

#275 - What's Saving My Life Right Now

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 275 - What's Saving My Life Right Now. I love doing these episodes because they are a reminder for me as I create them and you as you listen to them that we can always pay attention to what's saving our lives. What's giving us joy and hope and rest and fun? It's easy to survive every day or focus on what's productive, but we also want to notice, maybe even way more so so, the things that make life really really good. So today, I'll share mine.

These are in no particular order, and they are quite an array. That's one of the reasons I love these lists.

Okay, number one - Stranger Things. Particularly watching an episode of Stranger Things season 4 and chasing it with an episode or two of 30 Rock. Kaz and I are a little late to the game in that we just finished Stranger Things season four in late July. Our two oldest kids don't go to bed until 10pm, and their constitutions aren't quite up for something that scary so we have to wait until they go to bed. Which is my bedtime. I mean, getting started with your night at 10pm! That's crazytown, but it's also the new season of life we're in and will keep getting later, so I might as well start getting used to it. So all that to say, it took Kaz and me awhile to get started on Stranger Things because we had to gear up. We had to know we were going to stay up late, and some of those episodes are movie length. But I'm so glad we started because we could not stop. It was a fantastic season, and I have now started the series over and am watching from season one as my blankie. It's so good.

Now the reason this has been saving my life is a few things. It's something that Kaz and I have enjoyed together. We like a lot of the same things, but also don't have a lot of dead center loves that are the same. His favorite favorite things are not mine and vice versa. We have plenty we both like, but we don't have a ton that we both super love when it comes to pop culture. Stranger Things is one of those things, so it was fun to watch it together.

I also loved it because I cared about the characters and the story so much. That's one of the reasons we love stories, right? We love to get in deep with the caring. I cared a lot about Stranger Things, and it felt really good.

And finally because season four of Stranger Things is not a chill hang and quite intense, we would watch an episode of 30 Rock after. 30 Rock just left Netflix a week or so ago, so when we realized that a few weeks before, watching after Stranger Things felt like the perfect place to put our last hoorah. 30 Rock is maybe my favorite half hour comedy ever, and some of those season 2-4 episodes especially are actual gold. My favorite episode is The Bubble in case you were wondering. But sinking into those two shows for a couple of weeks was so fun and enjoyable and I just loved it.

Number two, another pop culture one, is the novel *The Trespasser* by Tana French. I haven't even finished reading it yet - I have the last fifty pages - but I didn't know how much I needed to sink into a longer novel that I could hold in my hand. Tana French is a novelist who writes mysteries that center around a detective squad in Ireland. You don't have to read the novels in order, but the occasional detective shows up in more than one story. No matter. You can read them all as stand-alones.

Tana French is an interesting writer to me because her writing is somehow dense but also propulsive. It's like walking through thick grass, but your muscles are strong enough to do it. It's hard work to read her stuff, but it doesn't feel like hard work. I don't know how else to explain it. And her novels aren't short. They're not doorstops, but this one I'm about to finish is probably 450 pages and has taken me almost two weeks to read. It's long. But I didn't know how much I needed a story to sink into for a long time. My last few novels have been great - by the way, I share all my book reviews in my Latest Lazy Letter which I send you once a month and you can sign up to receive at thelazygeniuscollective.com/join - but my last few novels have been fluffy. They've felt like water skiing even though I don't really know how to water ski. But you know what I mean? They've been surface skimmers. We're going fast and having fun, but there's nothing to really settle into. I like water ski novels. I really do. But this book *The Trespasser* by Tana French is like - man, I don't know what it's like in this water sport metaphor. I don't do enough water sports to have the right analogy. It's not a lazy river. It's more intense than a lazy river. Maybe it's like, it's like a moody hike to a waterfall. It's hard work but not really and also you get this amazing reward at the end when you see the waterfall, but also - y'all this metaphor is maybe actually working - but also you can hear the falls before you see them. You experience the benefit indirectly and gradually before you even get to the end. Tana French does a slow burn so well, and then when you turn and see the waterfall, the end is always so deeply gratifying. So anyway, that was a lot of words to say that I'm really loving *The Trespasser* by Tana French. I needed that kind of book right now, and I'm so glad I picked it up. It's been on my shelf for over a year, so you never know when a book is going to land at the right time.

Number three is being with friends. I've had several really great times with different friends and groups of friends during the month of July, and the cumulative effect of those has been an actual lifesaver. So emotionally fulfilling. I went to a birthday dinner with a dozen women, only a handful of whom I really knew, so it was fun to be around some new faces. Then the next week, one of the women I knew the best in that group invited me and two other women from that same birthday dinner to get drinks a week later because she thought the four of us would really connect. And we did. We had loose connections with each other, but those drinks were like a first date. We even said that out loud, that it was like a first date and would there be a second. And there will be. We hung out with our cocktails for over three hours and could've gone another two if it wasn't ridiculously late and we needed to go to bed. So that was a gift.

