

#58 - The Lazy Genius Morning Routine

Hi, everybody! I'm Kendra, and this is The Lazy Genius Podcast! I'm here to help you be a genius about the things that matter and lazy about the things that don't! This month, we're focusing on routine. Those things we do most every day that help us get stuff done, feel like a person, and not lose our minds. You're listening to the first episode in this series - The Lazy Genius Morning Routine!

A morning routine is pretty obvious - it's a collection of pre-made choices you do most every morning. In this episode, we'll go through why a morning routine is worth building, what yours might look like, how to create it, and I'll share at the end a quick overview of what my current morning routine is.

Let's begin with why a morning routine is worth building. You actually already have a morning routine. It might be tangible - you wake up, start the coffee, check your email, get out cereal for breakfast - any number of things. Or if you're thinking "My mornings are never the same. I always feel like I'm playing catchup." Guess what? You have mental morning routine. It's possible you're saying the same messages to yourself every morning. "I'll never get the kids to school on time. I'll never be able to drink hot coffee when it's actually ready. Why am I always rushed in the morning?" You might have a regular script that you don't realize is in your brain, affecting how you move through the morning. So no matter where you are in this morning routine business, you likely already have some form of repetition in your morning, whether it's played out by your physical choices or all happening inside.

So if that's the case, if we all already have something that's happening repeatedly, why not make an exchange? Let's trade those crazy thoughts and hurried mornings for something you intend, something that makes you feel like you're not losing your mind.

It's possible that right now you're thinking of a woman who wakes up at 5am, spends a long time reading the Bible, drinks hot coffee, speaks to her children with a beautifully patient voice, and you're already out. The idealism can sometimes feel fake, like "those people" are flaunting their discipline in your face. In this moment, we're going to extend a lot of grace. We've talked about this in other areas - our weight, our homes, and I'll link to a couple of those podcast episodes in the shownotes - but when people are doing well, when they seem to have what we think we should have, we feel inadequate. And sometimes we even take out that inadequacy in the form of anger, rejection, eye rolls towards that person, towards that woman who wakes up at 5am and seems to have it all together.

I'm always saddened by the fact that especially among women if we are not rushed, frustrated, in a perpetual state of trying harder, we're somehow self-righteous and snobby and not authentic. Somebody who wakes up at 5am and has a quiet time and preps dinner before breakfast and works out before anyone else is awake must be fake. They can't possibly be real. And I won't us to collectively debunk that attitude. We shame people for living in a way that

makes them feel grounded and alive because we are embarrassed and ashamed that we can't seem to get it together. So the people that are together must be fake. Can we stop thinking that? Because there's a really good chance that after listening to this episode and the others that are coming this month and especially after reading our foundational blog post that I'll link to in the shownotes called The Universal Path to Life-Giving Routine - it's possible that after taking in this concepts and asking yourself these questions and building life-giving routines that you actually feel grounded. You might actually start feeling less rushed in the morning. You might go through the day and not feel the need to hash out all the ways you're tired with your mom friends. Now I'm not saying - hear me - I'm not saying that having conversations about how tired we are, about how hard it is sometimes to be a person that those conversations are bad. NO. Community is essential, and being honest with how you're doing is also essential. But we also need to leave room for people whose honesty looks different than ours. Don't immediately doubt the authenticity of a woman who seems to have it all together. We've swung so far to the side of everyone is a mess and we all need to be a mess in order to count! We've said that about our bodies and about how clean our homes are. If somebody comes over and our house is actually picked up and maybe even a little shiny, we feel like we have to apologize, that usually it's such a mess. We've moved far from perfection being a badge of honor, and man oh man am I glad for that. But we've moved too far I think to a place where anything that resembles perfection doesn't count, that it isn't real. And you guys in this series, I think you're going to discover ways to feel grounded and alive and patient and less frantic. I think at the end of this month, you're going to feel a little better in the mornings, a little better when it comes to how you're moving your body, how you're keeping your home, how you get dinner on the table. You're going to find relief and life in the beginning stages of these routines. Don't for a second start shaming yourself or others, don't start apologizing for how messy - emotionally and like how clean your floor is - don't start apologizing for the lack of mess. Can you imagine a world where we as women are fully alive in who we are? That we confidently start the day in a way that gives the rest of the day life? That we take initiative in our own stories and move into the lives of others with a greater sense of purpose and identity? I realize we're just talking about morning routines, but they're all connected. And if we continue this conversation without the perspective of grace for women who are harried and for women who don't seem to be, we're going to keep spinning the same wheels and ending up the same place. I want us to collectively change the conversation around what it means to create routine, to be purposeful in how we live our lives. It doesn't make anyone better or worse. I've said it so many times - this isn't binary. Regularly living out a life-giving morning routine doesn't make you better or worse than someone who hits the snooze button five times. If you hit the snooze button five times, you matter just as much. There's no arbitrary value in these choices. They're simply tools to help us all identify who we are, what matters to us, and how we can actively bring those things to the surface so they positively impact our lives and the lives of the people around us.

