

#249 - How We're Lazy Geniusing the Boat Situation

Hey 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 249 - how we're Lazy Geniusing the boat situation. You might have heard that all the copies of my next book, The Lazy Genius Kitchen, were on a boat that had a rough day and lost some of its cargo. As of this recording, we still don't know if my books were part of that lost cargo and if Ariel and Aquaman and all the fish have now Lazy Geniused their kitchens. It's just a whole thing, y'all, but it's been an interesting few weeks watching myself and my team and even this community Lazy Genius the problem. So today I want to share the story of my drowning book but more importantly how Lazy Genius principles have saved us during such a strange, frustrating time.

Okay, a quick intro of the boat situation for those of you who don't know anything about the boat situation.

About three weeks ago, on January 17th to be exact, I got a text from my operations manager, Leslie. Leslie doesn't text me unless there's an emergency, so it was weird already. Her text said, "Lisa wants to hop on a zoom with us today. What time is good for you?" Lisa is my literary agent which is the person who is the liaison between authors and publishers. There are other kinds of agents, like talent agents, and they are your go-between, your voice in the room when you're not in the room. I've been with Lisa for a few years, we have a good relationship, and she has never once gone through another person to schedule a call, especially an urgent one.

So on this January 17th morning, I thought that maybe I was getting fired. Maybe she didn't want to work with me anymore or she had some very bad news to deliver. Because if it was good, Lisa would've just texted me! That's what Lisa has done in the past. Basically, this whole situation was strange and made me uneasy.

Within five minutes of Leslie's original text, the three of us were on a Zoom call. We did the small talk you do to be polite but that's also extra awkward because everyone is nervous and doesn't know what's about to happen but you can't just be like "let's skip the pleasantries what's going on."

Lisa says, "Okay. We got some news about The Lazy Genius Kitchen. The boat that the books were on..."

And I'm going to stop right there real quick. Why were the books on a boat, you might ask. In publishing, most books that are printed in color - which The Lazy Genius Kitchen is - are printed overseas. It's pretty standard in the industry, and it's enormously expensive to fly thousands of books over the ocean, so a boat it is.

Back to Lisa. "The boat that the books were on was in a storm and lost some of its cargo overboard. So there's a chance that all of your books are at the bottom of the ocean."

And then we all sat in silence because what Lisa just said was absurd. And y'all I'm pretty sure I started laughing because what else are you supposed to do? Lisa gave us a couple more details but not much more than that because no one knew much more than that. All we knew was that the boat was in a storm, lost some of the shipping containers, and we didn't yet know if my books were in one of those drowning containers or when we'd even find out.

Also a very important side note before we continue, no one was injured in this storm. All the people on the boat were okay. Just the stuff was hurt, so that's excellent news.

The three of us said a few more words, naming all the complications out loud. Because, y'all, we were in the middle of planning a massive - well, massive to me because I've never done one - book tour. We were about to sign contracts with venues to do launch events. Special guests had already booked plane tickets. Our preorder bonus plan was based on a specific release date. So much was happening.

This is an understandable sentence, but everything in the book world centers around the release date. That's your sun. All the plans revolve around that date. And on January 17th, the day of this strange boat news, that release date was nine weeks away. Nine weeks is nothing. It's so short. And nine weeks from the release date, the books could be in the bottom of the sea. I mean.

So after we all just kind of stared at each other for a few minutes and realized that we had literally no answers, we decided to end the call. Leslie, my operations manager, said to me "Kendra, do you want to stay on and talk through any of the potential scenarios?" And here's an important place to pause the story.

Did I want to talk through all the scenarios? Yes I did. I was feeling pretty spinny obviously with this news, but we had established on that call that we really didn't know anything yet and wouldn't for several days. I also was paying attention to my body and knew that I was on the cusp of spinning out, of getting more anxious than I was comfortable with. So in that moment, I realized that there was no real benefit in talking through potential scenarios. We didn't have enough information, and while some of the verbal processing could have helped, I knew that for me all the talking and wondering and waiting would make it worse because there was literally nothing we could do. So I told Leslie no. No, we can all just get off the call and just wait for word from the boat captain or whoever was going to tell us where the books were.

And then I called Kaz to tell him, texted my mom and sister and friends to tell them, and everyone had the reaction you would expect: a giant "I'm sorry what?" It was just so absurd. And an absurdity with no answers and no timeline. Just a floating piece of absurdity that we could only stare at. It wasn't great. I do think it helped that it was so absurd that we could only laugh in shock, but it was still really tough news to get my head around.

