

358 - How to Kindly and Efficiently Get Where You Need to Go

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 358 - how to kindly and efficiently get where you need to go.

This episode was unique to create because I couldn't quite figure out what it was. We did an episode three years ago, Episode 223: The Lazy Genius Gets Out the Door, and I love that episode. It's really helpful in breaking down the main reasons we have such a hard time getting out the door. Is that what this episode is? Not quite. But in order to figure that out, I had to go live on Instagram to spend a few minutes processing out this episode with about 250 of you who happened to be on. hilariously, Jenna Fischer was in the comments, and with her and everyone else's help, we came up with multiple podcast episode ideas, but I also think we landed on what this one is.

We all have places we need to go, and we want to kindly *and* efficiently get there. That looks different for everyone though. Sometimes we're taking other people with us or going alone. Sometimes it's a routined leaving, and other times the chaos is because it's a type of place we've never gone before and don't know what we need. Sometimes we might have our own transportation or use public transportation. And it's not just about leaving; we also want to come home well. Sometimes leaving creates more chaos, and then we have to physically and metaphorically clean up that chaos when we're back home again. It would be nice if that part was avoidable, too.

All that to say, this is obviously a very relevant topic. The all caps energy of the comments during that Instagram live prove that. We all have places we need to go, and because you're Lazy Geniuses, you want to get there not just efficiently but kindly too.

I'm going to break this episode down into three sections. First, we're going to talk about your expectations related to getting where you need to go. Second, we'll talk about how to kindly do that. And third, we'll talk about how to efficiently do that. Do not skip straight to part three, please. Part three will not be as effective in your life without one and two first. Remember, Lazy Geniuses go in the right order, and starting with efficiency is rarely our best bet, as much as we'd like for the opposite to be true.

So let's jump into part one: expectations.

Expectations are slippery little buggers. We think that our main organizational priority is to manage our time but a huge part of that is managing our expectations. If we manage our time, if we plan for how we're going to get out the door and get where we're going, without any awareness of our expectations around that process, we will absolutely get frustrated. Rarely do

our plans happen the way we hope. Some might say the rate is closer to never, especially if you have other humans involved, and rather than accept that managing expectations is part of the deal and a skill to develop, we just get mad. We get resentful or frustrated or frazzled or we start yelling at somebody or forget important things because we've now activated our lizard brain and it's all just straight up chaos. That chaos might be outward or inward, but regardless, it's there. The skill of managing your expectations is highly valuable. If learning to pivot is more important than learning to plan, managing your expectations is more important than managing your time. Planning and time management are both awesome skills, but without the balance and importance of pivoting and managing expectations, you'll just move closer and closer to being a frustrated robot.

So the first step in kindly and efficiently getting where you need to go is to manage your expectations. If you expect that you are going to get up earlier than you normally do, that all of your kids if you have them will exit their beds in a timely manner with nary a reminder, that the dishwasher will get emptied and the lunches will get made, that you will have time to make your own lunch to take to work instead of depending on your emergency granola bar, that everyone will locate their shoes and keys and important signed documents without confusion or delay, that you will somehow have time to quietly drink a cup of coffee or journal or do yoga or hit the gym before anyone needs you, that breakfast will get cleaned up before you walk out the door, and all of this before somewhere in the 8 o'clock range... if you expect all of that to happen and to go down easy on a regular basis without intensely thoughtful systems you've been building on for years and likely children are naturally amenable to such expectations which is rarely the case, you will be disappointed. Every single morning, you will be disappointed and frustrated and harried and scattered and annoyed that you or your people can't get it together. You should be able to a, b, and c and d and e and z before you get out the door, but I'm not sure you should. I don't know that those expectations are reasonable, and even if they are, do you have the energy to fulfill them all? Remember one of our Lazy Genius mantras: match your expectations to the energy you're willing to give. If you do not have the energy to wake up early and work out, if you do not have the energy to be patient with your children and all of their childlike chaos, if you do not have the energy to do your makeup with the care you wish you had time for or think you should have time for, if you do not have the energy to delegate where appropriate and help your partner or kids see what needs doing so you're not doing everything, if you do not have the energy, especially in the morning, to catalog everything that everyone needs, but you expect that all of that will still happen? Disaster. Emotional, logistical disaster. And if that happens day after day after day, no wonder you're turning to Google for help with a morning routine.

