

#77 - The Lazy Genius Rests

Hi there! You're listening to The Lazy Genius Podcast! I'm Kendra, 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 #77 - The Lazy Genius Rests! A couple of months ago, I asked on Instagram what you'd like me to talk about during our times together, and when someone said rest, the likes on that comment started piling up fast. I think we're all so tired and want a better way of resting... which feels counterintuitive in a lot of ways. Can we get better at resting? Can we set better goals and push toward resting better? But if you take away the paradox there, yeah. I think we can. In this episode, we'll talk about how we need to look at rest differently and then figure out practical ways to actually do it in our regular life.

So first thing, when you imagine rest, what do you see? An empty room that doesn't belong to you, a plush white bed, curtains blowing in the breeze. Maybe you see the ocean or the mountains. You see a weekend alone in a cabin in the woods or a girls trip eating and shopping and sleeping in. So many beautiful possibilities. My personal vision of rest is being in my house by myself for at least 48 hours. Somebody take away all my sweet people and let me enjoy my own space without responsibility. That or the beach, also without responsibility.

It's pretty common for us to imagine rest on a grand scale. If we could just get away for awhile, we'd be a different person. I say that, too. It feels like that's the magic formula - the ability to get away and recharge alone for longer than an hour. But when we do that, if we get to do that, it often falls a little flat. Here's why I think that is - we don't know how to rest. Even when we're giving that rare opportunity to do it, we do it poorly because we don't have any practice. Daily rest is not on our radar. We just live and survive and do our best and hope for a chance to get a break. And because we're so programmed to idealize that grand rest, we don't enjoy the smaller

opportunities to rest every day. If what you want is a day to yourself, getting an hour is a letdown. Nothing is enough... which isn't the most helpful mentality since most of us feel that we ourselves are not enough on a consistent bases... which is part of the reason we're so tired in the first place.

My favorite Emily P. Freeman uses the phrase "sitting down on the inside." Rest is sitting down on the inside. We can actually experience rest while we're moving and doing and living regular life. Now, I'm not saying that's the answer. This isn't a bait and switch of "hey you can rest and still be a crazy person bye!" but what I am saying is that rest doesn't have to equal silence and stillness and solitude. Those things are hard to come by because of toddlers and jobs and dinner and life. But there's a subtle difference in finding rest for our bodies and rest for our souls. Soul rest is possible when our bodies are moving. There are a lot of differences in how we all see our souls and our spirituality, but for me, I love that the Bible offers Psalm 62 where David writes "my soul finds rest in God. My hope comes from him." The thing I love about that is that David was a king and a soldier and a major player in Israel's history. He was a man of action, not necessarily of regular long weekends at the beach. And yet he said that his soul found rest in God. For me and my personal spiritual life, seeing the difference in soul rest and physical body rest is important. We can experience rest in our souls even when our bodies are moving.

How do we do that? It goes back to that Emily P. Freeman phrase - sitting down on the inside. I'm guessing you know what it's like to stand up on the inside or run around or hide in the corner on the inside. When we have a posture of protection, we grow weary on the inside really quickly. We're worried we're not enough, that we're too much, that we're letting everybody down and doing it all wrong. We're worried that people think we have it all together so we're not allowed to fall apart. We carry a lot. Those messages make our souls heavy and tired, and we're desperate for rest.

We're going to talk about physical rest, but I think the first step and the one that can have immediate benefits to us is to let that stuff go. Daily, hourly, maybe minute by minute. It's an abiding in the space of not being in control, of trusting that you're being held together by arms bigger than your own, that you don't have to keep it together in your own power because your own power wears you out.

So when it comes to finding rest in our souls, we need to recognize that our souls are often busy carrying rather than receiving. And this analogy might be a little too on the nose, but when you're busy carrying, you can't receive. Have you ever gone to somebody's house for dinner or a big Christmas gathering and your arms are full of appetizers and diaper bags and you can't properly receive a hug from your sister or your aunt? It's hard to carry and receive at the same time, and that's especially true of our souls. I don't believe our souls were meant to carry anything on their own. There's another Psalm - Psalm 42 - with the refrain "why, my soul, are you downcast? Put your hope in God." That's it. Put your hope in God. Not in your own expectations or abilities or systems. Hope in something bigger than you, in someone who loves who you are, not what you do. It's there that we find rest for our weary souls.