But here's the thing with unexpected circumstances. Sometimes, you can't control a dingdang thing. Stuff just happens. Obviously there is a wide spectrum of that from the sudden loss of someone you love - one horrible side of the spectrum - to the dress that you had ordered on purpose for a particular occasion not arriving in time for that occasion and having to pivot really fast and not feel like yourself - which is the other side of the spectrum. I'm very much not saying that how you handle the loss of a loved one is how you handle the loss of a dress. Please hear me in that. But unexpected circumstances don't make sense no matter what they are. They don't have a box to go into in our brains. We just get this news that surprises us on some level, and then we have to just live with it, figure it out, and process the emotions that come from it over an unknown period of time. Unexpected news has to be dealt with in some way, and you don't always have the margin or even understanding to do it. That's how I personally felt. I didn't fully understand what was happening, and I had a variety of feelings that would come and go in the following days. And I had to deal with them. That's what I'm saying. Stuff happens that's beyond your control, but you then have to deal with that stuff no matter how little you had to do with it.

One of the things I dealt with in those early days and even some now is disappointment. I mean, that's obvious, but I had to name what I was disappointed about specifically. So much goes into the launch of a book, and we were going big. I had big fun plans, partly because I didn't get to really have the book launch I dreamed of when my first book came out in August 2020 because it was August 2020 and we were all scared and inside our houses trying to figure out how dystopian our world was. Plus, writing a book is an enormously long process, from coming up with the idea to writing a book proposal to pitching that book proposal to publishers and helping them catch the vision for it, to writing a whole daggum book which is stupidly hard, to editing that whole book multiple times, to making all of these tiny choices about covers and headshot photos and who you hope to talk to about the book and cross your fingers that they say yes and setting up email machines so that people get their preorder bonuses without a hitch, and then finally getting to share the book with the world but feeling the fear and pressure of hoping people actually like it enough to buy it and are you a fraud and should you celebrate and are you thinking too highly of yourself but no this is a big deal and you want to celebrate but oh wait it's a pandemic still YOU GUYS it's a whole thing.

Because of all the time and energy that went into this book and still is, I wanted to have a fun book launch for The Lazy Genius Kitchen, and this boat news put all of that in jeopardy. I might not be able to have the book launch I had so carefully planned, and that was deeply disappointing.

And so, we waited. We were told we might have word by the end of that week whether the books were wet or dry, but spoiler alert: I'm recording this episode on February 10th and we still don't know if the books are wet or dry. So suffice it to say, we eventually had to stop waiting and start doing something.

We'll be right back...

Once we got to the beginning of the next week, my whole team, mostly me, was itching to make decisions. Everything was put on pause for a few days, but most of those pauses greatly affected other people. We couldn't just tell these venues "hey can you just hold this for us indefinitely we're dealing with some stuff thanks." We had to know how long we could wait before waiting was no longer an option.

Enter Decide Once. We kept looking at the calendar and scenario-ing our faces off. Well, if the date gets pushed here, can we change this? And what if it's pushed three weeks, should we cancel this thing? And what about the launch party that was going to be in person and on launch day?! Can you have a launch party without a book? There were just so many questions.

So I decided once. I looked at my calendar and said, "What's the latest the release can be pushed where we can still make our current plans work?" Let's just decide once that one day is our cutoff point rather than adjusting tiny bits for any new release date we got. So after looking at the calendar and factoring in my energy and time, my family's schedule, and all the many things, I told my team that if the date was pushed as far as four weeks out, which was April 19th, we'd keep everything as is and just call it a baby shower where we were celebrating something that wasn't here yet. April 19th was our Decide Once cutoff. Anything on or before that and we'd just keep rolling on the book tour plans.

The crazy thing was we still had a sliver of hope that the release date would stay March 22. I mean, if the books were on the boat and okay, could we still make it? When would it be too late even if the books were still on the boat? And that was our next marker. We had to decide again what our new release date options could be so that if we had to change the date, we'd have some ideas of what to change it to.

This is getting in the weeds a little bit, but maybe it's mildly interesting. Publishers vary with how much they allow their authors to ask for certain release dates or months even. Publishing houses release plenty of books over the course of a year and have to consider what they're capable of producing according to their own sales calendar. You can't release all of your books in two months! You have to spread them out, hope that you're putting the right book in the right season for the right reader, and pay attention to market trends and all kinds of things. Anyway, my publisher was kind enough to let me contribute to the conversation around the original release date, and I landed on March very purposefully.

