

## 326 - How to Magic Question Your Morning

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 326 - How to Magic Question Your Morning.

This is the time of year when we start hearing a lot of buzz about transitioning to fall. Summer has a very particular energy, and it's important to live in the season! We love doing that around here. But if you're not careful, the buzz can get too loud, crowding out what really matters, especially when it comes to mornings. If transitioning to fall is all the buzz, a morning routine is for sure the buzz word. We put a lot of stock in how the morning goes and its impact on the rest of the day, and to a point, I agree. My morning often impacts the rest of my day. However, I can have a great morning that ends in a crappy day or a crappy morning that ends in a great day. A morning routine is not the magic formula. It's great to have, but it's not your only option.

I was talking to Leah, my team's Director of Content, about this, and she said something that stuck with me. She said, "We treat other people's morning routines like they're homework." Isn't that true? There are so many books about morning routines and the things that successful people do to start the day and all kinds of things. We ask our friends and family and Facebook groups what their morning routines are so we can get ideas. We grab on to every idea that sounds reasonably good to make our morning routine work, and we treat it like homework. It's a task to complete, a checklist to follow, and it is completely devoid of our own personal needs.

So if that is our problem - feeling buzzy about a new morning routine and following everyone else's guidelines about what one should be - what is our solution? What do we do?

Let's get into it.

First, let's name where we are. We're in the first week of August which means different things for different people, but for everyone, it does mean some kind of practical transition to a new season. The seasons look different, but something else is coming. School, changing weather, a holiday season on the horizon, maybe going back to work if you're in a job that has slower movement in the summer. We're in or about to be in a practical transition. That's one part of where we are.

Another part of where we are is in an intangible transition. New seasons *feel* like something significant whether the practical pieces are there or not, and there are a lot of mental pieces and parts that can create a sort of pile-up in our minds.

You might be entering another run of the mill new season, but you're still feeling a little angst about what's coming. Super normal. Or you might feel like you *should* feel a little angst about what's coming even if you're not. You know that feeling where everyone else acts like the sky is falling and you're wondering what you're missing? That's also super normal. In fact, there tends to be a lot of optimization energy in the air around this time, so even if you're content with your

life, the messaging implicitly tells you you shouldn't be. We have been taught by the productivity industry that anything out of order is the enemy, that going into something without a plan is the enemy, that stress is the enemy. We're supposed to fix it, no matter what it is. Your choices should be intentional and optimized and ready for battle, especially when a change is ahead of you. Meanwhile, fall is like "what did I do?" You are absolutely allowed to feel any level of unease or nervousness or anticipatory stress about the upcoming season, but you also don't have to let what's around you tell you a message that isn't true for you. You can be stressed, but there's nothing wrong with you if you're not. You also can be stressed without the ultimate goal being elimination of it. Sometimes things are hard. In fact, oftentimes things are hard. Being a person is not an easy task. We will have obstacles, and as I just typed that phrase, my computer auto-populated the end of the sentence to "obstacles *to overcome*." Even Google docs is telling me I need to beat what's in front of me.

You don't, y'all. You really don't. You can just exist where you are without coming up with systems and strategies and tricks to make your life as smooth and optimized as possible all the actual time. Smooth and optimized are not the primary goals here. They're not bad things to pursue but not at the expense of staying grounded in yourself first.

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

So we've named where we are. We're in a practical season of transition with some intangibles floating around in the culture and in our heads, and we can decide how much of that is ours to manage and ours to let go. I love that for us.

Now, with that in mind, let's move into thinking about potential solutions to our seasonal challenges. Please know I also love solutions. I just want us to be in the proper headspace when we come up with them.

I do think that while mornings are not magical, they're a potential solution and a great place to start. We all have mornings, and most of us start our days with them. But in a season of transition, the morning you experience now could be different than the morning you will experience when it is deeper into August and September. You will almost certainly have to transition your mornings, either slowly or abruptly, no matter what. So let's go back to that last exercise of naming where you are.

What does your morning look like now? And how would you like your morning to look when you're in your next season? The object is to get from here to there with as little robot energy and as much wisdom as possible. I think the wisest path is the simplest one.

We are going to make this as simple as possible by asking the Magic Question and keeping the answer as small as we can.

The Magic Question is what can I do now to make something easier later? Our “something” in this case is transitioning our current morning to our desired morning. Your primary job is to name that transition in the simplest way possible.

