

## 336 - How to Lazy Genius Audiobooks

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 336 - How to Lazy Genius Audiobooks. Y'all know I love an episode about reading, so I'm pumped about this. Audiobooks are one of my favorite ways to read, but that's a recent development. I didn't get into them until 2020. So as a new-ish convert, I'm really excited to help you figure out your relationship with audiobooks and how to Lazy Genius them in your own life, whatever that means for you.

First, we'll walk through the five Lazy Genius steps, and then I'll share a laundry list of my personal tips and how I listen and integrate audiobooks in with the rest of my reading life. Before we do that though, I want to make it very clear for anyone who is insecure about this that listening to an audiobook is without question reading a book. It counts as reading. I don't think that is as controversial as it used to be, but listening to an audiobook counts as reading. When I recorded the audiobook for my first book, *The Lazy Genius Way*, the producer casually said that audiobooks didn't count as reading which was hilarious considering she was a literal audiobook producer, but I kindly told her that I disagreed for many reasons, the simplest being that people who are blind and can't read words on a page in the traditional way are totally reading if they listen to a book instead. That is one of many reasons. We're eventually going to talk about what might be keeping you from enjoying audiobooks more, but I'm going to nip it in the bud right now that the validity of audiobooks as reading shouldn't be one of them. It counts as reading. It is reading. Full stop.

Now, figuring out how to Lazy Genius audiobooks likely doesn't require some overwrought, complicated thought process or system. In fact, I'd encourage you to avoid that. But I do think that running through the five steps to Lazy Genius anything could help you see some holes in your audiobook thinking or reading life that you didn't notice before. So let's breeze through these.

When you apply the five steps to Lazy Genius anything, you have to know what you're trying to Lazy Genius. In this case, it's audiobooks. But think first if there's something specific about audiobooks you're wanting to do. Is it that you want to listen to more? Listen to them at all? Find ones that you find interesting and will finish? What's the general challenge here? That'll be helpful to name as we continue.

Now let's look at the five steps. Those steps are prioritize, essentialize, organize, personalize, and systemize. Let's briefly look at how these can apply to audiobooks!

First up is prioritize. What matters to you about your audiobook desires? If you want to make audiobooks a more regular part of your daily rhythms and reading life and not just listen to one random one every few months when you think about it, your priority could be ease. You want an easy experience of finding and starting a book. Another priority could be that you listen to audiobooks instead of doing something else, that it becomes your first choice. Another priority is

that you just want to enjoy it. Maybe you've tried audiobooks and haven't had a lot of success, so the priority is that you like it. Name what matters.

Second, essentialize. When we essentialize, we get rid of what's in the way, and we make sure we have what we need. Do you have an app you use? Do you have a pair of headphones or AirPods or something else that you find easy to listen with? Do you have earbuds you like but you're always losing them? Is what's in the way that there are too many choices? Too many distractions when listening? Maybe you need to get rid of the expectation that you'll listen to audiobooks all the time or for longer than ten minutes at a time. Maybe you need to have a go-to Decide Once app to listen through rather than trying to choose from several. Maybe what's in the way is a bloated TBR or maybe you don't even have any kind of list and need one. Maybe you don't have a place to go for recommendations. You see how many things you might need or that might be in your way based on what matters to you? Essentialize. What's in the way of what matters? What's missing to help support what matters? Knowing those things really helps.

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The third step is to organize. This is when we put things in their place. I love to organize. Maybe you need to find a place for those earbuds you keep losing. Maybe you can organize when you listen, as in choose a specific time of day or activity that goes with audiobooking. Maybe you need to organize your TBR or put your audiobook apps on the front page of your phone so you'll be more likely to see them. You could put lots of things in their place.

I've organized how I search for audiobooks by doing it one particular one. I use the Libby app which is connected to public libraries all over the country where you can check out both digital and audiobooks, and I search for audiobooks with the filter "available now." Then I sort those by "most popular" and go from there. I figure if they're popular, they're not terrible. But because I have some limitations to the audiobooks I listen to, I'm able to grab one that will likely work for me.

