

## #195 - Creating Your Own Holiday When There's Nothing To Look Forward To

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 195 - Creating Your Own Holiday When There's Nothing To Look Forward To. Now right now, we're still in a pandemic, but if you're listening to this in non-pandemic times (first, hi how's it going over there?), this episode still works. February and March struggle to bring the thunder. I mean, it's just the way it is. We're past the lovely winter holiday gauntlet, we're past the energy around fresh starts in January, we're still weeks away from spring break if you get a spring break and for sure months away from summer vacation. And right now, you throw the pandemic in there, I'm not going anywhere. We're still doing this. We're still mostly home, day after day. A lot of you have kids in all online school or a hybrid, and it's hard to find any kind of routine when every day looks a little different. We're still in that. So we need something to look forward to. For real. So rather than just waiting for July or a vaccine or for any kind of gathering or celebration to count only when things are back to normal, we're going to be proactive. Y'all, I want all of us to create our own holiday sometime in the next few weeks. February or March. Try for February. You likely don't need two months to plan. And I know this is very specific and maybe even silly, but silly is not bad. And if you recall from episode 191 called Naming What Matters for 2021, I shared that one of the things that matters most to me this year is finding joy. Creating joy. Keeping an eye out for joy and maybe even serving it up on a podcast episode platter for you guys. Joy is essential all the time for our mental health and experience of just being alive as a human on this earth in connection with other humans on this earth, but as it's been said by me and many others, this year feels like extra important for that. We need some joy. So I want to show you how to create your own by literally making up a holiday out of nothing for just you and your people, whoever those people are.

You ready? We need this, guys. We need bespoke holidays. I'm throwing you a lifeline you might not have known you needed, at least in this form. Okay, so let's walk through it. I've got a plan. I've got steps for you to create something that's fun and memorable and that matters to you. These are the questions I want you to answer in this particular order so that you aren't spinning your wheels in no direction. Let's do it!

Question one: what do you want to celebrate, or what do you need more of in your life? Let's look at the first part first. What do you want to celebrate? You can be as random and weird as you want in this, and I think that's kind of preferred even? If you have a birthday coming up for someone you live with, that's different than this. This is a thing to celebrate that you aren't already celebrating. So it could be a literal made up holiday, like George's dad in Seinfeld with Festivus. Or you know we celebrate Mean Girls Day just because the script in that movie said October 3rd? It didn't mean anything until someone gave it meaning. So you can make the meaning. You can celebrate the first day of March just because, you can look at a list of weird national holidays and pick one in February or March that feels like something fun to celebrate at least this year. Next year you'll see. For example, February 9th is national pizza day. That

celebration creates itself. February 26th is Tell a Fairy Tale Day, so you could focus the whole day on a fairy tale and make food around it and have someone dress up for it or watch that movie or whatever. This probably works better in a house with little girls as opposed to teenage boys, but maybe not. Just know I'm giving these as examples. March 3rd is I Want You to Be Happy Day. That feels like a fun thing to celebrate. Everybody gets something that makes them happy. March 7th is national cereal day, March 14th is national potato chip day. For both of those, you could do a big taste test and rank your favorites. There are all kinds of holidays already waiting for you if you don't want to come up with something yourself. But the point is, what do you want to celebrate?

The second part of that which might be necessary in helping you choose is what do you need more of in your life right now? Do you need to laugh more, connect with people and have a conversation, make food that's not the same five meals that you've been making for a year... what do you need right now? What do your people need right now? You can either start there and make that the thing that matters most as you create your own holiday, or you can use that to narrow down your options when you're thinking about what to celebrate. But first ask what do you want to celebrate and/or what do you need more of in your life right now? Make it happen.

Next question: who needs to be part of this? Obviously all of that depends on what you're celebrating and what you need and in this particular time period what's safe and allowed for you in terms of the pandemic. But who needs to be part of this?

Next question: how can you do it? How can you celebrate this thing or get more of this needed thing in your life for a day? This is where you brainstorm all the possibilities. You might not need to brainstorm; you might just know what you want to do. For national pizza day, you're going to order a pizza from four or five different places and have a taste test with your family for dinner. Boom done. But it's still nice to think through the different elements of a celebration you're already sure of. So start writing down some ideas.

