

## #240 - How to Plan a Personal Retreat

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 240 - how to plan a personal retreat. This episode was a last minute addition. A week or so ago, I sent out the Latest Lazy Letter which is a monthly newsletter that is one of my favorite things to write and one of your favorite things to get which is so kind. Anyway, in that letter I mentioned taking a personal retreat day the week between Christmas and the New Year, and a woman named Rebecca emailed back asking if I could explain that more. Like, what do you do? How do you plan it? Where do you go? And I realized that I had never really talked about this before and that it would be such a better podcast episode than the one we originally had planned, so here we are! Let's talk about how to plan a personal retreat.

Step one is to schedule the time. Kind of a duh, but also it gets forgotten a lot. This episode is releasing on December 13th, and I wonder if a lot of you might have the opportunity to take some time the week between Christmas and the New Year, like I do. A lot of people have the week off or simply take the week off. Also the energy between those two holidays is very retreat-y. It's got a great vibe for just being a person. So the first step is to schedule your time. Perhaps start by looking at that last week of the calendar year.

Now I like to take a day. A day ish. My ideal is to leave in the morning, kiss the kids, and then go and have coffee and breakfast somewhere. Then I'll come back by dinner. My kids usually have screen time before dinner, so sometimes I'll actually come home right at the start of screen time to get some chill time at home without having any real responsibilities, but I can still be home. But that's what a day means for me. From early morning until just before dinner. You could do that, you could do half a day, you might need an overnight and do a breakfast to breakfast situation. The point is to choose what you'd like and then schedule it.

Step two is to release the guilt. I'm not stupid. I know you have it. There is something so icky to so many of you about taking such an excessive amount of time for yourself. And yet you know you desperately need it. Probably more than once a year. If you want some specific words about scheduling rest which is a Lazy Genius principle, there's a whole chapter on the different kinds of rest to think about and schedule in my book *The Lazy Genius Way*. But I know you feel badly about it, about taking time to just be a person, and I want to tell you right now that you do not need to.

I saw someone post on Instagram recently the phrase "you do not need to earn rest." The biggest amen of all time. A personal retreat day isn't a reward. You don't have to prove your reasons. You don't have to have a big project or be falling apart or anything huge to require it. You can just do it. So go ahead and leave the kids with your partner if you have one, hire a sitter, ask a family member for cash for that sitter as your Christmas present if you want! If you don't have kids, be intentional about taking a day on purpose for your own rest. Zero guilt. This is a beautiful, important, normal thing you don't have to justify.

## **We'll be right back...**

Step three, name your one thing. Okay, one of the biggest questions about this kind of day is what am I supposed to do? There are so many things I could do! I don't even know how to spend a day like this! So name your one thing. What singular thing would you love to do if that was the only thing you actually did during your time to yourself? Do you really want to take a long walk through the woods or go on a solo hike you don't usually get to take? Do you want to browse a bookstore with no one needing you? Do you want to have a long luxurious lunch with a friend you only see when your kids are around? Do you want to go to thrift stores and piddle? Do you want to get a hotel room and watch TV all day? Do you want to get a massage? Do you want to bake something intricate you don't usually get to spend time on? What's the one thing that if it happens, the whole day is worth it? Name that thing.

Depending on the weather and my mood, usually when I take a day like this, my one thing is either taking my time in a bookstore or going for a long walk with music in my ears. Those are my two things I love more than just about anything, so I try and make one of those things happen for sure. What's your one thing?

Step four and this is an expansion of three - feel like yourself. I wrote in *The Lazy Genius Way* that self-care is doing whatever makes you feel like yourself. That's different for everybody.

I think right now at the end of 2021, there's a solid chance that we feel less like ourselves than we have in awhile. We're still pretty tired and trying to navigate life and hold appropriate expectations for getting back to normal and all the things. I also think there's a decent chance that the last two years have offered some great perspective on what matters to you and maybe what does, in fact, make you feel like yourself. So between now and your personal retreat, think about what makes you feel like yourself. Name two or three things and try and do those things during your time.

If you are one of many who just doesn't know what makes you feel like yourself, maybe this particular day can be an exploration of that. Name a few things that might be ways you can feel like yourself, feel happy, feel joyful, feel a deep breath throughout your body. Name a few of those things, and try them out. It'll be like a fact-finding mission. Ask yourself how you feel before, during, and after the thing. Just pay attention to what makes you feel more whole, more human.