So if we daily practice rest in our souls, what does that mean for the body? Because my body is tired. My muscles hurt, sometimes my eyes won't stay open, and it's not uncommon for me to sit down on the couch and not know how to get up again. Physical rest is necessary, too, and it definitely can't be fixed with that magical weekend away. We need to practice daily physical rest.

Now, I'm not going to tell you to do everything you can to get eight hours of sleep a night and don't put your phone in your room and all the things we already hear and know. Frankly, those ideas are great. You know it, and I know it. If I could get eight hours of sleep a night and not look at my phone after 9pm, I'd probably be a more rested person and not want to take a nap at 2 in the afternoon. But while those are worthy practices, what they can do is make us feel like we're failing if we're not doing them, and we don't need any more of that.

Daily rest is more than just getting more sleep and not looking at our phones so much. So let's spend our last few minutes together talking about what physical rest can look like for us practically. First, let's talk about sleep. I know I just said I wouldn't tell you to get eight hours, and I won't. But real quick, let's reframe how we see sleep. I feel like sleep is a waste sometimes. I don't close the door on my last kid until 8:45pm every night, and for those of you with teenagers, they're up later than you are. Those evenings of kids in bed by 7pm and then a couple hours of unwinding followed by a reasonable bedtime? No more. I think that's why so many of us feel so desperate in those late night hours. We don't want to go to bed because we just sat down! We're just getting to be a person! And there's where the shift can happen. I want you to figure out ways to be a genius about being a person throughout the day even when you're not alone. We need daily practices of rest and recharging throughout the day, not just at night when we're basically comatose but refusing to actually go to bed.

Y'all know I love small steps, and small, daily acts of rest are way more powerful than those magical kidless, responsibility-less unicorn weekends away that we so desperately long for. But again, if you don't practice rest on a daily basis, even when you get those weekends, you're not going to even know how to use them because you don't know how to rest.

Our souls need to rest from effort, and so do our bodies. The difference is sometimes it's good for the body to show effort. We have to do stuff. We don't have to carry soul expectations into that stuff, but our bodies do need to move and accomplish and be responsible and also rest. So what can we do to physically rest and recharge throughout the day?

First idea. Don't put rest only in the nighttime category. We push and produce all day and then allow ourselves to rest at night but collapse into it because we haven't stopped yet. We treat weekends the same way. So a way to rest regularly is to let ourselves rest throughout the day, not just at night, not just on the weekends, not just when everything is done. Of course I can't do a podcast episode on rest and not mention the Sabbath, but God commanded that we take an entire day to rest. He took that day, too, whatever a day means to God. But he worked it into creation, into how he wants us to live. He wanted for his people to rest so much that when they were wandering in the desert and he sent food from the actual sky for them to eat, he sent a double portion the day before the commanded sabbath so that they wouldn't work on that day. Rest is part of how we're made. It's part of what's intended for us and how we live life. Don't tell yourself that you don't need it. So first thought is to have rest be an overall life category, not just a nighttime or weekend or vacation category. It's important.

The next thought is to figure out what physical and soul rest looks like for you specifically. We're all different and fill up different ways, so it's important to pay attention to what offers you rest. If you're not sure, it really does start with paying attention. Think about when you've felt rested. When did you live an experience and feel more settled in who you are, like you were sitting down on the inside? Because guess what, if your soul is wonky, physical rest won't do a thing. The two need to be separated in our minds,

but they can be met in similar spaces. I'll explain what I mean by giving you my own daily practice of rest. You might have heard me mention this on other episodes, but there are three things that make me sit down on the inside, relax my body, and leave the experience feeling rested. Those three things are: music, baking, and the beach. My go-to rest is listening to Penny and Sparrow because it's always a click away. For whatever reason, when their music comes on, I'm immediately in a better place. It's like a secret code that gets me back to equilibrium. So when I feel stressed with those crazy afternoons of homework and dinner and general tiredness, I turn on Penny and Sparrow and immediately feel a little better. And when my soul feels like itself, my muscles relax. My breathing slows down. They're connected. Baking is another thing. I don't bake every day because I just don't have time, but it's one of the greatest reset buttons I have. When I have a busy week, I'll pick an afternoon where I could be doing something productive and instead plan to bake. I'll write it in my calendar and block it off like an appointment because I know I need it. I need to knead bread and cream butter and sugar and smell something come from the oven and feed my people. It's so centering to me. And the third thing is the beach. The broader category of that is nature, but the beach is my favorite. But I live four hours from the beach and get there once a year if I'm lucky. And here's where we go into the third idea.