This is the phase, to borrow a term that BJ Novak uses, known as the blue sky period. BJ Novak played Ryan on The Office and was also one of the main writers for the show. And in an interview a few years ago, I think it was with Tim Ferris, Ryan said that in the writer's room they would have something they called the blue sky phase. And in that, any idea was on the table. The example he gave was Dwight goes to space. Now you could very quickly shoot that idea down and be like no he can't. But the point of a blue sky phase is to let ideas live. Let them be what they are before figuring how they're going to happen. By letting the idea live, you see how attached you are to, how important it is, how much you want to make it happen. Then once you know that, the work in figuring out how Dwight gets to space is worth it. The same is true here. If you want to have a gathering with three families on national pizza day and you immediately shoot it down because you can't gather with that many people, you might not find a solution that will actually make it work. So brainstorm and give your ideas some blue sky time. See what gets you excited.

Next question is what does this need to be? If you know what you want to celebrate, you know who you want to be part of it, you have some ideas of how you might create this special holiday, you can name a little better what words can describe this celebration. What does it need to be? Big or small? And that's just the amount of people. So big or small, grand or simple, thoughtful or silly, in person or virtual... think about what this needs to be. Keep what matters in mind always always always.

Another way to add some legs to that question is to ask yourself how you want people to feel during this random holiday you're making up. What are they doing? Do you imagine yourself or your people laughing, talking, eating, playing games, quietly connecting, just being in the same room but without the conversation you have every day... what do you see? What do you imagine? That can also help you answer what this needs to be.

And then you plan it. You make the choice. On this date, we will celebrate this thing. This is our holiday. And then you do it. Give it a funny name if you want or at least a memorable name. Invite your people to be part of planning it. And when I say planning it, I don't mean you need seven checklists and you need to hire an event coordinator. I mean maybe you're doing a movie. Maybe you create a month long holiday where it's Movie March, and everyone in your family or your friend group picks a movie you want to see, and you watch it together. And whoever's movie it is gets to pick the dinner before or the snack you eat. It's just putting a name and purpose to something. You make the meaning. So when I say involve other people in planning something, that planning could be done in a ten minute conversation. Now if you want to go big, do it. Do what you need. Do what matters. But I just don't want you to hear the word "plan" and think you need to make something huge. You don't unless you want to. But have your people be part of it.

And I will say this about the anticipation of said bespoke holiday. We often anticipate a letdown. We don't always anticipate things well, or we think that by having a long runway to a celebration that the lead up is going to be better than the actual thing. Somebody is going to be disappointed, so let's not make it a big deal yet let's not talk about it. And while I get that, I often am that, I think we need to remember that anticipation, even very low key anticipation, is something really fun. I think what happens is we see other people's experiences, like you see a family that's done quarantine olympics and has silly challenges pretty often, and you think "I wanna do that" but say it in a way that is already layered with disappointment. Your kids will think it's dumb, you're not creative enough to come up with games, all kinds of excuses. But really those people you see, they just chose to do something. They chose to make meaning out of something that didn't exist before just by saying it out loud and then doing it.

I know this is a silly random not essential idea, but I think we all need something that's silly and random and nonessential. Don't let your anticipated disappointment stop you from trying. You won't know until you do it. And if you and your people come up with something and it's not as fun as you wanted it to be, don't do it again. It's no big deal. You don't have to put the pressure of a 25 year tradition on this idea. Just create something for now in these next few weeks, do it, and let it be what it is. Have fun. Anything can be fun when the people make it fun.

One thing we're thinking about doing soon is having a Little Debbie Day. Which I actually just looked it up and Little Debbie became an official brand on August 23 in 1960. So we might hold off on this until August 23 and make it really official - this will not be our February or March made up holiday - but I want to buy all the snack cakes, a box of each, and we do a taste test with just us, with other people, I don't know. That idea has been floating around with the kids, and they're into it. And that's another thing I will say as we end. You don't have to come up with something and then it be law. Like, let it land in conversation and see what people say. Ask at dinner, "what if we had a week soon where we watch a movie every night and everybody gets to pick one?" And wait for a response. If there's a lot of complaining immediately, don't give up. Just ask another question to help people find their way. And if they're just not into it, don't do that thing. Think of another idea and float it out there. It doesn't have to be like you're a ringleader of a circus announcing some big thing that no one cares about yet. There's a journey to be had in caring about something.

So what do you want to celebrate or what do you need more of right now? Who needs to be part of that? How can you do it? How can you make it happen? Brainstorm. Leave some space for blue sky. Make it what you need it to be. And then ask for help and ideas from your people. Let the planning and thinking, even on the smallest scale, be part of the anticipation. Don't let your cynicism keep you from doing something fun. And if you celebrate this year and never again, you still did something fun or unique or memorable. It counts no matter what it is.

And that's how we're going to create our own holidays because we don't have a whole lot to look forward to right now. I hope you have fun dreaming and thinking and creating something that makes you and your people happy.

Thanks so much for listening, I'm always grateful for your ears, 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!