

Episode #260 - Let's Lazy Genius Your Kitchen

Hey, y'all! 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 a big day! Well, almost a big day. Today is the day before the release of my book, The Lazy Genius Kitchen! It is episode 260 - Let's Lazy Genius Your Kitchen. I feel like we have been on such a journey, you guys, to get to this. What a ride. Last week, I shared with you the five steps, or as Emily P. Freeman called them when I did an episode of The Next Right Thing with her which comes out tomorrow I believe, she called them five movements because that is Emily's way to kindly usher from steps to movements and I love her for it. But last week, I shared the five steps to Lazy Geniusing anything in your kitchen and frankly in your whole life. There are 13 principles I shared in my first book, The Lazy Genius Way, and as I've spent time with those principles over the last couple of years, I have seen how they connect more organically and more orderly, and I've been applying those principles in a specific order to my kitchen and guys? It's been amazing.

So last week I shared part one of The Lazy Genius Kitchen where I teach the five steps, and today I want to apply those five steps to a few specific areas of the kitchen, just like I do in part two of the book! Now today, I'm not using any material from part two of the book; I'm not repeating what's in there. What I am doing is taking specific problems that you all have and applying the five Lazy Genius steps to those problems to see if we can find some solutions.

The point of that is to a) show you how versatile they are and how they work and b) help you see how tending to small problems makes a huge difference. We think that the solution to our kitchen frustrations is to get a new kitchen, right? Get new pots and pans! Learn to cook everything because we know nothing! Reorganize the entire kitchen! Create a whole new meal planning system! We can very easily spin out when we take the broad feeling of being frustrated in the kitchen and trying to solve that entire feeling with one giant choice. That's just not going to work. You know this, I know this, but we'll keep saying this. The most important thing you can do with your kitchen problems is to start small. Very very small. And today, I want to share a couple of real life examples of how to do that so that your kitchen can slowly become a place that (like the book says!) has what you need so you can use what you have and enjoy your kitchen in ways you never have before.

So as a quick reminder, the five steps to Lazy Geniusing anything in your kitchen are prioritize - name what matters, essentialize - get rid of what's in the way, organize - put everything in its place, personalize - feel like yourself, and systemize - keep things in a flow. Now when you apply these five steps to your problem, I can't implore you enough to start with a small problem. But I want to share with you an example where we started off with a bigger problem but by going through the five steps, the problem shrunk and so did the solution.

This example came up during a live event I did in DC a couple of weeks ago. A woman - Kellian? Kellan? I can't remember how to say your name, and you were so lovely I wish I could remember - but Kellan said that her problem was that she was overwhelmed with meal planning

because she has a daughter with specific dietary needs. That's a legit frustration that I'm sure a lot of you struggle with in some form. So first step - prioritize. Name what matters. I asked her what mattered most to her about meal planning. She said that she wanted it to be easier and less overwhelming and stressful. Cool. Okay, step two - essentialize. What was in the way of that? What parts of her meal planning were in the way of the process being easier? She said there were too many choices. Another frustration we can all relate to. When there are too many choices, it is deeply overwhelming. So if you are like Kellian, how can you get rid of some of those choices? I remember this relief came over her face, and she said, "Maybe I should stop Googling recipes." Yes. I think that is a good call. Because by Googling recipes, you're only adding millions of choices to your already existing sense of overwhelm, right? I just Googled "gluten free recipes dinner" and got 398 million results. You guys. No thank you. So a way to Lazy Genius this problem is to remove the thing that is overwhelming the meal planning process and that is choice. Remove Google from the equation.

The third step is to organize, to put everything in its place. She needs to put the needed, helpful recipes in their place. When I asked her about this, she said "Yeah maybe I can choose recipes from one or two cookbooks instead of the whole Internet." YES. And someone next to her immediately recommended a Danielle Walker cookbook. Start small. Start right there with one cookbook! All the recipes are in their place.