See, launching a book is about a three month undertaking. You're pretty deep in it for the month of release and two months before, so I wanted to make sure that I wasn't just choosing one month that worked for me but all three. So I wrote down all the months of the year on a whiteboard and marked out when I didn't want to be in book launch mode. I definitely didn't want to do it over the summer, so that took out launches in June, July, August, and September. I didn't want to launch a book over the holidays, so that took out November, December, January, and February. If you're counting, that leaves March, April, May, and October. Then I wondered if there was an industry standard for when cookbooks were released. Leah who is on Team LG and I combed through the Internet, looking at publication dates for hundreds of popular

cookbooks and found that around 70% of all cookbooks release in September and October. Seventy. Isn't that crazy? But also makes sense.

Now I'm going to tell you something about me. I like to do things well. I don't need to be the best (that's my old Enneagram One self trying to get prominence again), but I like to do things well. I like to do this work in a way that is exceptional to the people who care about it. I want to write books that you return to again and again. I have a very specific philosophy on how I create content here in this space and what I want this business to accomplish and how it can serve you well. I also know that I'm competitive. That "be the best" default in me can get loud, especially when there's something big at stake. That's why when *The Lazy Genius Way* came out in August of 2020, I knew myself well enough to know that if I stayed home on launch day, all I would do is refresh sales numbers and obsess over how well the book did. I remember at one point, *Way* hit #2 on Amazon's new release list of movers and shakers across all books which is wild. Shocking. I never expected to rank that high on anything. And do you know what I then suddenly wanted? To be #1. If I was #2, there was a chance I could be #1! And that energy, while fine in some people and sometimes even in me depending on how well I'm doing in counseling and with my overall self-awareness, that energy would destroy my launch day. I would just be so deep into competition and comparison that I wouldn't enjoy what was happening. So on the publication day for *The Lazy Genius Way*, I got in my car and drove for hours around North Carolina, stopping at bookstores and Jeni's ice cream scoop shops and enjoying backroads and music and meeting some of y'all along the way. It was the best day.

So all that to say, publishing a book has a lot of layers for me. It can be really creative, empowering, exciting process for me, and it can also be emotionally complicated if I'm focused on the wrong things. Back to the release date for *The Lazy Genius Kitchen*. As I looked at my possibilities for launch months - March, April, May, and October - I knew I didn't want to be in the 70%. I didn't want to launch in October because I would be too close to a harmful comparative energy and just didn't want that. Of the three remaining months, March felt the best because we could start the year with good launch energy and ride the wave before we hit summertime. It was a very intentional decision to publish in March, and my publisher kindly went along with it.

Now let's come back to present day. I got an email from my publisher saying this, "We need to start considering other publication dates. For sure May and June, and we could even push it to the fall," I started to cry. Two weeks into all of this news, and the suggestion to push the release to fall is what caused my first tears. I compare it to planning a wedding and going through the stress but excitement of carefully making decisions and getting excited and celebrating this fun thing and then you're in the room in your dress with your bridesmaids or whatever before the ceremony starts, and your wedding planner comes in and is like "Hey, interesting news. Someone kidnapped the groom. They might give him back in an hour, they might not give him back at all. We have no way of knowing. But you still have to get married." That's how it felt to move the release date at all, let alone to the fall, to this season that I so carefully avoided. That's why I cried.

That process I went through to pick my best publication month? I did that again but for weeks. I looked at my calendar and eliminated weeks that were off the table for release and ones that were ideal. I told my publisher that if we had to move the date that May 3 was ideally my very last day to release. Anything after that was very much not my preference. Part of that, y'all, is because I want you to have access to this book before Mother's Day and the end of school for teacher gifts and for graduations and weddings and baby showers and all the transitions that seem to happen in May and the summer! Releasing after that just felt sad.

So, even though we still don't know if the books are wet or dry, we have missed the window to release on the original March 22 date because the books can't get to where they need to be in time to get to you in time. Which is a bummer. So we have officially changed the release date to May 3, the absolute latest date I wanted to release. But it's also super early for the situation. Two highly anticipated cookbooks were on that same boat, and their release dates have been moved to June and September. We are being super ambitious with a May 3 release for mine, and I'm grateful to my publisher, Waterbrook Multnomah, for trying to make it happen. But guess what May 3rd is? Two weeks after our Decide Once date of keeping or changing the book tour. So we are very much changing the book tour, BUT we have some super exciting things planned. I'll be sharing details in the coming weeks once we get contracts signed and stuff finalized, but we are rallying and pivoting and figuring it out!

