

#178 - How to Start a Hobby

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 178 - how to start a hobby. I hear a lot of you say "I wish I had a hobby" or "I need a hobby" or "I have no idea how to start a hobby I'm 39 years old" or "I have no idea how to start a hobby I have a million children and no time" or any number of sentences about hobbies. We want them, we need them, but a lot of us don't have them or know how to get them. So that's what we're going to do today. Let's get a hobby.

First question: why? Why do you need a hobby? You have to answer this for yourself like everything else we do around here! There are so many reasons why you might want or need a hobby, but without naming it, you could very easily choose a hobby that just doesn't make sense for you.

So some thoughts on why you might need one. Do you need something that works a different part of your brain than normal? Do you need something that will slow you down or speed you up depending on the typical speed of your day? Is your brain the thing that is too fast or too slow in contrast with your schedule or your body? Do you want to feel good at something? Do you want to try something new even though you'll likely not be great but flexing that imperfect muscle is good for your spiritual formation? There are lots of reasons, so name yours. Why do you want a hobby? Why does it feel important? Put words to that before you decide anything else.

So we did the why. Now we move on to the when. At first, I had the what coming first. I mean we need to decide what the hobby is, right? But a lot of us have specific blocks of time that are available to fill with a hobby. Also how often do you want to engage in your hobby? If your hobby is birdwatching but you only have time to engage in it at night, that's not going to work. Obviously that's a weird example, but you get the idea. Think through your typical day and typical week and see when you'd like to engage in your hobby. Have a time framework that makes sense. It doesn't mean you're committing every evening from 7:30-9:30pm to watercolors, but you can reasonably say that you could have time to do something on certain weeknights after the kids go to bed. Be flexible. Right now you're just gathering information to see what makes sense and what will get you excited to do this thing you want to do for your own reasons you've already named.

Okay, now we do the what. What would be a good hobby that fits in your reasons for wanting one in the first place and the time you have in your life right now? Brainstorm some stuff. Ask a friend or partner or sister. Don't commit to anything or automatically say no to something. Just brainstorm a list of possibilities and sit with them. Or your hobby might be so crystal clear at this point which is great too. Just give yourself some space to choose what your hobby is and feel zero guilt about it taking a little time. You're not supposed to automatically know.

Also remember that what you choose doesn't have to be the only way you spend your free time for the rest of your life. This is another situation where we put so much pressure on a thing to fulfill us forever or work the first time or give us the purpose we've been craving, but really you might just cross stitch for three weeks and then be done. It doesn't have to be a massive thing, especially considering what your why is in the first place.

So we've done the why, the when, and the what. And that's really all you need. Depending on the hobby, you might involve a who, someone to do it with. You might choose a where if that's important. All of your other decisions are really based on why you want a hobby, when you have time to do one, and what it actually is.

Now what about how? How does one incorporate a hobby into one's life? If you have named your reasons and gone in the right order with how you make this very low-risk decision, how you do it will feel a lot easier than trying to commit to some goal or finish line or something. A hobby is supposed to be a chill way to spend extra time. It's something that is only for the purpose of itself. It doesn't make you money, it doesn't make you an expert, it doesn't really have an end goal, it's just there for you to use for your own purposes when you need it and want to enjoy it. It's supposed to be enjoyable. So when I ask how - how do you stick with your hobby - and you're truly worried about that, I want to ask you to consider if you really want to do that hobby or if your expectations of yourself are hobby-level. Are you afraid to try watercolor because you want to be amazing and secretly hope you get a little Etsy business out of it? Well, that's totally fine. You can absolutely want that. But if you pretend like you don't want it when you actually do, your experience of that hobby is going to have a lot of unnecessary pressure because what matters isn't really what matters. So be honest about the purpose of this whole thing.

Okay, so to wrap up, I will share with you a hobby I'm pursuing for the rest of 2020. First, my why. Why do I need a hobby? Why do I need a specific way to spend my time when I'm not working or managing a home or caring for tiny humans or doing those things that are lovely but can drain me pretty quickly day after day? My why is that I want something that's slow, that has nothing to do with a computer since so much of my job is in front of a screen, that benefits my family because I like to bring them into my stuff sometimes, and that builds on itself but doesn't require a regular schedule. So like I want to learn something and continue to grow and understand it more, but I want it to not be a big deal if I don't do my hobby for two weeks, you know? I need my own timetable for this to work.

