

Episode 360 - A Pep Talk for the Perpetually Tired

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 360 - a pep talk for the perpetually tired.

Is this maybe the most appropriately named pep talk of all time? Quite possibly. I have a feeling a lot of you, and I mean a lot a lot of you, always feel tired. In fact, like me, you feel tired so often that it's annoying at this point. You're tired of being tired. Will we ever not be tired?!

I think we all need some solidarity in this space as well as some practical help. My goal is for you to get both.

Let's start with the solidarity.

Lest you think that you are the only person to feel this way, you are decidedly wrong. It is so normal to feel so tired all the time. Your season of life might be involved, your health, your unusual circumstances, expectations from a boss or partner or yourself that you just can't seem to meet, the general frenetic nature of living as a person in 2024. There are many reasons, often multiple reasons, why you always feel tired.

I hear a lot of folks say that if someone is tired then they're doing too much. To an extent, that's probably true. I could list out all of the things that you're doing that could make you tired, and I'm sure the list is long. Mine is. I'm very intent on living like a Lazy Genius and only doing the things that matter, and even still, there's a lot to do and I often feel quite tired. Why? Why do we all feel this way?

As I thought back to generations past and those long ago, I wondered if everyone always has felt perpetually tired. Was my great great great grandmother and all of her friends perpetually tired? I honestly don't know the answer to that, but in thinking about the differences in past generations, I do think there's something there. Yes, we're doing a lot of things and that might make us tired, but there is something else that didn't exist before.

We live in a digital era that has come on the heels of the Industrial Revolution and the Technological Revolution. The most basic of basics is that the United States got super into productivity really fast because of factories. In order to make money and succeed, your factory had to beat that guy's factory, and you did that by going faster, by being more efficient. Then that mechanization and efficiency present in factories started to seep into our homes: ovens and microwaves and cars and washing machines and all kinds of gadgets and appliances that helped people get more done *and* get more done more quickly, right? Well then, we entered into this age of technology and the digital era where computers started doing so much for us and, consequently, we were promised more time. When machines took the place of humans in a

quest of efficiency and productivity, the expectation was that humans themselves could do less. We could have more time.

But what ended up happening is that we didn't disengage from the focus of productivity that came out of the industrial revolution *before* we entered into the technological revolution and the digital age. We kept that "do it all and do it fast" mindset even as we gained tools to help us to do less. So rather than technology giving us more time to do nothing like it promised, we've used it as a chance to do more. The expectation of productivity simply hasn't stopped growing.

Now, why am I telling you this? Because we live in a culture where getting a lot done is expected. It is the way everything around us is built. Slowness, contentment, rest, breaks, creativity, fun... those are not things that hold any sort of priority in most workplaces, communities, or individuals. They have not been taught to us as integral parts of being a healthy, well-rounded person. Instead, we've been taught to chase and do and succeed and produce and be great.

Since most of you listening are women, you have a double whammy here. Not only do you have the cultural expectations of productivity that everyone has, you also have the cultural expectations of carrying far more than your fair share in your home, at work, in relationships, and in how you manage yourself. Women do so much of what is invisible and repetitive, like laundry and meals and family calendaring. Women carry enormous relational pressure to show up for people, to have great friends, to be a great friend, to keep themselves and their families engaged in various parts of the community, to prepare their kids for being a person in this world, and often that's while having a full time job... that you might not be fairly paid for compared to a man. It's a tough look to be honest.

Again, why am I saying all this in an episode titled A Pep Talk for the Perpetually Tired? Because the reason you're tired has less to do with you than you think. The reason you're tired is because we live in a culture that celebrates movement and hustle and production, all while expecting women to hold and manage the invisible strings that keep everyone else's movement and hustle and production going. And you're also supposed to look cute and be a good baker and know how to throw a spiral and keep a clean house and remember everyone's birthdays and throw the office party and take care of everyone else's needs but your own and on and on and on. I'm starting to sound a little bit like America Ferrera's speech in the Barbie movie, but she's right in that being a woman is really hard. It's beautiful and empowering and awesome, but it's really and truly so hard.

