

#263 - How to Still Have a Weekend

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 263 - how to still have a weekend. Weekends are supposed to be restful and rejuvenating and fun, and yet our weekends are filled with more obligations and responsibilities and activities and things that are not rest or rejuvenating or fun! So how do we be grownups with responsibilities and still have a weekend? Let's talk about it.

First, we need to make the problem smaller. There's a very high chance that whatever is preventing you from feeling like you have a real weekend is different than mine or anyone else's. It could be you work full time and grocery shop and do regular maintenance things on the weekends. It could be that you have kids in sports or activities that happen during the weekend. Maybe you work at a church, so weekends are never restful for you because you're literally working. Maybe you stay home with tiny humans every single day, so the weekend feels exactly like every other day. Maybe you're a single parent, and there's just not enough of you to go around to your kids and your responsibilities, so you are the first thing to go. It could be that you're partnered with someone who is a big time weekend project person and likes to get stuff done on Saturdays and Sundays, and you're like um no thank you I'd like to be still now.

The point? There are a million different reasons you could feel like you don't have a weekend, and until you name that exact challenge, that exact problem, or at least an approximation close to it, you'll struggle moving forward with a solution. We can't name what matters until we name the problem, and that's a lot easier when we make the problem smaller.

So that's your first question - why don't you feel like you have a weekend? And as much as you can continue making it smaller, I want you to. It's not unusual for us to feel like our problems are huge and unsolvable, but once we take a beat to think about it, we see that if we adjust this one thing a little, it doesn't make the problem disappear, but it sure does make it feel less oppressive than it was. So why don't you feel like you have a weekend? Drill down.

I'll use myself as an example here as we move through this process. The thing that can keep my weekend from feeling like a weekend is if I don't get to do anything for myself without interruption. Reading, taking a nap, going on a walk, watching a basketball game. More specifically, if I spend the entire weekend beholden to someone else's needs, it's hard for me to feel rested by the time I get to Monday. Now, I spend most of my weekends beholden to other people's needs. I go to my kids' soccer and flag football games. I play Barbies. I meal plan for the week. I play music at church. And those things are all really important and sometimes even energizing and preferred to reading or napping or whatever. But if I spent my entire weekend doing things where someone else is in charge or someone else determines what time I need to be somewhere or someone else is the arbiter of everything, I don't feel rested. I thought it was having too much to do, but sometimes the busiest weekends are the most fun. I thought it was that my kids' schedules, but a weekend can feel not like a weekend when they're complaining

about being home all the time. So really it's about my own energy and how much of it is impacted by someone else.

So once you name why you struggle feeling like you have a weekend in the smallest way possible, you can now begin our five steps to Lazy Genius-ing anything. You guys, these five steps are in *The Lazy Genius Kitchen*, a book that came out just three weeks ago, is a New York Times bestseller, and these steps have accidentally helped us figure out the right order to Lazy Genius anything. Watch out because so many episodes will have these five steps in them. It's pretty fantastic.

So step one is to prioritize or name what matters. Now that you know your challenge, you need to name what matters about it, and frankly, you likely already have by naming the challenge itself. What matters is probably the opposite of whatever your problem is. So for me, if a weekend doesn't feel like a weekend when I'm beholden to someone else's needs the entire time, what matters to me about having a weekend feel like a weekend is that I have time where I am only beholden to myself. What matters is that I have some time here and there to be released from anyone else's requirements of me. That's what matters to me. What matters to you? You need to name that before you can move on.

Next step is to essentialize or get rid of what's in the way. And here's where that small struggle is better than the big one. If I say, what's in the way of you feeling like you have a weekend, you'll have an enormous list. Chores! Sports games! Projects! Chauffeuring children! Still having to work because my job is over the weekend! But guess what? You can't get rid of those things. You can't get rid of chores or your kids' games or your actual kids or your job. Those things must stay. And because they must stay, you think you don't have any recourse. There is no solution to get you to a weekend that feels like a weekend, so you might as well give up. Sound familiar? It does, and we are going to be Lazy Geniuses instead. We're going to do this a different way, and that happens by making the problem smaller and therefore solvable.

So back to step two. If you're going to essentialize and get rid of what's in the way and also make sure you have what you need to support what matters, what does that look like for your smaller weekend problem? How can you remove something that is in the way, or what are you missing that would help what matters be what matters?

For me, what matters is having some time for me. What's in the way? There are a few things, many of which I've already eliminated or added to our weekends. One thing I'll share now though was early mornings. My kids, even when they sleep in, only make it to the late hour of 7am. It's unfortunate, and that's rare. My kids are just naturally early risers. Maybe that will change when we're in the season of more teenagers, but right now they are up on average at 6:30am. Which means I also have to be up then because my kids still like to have me around and also Annie needs help pouring her juice.