And spoiler alert: the first search result for that has 21 steps for the best morning routine. You're not ready. I'm going to speed through these *TWENTY ONE THINGS* that are great for your morning routine according to the Internet that you just frustratingly turned to. Get a good night's sleep, avoid the snooze button, give yourself enough time to get to work, drink a full glass of water, enjoy a cup of coffee or tea, prepare a healthy breakfast, take advantage of self care, fit in a quick workout, say positive affirmations, meditate by taking deep breaths, prioritize important tasks, listen to motivational music, call a loved one, subscribe to a podcast, perform

an act of kindness, spend time on a hobby, think creatively, read an industry blog post, do a crossword puzzle, take a moment to stretch, and perform a retrospective. That was the first search result. Now, I'm not dumb or intentionally baiting you. I know that this author doesn't expect anyone to do all 21 of these things every single morning. But still. Many of our mornings lead to getting where we need to go, even if it's our desk at home because we still work there, and this list has nothing about actually getting out the door or doing anything for anyone else. This is why we are frustrated, you guys. Our expectations are so off, partly because the Internet sets us up to think we're supposed to do a retrospective every morning and not hit the daggum snooze button. What kind of anarchy is this?!

It is not your fault that your expectations are high or even out of wack. The messages you've received about what your morning should look like for years and years are bogus messages. Your expectations have been tampered with in a wildly unrealistic way, and it's time to shift them. Match your expectations to the energy you're willing to give. Even match your expectations to the energy you have today. Your energy will change from day to day thanks to hormones, so match your expectations of your morning or whenever you're trying to get where you need to go, to the energy available to you. That's the first step.

Now, let's talk about how to access kindness as you get where you need to go. Your expectations do matter, so create kind ones. And if you forget to or get a little too big for your expectation britches, manage your expectations kindly. The most effective way to do this, at least I think, is by being grounded. Breathe, access kindness within yourself so you can have kindness for yourself. If you're running late and scattered and find yourself raising your voice to your teenage son because he is moving slower than, well, a teenage boy, remember that you very likely would rather stay connected to your kid and be a little late than be on time and mad at each other. What matters more? Sometimes being on time is a really big deal, and you have to do your relational repair in the car. I'm not naive. I love being on time. But to prioritize timeliness over connection with our people will turn getting out the door real sour real fast, especially if it's happening repeatedly. Dare I say it, being grounded is better than being on task. It's not a replacement for being on task because we need to be on task, but it's a better practice to cultivate than cobbling together the best morning routine to efficiently get out the door. If efficiency comes at the expense of relationship or integration and groundedness within yourself, I'm not sure it's worth it.

Now that you're paying attention not just to your expectations but to how you manage them and you're naming the importance of groundedness and kindness as you try and get where you need to go, you will be better equipped to do it efficiently. I will shout it from the rooftops for the rest of my working days: efficiency is awesome but it cannot come first. Just like you can't organize stuff before you prioritize and essentialize, you can't truly be efficient before you're aware of your expectations and kind about the whole thing. Efficiency is not a solo act, y'all. Efficiency is basically doing the most you can with as little as possible. We've already touched on "the most you can" part with your expectations, and you'll be more satisfied with "as little as

possible” if you’re kind first. So it’s even in the definition! So now that we know that, let’s discuss how we can efficiently get where we need to go.

I want you to think about getting where you need to go in three phases: there’s the pre-exit, the exit, and the post-exit. You can also think about this in terms of urgency. The exit is probably the most urgent. Pre-exit is when there’s no urgency yet. That might be the day before you have to get where you need to go or a couple of hours before or whatever. But the pre-exit doesn’t have urgency yet. And the post-exit is post-urgency, but you’re probably still a little hyped up from the urgency. So as we talk about efficiently getting where you need to go, it’s not just about when you leave. It’s about what happens before you leave when it’s not urgent yet and after you’ve left and what you can notice about how it went which helps you kindly adjust what you might do next time.

