

#241 - A Quick Holiday Pep Talk

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 short and sweet - episode 241 - a quick holiday pep talk.

I always find that this week of Christmas I don't need more information; I just need encouragement to be a person and exist in the information I already have. So this is just a quick word from me to you.

The first thing I want to say is that Christmas has a lot of faces. Some people adore it, some people tolerate it, some people survive it, some people genuinely dislike it. So let's park here on the faces of Christmas for a second.

One of the hardest things about being a person is feeling strongly about something and knowing that someone else feels strongly about the same thing but in a different way. We don't quite know how to be ourselves in conversation with people when we disagree. That's true of politics, religion, parenting, finances, and even Christmas. We feel bad because we have strong opinions about something that matters deeply to us, and we worry that sharing those strong feelings will alienate other people who don't feel the same way.

So for Christmastime in particular, I want to remind you to offer space for yourself and for others to feel whatever you and they need to feel. We can all exist together. We can be kind to each other in our different perspectives and let those perspectives all count.

Personally, I love Christmas. In fact, Halloween through the end of the year is my favorite two months of the year. I adore it. We have lots to celebrate with several family birthdays. We have opening ceremonies to several parts of the season that I look forward to every year. We have family things, I have personal things I do, I have a birthday myself... I just love November and December with my whole whole heart.

I also come from a family of divorce. Christmas always reminds me of the family I don't have. Also Kaz, my husband, doesn't particularly love Christmas. So even within myself, Christmas has some different faces. I love it. LOVE it. But November and December are also the two busiest months of the year, and if I'm not intentional, I'll drown, even in good things. And yeah I get sad sometimes when I think about the complication of family.

I was talking with my church community group a couple of weeks ago about this season, and one of the women in my group shared how much she dislikes Christmas. Her family situation is complicated and hard, and she dreads a season where she has to be with a family that she feels disconnected from. I have no doubt so many of you feel that way, and it makes a season that is full of joy for so many people even more complex.

Not everyone has to love Christmas. A person can love and dread it at the same time. There are many faces to how we all experience it, so this is your permission to experience however you need to. This is also your invitation to experience it however you need to *and* leave space for others to do the same. We can keep working those muscles of loving each other in the middle of being in different places.

I also want to say a couple of words to those of you who are in tricky church situations. This podcast is not a religious one, and I don't often share my faith publicly. That's mostly because I want this space to be welcoming to people of all faiths, and you don't have to be a Jesus person to have laundry problems. This is a podcast for all the people. But I also know that a decent number of you are people of faith, and a sizable number would identify or once identified as Christian. And as such, the last two years especially have brought on a bit of a reckoning for many of you. I've had a lot of friends leave their churches, I've had a lot of friends leave faith behind entirely. We're all unpacking and unlearning and relearning and sitting in complicated emptiness around the idea of what the church is, what faith is, who Jesus is, who Christians are, and who we want to be in the world. There are a lot of layers, many personal and complicated. And since Christmas is a highly faith-based holiday, I imagine there is some grief going into the Christmas season without a church home, without the same church family you once had, without the same assurances you once had about what you believe. Personally, this has been the most complicated season for my faith in my entire life, and while I'm so grateful for that, for that shaping, it's also just really really hard. Again, there are layers and faces and relationships that are all interwoven into this complicated thing of faith. I don't have any words really of next steps, but I just want to name that out loud in case it needs to be named for you. Perhaps you're feeling a certain way or have a layer of this feeling tucked into all the rest, and you haven't quite figured out why. Maybe it's that. And sometimes knowing what it is is enough.

Also if you are interested in some words on having a faith crisis, I had an amazing conversation with Erin Moon on this podcast about that very topic. We'll put a link in the show notes.

We'll be right back...

Now let's talk quickly about expectations. I did an episode a couple of years ago called The Lazy Genius Guide to Flexibility. If you feel yourself gripping onto this week being a certain way, that episode would likely be a very helpful, more comprehensive listen. But just as a reminder, your expectations are not bad. In fact, expectations can be good. But the good happens when you name them. If you have secret expectations that don't get met and also aren't shared or spoken, even out loud to yourself, your disappointment in those unmet expectations turns into resentment really fast. And you don't want that. You're a lovely person with a soft inside and a desire to be wholehearted and kind to your people. This community is not made up of intentional harborers of resentment. You want that to not happen.

