

324 - How to Make the Rest of the Summer Easier

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 324 - How to Make the Rest of the Summer Easier!

This episode releases on July 24, 2023, and for some of you, summer is almost over! Some schools start in just a couple of weeks. Others of you don't start until after Labor Day. It's a wide range. But because summer is likely more than halfway over, it is likely you have that anticipatory glimmer, maybe even stress, of what is coming next. You're mentally already winding down this season and getting ready for the next one. You might also realize that it's almost the end of July and are feeling the push of things you haven't done yet. You start panicking about if you've had the amount of fun you wanted to or if you did that project you said you'd tackle this summer or if your kids have had a good time. The middle of seasons can be tricky in that you're in multiple places at once.

So let's talk about how to take that energy and massage it out a bit, making the rest of the summer easier. And we're going to do that with a mid-season check-in.

Grab a piece of paper or a notebook or a Google doc, and answer these questions with me.

First, what are you thinking about? What are you preoccupied with? What's floating around in your head?

This is a bit like a Brain Dump I suppose, but name all the things you're thinking about. Are you thinking about what you already did or what you did in summers past that hasn't happened yet? Are you preoccupied with the upcoming fall and the tasks involved? Are you wishing you had done more this summer and are worried you're going to run out of time to do it? Is everyone sunburned and feral and you can't remember the last time you used your oven? Name where you are and what you're thinking about.

Second, what is happening? What is coming up on the calendar? What is going on in the lives of your family? What is happening in your body or emotions or calendar? You can put this in the same list as the first question if you'd like. You're essentially naming all of the things that are getting attention or that you want to give your attention to.

Same goes for the next question: what do you wish was happening? It could be a summer activity you haven't done yet or a day off you've yet to take. It could be a vacation or a more prepared sense of the upcoming fall. It could be that you've lost something or someone that is impacting your experience of this season and you didn't know that wishing that thing or person was around was causing you stress or sadness or grief. Name what you wish was happening.

Now you have a big ol' list of the things in your head and in your life. Personally, my list often feels a lot longer than it is in reality. I'll begin a mid-season check-in and get it all out on paper,

and as I begin writing, I assume I'm going to have like 30 things on there. Really, it ends up being six or seven. Maybe ten. But the energy those things take up is way out of proportion to what's actually happening. Note that as you look at your list. Is it a big ol' list, or did it just feel like one? Interesting. Just observe.

Now before we jump into what to do with this list, I want to remind you of something. So often, we think that if we're thinking about our time, if we're planning ahead, if we're being intentional about what's to come that we're not being present. We're cheating what's happening now if we're thinking about what's going to happen later.

Occasionally, that's true. I can definitely be so preoccupied with trying to get control over what's coming that I forget the good that is here now. I forget to be present. I get obsessed with the overwhelming problems and the new seasons and big changes. But if you remember from just last week, Episode 323 - How to Lazy Genius a Big Change - we have to name what's going on and then make it smaller. Otherwise, we will cheat the present by worrying about the future. Plus, the solutions we're creating are too big to work anyway. It's a double waste.

So this practice of noticing what's coming is good as long as it stays small. It's helping you add peace to some future concerns so that you can create more space to engage in what's happening now. Otherwise, you're spinning out while making detailed future plans, or you're sitting with your hands over your ears, mindlessly humming, hoping that the stress will just go away. Let's not do either of those. Let's intentionally think about our time and our season in such a way that we can enjoy where we are right now.

So you have your list. Now what do you do? How do you take this list and use it to make your summer easier? We make it smaller.

We'll be right back...

A mid-season check-in is to do just that: simply check in in the middle of a specific season. You've made your list of what's going on, what's happening in your head, and what you still want to make happen.

But also what do you need? In this moment of checking in and looking at your list, what do you really need? A lot of times, what I need is to trust my future self and just calm down a little. I need to ignore 90% of my list. The energy I'm spending trying to prepare for everything and anticipate everything and know everything that's coming day after day after day is exhausting me. But because it happened slowly throughout the season, I'm that frog in boiling water and have no idea I am slowly energetically dying.