Now what about when? I actually have a lot of flexibility with the when. I have some nights, I have some mornings, I have some afternoons, I have some weekends, I have basically have a very flexible varied life that doesn't always follow the same patterns in terms of time, so I'm not restricted by time in any particular way.

Now when I was thinking about my what, the list was very short. I thought about knitting because I find knitting to be such a Laura Ingalls hobby, and I loved the Little House books when I was a kid. I love things that feel homestead-y, especially since all at once, I would not be super great at living a homestead life. Like, I don't garden. I feel like you need to be a gardener

to be a homesteader. That said, I do like hobbies and pastimes that feel of another age, that feel like they've been done for generations before me. Which is why knitting was on the list. However, knitting is something I would do at the same times that I normally read. On the couch at night, in the carpool line, in a little break in the middle of cooking dinner. And I love reading more than knitting. I know this already because I've tried knitting before, and I would rather reach for a book. Could I do both? Sure. Life can be accepting of two hobbies. But I already desire more reading in my life, so taking that time away for knitting just doesn't make a lot of sense for me personally. I did for a hot second think about gardening as I often do but dismissed that pretty much right away because it's almost winter and gardening requires regularity which is one of the things I don't want. Plus I don't like bugs or dirt or getting sweaty. I keep trying to make gardening work, and it's just not for me. But it did pop up as an option because it always does, and my why and when helped me realize that it is still not the time to do it.

My hobby, the one that I already kind of do and have done at various intensities over the years, is baking. I love baking. I haven't done it a lot lately. For awhile, I was baking a lot of desserts, and then I just stopped. I still bake my chocolate chip cookies that are on the blog, but baking desserts in general hasn't been serving me in the way it used to. But do you know what does? Do you know what is grounded and centuries old? What can happen at various times of the day but doesn't have to happen regularly for it to count? Do you know what is slow and calming and also benefits my family? Bread. Bread does all of those things. So my hobby for the rest of 2020 is to bake more bread, specifically I'm baking my way through a book by one of my favorite Instagram follows Bonnie Ohara from Alchemy Bread. She has a book called Bread Baking for Beginners, and even though I have a decent understanding of baking bread, I still want to start from the beginning and experience the process of learning to bake from the most basic breads to more difficult ones. I can do it at my own pace, my entire family likes bread, I rarely feel more excited about being home than when bread is baking, and Bonnie is the kindest, best teacher.

Here's something important to notice. I'm excited about this hobby. It is not work to try and fit it into my life or stick to a schedule or anything like that. Please remember to put a hobby in its proper place. It's lovely and enjoyable and something you look forward to. Naming it and doing it is simply giving intention to something that matters to you at a pace and for a purpose that makes sense in your life right now. If you have to force yourself into a hobby, it's not a hobby. It's something that's carrying weighty expectations you haven't named yet. And you're allowed to do it for a little while and then stop. Or do it for awhile, put it down for weeks and weeks, and then pick it up again for no reason other reason than you want to.

For awhile, I was doing pen drawings of trees. Several nights a week, I'd go out on my porch and draw a tree. I loved it. Were the drawings good? I honestly have no idea, but drawing a good tree wasn't the point. Drawing a tree was. And then I stopped and haven't done one in several months. Does that mean it was the wrong hobby? No. It just means it served me until it didn't, so I stopped. No failing. No not carrying out your goals or sticking to a plan. Hobbies are kind. Hobbies don't want your stress. Just do something fun that brings you joy until it doesn't anymore. But if you need some direction on what it is, ask yourself first why you want a hobby and when you want to enjoy it. From there, you can name what you might do, and then just try it

out. That's the right order. And remember we learned in *The Lazy Genius Way* that going in the right order is a principle that can be applied to so many things, including choosing a hobby. Another principle from the book that applies here is to start small. If you want to knit, don't buy every color of yarn and twenty needles and three instructional books. Buy one thing of yarn, one set of needles, and try something simple like a scarf. Start small. If you start big with a hobby, you'll likely quit and then feel guilty for buying all the stuff to start big. Start small.

I hope this gives you some permission to engage in a hobby for no other reason than it's fun, because that's what hobbies are for. Just choose based on what matters to you. And that's it for today! Thanks so much for listening. And if you haven't yet read *The Lazy Genius Way*, I'll put a link in the show notes for you to check it out. It has almost 650 reviews on Amazon which is amazing and is a New York Times Bestseller which is still the most bonkers thing. The point is that people have really loved this book and have resonated with this way of approaching life. It's practical and helpful and full of permission, and I encourage you to check it out if you haven't yet.

Alright, y'all, 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!