One of the ways it won't, at least as much, is if you name your expectations when you have them. If you're going to see Christmas lights, imagine what you hope it to be. What's the story look like in your head? Now imagine that story turned upside-down. How will you feel then? My

family called me Eeyore for most of my childhood because I used to be kind of downer, so I'm very familiar with not setting any expectations or assuming the worst of a situation. But that's not great either. That's a different extreme. Just be honest. Be honest about your expectations, hold space for them to be unmet, and think now how you might navigate that. My friend, Ryan, recently said the phrase "make your decisions in slow time" and I latched onto that so fast. This is why we Decide Once. We make decisions so we don't have to think about those decisions again. But this kind of decision making has a slightly different bent, doesn't it? You're naming what matters in slow time, in a time where you're not stressed. You're thinking about your expectations before those expectations might get met and deciding how you'll exist in that situation before you're actually in it. Make some decisions now in slow time.

Another word about expectations. I actually wrote a post about this on Instagram a couple of weekends ago, but I want you to release your grip on the word magical. Let's shift our definition a bit. We think magical is when everything is perfect. It's ideal. Our kids think whatever we did was the best thing of all actual time. But I want to encourage you that even though it is so fun when things line up, when attitudes are good, when weather is beautiful, when lights are extra twinkly, when the right song plays at the right time, just the going and the doing is enough. Magical is just that it happened because somehow it always happens. That's why I love opening ceremonies and traditions. I have an episode about traditions by the way. It's episode 132 - Ten Steps to Creating Your Own Traditions. And those are ten very Lazy Genius steps, so give that a listen if you'd like. But the point is traditions and choice we've already made - those Decide Once choices - give us a framework for magic no matter what else happens around that thing. It's just the doing. The doing is what's magical.

I've mentioned this before, but my favorite weekend of the year happened two weekends ago. And honestly last weekend was a close second. But two weekends ago was our annual Christmas opening ceremony. On Friday night, we leave our house at the same time, go to the same restaurant for dinner, meet up with the same friends, and walk the same route downtown during our city's holiday celebration, ending at the tree lighting, and then going home. The next day, we usually put up our Christmas tree but didn't this year because of some other stuff happening which was fine, but then we leave the house at the same time, pick up McDonald's for lunch, park in the same spot, and sit in the same spot, often with the same group of friends, and watch our city's holiday parade. Do I love that we eat McDonalds? Not really because I don't personally love McDonalds. Is the parade always a hit? Nah. Have we had to leave halfway through because a kid was cranky and needed a nap? Most years that happened. Have we missed the tree lighting before? Yes, for sure we have. But the point is we do it. We do it every year, and I just love the doing. We look forward to it, and I'm fully aware that it's my personal favorite, not the family's. The family loves it for sure, but I also know that I'm the one who loves it the most. And that's okay. I don't have to convince my family that it's amazing because we just do it. And even though I do think that we'll all look back on those weekends years from now as something we always did during Christmas and maybe even continue to do depending on whether we stay here or our kids live here or the town keeps celebrating the same way, we don't do this tradition so that we'll look back on it fondly. We do it to experience it

now. Just do the thing. Don't manufacture magic. Magic can have a different meaning than it has had before.

And the final word is to have fun. We get so caught up in making the things happen that we forget to just relax into it and have fun. Have fun doing all your Christmas things. Drop down into it enough to experience it in the first place. I am the leader of Club Get So Wrapped Up In Stuff That You Miss It Actually Happening, and I know we want a different way, at least some of the time. So have fun and relax. This is a community that is really good at getting stuff done but not always at relaxing when things just are. Practice that a little this week.

I'm really grateful for all of you, I hope you have a beautiful week with your people, I hope that you give yourself permission and freedom to experience all the faces and leave space for others to do the same. So until next time, be a genius about the things that matter and lazy about the things that don't. I'm Kendra, Merry Christmas, and I'll see you next week!