

331 - What's Saving My Life

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 331 - What's Saving My Life. Y'all love these episodes, and I'm so glad. They consistently get high marks in listener surveys, so we will keep on doing them.

This phrase "what's saving my life" was first coined by Barbara Brown Taylor, an author that I love, who offers a simple way to look at our lives and notice what is making it worth living. That might sound dramatic, but I don't need to tell you that life is full and sometimes overwhelming and we need things that offer sparkle and light. Every quarter, I share my list and encourage you to make your own. Let's get started.

The first thing that's saving my life right now is self-compassion. We'll just get right into it. If you got the Latest Lazy Letter last week, you already know how much I hate August. Like, a lot. I've never ranked the months which is shocking honestly, but if I were to rank them, August would be last. I want to love it. I really do. But every single year, it makes me a crazy person.

Okay, now I have to rank the months. The order for me is December number one, October, November, January, April, September, June, February, March, May, July, August. I'm sorry I had to.

Since I have just left my two least favorite months of the year going into my favorite but also the busiest time of year with a lot of transitions, it makes sense that I would be a little off-center. I've had enormous Big System Energy the last few weeks, and I feel like my caffeinated squirrel brain just has an IV drip of double espresso. I'm a vibe right now. And when I'm this kind of vibe, I can get really rigid toward myself. I expect things to go a certain way at all times, and when that doesn't happen, I get mad at myself. So the thing that's saving my life a lot right now is self-compassion. I am actively choosing to be kind to myself multiple times a day. It's a practice you have to cultivate, and I'm grateful I've been doing it long enough that it's not as hard to access as it used to be. Still, I'm having to go there more than usual right now, and I don't know how I would be feeling if I wasn't seeking after self-compassion during this current season. So that's number one.

Number two is tidying a very specific part of our house. We call it the L which is just our kitchen and living room area that's kind of in the shape of an L. You've heard me talk about tidying the L before. We do it literally every day and have for years. My kids know what that means, and they have to do it every day before screen time. But the reason this particular thing is saving my life right now more than usual is because everywhere else in our house is in chaos. My kids' rooms are usually in low-key states of chaos as a baseline. We are getting our primary bathroom renovated right now which somehow has thrown literally every other room on its head. Our room is now a storage room and a closet. Like if I am in bed sleeping and need a sweatshirt, I can just reach up and get one from the rolling clothing racks that are scrunched up next to the bed. Everything from our old bathroom is now in the other bathroom but somehow has multiplied. I

honestly don't know what's happening except that everything in the house feels nuts. Everything except the L. I gave up trying to create order in chaotic places a few weeks ago, and I instead channel that energy into keeping the L which is where we spend most of our time anyway tidy and happy. It's intentional, necessary visual calm, not just coincidental calm because we've always tidied it. There is still builder's paper on the floor, and stuff from our tiny foyer is in that living room, but we're making it work. It's cluttered but tidy, and that's been a huge life-saver.

The third thing that's saving my life right now is my new watch. Y'all, I don't even understand what's happening, but this watch is making me so happy every day. It's just a plain old analog watch that was served to me in an Instagram ad about a month or two ago. The brand is Speidel, and we'll put a link in the show notes. I have the Speidel eco color pop watch. Honestly, I don't know if I can articulate anything special about it. The watch is a great size, modern and classic, very affordable, and it comes in multiple colors. I got one in black and another in pink for a pop of color, but I have yet to wear the pink one. The black is just giving me so much life which I should've expected honestly. I love black. But the reason I love this watch and why it's making the list is that it's making me feel pulled together like my glasses do, it's cool without being over the top, and it helps me know what time it is. Which is such a ridiculous thing to say, but it's true! I didn't realize how often I check the time, but I would usually do it on my phone. Then I'd pick up the phone and answer a text and then find myself on Instagram 20 minutes later. Having a watch keeps from getting sucked down that rabbit hole. Plus, as I already stated, I just love how it looks and how I feel wearing it. I am now a watch person, and I adore that it's not smart. That's better for my life right now, and I'm grateful I have it.

We'll be right back...

The fourth thing that's saving my life right now is pickled red cabbage. Yep, pickled red cabbage. It is a necessary component to two lunches I've been making on repeat for the last two months, and I've become a person who always has pickled red cabbage. First, let's talk about lunch. I've shared before that taking a lunch break is necessary for my mental health. My therapist told me years ago that I needed to stop moving and just enjoy my lunch, preferably one that I make and that's not just scrap assembly from the plates of other humans in my house. I've been doing that for awhile now, and it really is a huge part of my staying grounded no matter what my circumstances are. My daily lunch break is important.