Which leads me to step four: personalize. You want to feel like yourself and do things in a way that makes sense for you. A great way to do that is with book words. I've talked before about book words: words that are often used to describe books you like. Some of my book words are dark, twisty, fairy tale, magic, circus, sharp, and funny. On the other side of the coin are book words I don't usually enjoy: riveting, saga, moving, beautiful, poignant, sparse, vivid, and inspirational. I don't usually like books actively described as those things. I also have the same loose limitations around genres. I love thrillers of all kinds, especially domestic and spy. I love fantasy, anything with magic and world-building or dystopias or factions or weird ways that society has crumbled. I love sharp, modern romances. I like little weird books that sometimes skew a bit dark. Genres I don't love are historical fiction, family sagas, stories about groups of people, and a more recent realization that has nothing to do with genre, I don't really like books on a boat. Books at a circus? Books on a college campus? Books in another world, particularly if it has dragons or evil fairies? Give me all of them. But I don't really love books that happen on a boat.

All of that is a little silly but also super helpful. Having book words is such a great way for you to personalize your reading life, and I think it's even more helpful with audiobooks. The audiobook experience is different. There are books I don't want to listen to but would rather read on the page. You might have to listen to a few different kinds of things to get the hang of what you like, but don't automatically assume that your book words for handheld books are the same as they are for audiobooks. My two favorite audiobook genres are thrillers or mysteries or murders of any kind and celebrity memoirs. I don't love fantasy or romance on audio even though I just mentioned both as genres I love. I especially don't love my weird little books that sometimes skew dark on audio. Part of what I love about them is the imagination, and someone else's voice might impact how I filter that imagination. I want to be in charge of how those words are read, not someone else. So personalize your audiobook listening experience by slowly discovering your list of book words. It's so helpful.

Finally, step five is to systemize. How do you keep your audiobook life or your particular challenge in a flow? How does it keep going? You could Decide Once that you will always listen to audiobooks when you drive to carpool or wash dishes or eat lunch. Done. You could put audiobooks as the backdrop to a specific routine you already do. You might ask the Magic Question - what can I do now to make listening to my audiobook easier later? - and answer it by downloading a book now so that when it's time to listen later, you don't waste your listening time trying to choose. Basically you can apply one of the 13 Lazy Genius principles to where you are, and see how it works for you.

Now, let me share how I personally Lazy Genius my audiobooks.

First, let's talk about how audiobooks fit into my whole reading life. I always have at least four books going at once: two physical books (one fiction and one nonfiction), a book on my Kindle, sometimes a separate Kindle book on my phone on the Kindle app, and an audiobook. Those books cannot be similar. Obviously the nonfiction is fine because it's nonfiction and doing its own thing. The other 3-4 audiobooks can't be the same. I can't listen to a thriller and also read a different thriller. I try not to have stories happen in the same type of universe. I'll do a modern romance alongside a book about woodland fairies or whatever. That's a necessary component to my overall reading life and to how I choose what audiobook to read next. I always choose something that is different enough from what I'm reading elsewhere, and that goes for any time I'm choosing something new, no matter the format.

I already mentioned I use the Libby app to borrow audiobooks for free. I also have an Audible membership, mostly because my son Ben loves listening to audiobooks, particularly big kid epics like Harry Potter and Percy Jackson. After I bought a couple for him, I was like, "well I might as well just get a membership!" so I did. I don't use my credit every month. Often they carry over or they go to Ben. And I have a third audiobook app called Chirp. Chirp is a service that shares daily audiobook deals over email, kind of like how Anne Bogel shares her daily Kindle deals, and it's great if you're a big audiobook listener and have a harder time finding options at the library. But those are the apps I use.

I have an iPhone and use AirPods, and I've mentioned this many times before, but I am a one AirPods girl. That way I can listen to my book but also hear when a kid calls me or the doorbell rings or whatever else. It also doubles the battery life because when one pod dies, the other is ready to go. I just switch ears.

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Okay, so I've shared my audiobook words and how I choose them, how they connect with the rest of the books I'm reading, the apps I use, and finally let me talk about the specifics of how I listen, namely the narrator, speed, genre situation. The listening experience if you will.