Let’s start with your pre-exit or pre-urgency. Think about when you most commonly need to get where you need to go. Again, for many of us, it’s every weekday morning. You’re getting to work, kids are getting to school, you’re beginning your day. When is the time that you are thinking about that next exit but you don’t feel urgent about it? Is it the night before? Is it between 6-7am because you are a stay at home mom and your kids don’t go to preschool until 9am so you’ve got a little more time to ease into getting where you need to go? When is the time you’re thinking about the next exit but you’re not urgent about it? Okay, once you name that, what can you do during that time to help the exit work more efficiently? And I would say to start, just name one thing. What is one thing you can do during your pre-exit, non-urgent time that can help ease the urgency of the actual exit?

Maybe you can think about what usually causes the chaos, or you consider something that makes you feel grounded and like yourself and add that in. You can take something, add something in, or adjust something that’s already there that you can either decide or do before leaving becomes urgent. One of the things I do to help me get where I need to go in my pre-exit is wipe off the kitchen counters before I go to bed. Annie is in charge of clearing the dinner dishes, and my husband, Kaz, almost always cleans up the rest. But one thing he rarely does is wipe off the counters. He clears them and washes the dishes, but he doesn’t notice a shiny counter like I do. That’s less of a priority for him, so it’s not a regular part of his dinner routine. But when I come into the kitchen in the morning to set out our lunchboxes and get stuff out to either make or have the kids make their own lunches and the counter is dirty from the night before, it escalates my urgency. It’s frustrating and a little gross, and then it makes me resent Kaz rather than be genuinely grateful that he tends to the kitchen every single day. He does it differently than I do though, and that’s okay. Rather than obsess about that difference, I just clean the counters myself before bed, and then when I wake up the next morning to do the morning routine with the kids which is my area of labor in our family, it makes everything start off so much better. So wiping off the counter is one of my pre-exit things.

Another one is that I plan my next day the night before. It takes anywhere from 60 seconds to maybe five or ten minutes depending on my energy, my schedule, and how tired I am, but naming what I have going on and deciding when I’m going to shower, when I’m going to have

my coffee, and what I need to take with me when I leave before I feel urgent is huge. So I make my own exit strategy when I plan the day. It sounds more detailed than it actually is, but really I'm just like "when do I have time to shower today? I have early carpool, so I'll take my coffee with me." Because my days are different pretty much every single day because of what the kids have going on, when it's my time to drive carpool, what meetings I have, and how dirty my hair is, I need to plan my day every night before. That is a huge part of what makes my mornings feel more efficient because decisions have been made before they become urgent. Think about what yours might be. Think about what you can do as part of your pre-exit when you're not yet feeling urgent that can make the urgent exiting feel a little easier.

Next, let's talk about the exit itself. This is where I implore you to use the Lazy Genius principle Decide Once. Decide once about something that always happens every morning, and see how that single choice might help make getting where you need to go a little bit easier.

One thing we do at our house is my kids don't have a hot breakfast, and if they do, they make it themselves. Almost every single morning, and I mean this, almost every single morning, all three of my kids pull out a piece of chocolate chip pumpkin bread from the freezer, and that's their breakfast. Sam gets his milk, Annie gets her juice, and Ben sometimes makes a fried egg to go with his pumpkin bread. And that's what they have. I make a giant pan of pumpkin bread every couple of weeks, cut it up, bag it up, and put it in the freezer. Breakfast is not really an urgent part of our morning routine to get where we need to go because my kids funny enough decided once that they pretty much eat pumpkin bread. And if they don't, they eat something else from the freezer like pancakes or waffles or cooked bacon that they microwave. That single decision makes a huge difference.