I've shared some favorite lunch recipes here and on the website, namely The Chickpea Bowl which is still a fantastic option. I also went through a long stretch where I made the Tim Riggins Salad that I created for The Kitchn years ago. It's basically a bacon avocado salad but is somehow the absolute perfect salad. Speaking of salads, I also make an Asian inspired cabbage salad sometimes; that's in an Instagram reel I think. All that to say, I'm not low on favorite lunch options. However, two recent favorites are high in the rotation, and both involve the beauty of pickled red cabbage.

The first requires more work, and it's inspired by the harissa chicken bowl at a local restaurant called Ghassan's. I don't know that we'll have links for all of these, but this is basically white

rice, a smoky chicken which I use a recipe from The Modern Proper cookbook for, tabbouleh which I just Googled a recipe for, tzatziki which is Bri McKoy's recipe, and then pickled cabbage. I have the whole meal prep process on one page in a recipe notebook I have, and it takes me about an hour on the weekend to get everything made. Then I have the most delightful food for days. Incredible. But on weekends I don't have an extra hour and didn't think ahead to get the groceries for it, this is my current favorite go-to lunch.

I heat up a few Just Bare chicken chunks which are a favorite in the airfryer. Then I toss them with bottled barbecue sauce. Okay, now on a microwaved flour tortilla, I spread a little bit of mayo and then a healthy glob of wasabi because I love that heat. Pile on the barbecue sauced chicken and then a good heap of the pickled cabbage. It is a spicy, bright barbecue chicken wrap that is stunningly delicious for being so few ingredients. It's actually great without the mayo and wasabi - just chicken, barbecue sauce, and cabbage - but I do love the creamy contrast of the mayo with the fried chicken and cabbage and that hit of heat. My mouth is watering right now. It's so good.

All that to say, pickled cabbage is a staple right now, and it's saving my meals which saves my life.

Number five is a folder in my Instagram saves for things I want to paint or draw. I shared this in an episode maybe a month or two ago about how I went through my Instagram saves and categorized them. It was amazing because now I can find the things I saved rather than just having one huge bucket to sort through. Well, my Paint folder which I should probably rename Art is so great. I save ideas of things I could paint or draw so that when I do make time to create art, I can go right to a clean little set of inspirational posts. It's so great.

Number six is a Pinterest board for my fall outfit vibes. I love following What Kate Finds on Instagram for fashion inspiration, particularly because how she sees her own outfits makes me think better about my own. She's really thoughtful in how she shops and styles things, and following her for the last few years has definitely rubbed off on how I shop and see my own clothes. That said, Katie recently talked about how she shops for new seasons where the first month is like a green light where she names what pieces she needs and shops for them. The next month is like a yellow light where she adjusts now that she's worn the pieces and slows down her shopping. Then the final month or two is a red light. Just enjoy what you have. No new shopping needed. I really love this rhythm that offers permission to look at my closet and see what still fits my body, what still fits my style, and what I might need moving into a new season. I do find that intentional outfits, especially in the fall and winter when I personally have more layering options because the south is just so hot, is really good for me. It makes me feel like myself and matters to put that extra bit of thought into it.

So I followed Katie's advice and made a Pinterest board of this year's fall and winter outfit vibes. It's like a dinner queue. Just pick the things that make sense for you this season, and that's what I did with outfits. Then I organized the outfits like with like. Did you know you can do that? You can reorder your pins on a board? Amazing. So I grouped similar outfits together and

named silhouettes I'm clearly wanting this season and then any pieces that I felt like I was missing. I made a list of those pieces which was like five or six things, and I've been looking for those pieces ever since. Once our bathroom renovation is over and I can put clothes back in my closet, I'll also keep clothes in my closet that fit that vibe and store or give away the ones that don't work for me this season. You don't have to put intentionality into your closet or outfits, but I do think it's good to notice what areas of life feel better when we put a little thought into them. Right now, my outfits is one of mine.

Number seven is a new blush. Y'all, call off the search. I have found my blush. It's from Tarte. It's the Tarte Amazonian Clay 12-Hour Blush in the color captivating which is kind of peachy, and it's like my makeup game just locked in with this blush. I haven't worn another color nor do I want ever since I got this color. I use it on my cheeks and my eyes, and it makes me feel like my face is bright and done without being made up. I'm obsessed with it. Obsessed. I've tried so many blushes over the years as some people tend to do, and this is now my color for a very long time. Now don't assume that because it's my color that it's yours, but if it turns out to be, I'm so happy for you. But this is really my encouragement to not give up your search for the perfect shade of blush. When you find it, it's like putting the right amount of salt into a pot of soup and the whole thing just starts singing. That's how this blush makes me feel. Everything makes sense now, and I love it.