So as you scan your list, make a separate list of what you need. What do you need right now? You might need a day off. You might need to schedule someone to come do a deep clean of your house in four weeks so that you can start the fall with a calmer slate which also gives you more freedom to let your house be well lived in until then. You might need to eat something that

isn't a hot dog. You might need a night out with friends just to be a person without responsibilities. You might need a new hose because yours broke and your kids' favorite summer activity has gotten pushed off because you didn't buy a replacement right away and now you're the boiling frog that forgot to get a new hose.

What do you need?

And honestly, that might be enough right there. Clearly seeing all that was happening in your head and in your life, followed by an honest answer of what you need, and then scheduling that thing could be enough. I love that. Have what you need, and enjoy the rest of your summer.

If you need a little more than that, let's keep going.

If you go through your initial list and you realize that your mid-season check-in has a lot more trouble spots than you anticipated, that you need so much that you feel overwhelmed even writing it down, let's make what you need smaller.

This is my favorite time to use Mildliner highlighters, y'all, but no matter what you have, find a way to mark your list in four distinct ways. Use four colors, use four symbols, or use actual words. Whatever you use, I want you to go through your check-in list, and mark each thing one of four ways: make it smaller, make it easier, make it matter, or let it go. Make it smaller, make it easier, make it matter, let it go. Everything on that list should have one of those categories. Some things really matter. Others need to happen but you want them to be easier. Some things are too big to even figure out, and they need to be smaller. And there are definitely things you're worried about that you can just let go. That doesn't mean you'll never think of them again. It just means you're letting them go for now.

P.S. Please don't be a martyr in what you let go. If you find that everything you're letting go is stuff for you to feel like a person, I will come for you. Kindly and compassionately, but I will come for you. What you need matters, so please don't just cut your things because that feels easier. It's not. When you feel like a person, doing things that matter, making things easier, and just living your life feels more natural and more fulfilling. Soapbox over.

So your list is categorized in these four ways. What do you do with it? Start with the things you highlighted that matter. Right? Definitely start with what matters so you can make it matter.

If you want to make something matter, you need to have what you need to do it. What is that for you? You might need to put an activity on the calendar. You might need to send a text to invite someone to something before it passes by. You might need to grab the paperwork right now and just fill it out. You might need to look at your calendar and pick three possible days where you can have the day or the morning or whatever completely off and email your boss or text your mom or call your friend and find which of those three days works best for you to have your time.

If something matters, make it matter. Name what you need, and do the next thing to help you get there.

Now look at the category Make It Smaller. Even though some things in this category will end in something that matters, I don't like to start with the Make It Smaller category because I want to prioritize things I know already matter. What matters doesn't get the leftovers. I can add to it though!

So for the things you categorized as Make It Smaller, break those things down into pieces.

For example, we are about to have our primary bathroom gutted and renovated. In fact, we're a couple of weeks into that process by the time this episode is released and hopefully it's going well, but getting ready for that renovation was a big item on my personal mid-season check-in a couple of weeks ago. I wrote "get ready for the renovation" on my list, but how? How do I do that? That is way too big to make happen! So I made it smaller. I broke that big thing into a list of items like move the items from the primary cabinets to the other bathroom, sort clothes in our closet to find what's necessary now, pack away everything else, assemble portable clothing racks for current clothes, move the dresser, take the mirrors out of the bathroom so they don't get demo'd, organize the tiny bathroom that our whole family will use for the next six weeks. Those are still fairly detailed tasks, but they are doable tasks. They make sense. And from those items, I know what I need. In fact, I did some of this weeks ago and had my mom slash personal assistant get some of the things I knew I would need. She already bought the clothing racks. She already got bins that fit the tiny bathroom shelves for our stuff that needs a new home. Just this morning, I asked Kaz, my husband, if he would clean the big plastic bins we've been storing in the garage so that we can put clothes in them when we clean those out in the next day or two. Make the big things smaller. Have what you need. Schedule what needs scheduling. You're doing great.

We'll be right back...