If you know what makes you feel rested but it's something that you can't experience every day, it's good to find things adjacent to that thing that you can experience on a more regular basis. There's no version of nature that beats the beach for me, but that doesn't mean I can't feel close to that same feeling sitting on my front porch swing during a thunderstorm or walking on a trail through the trees or lying in the grass at the park. The beach is the best, but being outside gets me close enough.

One of my favorite things is to play Penny and Sparrow while I'm baking with the windows open and breeze coming through the kitchen. Even thinking about that experience makes me relax, makes me breathe and slow down and sit down on the inside. And guess what? That's not hard to come by. I can do that on most days. And if I can't bake, even making dinner scratches the itch a little.

Now you might be thinking that your thing isn't as easy to come by as mine. I get it. But music and baking and being outside weren't my immediate answers to that question. My immediate answer to the question of rest was the beach. I had to dig for the other things. It took months, even years, to recognize the impact that music can have on me. Why? Because my expectation always rested in a weekend away at the beach to the point where I couldn't see any other options. Nothing else counted or was enough because it wasn't the beach.

When you take yourself out of the headspace of the ideal version of rest and start to think smaller, you'll see a difference quicker than you think.

I'm in a season of busyness. I usually try to stay away from feeling frantic and busy, but sometimes you don't have a choice and I'm in a season where I don't have a choice. Which means I have to be even more intentional about choosing daily rest. I haven't listened to podcasts in weeks because all I do is listen to Penny and Sparrow because I need to. I've made the same dozen dinners for the past few weeks, but I've baked a complicated cake and a lemon meringue pie and a few other things because I need to. I've been so busy but have spent most of my rare minutes alone on my front porch swing just staring rather than hustling because I need to. We've heard it, but when we're busy, rest is even more important. Which I know feels stupid and annoying, but it's also true. It can be annoying and also true.

So to bring it all together, we need rest for our bodies and our souls, and often the two are connected. When our souls are at rest, our muscles and breath relax. When we recognize the stuff our souls are carrying and instead receive spiritual rest from wherever our spiritual rest comes from, our physical bodies feel equipped to do what matters rather than hustling and striving for what doesn't. And if we see rest as a daily practice, not just a night or weekend or vacation practice, we learn what it means to rest. We understand better how to do it and learn how we specifically need it. Then when those nights and weekends and vacations do come, we're in a better place to enjoy them for what they are. They're not some ultimate destination but a chance to experience longer stretches of rest that we've already been kindling.

Daily, small steps. They matter, and they make the big leaps even better. If you're struggling to know what your daily steps of rest can be, I encourage you to ask a friend or someone who knows you well. Process it out loud, ask if that person has seen a time in your life when you truly rested and felt like you were sitting down on the inside. We have friends and loved ones for this purpose, so use them if you need them. And if you want to process this together, I'll be on Instagram this Thursday around 12:15pm EST to answer your questions. I'm @thelazygenius on Instagram and would love for you to follow me there.

And if you're looking for a fun opportunity to spend a day away doing something fun, I have a great idea. If you're in the southeast or don't mind traveling for cool things, Nest Fest is happening in less than three weeks. I'll put a link in the shownotes so you can get more info, but Nest Fest is an all-day event hosted by my home muse, The Nester. She opens up her entire country property and fills it with curated vendors and food trucks and live music and all the things. It's like the best kind of craft fair there is. Plus this year's Nest Fest is kind of like a big birthday party for her new book *Cozy Minimalist Home* which I'm so excited to read I can't stand it. It's such a fun event and a great thing to do with a girlfriend to have a fun day. Her farm is in Midland, North Carolina close to Charlotte which works out perfectly because guess what's happening that night in Charlotte? A Popcast live show. Y'all know how obsessed I am with Knox and Jamie, right? They're doing a live show, and I'll be a guest for part of the show which I'm stoked for. It's the most random wonderful kind of night where you'll just laugh for two hours and love your life. So I'll be at both Nest Fest and the Popcast live show and would love for you to come say hi if you're there, too. Both events are Saturday, October 20th, and there are links for tickets to both in the show notes. And I'm doing a giveaway on Instagram right now for two tickets to the Popcast live show, so head to my Instagram account @thelazygenius for more info. It's a different kind of recharging that I'm stoked for. Such a fun day.

Okay, friends, that's all for today! Thanks so much for listening and sharing the episodes with your people. I love being part of your lives. I'm Kendra, and until next time, be a genius about the things that matter and lazy about the things that don't! Bye, guys!