

#71 - The Lazy Genius Goes to London

Hey, guys! Welcome to The Lazy Genius Podcast! I'm Kendra, and I'm here to help you be a genius about the things that matter and lazy about the things that don't! We're taking a break from talking about school transitions and detoxing from summer to talk about my trip to London. Now it's not going to be a recap of my trip in the traditional sense. I'm not going to plug in a projector and make you look at hours of photos you don't care about. But a lot of you have asked about the trip, and I want to share some things that I'm bringing home with me from this experience. I'll also share some practical stuff in terms of my favorite places to visit and eat and what I packed - a little in this episode but a lot in the show notes. So if you do indeed want all the Kendra Went to London information, go to thelazygeniuscollective.com/lazy/london.

In this episode though, we're staying close to home. I want to share with you the seven things I learned from this trip that I hope will color my daily life back in North Carolina and maybe yours, too, wherever you might live. Before I do that, I want to let you know that this week I'm doing a little 48 hour flash sale of some of my watercolor baking prints! They're the right size to be sent as a fun postcard, you can use them as fun little recipe cards to give as wedding shower gifts, or you can just washi tape them to your wall for a fun decoration! There are two sets available, and like I said, it's a one-time flash sale later this week, so to make sure you don't miss it, make sure you're on my mailing list. You can join at thelazygeniuscollective.com/join, and you won't miss a thing. They're so cute, and I love that you guys have been such cheerleaders through my 100 days of painting watercolors of desserts and bread! I mean, what a life. So again, that's thelazygeniuscollective.com/join.

Okay, let's get into what I learned from my London trip! if you're listening for the first time (hi!) or maybe don't follow me on Instagram, you might be wondering what this whole London trip is about. I'll put a link in the show notes to the actual details of the trip, but essentially Tsh Oxenreider who hosts the podcast Simple (used to be The Simple Show but now it's just Simple) and I cohost with her sometimes, she wanted to try leading an international trip with friends to see if she wants to lead the same trip with strangers. There's a place for you to join a list of interested people if you want. And I'll say from experience that Tsh knows how to plan a trip. The pacing, the variety, the perfectly situated chunks of free time, the little bits of information she shared to invite us into a certain headspace to visit a certain place - it was fantastic. She's super good at traveling, you guys. She also wanted there to be an intentional spiritual component to this trip where women could have conversations about things that matter in their work and lives. That's where the magical Emily P. Freeman came in. She was our spiritual director for the trip and was phenomenal. I acknowledge the ridiculous luck I have in living in her neighborhood, going to her church, being in her community group, and having her as my friend, but it was fun to see her do her thing in person around others. If you don't listen to her podcast The Next Right Thing, you need to immediately, and if you ever get the chance to be in a room with her where she helps you think through your life, spend all your dollars to do it. She's worth every single one. So links to those women and potential future trips like this will be in the show notes at thelazygeniuscollective.com/lazy/london. Okay, let's jump into the seven things I metaphorically brought home with me from my trip to London.

Number one, enjoy the beauty of people doing what they're made to do. There were so many moments during the trip where I saw people doing the thing that made them come alive, and getting to watch it and experience it was a privilege. The actors at the Globe Theater, the bakers who have tiny shops of just bread but the most perfect bread ever, the tour guide who made Jane Austen come alive in a way I never anticipated, Emily and Tsh resting in the center of what they're made to do... it was my favorite part of the trip, but it doesn't have to exist just inside that trip. When we allow ourselves to exist in the space of our deepest longings and passions and we come alive, it's a gift to the people around us. It just is. When we give our friends and kids and whoever else the chance to go after what makes them tick, what makes them thrive in their gifting, it's a privilege to watch. I want to seek out opportunities to come alive myself and to notice when I see it happening in the people around me. Let's keep affirming people in their gifts and let them know that we're honored to see it.

Number two, always take time for intentional conversation. If the eight of us had wandered around London and come back to the guest house and just chatted about nothing, it would've been great of course. But intentional conversation connects us. Being vulnerable and sharing struggles and crying in front of people whether it's in St. James Park next to Buckingham Palace or in your own living room is a sacred practice. You don't need tears for it to count; some people just don't cry that much. But being willing to intentionally enter into a space where you say "let's talk about what we're carrying" or "what's something you're afraid to start?" or any number of questions is vital to feeling connection. I hear from a lot of you that you feel lonely, that you have friends but don't always feel like they know you. It's scary to move from conversations about where to buy kids' shoes to what's happening on the level of your soul, but I often see and especially saw on this trip the value of bravely entering that space. And the more you do it, the easier it becomes. In fact, the more you do it, the more you want to do it. Take time for intentional conversations. They're always worth it.

Number three, London knows how to do bathrooms. I'm still trying to figure out the tidy lesson from that, but you guys. Every bathroom I went into was fantastic. The doors went to the floor, there weren't inch gaps where people could see you doing your business, they were always clean, it was crazy. I kept expecting a bad bathroom and never got one. What's the lesson? Not everything needs a lesson I guess, but I do love how whoever is in charge of bathrooms decided that they are important enough to invest in. There are things I do every day, rooms I enter, tasks I need to complete that could be more lovely than they are. I just don't give them priority because it doesn't seem worth it. After peeing for more than a week in thoughtful bathrooms, I'm excited to notice places in my own life where I extend the same kind of thoughtfulness. Little daily things can be made beautiful, and I'm excited to discover what those are.

