

343 - What's Saving My Life

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 343 - what's saving my life. I love doing these episodes once a quarter where I share the things that are saving my life right now, things that are bringing me joy, making life easier, helping me feel calmer... the sky is the limit, and I love them. The phrase itself came from author and priest Barbara Brown Taylor, and it's such a simple, helpful way to frame what's happening in your life. What's saving your life right now? Feel free to share your list and tag me in it, or just make it for yourself. Seeing your own life through this lens is never a bad idea.

I have ten things today that all run the gamut, so let's jump in.

The first thing saving my life is that I'm pretty much done Christmas shopping. That's not a brag. That doesn't always happen. But this year it mattered to me to have a quieter December, to enjoy slowly wrapping gifts - y'all now know how much I love doing that from episode 340: What's Saving My Gift-Wrapping Life - and to not be reactive to holiday sales and then either overbuy or underbuy because I didn't have a plan. So this year, I used the holiday to-do list approach I shared last week in episode 342 - How to Uncomplicate Your Holiday To-Do List and made the category of "choose holiday gifts" happen the week of Thanksgiving. That way I could actually look at Black Friday deals on purpose and get what I already planned on getting instead of reacting to whatever was on sale. Since Black Friday starts way before the actual Friday after Thanksgiving, I placed a good number of orders on Wednesday and Thursday. Y'all, when we got home from my side of the family's Thanksgiving on Saturday, the entire porch was covered in boxes. It was hilarious. But you know what? It's done. Except for stocking stuffers and teacher gifts and the random white elephant I need to get, the bulk of our gifts have been purchased. Now, listen to me carefully. I'm not saying that this is the right way to do it or the only way to do it. Last week, I saw a fellow mom at school pickup, and her greeting to all of us was "How's everybody doing? Is everybody already ready for the holidays? I *totally* am." And then she looked at me and said, "You're probably done aren't you?" Was I done? Yes. But I'll say to you what I said to her. I said, "Stop comparing yourself to other people! We'll all get it done when we need to get it done. If mine is already done, that's no better than you shopping for everything on Christmas Eve. We're the same. We just have different timing." Again, we're the same. We just have different timing. My personal life is saved because the gifts are done, mostly because the next two weeks are wildly chaotic in every single way. I won't have time to shop for gifts then, and then it'll be really close to Christmas, and I want to spend my time baking and driving to see Christmas lights and watching movies and all the things. I don't want to spend that time shopping, even online in my jammies. That matters to me, but that doesn't mean it has to matter to everyone. But because it does matter to me, I'm so genuinely glad that I'm done shopping. That weight off is definitely saving my life.

Number two. My Essential Calendar. I'm pretty sure The Essential Calendar has been on one of these episodes before, but it continues to save my life. Crystal and Lindsay are the founders of The Essential Calendar, and it is a suite of products in support of this fantastically simple,

beautifully designed, high quality hanging analog calendar. Most of the calendar options are by season, so you can get spring summer fall and winter, or you can get one that's summer break from Memorial Day to Labor Day. There's one that's called Home Stretch that's March to June for those who have kids. The options available for hanging the calendars are varied and so good, and Crystal and Lindsay are genuinely lovely people. Truly. They're just good, solid humans who care about other humans, and their products reflect that. This isn't an ad. I just love this thing, and it has been wildly helpful for our family during this busy season. Everything extra is written on our calendar, so all the band performances and my trips out of town and the fun holiday things we've had scheduled. My kids look at it every single day, and it helps us orient ourselves in our current season. It's been such a gift. We'll put a link in the show notes, but you can go to theessentialcalendar.com to check out the products, and you can use code LAZYGNIUS for 10% off your order if you find something you like! And I feel confident you will. Huge lifesaver forever and always.