I am a very picky audiobook person. Very, very picky. For books I might use credits for or buy on major sale, I always click on the "listen to a sample" button to figure out if I like the narrator. Usually I can tell pretty fast. I don't care how good the book is; if the narrator isn't good, the reading experience isn't either. I heard that about *Fourth Wing*. I loved *Fourth Wing*, but I read the physical book. I heard several people say that they didn't love it, but they were also people who listened on audio and the narrator wasn't great. At least not great for that book. There is chemistry between the narrator and the story, and if the two don't fit, it doesn't work. So pay attention to the narrator. You might have a hard time with audiobooks because you're actually having a hard time with the narrators.

Some of my favorite narrators include Marin Ireland, particularly her reading of *Nothing to See Here* by Kevin Wilson, Richard Armitage, particular the Jackman Evans murder mystery series on Audible, Jim Dale of course who did Harry Potter and *The Night Circus*, anyone who narrates anything by Steven King because they always do it right, actors because they're good performers (I love Derek Jacobi for this reason), and British women. If you are a lady and you speak as though you are from the UK and without too much vocal fry, I am in. You can search the name of a narrator and find by that person, you can be watching a movie and think "man, I really like his voice" and then Google "James McAvoy + audiobook" and see what comes up. Neverwhere is what comes up. Or you can keep a list of audiobook narrators you enjoyed on the Notes app on your phone so that you can keep looking for books read by those folks.

Now what about the speed? Listening speed is a thing. Play around with it. Too fast and you lose information. Too slow and you lose interest. This is not new information, but notice if something feels off about an audiobook experience but it's not the story or the narrator. It could be the speed.

And finally, how do you find recommendations? I'll tell you how I find mine, but recognize this could be a hole in your listening experience. Maybe you don't know what to choose because you don't have a place that tells you what's good. I get audiobook recommendations pretty much from the same places I get all my book recommendations: Anne Bogel, Jamie Golden's green lights on The Popcast, DMs from y'all who are familiar with my reading taste and send me recs which is always so kind, and my sister. Those are my main places. Those plus my list of

book words make it so that I don't usually listen to duds. And if one is, I'll quit and get a different one. About three weeks ago, I started four different audiobooks over an afternoon. Nothing was hitting, so I returned them to the library on my Libby app and kept trying. Try not to get discouraged if one doesn't work out. There are plenty of other voices and stories in the metaphorical sea.

So in summary, if you'd like to Lazy Genius audiobooks in your life, consider what the biggest challenge or desire is. Then walk through those five steps to Lazy Genius anything and see if something sticks. Name what matters, get rid of what's in the way, put everything in its place, feel like yourself, and stay in the flow. I highly recommend book words and simple ways to make a choice of what you'll listen to. Hopefully some of what I do sparked an idea for you, but ultimately enjoy audiobooks in a way that matters to you. It is definitely reading, and I hope it becomes something you enjoy leaning on more often. And that's how to Lazy Genius audiobooks.

Before we go, let's celebrate the Lazy Genius of the Week! This week it's Katy Bassett. Katy has a great book-related idea that I'm excited for you to hear. Katy writes, "This past year, we threw a party for my five year old daughter because she learned how to read! We decided to throw her a "Reading Celebration" on a specific day in the summer. Every year we plan to have a simple sweet treat (this year it's banana splits) and give her a few books to enjoy. By choosing a day to celebrate her reading life, we are doing several important things (important to us, they matter! :) ) at once. We are: encouraging her in her reading life by celebrating that she is reader, creating a family-holiday that is special to us, gifting her books on a day that she doesn't expect toys (like birthdays and christmas) and very conveniently, we scheduled all this on her half birthday so that we wouldn't ever forget the date. I wanted to share this because I have a feeling it would be a welcome idea for many families who also feel invested in their kids' reading." Katy, this is such a sweet idea. I kind of want a reading celebration day for myself! This could be for a kid but also for anyone, including us! I love how this hits on things that matter for Katy in a way that feels like marking a moment without a lot of pressure. Ideas like this are such a gem, so thank you for sharing yours, Katy, and congratulations on being the Lazy Genius of the Week!

Alright, 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!