I believe deep in my bones that the real reason you are tired is not about you. It's not simply because you didn't get enough sleep last night or because you have too much to do all the time or because you have a hormonal imbalance or any other number of things. I'm not saying those things don't exist. They likely do and even all at the same time. But you are surrounded by a cultural expectation of intense, illogical, unfair female productivity in a male dominated world that is obsessed with optimizing everything, and I think it's fair to say anyone would have trouble finding energy in that set up. It's hard to find rest in a world that doesn't give you any time to do

it and that even makes you feel guilty when you prioritize it. This is a cultural problem, not a you problem. Can you do some things to help yourself feel a little less tired? Yes, and we're going to talk about them in this episode. But I refuse to give you ideas for what you specifically can do before I say with my out loud voice that you are not the problem. Your lack of self-discipline or organizational skills or having the right system or whatever you say your problem is is not to blame here. You live in a culture that has created this problem, and being aware of that on its own is pretty life-changing. Once you stop blaming yourself for not having it together, always feeling tired, always feeling behind, once you realize the origin does not lie with you, it helps. It's not just solidarity you need. It's reality.

So now that the reality has been laid down, let's take a deep breath, notice what comes up as we think about what expectations we hold and manage, and be kind to ourselves as we take the next practical step of figuring out what we can do to feel less tired, despite the fact that we didn't choose for it to be this way.

So here's our goal for this topic specifically. We want to compassionately move toward feeling a little less tired as often as we're able. If you think of your body and even your calendar as a vessel, think of it as every day we want to take a little stress out and put a little rest in. Stress out, rest in. Doing that in tiny bits every day, developing that practice and awareness, will help you feel less tired on a micro level. Macro is a different conversation, but real talk, that's why I wrote my next book, *The PLAN*. I hope it shifts the conversation around time management in helpful ways, so if you've already checked it out, thank you. You'll get to read it on October 8th which is too far away to be honest. But macro is coming. Macro is needed, and macro is coming.

Today though, let's deal with where you are today and your own perpetual tiredness on a micro level. That's next.

I love giving you little phrases to hold on to, and you get another one today. Today's phrase is stress out, rest in. Stress out, rest in. Every single day, or at least the days you have the awareness and energy to do so, I wonder what would happen if you were to occasionally say "stress out, rest in" and then consider how to do that right then that day in your own life. What is something super small you can do to take some stress out? Just a little? I mean, just breathe. Breathe deeply in through your nose and out of your mouth just a few times, and that alone gets some stress out. That's how small I'm talking. Breathing. It's the perfect place to start small.

Speaking of start small, literally anything that comes to mind in that moment that might get a little stress out is worth doing. A breath, a slow walk to the mailbox, recognizing that the permission slip your kid urgently brought you isn't due for another week and you don't have to treat it like it's due right now. Anything. Noticing these moments where you can adjust and pivot a little to help eliminate even the tiniest bit of stress is cumulatively so helpful and does amazing things for your life and mental health.

Just last night, I was grilling chicken, and I used a new recipe. I got it from a friend, but I think the marinade I mixed up was out of proportion to the amount of chicken I was using. I discovered this when I took a tiny piece of the chicken and it didn't taste quite how I hoped it would. I also knew that my particular palates of my children would likely revolt. So instead of getting stressed out that this dinner I had worked hard on was a fail, I went inside, grabbed a bottle of Sweet Baby Ray's barbecue sauce, and started basting the chicken. Boom. Took a little stress out. Learning to notice when you're freaking out and then adjusting a small bit is one of the greatest skills you can learn as a person. Don't think that everything is the worst in one fell swoop because then you try and fix it in one fell swoop. And if you're already tired and emotionally compromised, you tend to do that even more.

So instead, start small. Notice what you can do to take a little stress out.

Stress, to me, is often caused by too much of something. Too many decisions, inputs, stimulation, noise, expectations, piles that I can see, invisible chores I haven't done yet, children. So if you feel like there's too much of something in your life that's causing you stress, name what that something is. Are you making too many decisions every day? Try Decide Once. Decide once about one thing one time and then keep doing it until it doesn't work for you anymore.

Maybe you have too much to do in the morning and feel scattered because you're a human pinball machine. Consider the principle Build the Right Routines, and see if you can't simplify what needs to be done and move toward an experience or feeling or headspace that matters to you. Maybe you literally have too much to do. Go in the Right Order. That's another Lazy Genius principle. The right order for everything is name what matters, calm the crazy, and then trust yourself with what comes next.

You can take a little stress out multiple ways, multiple times a day. But even just one makes a difference. So if you are perpetually tired, notice what specific parts of your day are making you feel that way because it's probably too much of something, and then apply a Lazy Genius principle to that singular thing and see what happens.