Now what about step four? Step four is personalize, to feel like yourself. I asked Kellian when she did her meal planning, and she said Sunday night. Then I asked her if that was working, if she felt like herself during that time. She said, "Sometimes it does, and I want it to, but a lot of times it ends up being rushed and stressful." And the whole room seemed very much to resonate with that. We think that Sunday night is the perfect time to organize the week ahead, and that could totally be true for you. One hundred percent. But you could also be tired from the weekend, and you have a lot to organize for the week ahead and you really just want to watch an episode of Ted Lasso and go to bed early. But it's Sunday night and you still have to meal plan!

Now when your meal plan depends on a lot of factors, many of which I talk about in The Lazy Genius Kitchen book, but for Kellian specifically, when I asked her if she felt like herself on Sunday nights, she said no. Not consistently enough. So maybe a small way she can feel like herself in the process of meal planning from her one or two cookbooks is to do that planning at a more energizing time, like in the morning or on Saturday or even on Monday! You can have a Decide Once for dinners on a Monday that doesn't require any energy - a brainless crowdpleaser - and have that be the day you meal plan the rest of the week. Sunday nights are great. A lot of people thrive planning on a Sunday. I personally find that it works 90% of the time, but I'm not everybody. We're all very different. That's why step four is to personalize, to feel like yourself. You have to feel like yourself in whatever you're doing or else you won't find any enjoyment doing it. So for Kellian, she said she would try to meal plan on a different day or at a different time.

Now step five is to systemize, to keep it in a flow. This is where you can apply a Lazy Genius principle or two to keep things moving. She has decided once - that's a principle - that she will choose meals from these two cookbooks. Done. Decision made. She is batching - another principle - her meal planning by doing the entire week's plan at once. She can build the right routine by - another principle - by knowing that she wants to have a calm process of deciding what's for dinner, and how she gets there might change depending on the day! She might plan on Saturday morning or Sunday afternoon or Monday night, but ultimately the point is that she's planning at a time where she's calmer and feels like herself. If that has to change, that's totally fine. And those are just some ideas. But the point is that she now has a clearer path to planning dinners that meet the needs of her family. Will she never experience stress about it again? Umm, of course she'll experience stress again. But remember that our goal is to make things just a touch easier one choice at a time. We learn to iterate. We pay attention and adjust and are kind to ourselves - another principle - in the process.

We'll be right back...

Let's look at a couple of other examples and the direction a person could take. I didn't get to have conversations with these people like I did with Kellian, but these are a couple of examples from the comments of an Instagram post I shared a couple of weeks ago where I asked about people's small kitchen frustrations. Let's look at a couple.

Whitney Scruggs shared this: "Cabinets overflowing with storage containers." That's it. We can all relate. There were a few great suggestions for solutions in the comments, but I want to take this simple problem and run it through the five steps, ready? First, prioritize. What matters most about the storage container situation? Because Whitney said they were overflowing, I'm guessing she feels overwhelmed by them and doesn't want to. She wants it to feel simpler and less. Okay, step two. Essentialize. What's in the way of that? My guess is there are too many containers or maybe there are a lot of different containers that don't fit together very well. So to remove what's in the way, Whitney could probably go through those containers and remove the ones that don't have lids or are super damaged from the microwave or cracked or something. But get rid of the containers that don't support simplicity. Now, step three is to organize. You could, as a couple of the comments suggested, get new containers that nestle better or have the same lid for every size so you have less to match up. But I would also like to offer that maybe the cabinet is not the best place for your storage containers. It's hard to find stuff you need, if a kid puts containers away and the stack is not super balanced, you will be attacked by plastic or - please no - glass when you move something. That was my personal frustration with containers for a long time, so ours are in a drawer in the kitchen. They're contained in a wide drawer. That way if a stack tilts, it's no problem. The drawer catches it, and I'm not being attacked by tupperware. Ew. So there are multiple ways to organize, to put something in its place. It all depends on what matters to you, but I share the drawer thing to remind you that you can put something in a place you might not have thought of before.

Now to step four - personalize. How can Whitney feel like herself in this process? And you might be like umm Kendra it's tupperware calm down. This is mostly true. But also we like to express

ourselves, we need to pay attention to our specific needs, and it's good to personalize your tupperware. You might personally want everything lidded always. Or you might want lids in a container and everything else nestled. You might want glass because you go from freezer to microwave a lot or you just are trying to lower your use of plastic in general. You might want containers that are colorful and bring a spark of joy, or maybe the cleanest, simplest, most minimalist containers do that. You might think you need square and rectangular containers because that's what most people have, but because of the size of your lunchbox or the fact that you make a lot of crockpot freezer prep and squares and rectangles don't fit, you need more round containers. There are lots of ways you might need to feel like yourself when you're dealing with your storage containers. It might feel silly, but it's important too.