So look at what your morning is like now. You can list the things you do but also the things you feel. What’s your energy? What makes you frustrated? What makes you happy?

Now consider how you want your mornings to look when you’re in September. You’re not trying to create a morning that is the easiest morning of all mornings until the end of time. You will have bumps. You will have particulars of your morning that you just can’t get rid of, and that’s okay. So when you think about what you want it to look like, be realistic. Perfection is not on the table here. Or be idealistic about the elements but realistic in your expectations of them all working out all the time. Either way is great.

So you have here, you have there, and you likely have numerous connective threads between the two. What is the longest thread? What is the biggest adjustment jump? If you have kids and they get up whenever they want to right now but in a couple of weeks they all have to be out of bed by 6:45am, that’s a pretty nasty thread. Focus on that. Make your morning transition simpler but focusing on only one thing, on one connective thread.

This is where we remind ourselves of the Magic Question. What can I do now to make that thread easier later? What can I do now to make the kids getting up way earlier and at the same time easier later? You are the best person to answer that because you know your home and your kids. It might be the standard idea of waking them up earlier and earlier over a week or two before school starts, or you might have another idea that works better for you. But the point is to ask that specific question and make the answer as small as possible.

### **We’ll be right back...**

This is actually a fairly short process and therefore a short episode. We could talk about the specifics of a morning routine for a long time. In fact, a great buddy episode to this one is to Episode 58 - The Lazy Genius Morning Routine. That episode was over five years ago, but it’s still a banger. In fact, fun fact, that is the episode that connected me to Jenna Fischer in one of our favorite Lazy Genius internet moments ever. I’m going about my business one day in January of 2019, and my phone starts blowing up with texts with the words “Instagram” and “Pam.” So I open Instagram to an utter barrage of DMs from people with various forms of exclamative emojis and GIFs. Jenna Fischer, aka Pam Beasley from The Office, was talking about my morning routine episode on her stories, and we all lost our minds. Cut to five years, that episode is still great, morning routines are still worth talking about, and Jenna and I have become Internet friends. She’s endorsed both of my books and is a genuinely lovely human. The Internet is a wild place. All that to say, that episode is still great and a fantastic listen if you want specifics on thinking through the particulars of your morning. I won’t get into it here since I already did there.

Your job from this episode is to remember the machine that we live in, the world of Western productivity, and remember that it's okay for your life and seasons and mornings to not be smooth or structured or consistent or whatever word you keep striving for. There are many ways to morning, and you can choose what works for you without listening to the chicken littles of the productivity world. But since not listening doesn't mean putting our heads in the sand of our own lives, we can still consider how we might make our mornings a little easier for us, especially during this upcoming seasonal transition. You do that by naming where you are, where you'd like to go, and the simplest path to get there with as few steps as possible. I love doing this with the Magic Question: what can I do now to make that singular transitional thread easier later? Then do that one thing. If it doesn't work, try another thread. If it does work, feel free to add a second thread. Start small. Go slow. Be kind.

And that's how to Magic Question your morning.

Before we go, let's celebrate the Lazy Genius of the Week! This week it is Kay with no last name from the Facebook group! There is a private Lazy Genius Facebook group that has over 27,000 members which is kind of nuts. They're really great over though with a million and one ideas for everything. It's what you want Facebook to be if you're on Facebook. What's hilarious is that a ton of them don't even know who I am or about The Lazy Genius Way. They just see this smart, kind group of people solving problems like a bunch of champs and enjoy being part of it. It's pretty hilarious. But anyway this very quick tip is from Kay in that Facebook group. Here's what Kay wrote: "I love making Change Your Life Chicken Shawarma in the air fryer, and it turns out perfectly! I marinate whole boneless chicken thighs, and then cook them at 390 in the air fryer for 14 minutes, flipping halfway through. They're great every time." Well, that is pretty fantastic. I might try that this week actually. If you haven't made the Lazy Genius Change Your Life Shawarma, you are missing out. It is absolutely delicious, really easy with just chicken, oil, and some spices cooked any variety of ways, and now one of those is in the air fryer. We'll put a link in the show notes to the recipe which also says how to cook them on the stove, in the oven, or on the grill. Thanks, Kay, for adding to the fun of that recipe, 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!