#281 - How to Get Dressed Without Losing Your Mind

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 281 - how to get dressed without losing your mind. Last week, we had a longer than usual episode about how to find your personal style. So much of it is about how you want to feel, but there are also some great reminders and practical tips to help you get there. So if you not yet listened to that episode, I would encourage you to do so and then come back and listen to this one. But you do you. Be a rogue listener with my greatest compliments.

Last week, we went through the first two steps of the five steps we often apply to Lazy Geniusing anything. We prioritized and essentialized. Today, we're going to organize, personalize, and systemize. I want to start by reminding you of my definition of personal style and that is "wearing clothes that effortlessly make you feel like yourself." You decide the clothes, the amount of effort you want to put into it, and what makes you feel like yourself. You know that feeling when you put something on in a dressing room or at home and you just light up. Your body lightens, you face lifts, and you're like "Oh, I love this." I believe it is possible to have that feeling everyday, even on days where you're being super casual and not leaving your house. Now, you likely aren't going to feel that way every day all at once. This is a slow process and should be. If you replace your entire wardrobe at once, you're probably not going enjoy your things the same way. It's the same as a house. It's the slow build of a room and layering and learning what you love and slowly moving out the things that don't really work anymore, that's where that feeling lives. That's where the "oh I love this" comes into play more and more regularly. So just go slow here. You still have clothes, and we're going to talk about how you can get dressed in those clothes and feel like yourself one small step at a time.

Now I want to make sure you have at least a small collection of style words, of how you want to feel and also maybe a few details you've identified in clothes and shoes and outfits that make you feel those ways. It's like our book words, you know? I did an episode a few weeks ago about reading and book words, how it's really nice to know the kinds of books you enjoy reading and the words often used to describe them. The inverse is true, too; it's good to know words that consistently do not represent what you like. So we learned that's true of books, and I believe it's also true of clothes. You can slowly begin to gather words and descriptions that are your style words, words that help you know how to get dressed, what to keep, what to buy, and what to say no to.

In fact, one question that came up often on Instagram when I asked y'all what your biggest challenges were with getting dressed was getting your colors done. I've had my colors done. It was the easiest process. It was so lovely and pretty cool to have something done for me individually. I know people who have gotten their colors done, and it is the best Decide Once for them because they just know how to only wear clothes that are their colors. I learned that for me to a point. There were a few colors in the blue family especially that were singing to me as colors that I really love and shades of blue to look for specifically. But sometimes there are conventions like colors for skin tone and like we talked about last week clothing choices for

certain shapes and what's on trend and all kinds of things that we see and hear as expert advice we should follow. But what these style words do is make you the expert. You are the expert on your own style. Now, you can take advice from people. Oh my goodness. Like, you could get your colors done and be thrilled to discover that the colors in your personal color palette make you feel like yourself. What a gift! You have direction now. You have some new style words to add to your bank in the form of specific colors. But you might also get your colors done and you're told you shouldn't wear black, and if you're like me, you're like "no thank you, I'm going to keep wearing black." Because wearing a navy leather jacket does not make me feel like myself in the same way a black one does. Wearing navy t-shirts doesn't make me feel like myself like wearing a black one does. You are the expert on you. That doesn't mean that color experts and stylists and whoever are wrong. Absolutely not. They give incredibly helpful advice. But you should let go of what the experts say if what they say is in conflict with how you want to feel. You are the expert. They are smart and sometimes can really help you add some of those style words to your collection or some fabric choices or shirt shapes or colors to wear or whatever. But if you don't feel like yourself in what an expert tells you to wear, they're no longer the expert. You are. You always are.

