

## #247 - What to Do Now to Make Spring Cleaning Easier Later

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 247 - What to Do Now to Make Spring Cleaning Easier Later. It's not spring, y'all, I know. Tomorrow is the first day of February and that is decidedly winter. However, the whole point of the Magic Question - what can I do now to make something easier later? Which is a Lazy Genius principle - is to think ahead just a little bit. We're going to do that today with spring cleaning.

First, a word about spring cleaning. We are about to enter a time of the year where we're bored. It's normal to feel like February and March are kind of humdrum months. It's cold, there aren't any gathering holidays, you're not close enough to the end of school for that to matter yet, and you're far enough away from the beginning of the year where all of that new year energy has petered out pretty significantly. It can just be a kind of bummer of a time.

Before we get into spring cleaning talk, may I offer a suggestion. Now is a great time of year to a) take a personal retreat which you can learn how to Lazy Genius in episode 240 - How to Plan a Personal Retreat, b) create a fake holiday or celebration for your people which you can learn how to Lazy Genius in episode 195 - Creating Your Own Holiday When There's Nothing to Look Forward To, and c) host a book swap which you can learn how to Lazy Genius in episode 72 - The Lazy Genius Hosts a Book Swap. The point is to do something fun these next couple of months because they are generally pretty boring.

Okay, back to spring cleaning. Let's define what that is first. Spring cleaning is a reset. Think of it simply as a reset. There are no rules you need to follow or standards you need to live up to with this. Spring cleaning is a tangible reset of your space in a more thorough way than you might week to week, and you get to decide what that means. You decide what clean means. You decide how much of your space you want to clean. You decide how much time you want to spend on it. There is not a standard you have to live up to here. You get to decide what matters. So release that pressure first, and then think of spring cleaning as a reset that you get to define.

Now let's talk about The Magic Question. The Magic Question is what can I do now to make something easier later? We are talking about what you can do now to make spring cleaning easier later, later being the general time of year - March and April - when you really do have the itch to reset. That's a real thing. As we do in fact get closer to school letting out which for many of you impacts your summer, as the weather changes and feel that energy of more warmth and sunshine, as our needs change because of the weather change - we're putting away heavy winter coats and shifting the shoes we wear and transitioning from soups to chicken shawarma on the grill (which my shawarma recipe is excellent and on the blog if you have not tried it yet), and in that time of normal transition, we often notice that we have stuff in our kitchens that we don't use as much anymore. That soup pot is cracked or those cookbooks haven't been opened

in months. Fill in the blank. It's nice to have times of the year where we reset, and it's perfectly normal for that time of year to be spring because of how spring energy feels. So don't run from it just to stick it to the man. I mean you can. Nobody has to spring clean, but ignoring how you're actually feeling during that time, all for the sake of standing up for the normal people who are not gonna be taken in by this performative season where you clean every baseboard and oven grate and all kinds of things that might not matter to you so much might not actually serve you well. I get that energy, that resistance to doing what other people think you should, and I think it's a worthy energy. But don't dismiss a spring reset just because you don't want to do things the way other people say you should. For sure don't do things just because other people say you should because it's likely they have different priorities than you do. Different things do matter. But instead of ignoring a spring reset altogether, name what about it matters to you. And then apply the magic question to make that spring cleaning - however you define it - easier for you later.

Okay, now let's Magic Question spring cleaning and make it easier. The best way we can start that process is by naming what is hard about spring cleaning. I think there are four main challenges people face. You might resonate with one or all four or none, but I think this is a good baseline for most people.

First challenge: you don't have a good enough reason why. Y'all talk a lot about having no motivation to do responsible adult things, and I get it. Neither do I. Also be kind to yourself about the season of life we're in right now. The pandemic has stripped us of so much emotional resilience we once had, so if you're like NOPE NOT GONNA DO IT, that's okay. It's better to not do it for a valid reason than start it, quit it, and realize you never had a good reason in the first place. At least in my opinion.

So if the first challenge is that you don't have a good enough reason to spark the motivation you need - because a spring reset will require extra from you, right? And you need some motivation to do it - a way you can Magic Question that challenge now is by asking yourself why. Why does this spring reset matter? Why is it important? If you're like "it's not important I really don't care if my oven grates are dirty" then that's good to name. Now you know. But if, for example, your kid with seasonal allergies has been sneezing more often and you're pretty sure it's because no one has really dusted the house outside of a quick pass of a sweatshirt sleeve over the TV, that might be a good reason. You know that taking the time to really dust all the surfaces and clean them more thoroughly than you usually do will help your kid not sneeze as much, that might be more worth it to you. So figure out why you're wanting to do it!

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

The second challenge which is very much tied to the first is that you get in over your head with too much to do. This one is probably very resonant for many of you listening. You get big plans, maybe you're externally motivated and joined some sort of Instagram challenge which got you started, but now you're standing in your kitchen with every item from every cabinet on every counter and you're wiping down the cabinets and annoyed and are muttering to yourself "wait,

why am I doing this?" Spring cleaning in the traditional sense can feel very large. Very overwhelming. So how can we Magic Question any future spring reset tasks and make them easier later? By naming what matters now. Specifically. Like rooms and closets and whatever is tangible. If you want to do a spring reset or spring clean in a couple of months, right now, you can begin to think about and pay attention to what rooms or spaces really do need that reset. Don't think about your whole house! If you're still listening to this episode, you likely have never done a full house spring clean in your life because you've run into challenges! If you already do this without help, you don't need me. You don't need Lazy Genius principles, right? So if you're listening, please hear me. I give you complete permission to not spring clean your entire house. It can still count if it's just one part. Please please please. This is not an all or nothing task. There are likely some rooms or closets or drawers that could genuinely use a reset. When you start small with what matters, when you really name what you actually *want* to reset, your motivation, your why from the first challenge is more clear. Plus you'll likely be more motivated to reset a particular space when you know you're not going to get in over your head with the whole house. So instead of getting in over your head by giving yourself way too much to do, go ahead and start small now by paying attention to your home, how you live, and what areas could use a reset when you have the time to do it.