The way we've decided to figure out is to name what matters most. We didn't want to shift our 10 week launch plan forward because I want to be done with the heavy lifting of book launching by the end of May. Summers are sacred to us, and I want to be home for as much of them as I can. That matters, so that impacts how we schedule a Plan B book launch. My energy also matters. I don't want to cram ten weeks of stuff into a three week window to fit it all in. No, ma'am. Some stuff, a lot of stuff actually, we've had to let go. Naming what matters has been essential in figuring out how we pivot because of this whole boat situation. We name what matters, we essentialize and get rid of what's in the way of what matters, and then we put it all together. We're in the middle of that last bit now, and I can't wait to share with you our plans once they're shiny and official and ready to be shared.

Ultimately, this has been a ride. It still is. But we have stayed focused on what matters most. I have scheduled rest a lot lately, going to bed earlier, shutting down my computer once the kids get home from school, ignoring Instagram completely at times just to have a little space... I've had to schedule rest. As I already said, my team and I have done some deciding once as well as using the magic question. What can we do now to make a changed publication date easier later? We did an interesting thing for the podcast that I'll share next week actually when I give you a behind-the-scenes deep dive of how the podcast comes together, but we've been applying the magic question all over the place. We're sticking with our routines because they are leading us where we want to go, and we have a company culture document that keeps us afloat in that. Two components of The Lazy Genius Collective's company culture are being nimble which we are having to do quite a bit and avoiding cynicism. It's easy to whine about this whole thing, and sometimes that's helpful and warranted and cathartic. But being cynical about the situation doesn't really help anything in the long run. As a company and as a team and even as

an Internet space that you all are part of, we want to be people who avoid cynicism when possible. Being cynical is to be distrustful of a person's integrity or sincerity. That is not how I want to live or how I want to lead. We want to believe the best in people and move forward seeing the humanity in others rather than be inconvenienced by their choices or even by situations beyond our control. Cynicism is me focused, and I want to be others focused. All of these things - naming what matters most, scheduling rest, asking the magic question, and one I haven't mentioned yet which is to be kind to yourself which I've had to do many times over the last three weeks - all of these Lazy Genius principles have saved us during this boat situation. We're all okay, we're figuring it out, we're not overwhelmed, and when we feel overwhelmed, we're taking steps to take care of ourselves in it. It's been a gift to figure this out with tools and people and a community that are all so supportive. And we will celebrate the publication of The Lazy Genius Kitchen on May 3 with all the bells on.

Again, this was a very in the weeds episode, but I hope it was interesting and maybe even a little inspiring to you in helping you see how these principles can be applied to literally anything, even your books possibly being at the bottom of the ocean.

Before we go, let's celebrate the Lazy Genius of the Week! It's Amanda, and I don't know her last name! But Amanda sent this message to Team LG, and I love it for many reasons. Here's Amanda:

I am off on a 3 month maternity leave (short, by our Canadian standards) with a toddler and a now 7 week old. For the past 6 weeks, I ask myself the same question all throughout the day: If I can only get *one* thing done, what do I *actually* want it to be?

Basically, whenever I realize I'm in a stretch of time where I can get something non-baby-non-toddler-related done, I really quickly guess how much time I have (and always make sure to underestimate it, so I'm usually talking 5-15 minutes) and then choose ONE thing. If I get that done, then I move on to the next one thing. It helps with the part of me that likes to feel like I've accomplished something. By choosing only one goal at a time, I can usually hit it, and it's amazing how much I can get completed when I'm only doing one thing at a time.

Most importantly though, is how my list of what I actually want to get done has evolved. It started off being much more of a chores list (necessary, but not particularly fun) and now is just as likely to include: laying on the couch with a book, drinking my coffee in silence, staring at the baby, or leaving a friend a Voxer. And because they all get put under my same mental category of 'daily goals', my days are that much more enjoyable.

I also have a "what *one* thing do I want to do this week" that I share with my husband during our weekly check-in so that he can get on board with helping me find time for a goal that takes a bit more time or joint effort. Thanks to that, I was able to recently spend half a day at a Nordic Spa and this week got out on my first postpartum run.

I was telling a friend about this whole philosophy, and she responded "wow, sounds like you've been listening to the Lazy Genius", haha. So I thought I should share my successes with you, as they are largely thanks to your book and show.

All the best,
Amanda

Amanda, this message is such a joy to read, and I hope those of you who listened got a little spark of inspiration on not just doing one thing, which by the way, is a great way to build a routine that works, but that you start noticing what that one thing actually is. This is good permission right here, so thank you Amanda for giving it!

Okay, that's it for today. Thanks 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!