Okay, on to our five steps. Like I said, we've already done steps one and two: prioritize and essentialize. We did that last week. Now we're on step three: organize. You can organize your style with specific words and descriptive details that you slowly gather from the daily activity of getting dressed but also from paying attention to the clothes you do wear that make you feel like yourself. We talked about playing dress-up in the last episode. You can also find those words from your Pinterest board. So as an example, here are the words that direct my clothing choices and getting dressed most days. Cool - we've very much established this already - tailored, masculine, black, texture in the form of ripped or cuffed jeans, blazers and jackets of really all kinds but especially leather, classic fabrics like cotton, linen, denim, and the aforementioned leather, solids, jewel tones if I'm going to go color, knits - I love a good sweater - Oxford shoes, and contrast. Contrast comes from color but also style. I own one single skirt, and if I wear it, I wear an Oxford shoe or sneaker with it, not a flat, because the skirt is already in nature pretty feminine, so I want to add stylistic contrast by choosing a more traditionally masculine shoe. I wear a lot of contrast I would say. So those are some of my words. I used to describe my style as Kathleen Kelly from You've Got Mail with the monotone classic tailored outfits but who also belonged to a roller derby league so there was like an edge to her. I'd say that still rings pretty true on many days.

I also have words and styles that don't work for me, words like feminine, pretty, I don't do floral patterns at all. I actually don't patterns in general unless it's a stripe and a very particular one. Anything with loose or puffy sleeves is out. I don't do nautical boat vibes like sweaters over button-down shirts and light sky and sand colors. I don't really do color. No heels of any kind. Barely a flat to be seen. And there's a chance that hearing these words might feel restrictive, and you're right, they are. But I want the restriction. I want the guidance to know what I love because I feel like myself versus what might look good or might help me branch out (which I have no desire to do) or dress my body or my age or my personality or whatever in conventional wisdom. I used to do that. I used to do that a lot, and I never enjoyed getting dressed. I felt like I

was playing a part and either a very boring one or a very over the top one because it wasn't me. Dress how you want to feel. Dress in clothes that make you feel like yourself, even when you're just lounging around the house. My loungewear is all black. I always grab the black stuff, not the gray, not the pink, not the whatever colors or styles. I lounge in black clothes pretty much exclusively and feel more like myself when I do it. Feel like yourself, and choose to keep collecting words and descriptions that fit that over time.

That was so many words on words, and we still have a lot to cover, but we shall charge on.

Next, I want to talk about outfits, about putting clothes and shoes and all the other things together. Some people call this styling. Don't be intimidated by that word like I have been for a long time. Styling an outfit is just putting stuff together. You do it every day, just likely not on purpose and maybe not to completion. And very often the putting together in an intentional way is what makes certain people seem more pulled together or stylish in their outfits. Now, do you have to do that? Nope. Not unless it matters. If it doesn't matter, you're probably not even listening to this anyway. But if it does, let's talk about outfits.

I would like us all to gather round and make uniforms together. There are different kinds of uniforms based on things like silhouette, style, and what you're actually doing in the outfit, and we'll get to that in a second. But I think it's important to think through what combinations of clothes make you feel like yourself and then figure out how to replicate them. There are some really great resources out there for different outfit formulas and combinations that don't fail or whatever, but I often find those to not serve me well because my style words don't often match the stylist. It's the same with self-help books that I have been saying for two years now since The Lazy Genius Way came out. So many self-help books are written from the perspective of the author, and the tips and hacks and strategies are what worked for that person. But what if you are not that person? We need a way of approaching our challenges where the tools work no matter the need or life stage or personality or whatever. I think the same can be true in the fashion world. There are formulas on how to put together outfits, but what if the main shoe in all of them is a flat and you, like me, don't really wear flats? Sure, you can sub out for a different shoe, but I also subbing out for loose blouses and patterns and all kinds of things that often exist within those formulas. I follow a lot of fashion blogger and influencers because I actually enjoy seeing how people put clothes together and get inspiration from that, but it's for inspiration. It's not for rules. Very few people I follow have the same word bank of style words that I do. And that's okay! But it wouldn't be okay if I followed their ideas as law because their purpose is different than mine. So all that to say, I'd like to give you another alternative to putting together outfits and getting dressed if the standard way that is offered on your Internet is not working.

And that is the uniform. Now, I don't mean like a Monday uniform. If you've read The Lazy Genius Way or even seen it on Instagram before, you know that for a very long time, I had a Monday uniform. I would wear black pants and a chambray buttondown every single Monday because I didn't want to think about what to wear on a Monday morning. I no longer have a Monday uniform because I am not really overwhelmed by my closet anymore because it's truly

only holding things that make me go "oh I love this so much." I rarely change outfits anymore, and if I do, it's almost always because something doesn't fit and I'm trying to force it to. So when I say uniform, I don't necessary mean a Monday uniform, although those can be incredibly helpful when we get to step five which is systemize.

