

#242 - What I Learned In My 40th Year

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. You guys, it's the last episode of 2021, and it's also my birthday today. And not just any birthday; today I turn 40! Since my birthday is on December 27th, 2021 has pretty much been my 40th year in its entirety. In early January, in episode 193, I shared seven things I wanted to do this year, in my 40th year, and today I'm going to share an update. The cereal box version is - drumroll, please - I only did one of the seven. One. And that one was quite generic as you'll soon hear.

But even as I reflect on that list of seven things and see why they didn't happen in the way I imagined, I've learned even more about myself and how I operate in the world. What I learned from not completing the list might actually be better than completing the list! If you were to listen to episode 193, you'll hear me say that the whole reason I wanted to approach this past year with this list was because I didn't want to get rusty at self-awareness. I wanted to stay focused on who I am, what I need, how I love, what makes me happy, what I can do to contribute to the happiness and well-being of other people. The whole point was to continually reflect on who I am in the world and how the most core, wholehearted version of myself can help make it better. Paying attention to why these seven things didn't happen actually helps me do that.

Last year, the two big things that I wanted to pay specific attention to, that mattered to me personally, were honoring my body in whatever ways it needed and finding joy for myself or offering it to others. After 2020, we thought 2021 would have a big upswing of needed joy as we moved back to normal, and while the upswing part was true, we're still looking for normal. So there's that. But honoring my body and seeking after joy were the two foundational things that mattered to me this past year.

I made a notebook - I called it my Book of 40 - where I wrote down these seven things, a few other goals and intentions I had, and it's where I put everything that mattered. I'd journal, I wrote words about books I read, I took notes from my therapy sessions... that little notebook is where everything went that mattered. Not to-do list and schedule stuff but everything else. I pulled it out every morning as I sat in my morning chair before my kids woke up, and I wrote something or marked something or looked back at something. It was a regular part of every day, and most days have written evidence that I was in those pages.

Then the summer came, and I didn't have as much morning time. I started sleeping in a little bit as our daily routine changed, and I never added my Book of 40 into another time of day or routine or anything. I knew that was the case, I knew I was not opening the notebook very regularly, but I figured that I'd get back into it once school started.

Well, here's what I didn't know. I didn't know that once all three of my kids were in school until mid-afternoon - no more three hour preschool days - that I would be able to experience time to myself in a new way throughout the day. I do spend most of my weekdays working, but I'm not as desperate for that solo morning time because I'm alone pretty much all day. Plus, my two

boys are older and go to bed around 9pm or even later. So my evenings where it's just me and Kaz are a lot shorter, too. That means I'll stay up a bit longer than I might before which also means I like getting that extra 45 minutes of sleep before an alarm goes off.

So back to my Book of 40 and the reminders of my seven things within its pages - the last time I wrote in it was August 16th where I took notes from a counseling session. The time before that was June 29th when I wrote some words about the book *People We Meet on Vacation*. So really the Book of 40 was a huge part of my life for the first half of the year and then literally not again after. Because the routine changed.

Now, when I pulled out my notebook for this episode and saw that it had been that long since I'd written in it, did I feel a little ashamed? Yes. Very briefly. And then immediately was like wait, hold up. This isn't a pass/fail thing. These were just intentions, and my life shifted to where what was a regular practice eventually wasn't anymore. Did I stop reading books? No. Did I stop honoring my body or seeking after joy? No. The book wasn't the reason those things happened. It was just a thing that captured tangible evidence. Or at least one kind of tangible evidence.

Now an excellent thing this has taught me and can teach you too is that when our seasons of life change, so do our routines. And when our routines change, so do our habits. That is normal. Super dupe normal. We don't have to beat ourselves over that. Actually, please do not beat yourself up over that. When a habit changes or stops altogether, notice what routine it was part of. Where did that routine go? How did it change? What made it change? What happened to your season of life that affected your routine? Seeing the bigger picture can help you not emotionally bodyslam yourself because you just didn't follow through or get it together or whatever unkind language you might use would be. Just notice.

If you miss that habit and want it back, you can look now at your season of life and the routines you've put in it and see if that habit can attach to a new place. Sometimes you'll want it to, and sometimes the habit was something tied to a different time in your life or you're a different person altogether and no longer need it. Seasons of life change routines, and changed routines impact habits. Stay neutral in that space, and just see what matters to you. Don't give yourself a failing grade because you stopped writing in a journal.