The second part of our phrase is rest in. Stress out, rest in. We'll keep this small, too. Because when we are perpetually tired, we think that big rest is going to be the solution. I just need to get away. I need a break. I need a vacation. While that could be true and I will never say no to a vacation, vacations aren't necessarily the answer. In fact, in the Latest Lazy Letter, my monthly newsletter that goes out this Wednesday, I'm going to share a couple of vacations that I took. Did I come back refreshed? Yes, to a point. Did I stop being tired? Absolutely not. When was the last time you came home from a trip or a time away on your own where you were so full that you didn't feel tired for days and days after? That is just not a reality! Big rest does not do anything except create space we normally don't have in regular life. The kind of rest you need is daily, small rest. Just a little rest in. Stress out, rest in.

So what can that look like for you each day? I will list out some possibilities, but not all of these are universal. Depending on what matters to you, your season of life, and the limits you have in your job or living situation will impact how you rest each day. So this list is not prescriptive. But small ways you can rest every day and put rest into your vessel, not just take stress out, are things like eating lunch in the sun or outside or with a book instead of with Instagram. I love Instagram. I enjoy it. But we all know when Instagram is not restful to us, so notice when that is for you. Maybe having it be your companion when you're trying to rest is not the best idea. Maybe. Put rest in by not feeling guilty when you leave a chore for later to sit down and read. Put rest in by going to bed early tonight because your body needs it, knowing that tomorrow you'll stay up and enjoy your night owl vibes. Remember, it's not all or nothing. Put rest in by talking to someone you love who fills you up. Put rest in by moving slowly sometimes instead of walking as fast as you can everywhere you go. Put rest in by walking somewhere you can drive and enjoy the stillness and quiet. Put rest in by driving somewhere you can walk so that you can sit in your quiet car alone. Put rest in by taking a 17 minute nap with the white noise app in your ear even if other humans are around. Put rest in by asking someone you live with to handle a chore you normally do because you're cramping because periods are stupid and you need to sit in a ball and then don't feel guilty about it. Put rest in by honoring what you need, not just leaving yourself until the end.

I am perpetually tired. For sure. Every day, I feel tired. But let's finish this very robust pep talk with a reframe. Your body is meant to rest, so of course you're going to feel tired every day. It's a natural rhythm we should expect. We almost might feel tired after something that brought us life, right? I threw a frisbee with my boys the other day in the yard when the sun was out and it felt like spring finally, and because I have glass knees and zero stamina, I was tired after. But it was a good tired. It was a fulfilling, connective tired. The tired we're talking about here is likely not just being naturally tired or tired after something good. It's weariness. You're perpetually weary, my friend. And I would like to say to you that making small steps toward stress out, rest in, toward naming what matters for you in this season and letting the rest go for now, toward confidence in what you need and who you are and not feeling guilty when you assert that in order to eliminate your weariness even just for today, those small steps work. They matter and they work. You don't have to be perpetually weary. You might stay perpetually tired because the body is finite, and we live in a highly optimized world. But shifting how you see that world, being aware of what it puts on you and what you don't have to accept, shifting how you see your tasks and your priorities, all of that will help you not be perpetually weary.

Life is tiring, so try stress out, rest in. But life does not have to be perpetually weary, especially as you slowly start to change how you see it.

And that's a pep talk for the perpetually tired.

Before we go, let's celebrate the Lazy Genius of the Week. This week it's Cory Canamo. This one is short and sweet and perfect for those of us who are starting to get the hot southern sun. Cory writes this: "Decide once, my kid is wearing clothes in the sprinkler this year. No more messing with swim suits in our own yard!" That's it. That's the tip. And it's so Lazy Genius. Part

of the annoying part of the sprinkler if you have a yard and a sprinkler is the whole hullabaloo of kids putting on swimsuits and then having to dry the swimsuits and change the swimsuits and putting sunscreen on more skin probably because they're swimsuits. No more. Just kids wear clothes in the sprinkler. Done. I love it. So great, Cory. Congratulations on being the Lazy Genius of the Week!

A quick reminder, this Wednesday, April 10th, the next issue of the Latest Lazy Letter, my monthly newsletter will be going to the mailing list, so if you don't already get that and would like to, please sign up! Like I mentioned earlier, I'm telling a couple of traveling stories, including when I sat next to my friend Jamie at a Broadway show and she got into a bidding war for Aaron Tveit's bloody tank top, a tremendous spring break oversight that resulted in a kid telling me that I was a failure as a mother - true story, as well as reviews of all the books I read in March, including my favorite book of the year. Yes, I have a new favorite book of the year. So if you'd like to get that email, sign up at thelazygeniuscollective.com/join.

This episode is hosted by me, Kendra Adachi, and executive produced by Kendra Adachi, Jenna Fischer, 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!