

# #87 - The Lazy Genius Guide to Flexibility

Hi, friends! 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 87 - The Lazy Genius Guide to Flexibility. It's getting really close to Christmas, and it's safe to assume that things aren't always going to go according to plan. Schedules change, family members are late to gatherings, you're late to gatherings, a kid gets sick and makes you miss the one holiday activity you've been looking forward to, the cookies you bake are disgusting, a fight breaks out during a Christmas light drive... so many things can happen that derail our plans and expectations, so right now, you might be a little nervous about these next couple of weeks, nervous that you won't make the memories you're so hoping to make. I believe that by the end of this episode, you'll move from nervousness to confidence, not confidence in perfect holiday plans but confidence that you can still experience relational connection even if your plans don't work out. I used to take every hiccup in our plans personally for years, and now I see them simply for what they are - a plan that didn't work out. It's okay and normal to be disappointed, but I hope that some perspective can help that disappointment not leech into everything and make you hate December. So in this episode, we're going to get there together with three simple steps toward flexibility.

First, I'd love to remind you about my mailing list! I sent out a newsletter every month with personal stuff from me that I don't share right away or maybe even at all with the big Internet, I share book and podcast recommendations, and all the fun things. This past month, I announced something super exciting to the mailing list that I still haven't shared with Instagram or said here on the podcast, so it's a fun email to get. There are some really exciting things coming at the start of the year, so I'd love for you to go ahead and join that mailing list before things get too crazy so you don't miss out on the next couple of newsletters that will most definitely make you a genius about the things that matter and lazy about the things that don't. So click the link in your podcast app or head to [thelazygeniuscollective.com/join](https://thelazygeniuscollective.com/join) to join the mailing list today!

Alright, let's talk flexibility. If you want to feel confident in your scheduling choices but also okay when they don't work out, this episode is so for you. We've all been there. You plan something you're super excited about, and something gets in the way. Or maybe you plan something you're super excited about but your people don't seem to be as excited as you are, and you feel small. If it were up to you and you alone, I bet all of your plans would happen most of the time, but our plans aren't always up to us and us alone. There are a lot of other people at play. It's also easy to let failed plans make us feel like a failure. Other families put on pajamas and get thermoses of hot chocolate and drive around looking at Christmas lights, but your two year-old isn't a fan of the car and starts crying which sets off your second grader into a spiral of anxiety which causes you to start yelling for everyone to just calm down and have a good time and then your husband who tolerates your love of Christmas music but isn't a fan himself is seething because the background to all of this family bonding is Justin Bieber talking about mistletoe. It's just too much, and it's easy to feel like a failure when those kinds of plans don't work out. You feel dumb, unappreciated, and that it's all just a waste of time. Making memories is for the birds if this is how it's going to go.

I get it. I know how hard you worked to make those plans, to find the best neighborhoods with the best lights, how you figured out how early to make the hot chocolate so it was basically chocolate milk since your kids have tongues made of tissue paper and think everything is too hot. You worked hard to make this experience an easy one, and it still didn't work. It's frustrating and disappointing. I've been there many times. I mentioned before that I used to take all of this very personally. I internalized failed plans as my failure as a person, and all that did was distract me from connection. But here's the good news - when we detach our personal value from holiday scheduling and memory-making success, we're better equipped to be flexible and roll with change when it comes.

I said there were three steps to flexibility, so here they are.

Step One: See plans as intentions, not as pass/fail. See plans as intentions, not as pass/fail. We give plans too much power. If they don't work out, then that does it. We're out. Throw in the towel. We're the worst, everything's the worst! If you want to be a genius about the things that matter and lazy about the things that don't, you want to be a genius about making personal connections and lazy about making the perfect schedule. By seeing plans simply as intentions, it automatically puts us in a mindframe of flexibility because we're not married to a particular result. We're setting an intention for something to happen without the pressure of it working or not. Now certain plans, you need them to work. Architecture, spinal surgery, spacecraft trajectories. Clearly there are instances where plans are definitely pass/fail, but going to see Santa has a little more wiggle room than getting a satellite into orbit. And it's not just that your plan isn't pass/fail; you aren't pass/fail either. Again, your value as a person has nothing to do with how well you pull off your holiday schedule, with how intentional you are about your holiday sabbath, or how much you love traditions and memories. You can love tradition. You can make plans. You can value connection during this time of year. But how well you pull them off, how much your family gets on board with your plans, how many memories you make... none of it affects your value as a person. You are not pass/fail. You can personally set an intention, too, to be flexibility and open to whatever happens without blasting yourself for things not going a particular way. So step one, see plans as intentions, not as pass/fail.

Step Two: Recognize that your attitude is a lightning rod... both ways.

