

## #273 - How to Cross the Summer Finish Line

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 273 - how to cross the summer finish line. At first, I had titled it how to cross the summer finish line strong because that's how we usually think about crossing finish lines, but then I found myself echoing words I've heard from voices like Emily P. Freeman and Kate Bowler about how we can just be regular, right? We can just finish! So today that's what we're talking about - how to cross the summer finish line in this super short little summer episode.

One of the challenges with crossing the summer finish line, especially if you have kids or are in education, is that the end of summer and the beginning of fall bleed together. There's not a clean mark between the end of this and the start of that. Which means it feels like we're neither beginning nor ending anything. We are not crossing finish lines or hearing starting guns. We're just running around like headless chickens. So that's an important energy to name. It's hard to feel like you're ending something when something else begins before the ending is complete.

And this is true in a lot of seasons of life, right? Very few things have clean starts and stops without overlap, so maybe - maybe we need a different measurement. Yes, we want to cross the summer finish line, but I think we need to be gentler about how we label our seasons and how finite and linear we make them. If few things have standard stops and starts, why do we work so hard to force them into that box? We waste a lot of effort trying to make things binary, like a light switch. Summer is on or it's off. School is on or it's off. Anything is on or it's off. We try to create systems to support that structure, when that structure isn't even a thing. If you're a certain kind of person listening to me talk right now, you're going to want to throw your phone across the room as I encourage you to relax and not make life so structured, but I'm still going to do it. You don't have to make everything so structured and linear. Sometimes that's not even possible, and one of those times is in this muddy place of seasonal transitions.

So if the transition is murky and there really isn't a summer finish line in the way we wish there was, what can we do to finish well? Or finish at all? My guess is that one of the biggest reasons you're feeling like you have to finish well or that you feel the finish threatened is because you have things you haven't done during the summer that you wanted to *and* you're anticipating all the things you need to do to get ready for the next season. There are too many things to do. That's usually where stress comes from. There are too many things to do.

So let's address that problem. Super simple idea here.

I've shared before my to-do list strategy when I'm feeling crazy in my brain. I do a brain dump of literally all the things, and then I categorize those things into four categories: now, soon, later, and never mind. And I put those items on my list into their categories based on what matters most about my life right then. That's super important. If you don't name what matters, you'll stay overwhelmed as you try and do everything. Categorize based on what matters most.

Once all the things are out of my head in one list and I give myself the space to name what matters, it's easier to prioritize. I can see what needs to be done now - like right now, what needs to be soon but isn't urgent, what can be done later, and what I was worried about but after seeing it in the context of everything else doesn't matter anymore. That goes in the never mind column.

Once the list is broken down into those four categories, I deal with the now list. I make a plan for that and get that stuff done. Then I can move on to soon and later. It's just mental triage. That's it.

### **We'll be right back...**

I encourage you to do this brain dump strategy for your own life right now. If you want to finish summer well, what are you wanting to happen to make that a reality? What did you hope to do that hasn't made it in your day yet? Write it down! What do you want to do to prepare for the next season? What's overwhelming your brain about the school year? Probably a lot! Write it down. Write down literally everything that comes to mind - that's why it's called a brain dump - and then go through your giant list, and categorize those things into now, soon, later, and never mind.

If you have been influenced by me and have gotten the Mildliner highlighters, you could use a couple of different colors and even highlight things that feel like finishing summer in one color and things that are moving into fall in another color. That'll help you see where your energy is too.

Once you see your stuff broken down, make a plan. Put certain things on the calendar. See where you need help. Notice where you're overwhelmed and need to schedule rest. Name what you can let go. And for as many days as you remember, keep looking at your list. Reassess the priorities. Be kind to yourself as you transition in these seasons. When we get overwhelmed, we are not kind. We are not focused or lucid. We are stressed. Out. And when we get stressed, we think that everything has to change. Our summer rhythms, how we plan for school, what we're doing to care for our own bodies, everything having to do with food... it's all under a microscope, followed by a sledgehammer. No! Let's not do that. Instead, name what's on your mind and on your plate. Think about what matters in this transitional season. Then triage your stuff. If you need some categories, you can use mine - now, soon, later, and never mind. And then keep doing that kindly day after day as we keep moving through the end of summer.

You're not the only one who feels behind, who feels like you haven't made memories this summer, who feels like everything is loosely falling apart. We all feel that way a little because time is strange, and being a person is a whole thing. So perhaps, too, as you look ahead at your brain dump list and the things you're hoping to do or that you're choosing to let go, look back, too. Reflect. You can follow our favorite reflection guru, Emily P. Freeman for that. She has a seasonal reflections journal called *The Next Right Thing Guided Journal* which is hugely helpful and lets you reflect simply and at your own pace. But don't forget to look back, too. Not just at

what was working for the sake of future productivity. No, notice how you've been a person. Look at what you've enjoyed, what made you laugh, what you miss, what made your people come alive. Looking back as an equally important part of effectively looking forward.

It's the end of July, and we're all feeling all kinds of things, so I hope these short few minutes have been a quick encouragement to you. Do your brain dump, name what matters, triage, and don't forget to look back, too.

Before we go, let's celebrate the Lazy Genius of the Week! This week it's Kristen Finn who shared about a little caddy she uses to make her life outside easier. Any caddy will do made of any material you like, but here's what Kristin says about hers. "This handy item has made it much easier for me to utilize our patio in the backyard. For a BBQ, I use it to hold silverware, fun napkins, a bottle opener and a condiment or two. For heading outside with the kids, I use it to hold water bottles, sunscreen, sunglasses, and a snack. For sitting outside with my husband after the kids go to bed, I use it to hold beer/water, a bottle opener, and a baby monitor."

You can see it all, can't you? Having a little basket or caddy or something that is the place for anything you need outside will help you have what you need when you need it. We love the principle of putting everything in its place, and sometimes those things need to move from room to room. The caddy is a great place. And remember, the caddy itself isn't magical. You could use literally anything, but it's the idea you want to think about. Don't spend your energy trying to find a magical calendar or recipe or caddy or anything at all! The magic is rarely in the thing; it's almost always in the practice. So try the practice! Thanks for this idea, Kristin, and congratulations on being the Lazy Genius of the Week!

Okay, that's it for today! Thank you so much for being here, 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!