Number four, do new things with a friend. I haven't traveled out of the country in almost twenty years, I haven't traveled much at all in my adult life, I've never been to London, never been on a city bus, have ridden a subway a few times almost two decades ago when I was in New York but don't remember it... there are so many things I did on this trip that were new. While they would've been fine if I had been on my own and I would've survived, I think that new things change color when done in community. When we're alone, new things feel scary. When we're with a friend, new things feel like an adventure. I did an episode back in June about trying new things, and this is something I want to add to it. Do new things with a friend. The vibe around the experience is lighter and more fun. We can lean on folks who know more than we do, we can depend on each other when we're both doing something brand new and feel like idiots, we can

have someone next to us to pull us out of a squirrely headspace when we make a mistake. It's always better to do something new with a friend.

Number five, do what makes you feel like yourself, even in a new place. Before we left for the trip, Tsh told us that we'd have an entire free day to whatever we wanted as well as several large chunks of time to explore or nap or whatever. At first I felt the pressure of all there was to see and do. I didn't want to miss anything! But then I realized that I just needed to do what made me feel like a person. A lot of you love museums and recommended some to me on Instagram, but guess what? I'm not a museum person. I'm just not. It's not an activity that makes me feel like myself. It's good obviously to try new things and experiences, but when the time came for me to fill free time and reenergize from a day walking the streets of London, I chose to do what made me feel like myself. I wanted to walk around trees, I wanted to look at books, and I wanted to visit bakeries. Those are three of my favorite things wherever I am, so why should I not do them in London? So I did. I visited a couple of bookstores, I stopped in a number of bakeries and had one particular spiritual moment with a lemon tart, and I enjoyed walks, especially ones underneath trees. I think if I had pushed myself to see another landmark or went to museums because that's what I should do in London, I wouldn't have had the same experience. So do what makes you feel like yourself, even if it's in a new place.

Which leads me to number six. This might not be as big a thing for everybody, but one of my favorite things to do in all the world is go on a long walk with the appropriate music in my ears. I'm a big playlist junkie, so there is definitely the right music for the right setting. I actually did a couple of episodes with Tsh on her show Simple about music and making playlists. I'll put those in the show notes, too. But the queen of playlists is my sister, Hannah. If you support me on Patreon and listen to the Lazy Sisters podcast, you got a link to the quirky summer playlist she made which was seriously one of the best summer playlists ever. It's really one of her spiritual gifts. Anyway, she made me a "walking in London" playlist, and I wanted to save it for when I would actually walk around by myself. Well, I was having such a great time with the women on the trip that I never took that walk. The day before we left though, a Saturday, most of us went to high tea which was so fun and fancy, and then we had an open afternoon before our final dinner back at the house. After our delightful high tea, I decided that I would walk alone for the rest of the free afternoon. It was my last chance to actually do it, but it felt right, like a goodbye walk to this city that I now adore. London felt like home, you guys. What a gift to visit there. So after tea was over, I put our home address in Google Maps, saw that it was 3.5 miles from where I was standing, and figured I'd just walk home until I got tired of walking and then I'd just hop on a bus to get back. I started Hannah's playlist and was in heaven. I walked those beautiful streets with the best soundtrack ever in my ears and had this experience that felt so rooted in who I am. I love walking, I love how music connects with what I'm doing, and I love the low-risk adventure of just wandering and looking around. So I walked all the way home, and it was the best. Just the perfect way to end the trip. I realize the takeaway from this one is a little trickier since it was so specific to that music and that city, but I think that experiences, even simple ones like a walk, have an anchor when music is involved. I realized that I want to walk more often with a soundtrack and not for the purposes of getting my heart rate up but to just look around. I would stop often to look up at a church steeple or peek in a bakery or watch the boats on the Thames. I can do that at home, too. Minus the Thames. It's good to find something where we can experience what's happening around us for no other reason than to have the experience. So number six, take long walks with music or something that helps you slow down and see.

And finally number seven, look around where you are. I often wondered how the folks who grew up in London felt when they passed St Paul's Cathedral or Westminster Abbey or any number of amazing places we saw on purpose. Do they notice? Do they feel the history on their streets? Do they see how pretty a building is or how lovely that side street looks when the sun sets? And then I wondered if I do that in my own city. Now, my city is definitely not London, but where I live has places worth noticing, too, as does your own city. I want to look around and notice like I did in London. The history of my city isn't as rich and old as London's, but that doesn't mean it's not worth noticing. So I want to practice looking around, seeing how that old church is right next to a Burger King and how there's a lot of history wrapped up in both. My city, your city has something to share, and I love that London taught me to start looking for it.

So that's The Lazy Genius Goes to London. If you want to see details of what I did, there's a London highlight on my Instagram profile, so you can follow me @thelazygenius to see that, and I'll bulk up the show notes with some of my favorite things from the trip. Somebody DM'd me on Instagram a couple of weeks ago asking for what to not miss when she visited later in the month. I'll tell you what I told her and you can ready the rest in the show notes - a play at the Globe Theater, Evensong service at Westminster Abbey, and wandering around Borough Market, especially if you nerd out over food. And if you get a chance to eat at Dishoom, you will not regret it. It was the most popular suggestion from you guys on Instagram before I left, and you were right. One of the best meals I've ever had. So head to thelazygeniuscollective.com/lazy/london for all the info you might require. And I'll be on Instagram this Thursday live if you want to ask me any specific questions about the trip! Thursday around 12:15pm @thelazygenius. And even though I want to visit London again and again, it is so good to be home. Thanks for being part of my home, you guys! I'm so grateful for you. So until next week, be a genius about the things that matter and lazy about the things that don't. See you next time!