You also might have seen on Instagram that I spent a couple of days with our favorite Emily P. Freeman at her mountain house which is also literally down the street from her sister The Nester who is also our favorite. Spending time with them - like, good, long, real time - was so needed.

I know that leaving home can feel like it's not worth the trouble, but for me, it is every time. If you're a dude listening to this, you might not feel the same resistance to going away, but for sure if you're a woman and perhaps especially if you are a mother or a caregiver, the gift of going away with a friend or two or ten is beyond measure. It really is. And it doesn't have to be fancy. Borrow a friend's house. Get a tiny airbnb. Or even just take an entire day in your own city sitting somewhere. That's completely free. But finding extended time to spend with your friends and with yourself is never a bad call. It's worth planning. That's why we schedule rest, right? Schedule it. Put it on the calendar. Make it happen. Not in a mean bossy way, but in a Kind Big Sister way. Being with a friend is worth making the time for. You can decide what that looks like, but I'd love for you to prioritize that as often as you can.

Now listen. I'm not trying to be simplistic here. I realize there are a ton of things that can interfere with prioritizing time like this. You could have tiny kids, you might be a single parent, you might be single and want to go on a vacation with friends but all of your friends have partners or kids so it feels weird to ask them to go with you. You could have a very limited budget slash no extra money for something like this. You might work multiple jobs and don't have any extra time. You might be caring for an aging parent and can't leave them, even for a day. You could live far out in the country where it's harder to find community. You might be in a season of working through your faith and not being in a church and realizing you don't know how to make friends outside of that institution. It could be so many things. I don't want to communicate that it's super simple to make friends and you just need to try harder, let alone saying everyone should go on a weekend trip. What I am saying is that taking the time for connection, whatever that looks like for you, is a worthwhile thing. So maybe the takeaway from this is just to think about it. Consider it. What might that look like for you.

We'll be right back...

Number four is kind of an offshoot of that last one and is a new thing for me. So we all have different personalities and relationship needs and friendship dynamics and life stages and resources and all of it. Right? We know that. So as I share this fourth thing, it is saving my life because it works for me, not because it works for everyone. But I also want to share it in case there's a way you can manipulate it to work for you.

So one of the challenges I have in my relationships is that I feel like there's not enough of me to go around. I feel like I've shared this somewhere before, I think on the podcast, but no matter. Basically, I am an extrovert who loves people and desires meaningful relationships with individuals. I usually do things one-on-one as opposed to groups. I've never been a friend group person. That's the one-to-one or sexual subtype of the Enneagram in me. I feel more at home with one person as opposed to six. I still love the six, but I feel more at home with just one. I'm also married to a pretty strong introvert who has very different relationship needs than I do. I love having a lot of friendships. Kaz needs like two. And I could be one of them if push came to shove. So our social life happens together sometimes but more often just me and my own friends.

I also work mostly full time, I'm the full time at home parent, and I am the domestic captain of our house. Kaz does a ton of stuff - laundry, cleaning the kitchen, anything in the yard - a ton. But I'm the house boss. I keep the long game running. So I have things to do at home. I also have three kids with three different schedules and three different sets of activities and interests and social needs and all of it. Basically, I have what some of you might have - more desire for relationships than time to give them. But I'm also realizing "not enough time" isn't fully accurate. I have some time, but what I identified this summer is that because I have what feels like so many people I want to spend time with, including obvious people like my mom and sister, I'm paralyzed when it's time to hang out with someone because I don't know where to begin. If I can have lunch one day, I freeze and don't know who to ask so I don't ask anyone. I've realized that I've tried to be a genius about investing in my friendships, but ever since the new season of life of working full time and the consequences of Covid, I've become very lazy. Very all or nothing. If I can't invest in my relationships the way I want to all at once, I might as well give up completely. And, pals, that is not what we do.

So here's what I did that's saving my life, and maybe this or some version of this is something that could help you, too. I looked at the rhythm of my schedule for when school starts because summer rhythm is different than fall, and I decided once - lazy genius principle #1 - when I would do things with people. I made a list of times like two Thursday lunches, two Friday lunches, one night a month, one Saturday morning a month... things like that. I created space in my calendar - kind of like the combination of two other Lazy Genius principles... schedule rest and let people in - and now I have a place - ah! There's another lazy genius principle! Put everything in its place! Now I have a place for thoughtful time with my people. I have those spots carved out and can spend time with anyone in them.