Number three. My dry erase monthly meal planning calendars. I got these super simple dry erase calendars from Target years ago. They don't make the specific one I use anymore, but we'll put a link in the show notes for the one that is almost exactly the same. I have two of them on our kitchen wall, and I use them to meal plan. Since there are two of them and they're both full five week calendars, I have ten weeks available to me to meal plan which for me is a dream. Do I sometimes just do that week? Yes. Do I sometimes plan several ahead? Yes. Does it help me put meals on days that I know events are happening so that when I get to that week, something is already chosen? Yes. This particular calendar also has a section on the side for notes, and I write our dinner queue on there. That way when I plan, I just pull from that list. We haven't changed our rotating meals in years, so the list is pretty much set all the time. I have about 30 things on there, and I meal plan right there. Some of you might remember I did an Instagram video showing how to meal plan for the month because there is definitely a Lazy Genius order to do it in, and I did that video where I was planning meals for March of 2020. You guys. We just didn't know. What a world. But anyway, meal planning always saves my life, but these calendars and having the dinner queue written up there which is not something I've always done has been a huge lifesaver, especially during this busy holiday season. Again, the one I use is no longer available, but one that is almost exactly the same is the U Brand 20x30 Pinit Magnetic Dry Erase Calendar, and you can get it at Target. But really anything will do if this sounds good to you. The point is not the product. The point is the practice.

Number four. The fireplace show on Netflix. I've mentioned this before, but I'll do it again. I love the Fireplace Show. It's literally just a video of a real crackling fire, and for those of us who love the coziness of a fire, even visually, but don't have an actual fireplace, this thing is a dream. It adds such a great vibe to our living space, and since Kaz is really sensitive to candles which means I have to be really careful about which ones and how many I burn, the fireplace show gives me the vibe I want without need to light as many candles or have an actual fireplace. I love this thing. My kids make fun of me for it, but they also always act calmer when it's on, so joke's on them.

Number five. Sweaters. What a strange thing to say, but holy moly are sweaters saving my life right now. Did y'all see the reel about the guy and his sweaters? It's weirdly not someone I follow and I didn't save it so there's no finding it, but there was a guy who made a funny infomercial type reel about how to make the holidays better and it's by wearing sweaters. You're basically invincible in a sweater. It was hilarious, but also it's kind of accurate. I have found so much joy recently from wearing sweaters. It's gotten cold - well, North Carolina cold - pretty quickly the last few weeks, and there's something about wearing a sweater that makes it all feel better. I've noticed how much I enjoyed my sweaters. I have a couple I even wear to bed. I'm wearing one now, I wore one yesterday, I'm basically always in a sweater, and I'm loving it. I also have a new loose Decide Once which is I only wear sweaters that are white and/or black. I do have a couple that are not that - a lavender one from Faherty, a blue one from ABLE, and a pink one covered in giant panda bears that I got from a vintage store - but all the others are white, black, or both. And I tend towards those. It's been a really great Decide Once filter when I go shopping too. I only look for black and white sweaters because those are the colors I usually feel the most myself in, and I wear sweaters constantly. I'm just really loving sweater weather and the sweaters that come with it. A simple pleasure worth acknowledging.

Number six. Cutting my graphic tees. So this is a strange one, but I'm also here to give you permission to do what matters to you. So I'm short waisted meaning my torso is quite short, so pretty much every t-shirt that exists is long on me. Plus I have a thick middle so I don't have much of a waist. That means that long t-shirts cling but also have no shape to offer. Basically, graphic tees are a tough wear for me which is devastating because next to sweaters, they are everything! Graphic tees are my favorite. So a few weeks ago, I put on one of my favorites, tried to tuck it a little, wasn't happy with that per usual, and then I was like, "You know? I could just cut it." So I did. I cut off like three inches from the bottom, put it back on, and the angels sang. It was like the shirt finally became what it was meant to be on my body. Now I have cut off every single graphic tee. When I pull one out of my drawer to wear, if it's not cut yet, I cut it. They're supposed to be casual looking, so having a raw edge doesn't really matter. And most of them are pretty cheap anyway, so who cares, you know? It has been the best because now I'm actually wearing some of my favorite clothes, at least when I'm not wearing a sweater. I'm so happy about it. And, y'all, I'm not precise. I literally fold the shirt in half, get some sharp scissors, and eyeball it. It doesn't really matter to me if it's perfect, and I'm not going to hem it again, so the length is unimportant to worry about. I just cut off the bottom, stretch it a little, and put the shirt back on. I love it so much.