What about the things that you want to make easier? This is where we can apply some Lazy Genius principles, right? Maybe your summer check-in showed you that meals have been a bear this summer and you need to make them easier. You can do that by making a meal matrix for the rest of the summer, deciding once what you'll have on repeat. Maybe your check-in showed you that you haven't been to the pool or the local splash pad or the ocean as much as you wanted. Why? Because getting ready to go is a bear. Make it easier by filling a bag with everything you need and keeping it there. Make wearing a swimsuit easier by getting a pair of boy shorts so you have less to groom if you choose to groom. Notice what you need that you don't have, and make that thing easier.

Maybe you've been making something that matters complicated. My son, Ben, and I made this really great reading chart at the start of the summer, and because plans are just intentions and not pass/fail and also we don't know what life will throw at us, Ben has not marked a single thing on that chart. He's read, but he hasn't marked a single title. I also had big plans the first week of

summer to take the kids to the local used bookstore and the library to just stock up on summer reading. On the day I'm working on this episode, we are two weeks into July, and we have still not been. We've had strange, sometimes dangerous weather, sickness, unexpected chill days that I didn't want to interrupt, odd working schedules with Kaz and me. Lots of things have gotten in the way of us going to the bookstore, but also I just tend to make what matters complicated. If we don't have a reading rhythm and a detailed plan we follow through on, it doesn't count. But that is obviously very untrue. Just because we haven't been to the bookstore doesn't mean my kids haven't read. And just because my kids haven't read as often or in the most rhythmic of ways doesn't mean it still doesn't matter. So notice if you're overcomplicating something that matters. That's usually my downfall. Make it easier.

Then look at what you're letting go. Are there things that need actual actions to do that? Do you need to tell someone you can't commit to that thing you said you could probably do? Do you need to put the 7% of the cleaned out items from a giant closet back in the closet because you really don't need to clean out that closet right now? Do you need to take that life-changing appliance out of your Amazon cart so you don't keep thinking about how it could probably make everything so much better even though part of you knows it won't? Do whatever you need to do to let the things go. Most of the time, it's just a decision, but occasionally we need to do something tangible to let something go. Do those things.

Okay, that was a lot of good work. Your mid-season check-in has shown you what matters, what you need to make easier, what is too big to deal with, and what you can let go of. Finally, I want you to stop thinking about the future and think briefly about the recent past and where you are right now. Take a moment to reflect on this summer and name what you have loved. Name what has made you and your people come alive. Take a moment to honor that thing. Then notice where you are right now, even in this very moment, and see the good that is here now. If you go through a future-oriented process and end on the momentum of all you have to do, it can easily take you away from what has been good and what is good right now. So end by reflecting on what's been good and the good that is here wherever you are.

And that's how to make the rest of the summer easier.

Before we go, let's celebrate the Lazy Genius of the Week!

This week, it's Meredith Rainey! Meredith wrote me this: "My husband and son often leave their socks in our living room, garage, by the back door, etc. and several times a day, I was carrying these socks to the other end of our house to put them in the laundry bin. I finally decided to put a small basket by the back door, and I just toss the socks in there until wash day. A small change but it has saved me so much frustration." I love this so much, and we also have one of these. It's been awhile since I mentioned it, but one of the most annoying things I experienced every day were the socks. We also use cloth napkins, so those would be left around our main living area, too. It just made me crazy to pick them up or remind the kids to pick them up, and our main laundry basket is in our bedroom which is the furthest location from the kitchen / living room area. So I got a small galvanized steel pail with a little rope handle that sits in the corner of

the kitchen. Every piece of laundry that exists in our main living area goes in that bucket. We call it the napkin bucket even though socks go in it, too, and it's so much easier for the whole family to pick up the stray laundry and put right there in that napkin bucket than walk down two hallways, through my bedroom, to the laundry bin. It's not hard to do that, but it is annoying to do that. And remember, the easiest problems to solve are the annoying ones. And the more you solve them, the more pleasant your daily life generally becomes. So this is such a great idea that I also use and vouch for, so thanks for sharing, Meredith, and congratulations on being the Lazy Genius of the Week!

Okay, y'all, 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!