So that's my routine soapbox. Honestly, I didn't anticipate that, but it's really important to remember. This stuff is not prescriptive. It's not a better or less than. We're just people trying to survive, and if we begin moving from surviving to feeling like our feet are on more solid ground and more regular basis, that's great. Do it, man. We don't have to feel crazy to be real.

Okay, let's get into the specifics now. The way I think of a morning routine is kindly opening the day with the purpose of gradually increasing my productive energy. Let me say that again. A morning routine is kindly opening the day with the purpose of gradually increasing my productive energy. We all know what happens when we wake up at the same time as everybody else and have a million things to do right away. It's not gradual, is it? We're thrust into

productivity and getting the coffee going and making breakfast and lunches and finding missing shoes and keys and showering and actually putting clothes on our bodies that we didn't sleep in. It's a lot. It really is. No one is dismissing that. But I think we all have also experienced those same mornings - the circumstances haven't changed at all - but when we are more gradual in our movement towards that productivity, it goes better. We're more calm, it's like our vision is better. We're not defaulting to feeling stressed out. A morning routine gives your brain a gentle power up. You're your mind, your body, and your soul that it's a new day, that we have stuff to do, but we can kindly open the day which really affects the rest of the day. And this might sound weird, but I think that a morning routine helps you feel like yourself so you're not frantically searching for yourself throughout the day.

This is true of every woman whether you have kids or a job or neither or both... sometimes we can't find ourselves. We're in a posture of questioning where we fit in the room, in the group. Strong women are often an anomaly, and that's sad. We're often thinking about what people need from us, how they're evaluating us, how we measure up or not. What a gift that a simple morning routine can help remind us who we most deeply are which allows us to begin the day carrying that truth rather than searching for it as we get busier and more tired. I want that for you. I want you to start the day abiding in the deepest truth of who you are, why you're here, what beautiful things you have to offer your world. A morning routine isn't about being a robot and checking off a huge chunk of your list before everyone else wakes up and giving yourself a pat on the back. It's about recognizing what you need to gradually increase your energy, the energy of who you are and what you uniquely as a person get to carry into the day. It's a beautiful gift you can give yourself. So let's do it. Let's start the ball rolling on what this looks like practically.

So what do you want your morning routine to look like? What makes you feel most like a person? This is honestly such an act of self-care. You're choosing something in purpose that provides care for your body and your soul. So what does that look like for you? Everyone is different. Do you need to be alone? Do you need to brain dump into a journal or to another person? Do you need to move? Be still? Does it help to know what's coming that day, or is it better to sit in the present and not actively think about productivity right away? It's honestly going to be so different for everyone, but asking yourself these questions helps. What is your ideal morning? And let's be clear that it's a regular morning. I mean, my ideal morning is I wake up in an oceanfront beach house with nothing to do and nowhere to go, but that's not real life. So what's your real life ideal morning? Create the whole scene - the smells, the sounds, the tastes (and temperature of your coffee let's be real), who's around and who's not, what you're saying to yourself, how you feel physically. I noticed awhile back that if I walked into the kitchen without washing my face first, I felt gross. Like, it changed my whole perspective on how I felt physically. So part of my ideal morning is washing my face before I leave my room. The things that come to mind for you might feel silly, but they're not. They're so important. Don't dismiss what does indeed matter. Nobody has to know, you know? This is your morning routine. You just do whatever you need.