Number seven is the I Dew Care Dry Shampoo Powder. Dew is spelled D-E-W. I Dew Care Dry Shampoo Powder. I learned about this stuff from Jamie B. Golden, and I had to try it. I currently use Living Proof Dry Shampoo, and while it's the best spray dry shampoo I've ever tried, it does create buildup in my hair, and it is not cheap. This I Dew Care powder is twelve dollars for one jar, it's small and easy to travel with which dry shampoo usually is not, and it works like a dream. It has a little sponge applicator, and you just dab the powder onto your roots. It's fantastic. It doesn't have an odor, it doesn't irritate my skin - that doesn't mean it won't irritate yours, but that's my experience - and it works. And it's cheap enough that I use it on Annie's hair. She has

ridiculously long hair, and washing it is such a journey. We put it off until the last possible minute, and this has extended our life a little bit without costing a fortune. So yeah this dry shampoo is for sure worth a try if you're a dry shampoo person. It's saving my life in multiple ways.

Number eight is one sane space. The Nester coined this term awhile ago. One sane space. When your home feels chaotic for whatever reason, focus on creating one sane space to make living feel easier. We are in the middle of a long bathroom renovation fiasco holy moly, and my house is so chaotic I'm about to lose my mind. Every room feels crazy. Except for the L. We call our living room, kitchen area the L because it's in that shape, and the priority is to keep it sane. Other rooms are crammed with displaced items from this renovation, our bedroom is a cluster, we're still using the one tiny bathroom in between my two kids' bedrooms over four months later. I am so ready to get my house back. But I would be more frantic about it if not for the focus of one sane space. It helps put the rest of the house in perspective, to live in the season, but still experience calm and coziness somewhere. This is helpful if you're moving, if you live with tiny humans who wreck everything, whatever it is. Focus on creating one sane space like The Nester says, and it really makes a huge difference.

Number nine is patience. Again, it has been many months since our bathroom renovation began. Demo started July 17th, and this episode is releasing December 4th. That is too long, and we're still weeks away from being done. Which is why I'm so grateful for patience. Therapy, my faith, and a very calm husband have all made this experience a lot better than it could be on paper, and I'm genuinely thankful for that. If you had told me that I would be living this way for as long as we have, I would've told you you had lost your mind. And yet I have been grateful for patience, that I'm willing and even sometimes happy to wait for a good thing that I feel lucky to experience, namely a new bathroom. That's not a necessity. Our bathroom before was fine. It was built with the leftovers of our previous renovation budget when we moved in a dozen years ago, but it was fine. I'm grateful that I can have something more beautiful and functional than fine, and I'm willing to wait for it. It's been a long wait and often frustrating. I have cried about it. But ultimately, patience has been saving my life. This is a season, and I can kindly live in it.

And finally the tenth thing that is currently saving my life is surprise surprise reading. It's always reading. Reading is my everything. I'm obsessed with reading. But it has been even more of a relief and an escape in recent weeks because of the chaos of life currently. A lot is happening with our family personally, there are so many logistical pieces and parts to the schedule of a family with three kids, two of whom are in middle school, and it's the holidays. There is just a lot happening in many places with multiple emotional requirements. That means that reading is my place to rest. It's my place to have fun, to do something for me, to not be productive, to enjoy something I love. It's just been the best thing even more than usual these last few weeks. If you're interested to know what I'm reading, I share reviews of literally everything I read - which is a lot - in my newsletter that goes out once a month. The Latest Lazy Letter is quite long but in the best way. I share thoughts about how I'm navigating personal things, funny stories, tips I'm

