

#204 - How to Rally on a Bad Day

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 204 - how to rally on a bad day. We all have bad days, and for different reasons. And there's something about being inside a bad day that feels like there's no way out. You kind of just have to wait until the next day and start over. But if your bad day is living its best or worst life by breakfast, maybe waiting until tomorrow's fresh start is not the ideal solution. None of us want bad days, but all of us have them. So how can we rally?

We can find a solution to anything with some combination of the 13 Lazy Genius principles in my book *The Lazy Genius Way*. One of the reasons bad days need principles instead of specific solutions is because the reason for your bad day and my bad day and even my bad day last week and my bad day this week, those reasons are different. I might have a bad day because my hormones are a little wackadoodle and impacting how I see myself in the world or even how I physically feel. A bad day can come from a bad moment. Sometimes I'll say I had a bad day when really the kids got in a big fight at 4 in the afternoon and I lost my temper or didn't lose my temper but felt super frustrated because I feel like all I do is break up fights, and that singular moment now has colored the entire day. The day was fine, but one bad moment changed my perception of the whole thing. A bad day could be because of bad news that came unexpectedly and is out of your control. It could be because you are in a really hard season and haven't rested or gotten a break, and the lack of sleep or margin or alone time or fun is just doing a big ol' pile-on, and you break. You feel even like you're in a string of bad days. There are a lot of reasons, and because there are a lot of reasons that are person to you and to me and to your neighbor and to your kid and all of it, we can't all apply the same bandaid. We can't have the same plan to rally. I can't even have the same plan to rally within my own life. It depends on why I'm having a bad day, you know?

That's why we love principles. That's why these 13 versatile, tangible, actionable lenses can help you rally on a bad day no matter how or why you need to rally. So I'm just going to walk through the 13 principles in a particular order actually, kind of like a checklist for you. You can apply any principle in any order, but if you're in deep with me over here, you'll notice that these principles are not in the order they are in the book and there's a reason for this topic, but it doesn't matter all that much. That said, how to rally could be running through these principles, maybe in this order, until you land where you want to land. You might need one, you might need all 13. You do what matters to you.

Okay, first. Go in the right order. The right order for anything really is to 1) name what matters, 2) calm the crazy, and 3) trust yourself with what comes next. We're going to go in the right order for a bad day in how we rally. We'll actually use other principles to calm the crazy, but first we name what matters.

Depending on why you're having a bad day, this answer could be different. What matters could be that you need space. You're having a bad day because you have no margin to be a person

and you just can't anymore. What could matter is some kind of connection with your kids over your ability to control their behavior. What could matter is staying true to your convictions when the rest of your team at work or friend group or whatever seems to be going a different going way. What could matter is that you don't have to do everything yourself today; you can let some things go. Start there as much as you can name it. What matters right now? If you don't know, that's okay. Sometimes we're too tired or mad or drained or distracted to know. That's okay. But if you can name it, try.

The next part of going in the right order to calm the crazy. We're basically going to try and do that with most of the other principles.

First up in that effort is to start small. That is a very powerful principle because we are generally a people who try and build it big. You have a bad day, and your reaction is to revamp everything in your life. You think you need to optimize and mechanize everything so that this bad day doesn't happen again, and you know it deep down that that's just not a thing. So take the pressure off yourself to rally on a bad day with big swings and big systems. You could rally with a simple series of deep breaths, with a walk to the mailbox slowly in the sunshine without kids behind you and just take your time breathing in and out and saying kind things to yourself, you could rally with a song, with a coffee, with a text of solidarity to a friend, with a prayer, with any number of very small things. So start small. If you find yourself getting out a new journal and listening out your life, it won't fix it. It won't prevent bad days from happening, and it'll likely feel kind of guilty about your bad day in the first place. Start small.

Next, live in the season. A lot of our bad days are attributed to being in a difficult season of life with repetitive, frustrating, boring, challenging, fill in the blank days, and it's the accumulation of those days that makes every day be a close call to being a bad one. So live in the season. Be honest about where you are, what's required of you right now, why you're in the season you're in, remember that it won't last forever, and pay attention to what your season has to teach you. I had a stretch of time last year where I felt like most days were bad days. I felt so beat up, like I'd lived three full weeks, and it was only Tuesday. I was really sad and annoyed and didn't like feeling that way but didn't give myself the space to notice my season. And when I did, when I realized "Oh wait, we're in a season of everyone being home and my not being a very patient virtual teacher and I'm launching a book and we can't go anywhere or see anyone..." like when I named that season, it was like a veil was lifted. I thought, "oooohhhhh, that's why I'm so sad. Life is kind of sad right now! This is a hard season." But acknowledging, being patient with that, naming that, all of it helped me have kinder eyes to see the season for what it was and let it teach me... let it teach me where I'm selfish, where I'm still trying to be perfect, what I love deeply because I missed it so much, all kinds of lessons I would not have learned as well or as quickly as if they weren't part of a hard season. So live in the season. Naming that perspective can really help in your efforts to rally on a bad day.