But now you might be thinking about all of those ideal things and how none of them are happening right now and that there's no way you're going to make this routine happen. It's too much! It's too hard! Might as well just stick with the way it is now. Okay, I have five words for you. One step at a time. One step at a time.

In the blog post I mentioned - The Universal Path to Life-Giving Routine - I share some reasons why routine matters and some of those reasons aren't on the regular laundry list of why routine is good. One of those is that small steps have more impact than big ones. Scientifically. When you start with the tiniest, most seemingly inconsequential step, you're more likely to get to the place you want. So if your options are to continue with the morning you current have or to add one tiny tiny step towards your ideal morning, don't you think it's worth taking the small step? What have you got to lose, you know?

So how do you do this? Maybe you mentally made a list of what happens in your ideal morning. Maybe you actually should pause this episode and quickly write some of those down. Now you're going to choose one thing on that list to be the first brick in your morning routine foundation. You're going to take that one small step every morning until you're naturally ready to add another. And you'll know. You'll know when you're ready. Routines are buildable. I talk about that in the blog post. Each small step leads to the next one. It might feel slow and silly and that it's not making any difference, but it is.

I shared this in that post, but I'll quickly share it here. I've always wanted to start the day with yoga. I want to be the kind of person who wakes up early and does half an hour of yoga every day to start my day. So I said I would just start! I'd get up and do half an hour and everything would be great! Except that it wasn't. Have you ever committed to a workout routine and flamed out? If you said no, you're lying. We've all done it, and the reason we've all done it is because we started too big. So late last year, I committed to doing one downward facing dog a day. Just that one pose one time. That's it. It was too small to not do, right? And that's a huge key. Your first routine brick has to be so small that you can't not do it. And if you have anxiety about doing your small step every day, your step is too big. I just said I would do one down dog a day. That's ridiculous. Like, what good does that do? It does no good! Except it does. Because guess what happened? I took that first small step. I did a down dog every day. Then I started holding it longer. Then I started doing a full round of sun salutations. Salutation? I never know which one. But I'd do one flow. That takes literally less than a minute. Then I'd do flows. Then three. Now I start every morning - you guys, every morning! - with about ten minutes of yoga. I'll explain the domino effect of that in just a minute, but that tiny small step actually made a huge difference because small steps that seem so small they're stupid are really the only step that truly moves you down a path that matters. It's really the only way.

So what's your small step? Look at your list that you have in your head or on paper, choose the one thing that feels like it would make the biggest difference to start in helping you feel like yourself and gradually increase your productive energy for the day, and do one small step. It could be that one thing is too big to start with and you need to start smaller. So let's say you want to meditate every morning for ten minutes. Meditate for one. One minute. That's it. You can fit in one minute. And that one minute will grow to two and then five and then ten, and then you'll start to add the other pieces, and you guys it happens way quicker than you think. This is a good time to finish up with my own personal morning routine.

Four months ago, my morning routine was a little scattered. I always tried to get up 15 or 30 minutes before kids just to have some quiet, and I'd unload the dishwasher or start making lunches or maybe I'd read a prayer or make coffee - there wasn't a regularity to what I did except that I usually just got up a little earlier. That was four months ago. It was fine. I still felt rushed, like I couldn't quite get on top of everything that needed doing, but you know you do what you got to do. That one tiny step of down dog every day, here's what my morning routine