trying out, and anything else that's up for grabs, including book reviews. So if you'd like to always know what I'm reading and make your TBR from it, join the literal thousands of people who do that and sign up. You can go to thelazygeniuscollective.com/join or click the link in the show notes. But all that to say, reading is saving my life right. I just finished one of my favorite novels of the year - *Drowning* by T.J. Newman. I read that thing in one day and was obsessed. It's a story about a plane crash rescue, and it is the most human, propulsive, well-written story holy moly. I gasped, I laughed, I cried... really and truly cried for multiple minutes. It was amazing. And it hits my book words. It's not an outlier. It's all about the plot which is my most important thing, but the characters are perfection. Perfection. It's worth using your book budget money on this, or get on your library hold list now. Amazing book. But right now, I'm reading *Starter Villain* by John Scalzi on my phone, *Winterset Hollow* by Jonathan Edward Durham on my Kindle, *Belgravia* by Julian Fellowes on audio, *Acceptance* which is a memoir by Emi Neitfeld, and I am one chapter into *Iron Flame*. I preordered it, so it arrived when it released a couple of weeks ago, but because of some library holds I had been waiting forever for and that it's been hard to read a book I hold for a long stretch of time (digital reading has been easier recently), I haven't really gotten started. But I'm hoping that changes this weekend. It will get read, and I cannot wait. But yeah, reading is always saving my life, particularly right now. It's my favorite, and I will always be an evangelist for reading being an incredibly worthy hobby.

And those are the ten things saving my life! I hope this inspires you to make your own list. It's fun to do but also offers a great way to see our lives in the season we're in. Again, it's never a wasted exercise.

Before we go, let's celebrate the Lazy Genius of the Week! This week it's Monica Firth Davis. Monica shared this in the Lazy Genius Facebook group which inexplicably has almost 32,000 members. It's private so it really is full of Lazy Geniuses, and the ideas and recommendations and questions are plentiful and easily searchable. Plus Letoya, our Director of Community, is in there making sure that people stay compassionate and kind. I don't know how there's a space on Facebook with that many people and no drama, but it's there. Y'all are really great people. Anyway, Monica shared this in the Facebook group. "When I order my Christmas cards, I add an ornament with the picture from the card. There's always a coupon code. I write the year on the back, and now I have a timeline of our Christmas cards without having to hold on to the paper ones." This is such a great idea, Monica! It's only December 4th, so there are some of you who will do Christmas cards but haven't ordered them yet. You might still be able to start this! What a fun idea to have even one ornament using your Christmas card picture, but to have this Decide Once in place too where you get the ornament when you order the cards is so fantastic. Love this idea, Monica, and congratulations on being the Lazy Genius of the Week!

Okay, y'all, that's it for today! Two quick things. Check the show notes for all the links from the episode because there are a few, but also don't forget about our Latest Lazy Listens email! It goes out every other Friday and holds all the links you need plus a summary of the last two weeks' of episodes. So you'll get all ten things that are saving my life listed out in that email including notes from next week's episode, too. It's short, robust, well designed, and a great

resource if you're a podcast notetaker or wish you were one! You can sign up at thelazygeniuscollective.com/listens.

And second, starting tomorrow December 5, 2023 through December 7, the digital version of The Lazy Genius Kitchen will be available on pretty much every platform for \$1.99. We'll send out an email tomorrow with all the links to all the places it's for sale, and we'll also mention it in the Latest Lazy Letter on Wednesday. If you are not on our mailing list, you can sign up at thelazygeniuscollective.com/join. The whole mailing list always gets that monthly newsletter and then anything else that we deem unmissable, which honestly is very few things. We are incredibly vigilant about how often we email our list, and if we know a lot of emails are coming for some reason, we usually have you choose to get them all rather than be forced to. So all that to say, the fact that more than one email is going out this week is shockingly rare. That said, if you'd like to try out being on our mailing list so you can get that newsletter on Wednesday as well as the reminder and details about the sale of The Lazy Genius Kitchen, head to thelazygeniuscollective.com/join. I promise that the likelihood of you being annoyed with us is slim to none. Email is already annoying enough without me adding to it, but I also want to help make your life feel a little easier and a little more like you with helpful content, the newsletter and The Lazy Genius Kitchen both being helpful content. So look for those emails, or sign up to get them.

Okay, thanks for listening! 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!