Now, you might think "well, what about the egg? What about the breakfast dishes left behind by the frying of the egg?" Fair question. Here's another Decide Once. Recently we divided up dish duty among the three kids because it got too annoying to constantly decide whose turn it was to clean up a meal or whatever. I was talking to my friend, Hannah, and she shared that with her three kids, they divided up the dishes by meal. So a different kid cleans up the breakfast dishes all the time. Not just their own. Everyone's! We started doing that, and it's awesome. It's worked so well for us, and guess who got breakfast? Ben, the fried egg maker. He's also the last kid at home every single week. He leaves last because his brother, even though they go to the same school, has before school activities three out of the five mornings. Ben is always last, and Ben has more variety with his breakfast than the other two. He cleans it up. Decisions like that that you decide one time and then let them ride until they don't serve you anymore are incredibly successful and relatively simple ways to make your morning or getting where you need to go more efficient. I'm doing more with less because I'm not having to make breakfast or clean up breakfast. Decide Once took care of that.

So think about a part of your process in getting where you need to go and apply the Lazy Genius principle, Decide Once, to it. It will absolutely help with the efficiency part.

Finally, the post-exit. We will not always have an efficient *and* kind exit. It's a tough thing to have happen every single day because we're humans and likely live with humans, and life is often a mess. I want to be a mom who doesn't get annoyed at her kid for making the carpool wait, but I do. I get "bro'd" by my oldest 3 out of 5 mornings because I'm nagging him to get going. I'm not great at this. But I'm working on being more connected and grounded and paying attention to the connections I have with myself and my people than I have before. Part of that happens in the post-exit. When everyone leaves or I have left, I will often take a breath and notice what happened. What triggered my frustration? Did it get triggered at all? What went well? What am I proud of that I stayed grounded through? I briefly notice how kindly and efficiently the exit happened, and either make a note to adjust something later or I repair any harm my lack of kindness caused. I have definitely been known to text my oldest an hour after he's left to apologize for getting huffy with him. "Sorry I lost my cool at you this morning, bud. I got caught up in being on time and took it out on you." Then he hearts the message and sends me a thumbs up and a "it's okay" and we move on. The post-exit is important for both kindness and efficiency. Notice where you were unkind and repair, either with yourself or someone else. And if there was something that was just super clunky that could be smoother, think about it now while you're still in the exit mode but no longer urgent about it. Problem solve, even for one tiny little thing. Especially for one tiny little thing. The small changes are where the magic happens.

So to recap how to kindly and efficiently get where you need to go: start with managing your expectations. Have reasonable expectations for your process of exiting, and remember that your expectations might need to change day to day depending on your own energy. And more than managing your time, manage your expectations of your time. It'll help set you up for a more reasonable, grounded exit than if you ignore your expectations altogether. Then access kindness by remembering that staying grounded is better than staying on task. Being grounded helps you stay on task. Be kind and be yourself, not succumbing to the robot energy that mornings and exits often bring. Then to be efficient, think about your pre-exit when you're not urgent, the exit when you are urgent, and the post-exit when you see how your urgency made things better or something to adjust. Be efficient only after managing your expectations and accessing kindness toward yourself and others. And that's how to kindly and efficiently get where you need to go.

Before we go, let's celebrate the Lazy Genius of the Week! This week it's Brittany Dickmeyer who has a great tip for getting little kids out the door. "We all know getting out the door with kids is hard! When mine were little I found that even if I was totally organized with my stuff I always managed to have a straggler kid or someone who wandered back upstairs right as we were trying to leave. The solution was I traced their hands on their favorite color paper and had them decorate them and tape them on the back door. When we were leaving I'd yell "hands on hands" and they'd all go stand with their hands on the back door until it was time to all head out together. No more wandering children!" This is seriously adorable, Brittany. Wrangling tiny humans is a particularly challenging job, and this makes it sweet and fun. Thanks for sharing, and congratulations on being the Lazy Genius of the Week!

This episode is hosted by me, Kendra Adachi, and executive produced by Kendra Adachi, Jenna Fischer, like super legit this time because she was active in those Instagram comments, and Angela Kinsey. The Lazy Genius Podcast is enthusiastically part of the Office Ladies Network. Special thanks to Leah Jarvis for weekly production.

Thanks, y'all, 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!