The kind of uniform I'm talking about is one built from outfits you already love to wear. Last week, I asked you to play dress-up and identify 1-3 outfits that you really enjoy wearing, that make you feel like yourself and that tap into those style words you've identified. And then what you can do next is play detective. Look at that outfit on your body if possible. What do you see? And how could you replicate it with other pieces you have? So let's say you have a pair of jeans that fit great and a short sleeved button down shirt and a super comfy oversized cardigan on top if that it's colder. And also when you're doing this, put on shoes, too. Shoes are part of this. And let's say you're wearing a ankle boot or something. You feel cozy and comfortable and purposeful in your clothes. Maybe that's one of the things is purposeful in what you're wearing even when it's super casual.

Now do you have another shirt that is kind of similar to the one you're wearing? I don't mean when you find a shirt that you like well enough and then buy it in seven colors. I have lived that life as well. There is no judgment here. But I mean something might be the same shape but a different fabric or a thinner fabric or a wider neck or just something that is similar enough to the shirt you're wearing but different. If you switch shirts but keep everything else the same, does the outfit still work? Okay. Can you trade your cozy cardigan for another that you own? Does it still work? But a different wash of jean or a pair of pants that are the same shape as the ones you're wearing but different in something else… does that work? You have found a uniform. A cozy purposeful uniform. Straight leg or whatever leg jeans, a short sleeved maybe it's buttondown or maybe it's cropped. Maybe the buttons weren't the deciding factor! Maybe it was the length of the shirt. So that pant style, that length of shirt, and a cozy cardigan with those shoes or whatever. If you love that uniform, you can look for pieces that can seamlessly be part of that uniform. Look for ways replicate, not exactly duplicate, not necessarily buying the same shirt in a different color. That doesn't always give us a feeling of having a complete wardrobe or a closet that serves our purposes and what matters.

But for example, I love a capped sleeve or dropped shoulder oversized button-down made of a heavy fabric, like denim or linen. I wear them with skinny or straight leg jeans or pants, I don't tuck or anything, and a pair of Oxfords. And I own five pairs of Oxford shoes that all have different vibes but all fit in the formula depending on what I'm in the mood for. So if I see a shirt that is that style of sleeve, is that length, and is a sturdy fabric, I will try it on and see if it would have a decent life in my closet, and chances are it's gonna fit and work well with what I have because I have the uniform.

Another uniform I have is a pair of wide legged pants with a bodysuit and a blazer. I wear this all the time. I have probably five or six body suits of different colors and necklines, but the bodysuit aspect is important because of the tucking into the wide legged pant. If I wear a wide legged pant and don't highlight my waist, it doesn't feel good to me. I don't feel like myself. It doesn't

look cool. It looks to me on me a bit out of proportion and often kind of frumpy. On other people, it probably wouldn't look or feel that way, but it does to me and I'm the one getting dressed. So if I wear a wide legged pant, the shirt has to be tight and tucked in. And then I wear a blazer or actually a vest as well on top. And I know to look for those shapes. And I know they're going to work. One of my favorite wide-legged pants is the Aarti cropped pant from ABLE. I have it in two colors, black and this rusty orange that is just magical, and I wear them all the time. And they always work, one because they're made really well and are lovely pants because everything ABLE makes has been lovely in my experience, but the shapes are the same. And I can wear a bodysuit with a v-neck, a crew neck, long sleeve, cap sleeve, huge puffy sleeves and then skip the jacket, and then put any kind of blazer or jacket on top.

I once took my mom shopping and helped her find her uniforms. One of hers is a casual drawstring pant that's flowy and easy, a fitted shirt tucked in, and a long thin cardigan or kimono even. She wears that uniform all the time, but it doesn't feel like she's repeating anything because she's mixing and matching items that fit a certain rubric so that they'll work with the uniform. That's why I want you to start with pieces you already have, with an outfit you already love. What do you love about it, and how can you replicate it with what you already have?