And finally step five is systemize. How do you keep this in a flow? How does Whitney keep the containers from becoming overwhelming again? Containers are put back in their place. She doesn't keep containers or buy new ones that don't match her priorities. If she's only using glass but there's this cute plastic set on sale, she probably needs to skip the plastic set because that's not going to support the system she's created. Does that make sense?

Now here's something about Lazy Geniusing your kitchen. These five steps are all important, but depending on the problem, certain steps might shine a bit more. They might feel more important than others. It doesn't mean none of them matter, but sometimes one will feel more essential than another just be the nature of the problem. So you're not doing anything wrong if you're like wait how do I personalize my containers! Just ask do I feel like myself? Is there a thing I could add or take away that would help me feel more like myself?

And remember all of these steps are broken down in much more detail with a lot more nuance and tools, and then they're applied in so many ways in the book, in *The Lazy Genius Kitchen*.

Okay, let's do one more real quick. Tori Rieger said this "ice spilled on the floor from the scoop when we get ice from the freezer drawer. Every dang day." I love the succinctness of these comments. Y'all are like this is so annoying I will not waste words on this problem. Okay, let's do it. Step one - prioritize. My guess is for Tori, what matters is that ice doesn't fall on the floor. Pretty simple. Because whenever a cube hits the ground, she probably grunts or sighs or rolls her eyes, and all of those accumulated frustrations are a lot. So let's keep the ice from falling on the floor. Step two, essentialize. Get rid of what's in the way. What's in the way? What's making the ice hit the floor? She said there's a scoop. Maybe the scoop could be filled with fewer cubes. Maybe you don't use a scoop and just use the cup you're drinking from as a scoop. Or maybe the cups Tori has have smaller openings, so when she dumps the ice in, a lot of those cubes don't make it. Or maybe she could get a new scoop that's similar in width to her cups. But what's in the way of ice staying where it's supposed to? Something functional is my guess. There's a functional dissonance between the ice, the scoop, and the glasses. So Tori can organize those things, she can put those in their proper place and have what she needs, like a new scoop, so that ice doesn't fall on the floor. My guess is if ice is not falling on the floor and this problem is solved, she'll automatically feel more like herself, but also there could be a personal requirement from her or someone in her family that is necessary to pay attention to,

and that's important and good. And then to systemize it, I think really it comes to everyone following the House Rule - a Lazy Genius principle - to use this scoop in this way. Everyone is on board so that someone else doesn't drop ice on the floor and leave it and it melts and Tori steps in the tiny puddle and gets a wet foot or sock which is not a huge thing but also if you're stressed or running late or just living your life and you step in a puddle of water that is the result of someone else's actions, it can get ugly real fast. So establish a house rule of how to scoop ice or where to put the scoop or whatever it is.

These are three very small, simple challenges, but the beauty of these five steps is that you can make a positive impact on any problem in your kitchen and your life using these steps. Because they work on everything, especially when you make the problem smaller.

So tomorrow is the day that The Lazy Genius Kitchen arrives! Also if you did not preorder the book and therefore get the 25 recipes ebook for free, you should jump on that today! Go ahead and order the book from wherever you want, then you'll go to thelazygeniuskitchen.com to register that preorder with us, with Team LG. Once you register that preorder, you'll automatically get the recipe ebook sent to your inbox.

It's been really fun celebrating this book launch with you! Thank you for watching The Lazy Genius Kitchen show! We've had three episodes so far, and tomorrow is episode four with Annie F. Downs where we organize her freezer and it is very fun. I'm just so grateful for how amazing y'all are, how supportive, how many books you've already purchased the thing is even on shelves... it means the world.

So that's it for today. Until next time, be a genius about the things that matter and lazy about the thing that don't. I'm Kendra, and I'll see you next week!