Now, onto the seven things. I'm going to zip through them in the order I listed them in the episode and share why they did or didn't happen and what I learned from that. Because I really have learned a lot.

First thing I wanted to do in my 40th year was take 150 walks. I love walking a lot, it's good for feeling like a person, and I wanted to prioritize that. I don't know how many I took because I stopped counting in June. It might have been 150, but it was likely a bit less. But what I've realized is that the number isn't what matters. I thought putting a number on it would legitimize it somehow, give it value, make the walks count toward something. But they didn't. I literally stopped counting. But I didn't stop walking. I go for walks often, and I go when my body asks for it. Truly. I can feel when I need a walk, and I'll just go around the block or go for a longer walk if

it works out or sometimes just slowly make my way to the mailbox. The whole point of these seven things was to create specifics around one of those things that mattered - honoring my body - and I did that. Even if I don't have the marked out 150 walks to prove it, I did honor my body by listening to it when it wanted to walk, and that's way better. So likely no more numbers around that kind of thing for me.

Which leads me to the second thing I wanted to do, and that was do 40 hours of yoga. I really do enjoy yoga, and it's good for me. But my yoga is a very tiny sliver of my day. Sometimes it's one pose. I wanted to add more of it into my life because it is good for me and does matter to me, but the number of 40 hours was a hangup. It put me in a position to fail because doing more than a minute or two just never happened. In the last few weeks, I've actually come upon a bit of a block in my spirit around yoga and active exercise in general. Walking isn't included in this weirdly, but anything else to tend to my body - yoga, my physical therapy exercises for my knee - I have a block. There's something in there I need to uncover with the help of my therapist, and I truly have no idea what it is yet. But I know it's there and it's a big part if not *the* part of why I basically shut down on tracking the yoga about a month into the year. I've got some discovering to do in that area.

The third thing was to choose books I really love. 2021 was not going to be the year of stretching myself when it comes to genre, and this is the one thing I actually did. You can't really log this which is why I think it worked. This was an intention toward my reading, that I would only read books I was super excited about for whatever reason. And I quit three books this year that should've been in my wheelhouse. They came highly recommended, even to me they felt like they'd be great, but once I started reading, I was like nope not for me. So I quit them. And that was a good practice. I've been really happy with my reading life this year. I wish I had read more. I think that's the only thing I'd like to change. I got out of rhythm with reading a few times this year and missed it. As we've discovered, I don't like putting specific numbers on how much I read because then I'm rushing to get to the number rather than just reading. But I do want to read every day. Actually, I wonder if that's a thing to do. Just read every day. Even a page. Days when I don't read are not as fun as days I do, so that makes sense. I'll sit with that a bit I think, but ultimately, I did read books this year that I really loved because I didn't push myself. Some years I'll do that. This past year I did not and am glad I did not.

We'll be right back...

The fourth thing was that I would make a watch list and actually watch the shows and movies on it. I did not do this. I didn't even make a real list. I mentioned a few shows in that episode back in January - Ted Lasso, Schitt's Creek, The Good Place, The Mandalorian, Bridgerton. I did watch Bridgerton and loved it. Kaz and I did start Ted Lasso and have loved the first seven or eight episodes that we have seen, but we only started watching it last month in November. This was not a 2021 endeavor. So a couple of learnings from this. This year has not really allowed TV watching with me and Kaz to be part of it. Our season of life requires us to stay up until 11pm watching shows because of when our kids go to bed. And that is not our story. Also we love sports so very much, so most nights are spent doing that.

Also another thing I learned from this is that bringing other people into year-long intentions like that doesn't really work. I wanted to watch most of these shows with Kaz, but it doesn't really always work out for us to do that. I watched Bridgerton because I watched Bridgerton. Kaz didn't. I watched it in the cracks and it was great.