You can have uniforms based on your feeling words - like a cool uniform, a classy uniform, a lounging uniform or whatever else. You can create a uniform based on what you're doing - a work uniform, a work from home uniform, a church uniform, a sports mom uniform, you know whatever. You can name them however you want based on what matters to you. But this is how you can organize your outfits, by uniform. And it's about the silhouette, about how the shapes of the clothes go with your body and with each other, and you will most likely see that at first from what you already have.

Now here's what's great about uniforms. When you are shopping or sitting on your couch at night and looking on a clothing website or whatever, you know what shapes and pieces to go for. You know in a sense what is going to work for you because you've already named it in your uniforms. And it really helps you know what to say yes and no to.

For example, y'all know I love ABLE. I'm actually an ABLE partner which means I'm a real influencer with a code and everything. But y'all know very well that I don't talk about brands or products on Instagram or here on the podcast like this that is not in ad space that I don't genuinely use and love. I'm not going to waste your time with that, and the truth is I love ABLE. I love what they stand for, I love the different ways they're making shopping easier like "try before you buy" where you can choose a handful of items and then just pay for what you like and send the rest back without paying extra shipping or anything. They have a size swap option where you can buy from a certain group of their items - and it's a lot of their great signature things - and if your body changes and that piece no longer fits, you can do a size swap no matter how long it's been. They offer that once per customer. So years later if you bigger jacket or a bigger pair of pants or whatever, you can get it. And they have lifetime guarantee on all their stuff. I mean, they are the real deal in trying to care for customers and allow us to shop the way we

need to shop with changing bodies and wondering if something is going to fit and all of it. I just love them. Anyway.

My point was there have been a couple of seasons where ABLE has released new pieces, and they weren't for me. They were in the shapes and fabrics and colors that are in my uniforms. And that's okay. It's not missing out but because I'm not missing anything. Those are pieces and shapes that don't work for me and my uniforms. They just don't fit. So it takes away the FOMO and the sadness of not getting new things or whatever struggles you might have in shopping for clothes. When you know your uniforms, your personal uniforms that are created around pieces you already have and you're just replicating shapes and details, you know what you'll love and what you can pass by. And eventually you'll be rewarded like I was this fall with the new ABLE line that is like all amazing sweater and blazers and vests and I'm kind of losing my mind a little but because it's all so pretty. It's actually not pretty. I mean, it is. Let me try again. This fall, the clothes that ABLE has released in my opinion are so cool. They are so cool. They're tailored and masculine and use the fabrics and colors and shapes that I love, and I'm anxiously awaiting the temperature to drop another ten degrees so I can layer more.

But not everyone is going to love the Aarti pant like I do. If your uniforms have mostly skinny and straight legged pants or you are in a season of soft pants only or no buttons or only skirts or whatever, you won't need those pants. It doesn't help for me to say I love these Aarti pants you should get them because maybe you shouldn't. But when you practice creating uniforms - and remember not uniforms based on color and this pattern with that pattern but on shape and proportion - you will more quickly identify the items that you do love AND would really really wear. That's how you personalize your personal style.

Now we could talk about systemizing where you Decide Once or you make an outfit matrix or you plan all our outfits or you choose what you want to wear that day or whatever, but because the systemizing of your outfits is likely personal, this is just where you choose a Lazy Genius principle that likely will make your challenge a touch easier.

Now I'm not sure I've said this many words in two episodes about one topic, and there plenty more to say. Today, Monday the 26th at noon eastern time, I'll be going live on Instagram to answer your style questions and to hear your own thoughts about the whole thing. I'll save that live, but that'll be today if you're listening on the day it releases, today at noon. We've also been doing closet permissions this month. We've had two weeks' worth of words that you might need to hear about getting dressed. I'll also be sharing some of my favorite fashion influencers to follow, so don't miss out on those. I'm on Instagram @thelazygenius.

Okay, because my voice is struggling big time, we're going to skip the Lazy Genius of the Week so y'all don't have to listen to me anymore than you already have! Hopefully next week will be a touch better. But thank you so much for listening today, 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!