We'll be right back...

The eighth thing that's saving my life right now is watching the Marvel movies in order with my boys. We've been doing this over the summer and now into the school year, just less movie at a time. The boys have individual screen time every night where they watch their weird YouTube videos or play online chess or whatever, but then we all end up in the living room after Annie has gone to bed, and we watch a little bit of the Marvel movie we're on. In the summer, we'd get through about an hour at a time before the boys went to bed, and now that it's school, it's closer to half an hour. Still, it's been so fun to have that to look forward to every day.

If you've been around for awhile, you know this is a big deal because my kids have historically hated movies. Sam still says he does even though he watches these every night, but we are breaking through. Home Alone started it all last Christmas, and now Marvel is continuing the journey. Right now, we have half an hour left in Ant-Man, and then it's on to Civil War. We are watching in release order, not chronological order just for the record, and Ben is a huge Captain America fan. He actually doesn't like Tony Stark, so he's nervous about Civil War because he doesn't want to see The Avengers fighting with each other, but he also thinks that Iron Man is cocky and careless and should get what's coming to him. It's pretty hilarious. I'm sad now when I have to be gone for a meeting or drinks with friends or something because I miss watching the movies with the boys. It's been a really sweet thing to look forward to.

Number nine is Barbie Uno. After I saw Barbie, I went looking for Barbie paraphernalia and found a Barbie Uno game. Margot Robbit is number one, and I made my own rule where we have to say "Hi, Barbie!" whenever we play that card. Annie hasn't seen the movie yet and won't

until it's streaming and we can watch it together, but she loves Barbie and the idea of the movie. We play Uno as a family a lot, so I ordered this Barbie set and just left it on the coffee table. She immediately freaked out, and we play almost every day. Since I am not a mom who does pretend very well, having a game to play with her is essential. And we have a great time. Especially in this season of still getting into the groove of school, having Barbie Uno at the ready for us to connect with each other has been the best.

And finally, the tenth thing that's saving my life is knowing my day off is coming. Y'all, at the time I'm writing this episode, I still have not had a day off. I still have not really been alone with the freedom to do nothing since June. I've had a few handfuls of hours where I was alone and even traveled a couple of times this summer, but all of those were for a purpose. Or I was left at home to finish a project or something while Kaz took the kids somewhere. I haven't really been alone in my own house without an agenda since June. And even now, I'm not really alone because of this renovation. Someone is always in my house. It's kind of a bummer. Regardless, this coming Friday or three days ago Friday when you're listening to this is my first day off since school let out in June, and I am pumped. It is saving my life because I know it's coming. I know that I'll have most Fridays to get back to myself for the next handful of months, and it's making it feel easier to go without. I don't know what I'm going to do on Friday, but I don't want to waste my time on the actual day trying to figure that out so I'll spend some time thinking about it beforehand. But what's great is that it's not my only Friday. I have lots more, so I can just be and not put so much pressure on it. That's one of the reasons I enjoy my lunch break. I get one every day or at least most days. The more you can embrace specific times to feel like yourself, even in busy seasons when other people are always around, the less pressure you feel to make that single time count. You have other times coming! They're coming, and you're going to be okay.

So to recap, the ten things saving my life right now are self-compassion, tidying the L in my house, my new watch, pickled red cabbage, my paint Instagram saves folder, my closet Pinterest board, Tarte Amazonian Clay 12-hour blush in the color Captivating, watching the Marvel movies with my boys, playing Barbie Uno with Annie, and knowing that my day is coming. Thanks for listening to my list, and I hope it inspires you to make yours.

Before we go, let's celebrate the Lazy Genius of the Week! This week it's Melodie Hill who shared this tip for seasonal favorites. "I love candles. When I want to light one I am paralyzed by choice. They all smell so good! So I did a small test and divided them up by season (winter, spring, summer, fall). I used dot stickers (convenient since the typical pack comes in 4 colors) to mark which season they smelled like and put away the ones that weren't the current season. So now I only have 3-5 choices, which is nice." Isn't that such a great idea! This feels similar to what I do with my Olive and June nail polish. I have so much, and when I go to paint my nails, I spend all my painting time trying to decide what color to choose. That's why I choose a seasonal polish capsule that has just a handful of options to choose from for that season. You can do this with so many things! Recipes, clothes, kids' toys... pulling out a certain selection or queue from a larger group that fits your season is such a great way to Lazy Genius something that matters. Thanks for this idea, Melodie, and congratulations on being the Lazy Genius of the Week!

Okay, 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!