This is a hard one for me. I'm not great at hiding how I'm feeling about something; it's usually all over my face and everybody knows I'm unhappy. So in that Christmas lights example which I obviously made up and isn't from personal experience at all, when I literally yell from the front seat at my kids to chill out and have fun and make memories, clearly that's not going to go very far in making memories... except maybe memories of holiday trauma that they'll want to talk out when they're adults. But in that same scenario, if I release my expectation of a pass/fail Christmas light experience and allow my attitude to remain fluid and positive, it's not that the baby will stop crying or that the kid won't have a breakdown or that my husband will magically start liking Christmas music. But it will help me stay calm first so that I can lead with connection and patience rather than shattered expectations. It might take pulling over on the side of the road to calm down the baby and help the bigger kids settle, but they'll use my attitude as a reference point for how to feel. Little kids do that. It's that thing when a kid falls down and they look to their mom or dad or teacher to see if they should cry about it or not. Our attitudes are lightning rods both ways. And that's not just with kids.

If you're with your extended family going out for your annual breakfast at a local restaurant and there was a misunderstanding about who was supposed to make the reservation so there isn't

one and your family has to wait 45 minutes to be seated, the person who grumbles and complains about how long it's taking, who comments on how quickly the wait staff is working and that he hopes they don't get that waitress or any number of negative things, that attitude tends to shape everyone else's. It's hard to be positive and flexible around negative, inflexible people. I'm not saying you can Pollyanna the situation and make everyone break into song while you wait for a table, but choosing to have an attitude of flexibility creates its own lightning rod, it attracts the people in your family who don't want to be bummed out either, and offers an invitation to wait with a good attitude and maybe have fun in the process.

So step one, see plans as intentions, not as pass/fail. Step two, recognize that your attitude is a lightning rod both ways. And now Step Three: Make a Plan B. A lot of times we try and do this first before we're feeling flexibility, and all it does is create another situation where we're unhappy. Don't start being practically flexible until you're on your way to being emotionally flexible. We'll go back to the Christmas lights in the car scenario. If I were to make a plan B before I release feelings of failure and tap into how my attitude is affecting everyone else, I'm just carrying unhappy children into another plan where they'll be unhappy. But if we drive a couple of blocks where everyone is breaking down but while I'm taking deep breaths and getting my ish together, then we can stop and make a plan B. If the baby doesn't want to be in the car and it's obviously super close to her bedtime anyway, maybe we pull onto a super decorated street and get out of the car, assuming we won't freeze to death, and just walk one street instead of driving down a dozen. Or maybe my expectations for a full family experience just aren't going to cut it, so our plan B is to take the baby home for bed, and then my husband who can take or leave Christmas will stay home with her while I take the boys out even later than before which feels special and they get to see the lights they wanted to see. It's not the ideal, but remember that plan was an intention, not a pass/fail. It didn't work out the way I hoped, but that doesn't mean it can't work at all. Plan Bs are great; just consider making them when you're not yelling at somebody.

So before we go, let's talk about how you can start to think about this right now. Look at your calendar for this next week, and release your hope of perfection for those specific plans. You might even look at one or two things coming up that have the potential to change up, so consider making a quick Plan B for some of those before you neck-deep in crying children and disappointed mothers-in-law and stomach bugs and broken down cars or whatever might happen to derail an otherwise lovely plan. Remember, it's all about intention for your plans and for yourself.

Here's what I don't want. I don't want you to be in the middle of December 28th annoyed and exhausted and aching for January to get here. There's nothing wrong with loving the simplicity that January brings, but if you carry the soul-scurry of unmet expectations into January, you'll feel inflexible about new years and new starts, too. So for this week and next, remember that flexibility is your friend. It allows you to release expectation while you're still inside an experience, allowing you to enjoy whatever is happening right now in front of you, whether it looks the way you wanted it to or not. It's okay to have hopes. It's okay to make plans. It's okay to be disappointed when they don't work out. But that disappointment doesn't have to affect how you see the rest of the experience or the rest of the holidays themselves. I hope you feel more confident in being flexible and in enjoying these next couple of weeks with gracious intention.

And just as a heads up, there won't be an Instagram live this week or for the next three weeks. We're going to hang with our people and do our thing for the rest of the year, and I'll be back again live on Thursday, January 10th to get back into the Instagram swing of things.

If you have any thoughts on this episode that you want to share, you can do that a couple of ways. You can leave a comment on the episode post at [thelazygeniuscollective.com/lazy/flexibility](https://thelazygeniuscollective.com/lazy/flexibility). You can DM me on Instagram @thelazygenius. You can also join the mailing list and reply to any emails you get from me at [thelazygeniuscollective.com/join](https://thelazygeniuscollective.com/join).

Thanks for spending this time with me today, and I hope that your holidays are filled with soulful flexibility and with grace when that flexibility has a hard time showing up. I'm so thankful for every single one of you that listens and shares and encourages me with your messages and emails. I love this space so much, so thanks for being the reason it happens. I'm Kendra, and until next time, be a genius about the things that matter and lazy about the things that don't. See you next time!