Or do I? They were super needy on Saturday mornings, the very morning I wanted to stay in bed longer and doze and read and just be. Kaz, my husband, is more that way than even I am.

The man loves his bed. Just let him live in his bed, and he would be happy most of the time. So suffice it to say, Saturday mornings were cramping our style and also making it so the day started off early and based on the needs of other people. Again, I am their mother. I do not mind being beholden to someone else. In fact, much of the time I like it. Just not constantly and especially not on the weekend. So we started doing what my kids call Calvin Saturday. My boys love reading Calvin and Hobbes, and one day Sam was like “Mom, why can’t we spend Saturdays like Calvin does just eating cereal and watching TV?” And I was like dude, go for it. So our kids have Calvin Saturdays. I usually make them hold off until 7am to start because not everyone is up by then, and then they just watch their shows and figure out their breakfast, and I get to stay in bed for a couple of extra hours. The existence of that alone as the kickoff to the weekend has been amazing for me. So what was in the way? Kids needing me right away. Let’s get rid of that.

So what’s in the way of what matters?

The third step is to organize, to put everything in its place. This feels super helpful when it comes to weekend time management. Because isn’t that a lot of what this struggle is based on? We don’t have enough time to do all the things we want and need to do. A way that a weekend can be productive in the ways your responsible self requires but also be fun and restful in the way your kid self requires is to put your tasks in their places. If you’re able, decide once where certain things will go on weekends. Now, not every weekend will be identical, but for the most part, if you can put your tasks in their place, you know where they’re going to be and won’t spend half the weekend procrastinating or wondering when you’ll have the time to do something. Put your tasks in their place.

We’ll be right back...

I have two examples to share from my family when it comes to organizing our weekend time. We have family chore time right after Calvin Saturday, assuming there isn’t something that interferes with that timing. Once Calvin Saturday is over, I make a list on our big whiteboard of what chores need doing. Usually the kid who gets to the list first gets to pick their first chore which incentivizes the kids a little bit to get going quickly. You do a chore, come back and check it off, and pick another. All of us do that. Now, we have a housecleaner that comes once every two weeks to clean the house, so our weekend family chore time is a bit more maintenance than deeper cleaning. I have an episode on using a housecleaner in the archives that we’ll put in the show notes. I also have an ebook in the digital store called *The Clean Slate: The Lazy Genius Guide to Keeping Your Home* if you’d like some specific help on figuring out what a cleaning routine and rhythm could look like for your home. But one of the things I have said and will continue to say is that you get to decide what clean means. Are there people who would come into our house and have a higher standard of clean between when the housecleaner comes? Absolutely. Are there people who clean even less than we do? Absolutely. Are any of us better than another? Absolutely not. You get to decide what clean means for you and your home, and for us, 30-60 minutes on Saturday mornings as a family in between those housecleaning visits

every other week works perfectly. But the point of that is I don't wonder when we're going to do chores. We do it after Calvin Saturday. Decision made.

Kaz also mows the grass on the weekend. I feel like Sam is about to get that job passed down to him, but for now, Kaz does it. Do you know I've never mowed any grass before? Never. Isn't that crazy? Anyway, Kaz always mows during lunchtime on Saturday or Sunday, almost exclusively. It depends on the weather and our schedule, but he has fairly set times when he does that. I get ready for the upcoming week on Sunday afternoons which keeps me from wasting energy on wondering when I'm going to do it. I just do it. And these kinds of decisions, organizing your time in this way as much as you're able, frees you up from having to use energy to wonder and go back and forth and maybe even internally or externally whine and complain about the things you have to do. When the decision is made and you just do those things at that time as part of your weekend, it frees you up to have more time to do those fun, restful things.

You can also put things in a place that's unusual. You can rest on Saturday and do chores on Sunday. You can make Friday your domestic day where things are more or less ready to go for a smoother weekend. If you work at a church, see if you can take Monday off instead of Friday. I feel like a lot of pastors automatically take Friday off, but then you have this weird day off right before your biggest workday of the week. Take off Monday instead. Basically, you can put things in whatever place you need even if it's unusual or different from what you've normally done.

The fourth step is to personalize, to feel like yourself. That might be the lowkey ultimate goal of your weekend, to rest in whatever way that makes you feel like yourself. So make sure that happens. What do you need to feel like yourself? Make sure you get to do that thing at some point during the weekend, even if it's a short time.

