more clearly how to most wisely and kindly Lazy Genius whatever is in front of you. And again, just like riding a bike, the more you do it, the more natural it becomes. And that's how to Lazy Genius your whole life.

Before we go, let's celebrate the Lazy Genius of the Week! This week it's Amy Day! Amy sent this message into our Lazy Genius inbox at [hello@thelazygeniuscollective.com](mailto:hello@thelazygeniuscollective.com). It's about planners. Amy writes, "I always order my planner in the summer and it runs from August to July. That way, I have the entire school year and all the summer camps in one place! I find it easier to 'move into' a planner on a lazy summer day than trying to cram it into the most stressful week of the year (the week between Christmas and New Years). [Side note: that's a helpful call for a lot of people, so file that away for when we're closer to summer. But this tip right here works for whatever planner you have and is similar to a recent Lazy Genius of the Week. Amy continues...] My biggest magic question for my planner self is solved with a giant sticky note on the last page of the book. I leave myself notes for the entire year...where I hid the special Christmas decorations, who needs new ski pants, where I stored the plastic Easter eggs, when baseball sign ups are, etc. All the little things that take 30 seconds to write down but would take me 3 hours to figure out at the time. When I get my new planner, I just put the information I jotted down into the correct month and it saves my life every year!"

Isn't that great? It's like the tip from last week with Ana Josephs Next Time note in her Notes app. But since some of us are more analog in nature, I wanted to share this idea, too, because it might work even better for you. I love ways to do something now to make life easier later. The Magic Question is here to help us out yet again. Thanks for sharing this, Amy, and congratulations on being the Lazy Genius of the Week!

Okay, that's it for today! Just a reminder that this Wednesday, February 7, our next Latest Lazy Letter will go out, so if you'd like to sign up for that, please do! It's my monthly longform newsletter, complete with stories, tips I'm trying, all the books I'm reading, and all kinds of fun stuff. The response to this newsletter is always so positive, even overwhelmingly so. People love getting this email, so if you want to give it a try, go to [thelazygeniuscollective.com/join](http://thelazygeniuscollective.com/join). It'll be in inboxes this Wednesday morning!

Alright, thanks so much for listening to The Lazy Genius Podcast, enthusiastically part of the Office Ladies Network. 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!