looks like now. My boys of those alarms that light up when they're allowed to get out of bed because my kids wake up earlier than I want them to, so they can't out of bed until the green light comes on. Which happens at 6:36am every morning. So I try to be up by 6am, but 5:30am is ideal. And since my daughter still seems to wake up around 5:15am because she's kicked off her blanket and is cold, I'm usually up. But I think my body has gotten used to it, and assuming I didn't go to bed super late, the mid-5s actually feels pretty good to me. It's not for everybody. This isn't a rule. It's just what works for me. So I get up around 5:30am, I wash my face, I put on my glasses and my slippers, and I go into the living room where I do my yoga which is about ten minutes, I meditate for right now about 5 minutes but I've been adding to that a little working up because meditation is the worst but also the best for recognizing how stillness helps me brain and my thought life, then I read my Bible for a few minutes or just mull over a single verse while I start coffee, I read a prayer from The Diary of Private Prayer which I love - it has a morning and an evening prayer for 31 days so you just repeat them every month - and then I put on a morning playlist of music that helps ground me while I finish packing lunches that I started the night before, I finish unloading the dishwasher if I didn't finish that the night before, I get out stuff for breakfast, and by this time, it's usually 6:45am and I hear my boys opening and closing drawers, getting dressed for the day. All of that can happen if I wake up at 6am, and if I do happen to get up earlier, sometimes there's time to look at my to do list for the day or even put together an Instagram post or edit a blog post or something work related. Not always, but if there's time, I do like to do that. But that gradual movement towards my own unique productive energy makes the entire day better. I'm more patient if the boys are fighting over who gets the last muffin. I'm not as annoyed if my daughter who often sleeps until 8am wakes up at 7am. That positive energy spills over into motivation to chop an onion for dinner or make a quick marinade for the chicken I'll buy later. I don't feel guilty listening to music or podcasts because my movement has been kind and gradual, and the messages that I hear are gracious. I'm not as mad at myself for always being behind or never getting enough done or never being enough for anyone. It matters. It makes a huge difference. And you guys again? That all started just four months ish ago of doing one downward dog a day. You might not have the morning routine you want happen tomorrow, but if you positively begin with a crazy small small step, you might be surprised how your morning routine will begin shaping itself quickly. Four months in many ways is nothing. That's a blip. And considering the alternative is just staying where I am, I'm super willing to do one tiny step at a time to get to this place in four months. I'm not saying that's the magic timeframe or if you don't have a morning routine built in four months that you're doing it wrong. I'm just giving you my perspective that it does happen. Routine is buildable, and small steps are better than big ones.

So to recap. A morning routine is kindly opening the day to increase your productive energy gradually which helps you feel rooted in who you truly are. Decide on your real life ideal morning, pick one thing from that list, and pick one small step that is too small to ignore and start doing it. If you need a reminder, set an alarm on your phone. Put a note on your mirror. If your small step is to drink a cup of hot coffee alone, put the mug on the counter the night before. Set visual reminders. I have a download from a blog post I wrote last year that you can get any our inbox. I'll put a link in the shownotes, but it's 30 Days of Small Steps, and it's a card with 30 circles that you can fill in to mark your daily small step. And it's surprisingly fulfilling to color in those circles. That could be the visual you need, so you can find that and all the other things we talked about in the shownotes which you can access at thelazygeniuscollective.com/lazy/morning.

I'm excited for you. This is exciting stuff, and we're going to keep talking about routine all April long, so I can't wait. I hope these conversations are a gift and encourage you toward a life more rooted in who you truly are.

Okay before we go, let's do our Lazy Genius Tip of the Week! This is going to sound weird, but it's also pretty great. So most of you probably drink coffee every morning. If you don't, this won't mean anything to you. So sorry. But for those of you who drink every morning - unless one of those pod coffee makers I guess - you always end up with coffee grounds, right? Before you dump them out from your drip maker or your French press or whatever, take a pinch, put the pinch of coffee grounds in your hand, pump a little hand soap into the grounds, and wash your hands. You just created an exfoliating hand scrub that will make your skin feel silk and smell like coffee which is a lovely thing. I had a coconut scented soap for awhile, and that in combination with the coffee grounds? Stop it. But it's not about the scent; it's about creating a little free skincare routine every time you dump your coffee grounds. Use a pinch and take time you're already taking to wash your hands. It's surprisingly awesome, so I hope you try it.

Okay, that's it for today. Thanks for listening! Please consider passing this episode along to a friend or neighbor or sister. I want so desperately to see us as women collectively encourage growth in who we are and help each other do life in a way that moves us, that gives priority to what matters, and helps us just live regular life in a way that doesn't deplete of every ounce of energy. So if you use the Overcast app and I think the Apple Podcasts app, too, there's a way to click "share" where you can text or send an episode link over Twitter to someone who you think might enjoy it. I'm so grateful for all of you who do share on such a regular basis, and there are more Lazy Geniuses because of you. And don't want everyone to live this way? I want everyone to be a genius about the things that matter and lazy about the things that don't. That world would be a lovely place, so thanks for helping grow it by sharing these episodes. It means the world. Literally! I appreciate you, and until next week, be a genius about the things that matters and lazy about the things that don't. See you next week!