Then I made a list of people in my life who I want to spend more time with or just spend time with at all. I already mentioned my mom and sister and Emily P. Freeman. I have other friends who I want to connect with pretty regularly, but then some who I really like, say women at my church, who I love talking to but we don't ever interact outside of church. Just having breakfast with one of them once this year would be amazing. So I made a list of my people - it was shorter than it felt in my spirit - and now I have scheduled time to spend with them. At the beginning of the month, my plan is to invite people to hang out during those times and just let it roll. Now - full disclosure - have I done this yet? No. I haven't actually done the inviting. But I've done the listing and the scheduling. I've put my desires in their place and decided once when I can hang out. It's not that I can't hang out other than those times, but if I don't schedule something that matters within the priorities and rhythms of my life, it likely won't happen. Or I'll fill my time with other things first that are less valuable than being with my people. Does that make sense?

So I made a little system, and I am fully prepared for it to not work out of the gate. This is simply a place I'd like to start. I already tried starting smaller in just inviting someone to do something more spontaneously. "If you think of it, just do it!" But that wasn't working for me. I need more structure than that. So I'll keep you posted on how this goes, but even the existence of these scheduled social times, even though they don't have actual people attached to them yet, has created such peace in my soul. I'm really happy with it.

That was a very long number four, so let's just do one more to finish up. The fifth thing I'll share that's saving my life is our robot vacuum. We'll link it in the show notes, but it's the Eufy robot vacuum, the one that Sherry Petersik from Young House Love told us all to buy, and she was right. Our kids named it Sucker Buddy, and Sucker Buddy has been a surprising little lifesaver. We have him set to run every night at 7pm, just in the main living room kitchen area of our house that we refer to as "the L" because it's in the shape of an L. We have our little routine to get ready for Sucker Buddy where we pull the chairs out from the table, we move this one little side table that he always gets stuck in, and we move the big coffee table to the hallway to block Sucker Buddy from the rest of the house. It's great because it helps us keep that area tidy for longer, the kids still - *still* - love getting a room ready for Sucker Buddy and don't realize that they're super dupe cleaning. We let him run in different rooms less often than every night, but every night, we get that little hum of our vacuum, and the whole rhythm of having Sucker Buddy has been surprisingly lovely for everybody. Could I vacuum the L in way less time than it takes Sucker Buddy? For sure. But that's ten/fifteen minutes I can spend reading Tana French or playing Genius Square with my kid. I'd rather do that than have the vacuuming done more quickly.

So those are some of the things saving my life - Stranger Things, Tana French's The Trespasser or any hiking to a waterfall read, spending time with friends, and making time for friends in the future. Plus Sucker Buddy. What a list. I hope you enjoy making yours, even if it's in your own head. It's such a lovely practice to do this regularly because the things that save our lives usually shift as much as our lives and the seasons do. I hope this helps you pay attention a little more to what matters.

Before we go, let's celebrate the Lazy Genius of the Week! This week it's Melissa Solis who shared this. "I have lazy geniused the problem of music! Short version: a MUSIC MATRIX. I stay at home with my baby, and we listen to music most of the day while he plays. The problem was that I found myself scrolling through Spotify trying to decide what to listen to for easily 15-20 minutes at a time. All day long. Or just listening to the same 3 albums all the time. I created a music matrix (just like a meal matrix) to both limit my options and also encourage the kind of variety that matters to me. Here it is:

Mix-it-up Monday: I listen to those mixes that Spotify makes featuring artists I like with some others mixed in, and I note anything new I like in preparation for...

Try-it Tuesday: I listen only to artists/albums that are new to me. I try new things.

Well-loved Wednesday: time for all the old favorites that used to be my music rut.

Throwback Thursday: all music published at least 10-15 years ago.

Fun Friday: welcome all the quirky weird and random. Musical soundtracks? Yes. Veggie tales albums, yes. Britney Spears? Yes. Anything that sounds fun to me.

On weekends I just play it by ear (pun intended).

I love this idea so much, Melissa! Any time we find ourselves spending more time trying to choose something than we do on the actual something, it's a great place to create a matrix. I love this music matrix, Melissa, and I'm sure it will inspire people listening to do something similar! You could create a music matrix or even a listening matrix. Monday and Tuesday are music. Wednesday is catching up on all your favorite podcasts. Thursday and Friday are listening to an audiobook. Whatever works for you! Thanks for the inspiration here, Melissa, and congratulations on being the Lazy Genius of the Week!

Okay, that's it for today! Thank you 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!