This is a slightly deeper point that I'm not sure I have complete words for yet, but I also think I'm in a season where TV is less palatable for me. I'm not sure why, but right now - I don't think this will be true forever - but right now, I don't really enjoy watching TV. Even the shows I just listed. We're a little bit into Ted Lasso and love it. It's great. We're halfway through Schitt's Creek and love it. It's also great. We didn't do any of the others, but I'm sure they're great. But the point is that if I stopped right now and didn't see any more of those shows again, I'd be okay. I just don't enjoy the act of watching TV right now. Which is weird because that used to be my favorite thing to do. I started watching The Chair on Netflix because it was a Green Light on The Popcast with Knox and Jamie, and while I really enjoyed the first two episodes and can tell that it's a show that I would love, I can also tell that when I watch it and any show for that matter, I'm only halfway in it. I just don't care. The only exception from this year is Midnight Mass. That thing was dark and amazing and a journey I would take again. But for the most part, a lot of shows I just don't have any motivation for. Again, I don't imagine it will always be that way, but it's okay that it's that way now.

Fifth on the list was to learn more about the Sermon on the Mount. That's a highly spiritual one on this list, but for the continued formation of my faith, I wanted to spend some time in this famous message of Jesus. I bought a study book for it, I got a special journal to take notes about it, and I barely read the first few pages of that study book and took maybe three days' worth of notes. But what was beautiful is that the Sermon on the Mount came into my life in other ways. Erin Moon released her annual Lent Guide during the Lenten season earlier this year, and the focus was the Sermon on the Mount. I read Osheta Moore's book Dear White Peacemakers, and she used the Sermon on the Mount as a framework for her words. So I spent time in that sermon and dug into those words more, but I'd like to keep digging. I don't know how that will look tomorrow much less for 2022, but this isn't something to check off. I can't completely learn the Sermon on the Mount. This isn't a test I'm studying for. It's a posture I'm exploring because I want to learn more about who Jesus is, especially as I see how much the Jesus of the Bible is not really the Jesus of the western evangelical church. But that's a very different conversation for a very different day.

The sixth thing was that I wanted to host a big party. I didn't do that. We aren't really at a place for big gatherings. Now I did host a medium party for some friends, a surprise for them after a long season. I planned with a handful of people, and it was lovely, we masked inside which was lovely in one way and not so lovely in another but we do what we can, and it was very chill. But see when I say I want to host a big party, I like to host a party. Big plans. A theme. I didn't do that this year, and that's okay. I will throw a party at some point.

And finally the seventh thing I wanted to do in my 40th year was to see a Penny and Sparrow concert. I love music, I missed live music so much in 2020, and I thought I would be able to buy all the concert tickets in 2021. I bought concert tickets for one show in October of this year and ended up giving them to a friend because I just didn't feel comfortable going. However, I have already purchased tickets to one Penny and Sparrow show in 2022 and have plans to go to a second and maybe even a third. They are on tour for their new album the same time I'll hopefully be on tour for my new book, so I'm literally trying to orient my tour schedule alongside theirs. It's a very high priority for me.

So those were the seven things I wanted to do in 2021, and I did only one of them. And that was just to read books I love. But also that's a beautiful thing to intend for a year! It can be general like that. I want to release guilt in thinking I have to read what everyone else is reading, or you can sub in whatever scenario makes sense in your own life.

And here's the thing. I had a really good 2021. It wasn't really good because a lot of good things happened, even though a lot of good things did. A lot of hard things happened too. This was personally one of the hardest years I've had in probably a decade. But I am different. My circumstances were difficult and still are in many ways, there are relationships that need care, there are people who I love who are hurting, there are new parenting challenges and full-time working mom challenges and all of these things that were very new this year. But I am different. I am better equipped to ride the waves of those difficult things and the emotions they bring without judgment, which is why this might be my most personally fulfilling year ever. I feel more like myself than I ever have before, and even though those seven things were meant to facilitate that feeling, just because I didn't meet those things perfectly doesn't mean they were useful or that I didn't go in the direction I hoped for. I am continuing to be more of myself, and that really matters a lot.

I don't know if I'll make a list for 2022. We'll see. But I am grateful for what 2021 and my 40th year have both taught me. I hope that as you maybe take some time this week to reflect like we're all likely to do before the new year that you will look more at who you are becoming more than what you have done.

Since it's my birthday, I'm going to make myself the Lazy Genius of the Week and just say thank you to all of you for making this last year such a gift to me. This space wouldn't exist without you. If you didn't listen, I wouldn't make this podcast. If you didn't watch Instagram stories or read my newsletter or read my book or share your excitement about my next book, I wouldn't have a reason to do this. You guys are truly the reason I'm able to have a job that makes me feel like myself, and for that I am deeply genuinely grateful.

Thanks as always 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, Happy New Year, and I'll see you next week.