AD BREAK

Next is two together, and they are let people in and schedule rest. Many bad days are because we're very tired and/or we're keeping the hard stuff to ourselves. We're not sharing our lives with people because it's not important enough, we don't want to be in the way, everyone is going through a hard time why should I get any extra treatment, all kinds of thoughts that keep us to ourselves. And when we keep those thoughts to ourselves, we try harder. Which makes us more tired. And it's very hard to schedule rest if we don't involve other people in it. Which is why I'm putting those together. When you're in the middle of a bad day, let someone in. Text or vox or call a friend and just say "I'm having a bad day. I just need someone to know." And leave it if you want. But also you could ask a friend or spouse or sister or babysitter or kids if you need space from your kids, ask someone to help you schedule some rest. Tap out of bedtime routine tonight and go for a walk or hang out with a friend or go to a bookstore or anything. Ask the grandparents if they can hang out with the kids for a few hours this weekend so you can have some space to rest. Schedule rest, and let people in when you do it.

Next up is decide once. If you're in a season of bad days or if your bad days tend to have the same culprit, like regular hormones or something, decide once what your bad day rallying plan is. If you're in it deep and you're like "I don't want to do this anymore I don't care" know automatically because you've already decided that you're having spaghetti, you're watching a show at dinner, you're going outside, you're listening to this music, you're skipping that chore, anything in any combination. But decide once what your bad day rally plan is. Plan it based on what you need. Do you need to be off duty parenting? Do you need a perspective reminder or shift? Do you need to be outside or alone or with a friend? Do you need to not make anymore decisions? Don't decide once arbitrarily. Really think about what you need, and then make a decision that's always made to support what you need.

Now let's say your decide once is when I have a bad day, we're having spaghetti because it's a dinner you don't have think about. But let's say you get to Friday and you're about eat spaghetti for the third time because you've had some bad days, another principle or two could help.

I'm going to group together these three: House Rules, Essentialize, and Build the Right Routines. House Rules are things you decide once that are meant to keep a lot of other madness from following. I give this example in the book about after school. The kids would drop their bookbags on the floor and their shoes are strewn about, Annie would take things that weren't hers, important papers would get strewn about with the shoes, it was just a whole thing, and it often created a bad day for me. That single hour would mentally ruin my whole day, at least by my own perception. When I realized that the main culprit was the bookbags on the floor, we made a house rule to put bookbags on the counter. No one trips, stuff doesn't unpacked on the floor, Annie doesn't take things that aren't hers, it just works. It's been a house rule for years and it still works. So think about something you could put in a place that might keep the dominoes of bad days from knocking each other. It's that thing when everything's going great and then all of the sudden everything is on fire. Find the place where the ingredients for the fire began and create a house rule that stops it from happening. That's a great way to actually prevent a bad day that you normally have. No need to rally because you've gotten in front of it a little bit. The same can happen with building the right routine and essentializing.

Lazy Genius routines focus on where you're going, not on the steps to get there. Think about what you need - calm, plans, perspective, dinner prepped, whatever - and as you name that, you can take steps to make it happen. But the steps can change. The onramp itself - where you're going and what you need - those things don't really change. But the flexibility in what the steps are to get there can really help, especially in helping prevent a bad day.

The same is true for essentializing. Essentializing is basically getting rid of what doesn't support what matters to you. You name what matters, you get rid of what's in the way of that, and then you make sure you have what you do need. So this is a very niche example but a helpful one I hope. At my local Target shopping center, there is a three way stop. Not four way. Three way. And it feels like no one knows how to use it, and it makes me crazy. Like, bad days are on their way, ladies and gentlemen. It's maddening to me. So a way that I can essentialize my trip home from Target is to exit a different way. Don't go to the three way stop. Go around the back of the parking lot and exit behind the Fresh Market and skip the three way stop. And I skip the bad attitude that leads to a bad afternoon which leads to mentally having had a bad day. I'm removing what's getting in the way of my peace simply by turning a different direction out of the parking lot. I'm telling you that kind of simple choice makes a world of difference. So those three principles - house rules, essentialize, and build the right routines can impact your bad day by making it less likely to happen.

If you're in the middle of a bad day, please make the Magic Question part of your rallying plan. What can you do now to make life easier later? What can do now, assuming that your bad day isn't going anywhere yet... what can you do now to make life easier later?

The others we have not mentioned are Batch It which is more of a productivity time management principle, but if your bad day consistently comes from repetition that you hate, batch your task and see if it helps lessen the likelihood of a bad day.

The same is true for the principle put everything in its place. THIS isn't just about your house and your stuff, but I've had bad days result from clutter. When I put things in their place, it helps so much. Put your stuff away. And finally be kind to yourself. In all of this, be kind. We all have bad days. Beating yourself up because you're having them does you no good. Be kind as you think through the other principles and try and come up with a plan that helps but acknowledging that you're a person, not a robot. Your season, your hormones, your family, your job, the news you just got that you didn't expect, the person who was unkind in the parking lot or in the Internet, any of those things can create the volatile conditions for a bad day, and trying to program yourself to avoid those and manage those takes your humanity out of it. So be kind to yourself as a person who is just trying to live a wholehearted life and is doing her best. Be kind.

And that's how to rally on a bad day.

Before we go, let's celebrate our Lazy Genius of the Week! It's Chelsea K Stanley who shared how she uses the principle of Decide Once in a fantastic way. She saves up her Chick-fil-A

reward points and only uses them for special treats after school. I love that so much. So simple. So fun. So clear on the purpose of the points. And then an automatic choice of if you get icedream after school. Love it. Thank you for listening and reading and being awesome, Chelsea!

Okay, that's it for today. Thank you everyone for being here, 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!