Which leads me to number three. The third challenge that keeps us from spring cleaning or from wanting to burn everything down and start over is that we don't have the time or tools we need. Doing any kind of spring reset, even if it's one drawer, requires extra time than your normal schedule. Your daily routine, even if you don't realize that it's a routine, will have to be added to. You have to specifically add time to your life to do any kind of spring reset. So how can you Magic Question the time aspect? Plan your time now. Look at your calendar and block out a morning, a couple of hours here and there, an entire day or weekend or whatever, and know that those times are when you're going to focus on a spring reset. Get any of your people on board, maybe plan something fun for when you're done, go ahead and decide once that you will always do fun takeout or a frozen pizza or a freezer meal on a spring reset day so that you don't have to cook. Go ahead and decide your time and any logistical decisions that can affect that time, like dinner.

And what about tools? If you know you're going to do a spring reset of your closet because everything is sort of all over the place because you're out of hangers and you don't have any place to put your jewelry and you have winter stuff stored in the main part of your closet and it's taking up a lot of room, use the Magic Question now to think intentionally about what storage tools you might need. Go ahead and get more hangers. Get one of those hanging shoe organizers if your shoes are all over the place. Think about what you might want to have to help you tangibly organize your closet. Because what happens is that you start resetting something but you don't have the tools - the mop, the bendy duster to get on top of ceiling fan blades, a step stool to reach high areas, a vacuum that works, enough hangers to hang all of your clothes - and then you have to leave the little momentum that you have behind in your room, go to the store, waste the time you already planned, and then you get back home and are like "yeah I'll do it later." It is such a common cycle, so Magic Question it.

Another thing I want to share with this one is true in so many areas of your life. Please do not organize what you don't need. Before you organize, you have to essentialize. You have to get rid of what's in the way of what matters most. One of our biggest home organizational problems is that we're organizing what we don't actually need. Which is another way you can apply the Magic Question now. Slowly start removing things from that closet, that drawer, or your home in general that you no longer need. Have an essentializing eye, and remove what is in the way. Don't organize anything yet. Just get rid of what's in the way. And then also make sure you have what you do need - like hangers and a working vacuum cleaner.

And the fourth challenge that you can Magic Question is the challenge of going in the wrong order. Cleaning and resetting often have a very right order. For example, I did an entire episode on cleaning a bathroom in the right order. You need to dust your bathroom before you clean it. You think I'm crazy, but I'm also right. The kitchen is the same way, and there's an episode for that, too. There are right orders for certain tasks. So if you're curious what one might be, you can google it. You can seriously google "the right order to deep clean a kitchen" or whatever. You might have a cleaning account on Instagram that you love that has good orders for things. Again, I talk about the kitchen and the bathroom on the podcast. The wrong order is usually that you try and clean a room that has a bunch of stuff in it. If your definition of a spring reset involves deep surface cleaning, you need to clear out as much stuff from that space as you can. Otherwise, you're basically cleaning around piles and moving those piles from one part of the room to another, and you don't feel the progress that your deep spring reset is supposed to show.

On a broader scale, this episode is helping you go in the right order. You need to figure out why you want to do a spring clean before you start it. You need to name what that looks like for you and what rooms you'll actually do or else you'll start where someone else tells you to and get in over your head and hate everything. Remember our steps of going in the right order that are laid out in my book *The Lazy Genius Way* - name what matters, calm the crazy, and then trust yourself with what comes next. A way that you can calm the crazy is to not start what you really don't want to finish or prioritize a space that doesn't actually matter to you.

And that is what you can do now to make spring cleaning easier later.

If you would like some specific tools and cleaning ideas because you don't want to have to solve more problems than necessary, there is a digital ebook (because ebooks are digital) in the Lazy Genius store called *The Clean Slate*. It's a guide on how to gather the tools you need, how to think about cleaning, how to specifically clean certain places, what order you can go in... it's a really helpful resource if you just don't know where to start. There will be a link for that in the show notes if you're interested as well as links to the episodes I mentioned earlier.

Okay, let's celebrate our Lazy Genius of the Week! This week it's a dude! Ludwig Vivas emailed us saying he uses the built-in sleep timer on his TV to manage screen time for his toddler. He wrote, "Instead of saying that we will watch for a little and end up watching for an hour, I go ahead and set up the tv on sleep timer. If we are going to watch for 20 mins, I set it for that time

and it automatically shuts off. I don't have to remember to shut it off, and we don't go over our established time." I love this idea, and I will also mention three screen time related episodes if you're interested in that topic! Episode 196 is how to lazy genius adult screen time and it is a shame free zone. Super helpful. Episode 208 is about essentializing your phone apps to make your smartphone potentially work a little better for you based on what matters. And episode 210 is how to lazy genius your kids' screen time. Those links will also be in the show notes, and I love this example from Ludwig on how to decide once with how to measure time when measuring time matters. Just set the sleep timer, and let the TV do all the work!

Alright, 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!