And the fifth step is to systemize, to keep things in a flow. We have a pretty decent weekend flow at this point, and while it's not perfect and will change as our kids get older, we have slowly created a flow of a weekend that serves our needs, my personal one being some time to myself where I'm not beholden to anyone else's needs. The way you can systemize your flow is to use Lazy Genius principles to create a rhythm or structure that matters to you.

You could use whatever of the 13 principles you'd like, but I think some good picks would be one I already said - Decide Once. Make one decision one time about one thing, and then keep doing it until it doesn't work. Donuts for Saturday breakfast. Takeout or leftovers or find your own dinner on Sunday nights. The same snack bag gets packed and taken to sports games. Calvin Saturday. Everyone is responsible for one load of laundry before the end of the weekend. Whatever you want it to be. Just decide once.

Another principle that would be great here is to batch it. A lot of our overwhelm with the weekend is having to do things we don't want to do when we'd rather be doing literally anything else. So batch those things. Do all the chores at once. Do all the laundry at once. Do all the meal planning at once. This isn't a solution for everybody, but it could be for you. Also there's an

episode called How to Do the Things You Don't Want To Do or something like that? We'll put the link in the show notes, but that's also a very helpful episode.

Another principle that could help you in your flow is to Start Small. You have lived through thousands of weekends, and you likely have thousands more. You don't have to fix it all right now. You can slowly start to find yourself in your weekends one small step at a time.

And one last one to remember with this is to live in your season. If you are home with little kids during the week and the weekends aren't much different, yes that's a season you're in, but maybe that also means the season for hiring or asking for help on the weekends so you can rest, not during the week to get more done. For example, a friend of mine who I haven't talked to in a million years - Hi, Stacey! - when she was home with her boys and they were tiny, every Saturday morning, her husband Lee would take their kids out for a long breakfast. I'm pretty sure they went to McDonalds and played at the play place for awhile, and Stacey got to be in her house alone for a couple of hours every Saturday. What a gift that is! So if you're in a season of tiny humans, maybe you find a way to find some time for yourself on the weekends during that season.

Or if you're in a season of having kids on traveling sports teams or working extra weekend shifts because finances are tight or any number of things that can contribute to a unique season, remember that if you try and fit an old solution into a new season, it might not work, and you don't have to beat yourself up about it. We have to look at where we are with kind eyes and be more or less okay with certain solutions not working the same anymore. The honesty about where you are really does help.

So if you leave this episode with nothing else, I encourage you to drill down to the specific, small reason your weekend doesn't feel like a weekend. "There's just too much to do" is not a small enough answer. I get that answer. I've said that answer. But that is not an answer that leads to any kind of helpful solution. Make it smaller. Adjust one thing at a time. I get my couple of hours of uninterrupted time on Saturday mornings, we often get takeout on Saturday nights or go out to dinner so I use the kids' afternoon screen time to read or do something for me, and on Sundays, I take a nap after lunch and try and have any weekly planning done before Sunday dinner so that Sunday night, I can just chill out. Those four short pockets of time are incredibly helpful and often generously helpful in promoting what matters most to my having a restful weekend - time to not be beholden to another person's needs. All of my solutions to that didn't come all at once; they've been built on for years. So start small, be kind, take it slow, find your rhythm and do it in the right order. And that's how to still have a weekend.

Before we go, let's celebrate the Lazy Genius of the Week! This week it's Karen Howes! Karen has been a long-time member of the Lazy Genius community, and she sent me a meal planning choice she makes that helps her stay sane in her meal planning but keeps her family from feeling hemmed in by her choice. So she actually chooses two meal options on the days she's cooking and writes them on their dry erase meal planning board. She says, "some members of our family don't want to be hemmed in by a specific meal plan, especially too far in advance. So

this gives the illusion of choice as I like to have two options for each day but within the boundaries I can cope with.” I really like this simple approach because it serves what matters most to Karen. She wants to have things planned but she also wants to honor the rest of her family by not choosing everything so strongly that they feel like their own ideas or desires aren’t being considered. Two choices it is. This wouldn’t work for everyone because nothing does. But this works for Karen because of her own priorities. I love examples that are this specific because it shows how any choice is worthwhile and can work if you make it based on what matters to you.

Also a quick reminder that the next Latest Lazy Letter will be going out a week from this Wednesday, and I’d love for you to join the mailing list so you can get it! I only send out one email a month with the occasional extra if there’s something really exciting or important happening, but most months, you just get the one. This month, I’m going to share the magical packing tip that has changed everything for me and streamlined what I choose to wear on trips, and I also have had one of my favorite months of reading in a long time. Some great titles to share with you, so if you’d like to get the Latest Lazy Letter, go to thelazygeniuscollective.com/join or click the link in the show notes to sign up. Okay, that’s it for today! Thanks 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.