Step five, schedule only in a way that matters to you. You don't have to schedule your day. It doesn't have to be at 8am I do this and at 10am I do this unless that's helpful to you, unless that makes you happy. You could have flags, kind of like how we plan a day - there's a podcast episode about that - but you could have flags, a couple of set things that don't move. A lunch date with a friend, you're going to hit the bookstore when it opens at 10am, anything connected to time. You could have a couple of those and then just let the time in between ebb and flow however it wants to. So be totally scheduled, not scheduled at all, or somewhere in the middle, but I think it's a good idea to name what way does matter. If you go into the day overly

scheduled when you just want to move through the day at whatever pace the day calls for, you'll lose a little of what the day is for. The opposite is true, too. If you don't schedule the day but really like having somewhere to go, you'll feel like you're wandering around aimlessly and get frustrated. So schedule in a way that matters to you.

And finally, step six, release magical expectations. This is probably the most important part. Whenever I take a day away or especially if I take a weekend away, there will always be a stretch of time, sometimes a fairly long stretch, where I am exceptionally restless and listless and feel like I'm wasting my time. It's just the way it goes. Not every bit will be magical. Not every choice will land. Not every stroll through a bookstore will feel as romantic as you imagine. Not every retreat will leave you refreshed. But that doesn't mean you shouldn't take one. You should. As often as you can. The more you spend time this way, the more you'll start to know what you need and what will land. But even without the promise of that, it's still worth taking time for yourself to feel like yourself. Do the fun stuff. Do the stuff you only ever cram into the margins. Take longer on things you love.

Part of the challenge there is that we don't often get to take longer, so our attention span isn't as great. I remember when I took my last weekend retreat, I sat in an Airbnb with a book and plans to read it for hours on a comfy couch. I got about 15 minutes in before I started getting so antsy. And it was a great book. I was reading Project Hail Mary by Andy Weir which I loved, but I wasn't used to reading for more than ten or fifteen minutes uninterrupted. I kept interrupting myself. So expect that. Expect the scattered attention. And when you spend your three hours of reading time not actually reading, be kind to yourself. You didn't waste your time. You just spent your time a little different than you intended.

Remember, plans are intentions. And sometimes what we intend doesn't happen. That doesn't mean everything is ruined. It just means it's kind of normal.

So schedule the time, release the guilt, name your one thing you for sure are going to do that will be enough if that's the only thing that happens, feel like yourself, schedule the way you need to schedule, and release magical expectations. Just let the day breathe, and be kind to yourself during it.

And that's how to plan a personal retreat. I really hope so many of you do this in the next couple of weeks. And then do it again before next year at the same time. In that chapter I mentioned in The Lazy Genius Way, I talk about seasonal rest, about taking a stretch like a day or a weekend every season to do this. Be yourself in the summer and fall and spring, not just in the winter. Take time. Schedule it. If you don't schedule it, it won't happen.

Okay, before we go, let's celebrate the Lazy Genius of the Week! This week it's Laura Beth Davidson who I've actually had a conversation with and is a lovely human and also a very talented family photographer. She wrote this in the Lazy Genius Facebook group.

Just wanted to share a decide once that might be helpful! A few years ago I began giving my daughters an ornament for Christmas but soon ran into the headache of choosing the perfect ornament for each personality/milestone/new hobby x4 every year. Then I decided to give them each an ornament that represented that year's Halloween costume. I've had great luck finding them on Etsy and as the collection grows, it reminds us of how each kid chose to dress up that year. Hope that helps someone else!

Laura Beth, this is a fabulous idea. I have no doubt this will inspire someone else's desire to mark moments but in an easy, Lazy Genius way. You nailed it. Congratulations on being the Lazy Genius of the Week!

Before I sign off, I would love it if you would consider signing up for the Lazy Genius mailing list. Like I said, I send out the monthly Latest Lazy Letter, and it's a really great newsletter with all kinds of helpful stuff I don't share anywhere else. It's also where I'll be sending an email in a couple of weeks with my favorites from 2021, and it's where you'll get first news like book tour info and stuff like that. We send email only when it's super necessary, and we always make sure it's fun and helpful. Also we've starting doing a giveaway every month for two people on the mailing list! One that's been around awhile and one that's new from that past month, and we announce those winners in the Latest Lazy Letter. So yeah I'd just love for you to join that mailing list. If you enjoy the podcast, you'll really enjoy the newsletter.

Okay, y'all, that's it for today! Thank you so much 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!