

#255 - How to Name What Matters

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 255 - how to name what matters. This episode is one of those rare ones that I'm like - wait, did we not do that yet? It's so desperately essential to living like a Lazy Genius, and I've never actually done an episode or spent a length of time talking about how to do this, how to name what matters. Because y'all ask often how to do this. It feels like everything could matter, and it's hard to have a rhythm for figuring it out in your own life. So that's what we're going to do today!

But first, I want to make sure you know about something very exciting that's happening. You might know that I have a book coming out in 36 days! It's almost a month away! So exciting. It's called *The Lazy Genius Kitchen: Have What You Need, Use What You Have, and Enjoy It Like Never Before*, and we are celebrating its release with a handful of fantastic events. We just had one last week! It was a virtual kickoff to our Pub(lication) Crawl, and it was ridiculously fun. And now the three events we have left are in person events! You guys! The next one is next week! April 7th in Chicago at Greenhouse Loft, we're having a kinda fancy slightly sparkly book reading and Q&A. We have a few tickets for that, so if you are in the area or want to travel to the area, it's going to be a really fun, again kinda fancy slightly sparkly, good time in the same room! Also for the record, if any of you are like "Kendra, I love you so much I am not a kinda fancy slightly sparkly person can I still come." Of course you can. Personalities and vibes can be kinda fancy slightly sparkly too. So all are welcome in whatever makes you comfortable. I will be wearing some sort of sequin probably. Letoya, the Lazy Genius community manager, is going to be there, and I've seen her dress and she's gonna look amazing. I'm not usually a dress up person, but sometimes it's really fun to do. It's fun to have a reason to wear that bold lip you don't always have the confidence to wear (which I still think you should on a regular day) or that sparkly top or super fun skirt that just don't make as much sense to you on a regular Thursday. Well, next Thursday is not a regular Thursday! It's a Lazy Genius live event Thursday, so if you would like to come, tickets are available at thelazygeniuscollective.com/pubcrawl. The other two events are in DC and Greensboro, my hometown. DC is already sold out, but we still have a few tickets for Greensboro. So all event info is at that website which we'll link in the show notes.

Okay, on to today's episode on how to name what matters. First, a quick reminder why it matters to name what matters. Do you know what I'm going to do right now? I hope this is not against the rules, but I'm not going to ask permission. I'm going to read an excerpt from *The Lazy Genius Kitchen* titled "What What Matters Matters." And remember, this is from a kitchen book, so some of the examples are kitchen-y but the overall idea is the same.

When you haven't figured out what matters, you implicitly allow everything to matter. You buy more stuff, sign up for more services, and reorganize more cabinets to try to make life easier. You spin off in a dozen directions, trying to make everything matter. But it can't. It just can't. That's why your kitchen (and everything else) is cluttered and your brain is overwhelmed. Unless you know what matters most about your space, your meals, how you plan them, and so

*forth, you'll simply tend to the most urgent need and repeat ad nauseum. No one needs ad nauseum in the kitchen. You need to prioritize. When you prioritize what matters most, you see a clearer path to **your** best choices. You know clearly what to cook, organize, and renovate. You know what to buy, skip, and prep. You know if that chicken recipe is worth spending time on or not. When you prioritize, you have a lens for choosing only what you need. And I promise it works.*

Okay, that's the excerpt from the book. Now that whole book teaches you how to name what matters in multiple areas of your kitchen and then gives you tools on how support those priorities, so The Lazy Genius Kitchen is really targeted at doing what we're about to do in this episode in your kitchen in very specific ways. So if you listen to this episode and you're like ooo I like this, you will really be sad to not have The Lazy Genius Kitchen on your shelf. I'm just telling you. This book is quite fantastic.

But it covers the kitchen; today we're covering kind of everything else.

The reason it's hard to name what matters is because it's overwhelming. It's too big. If I say to you, you should name what matters. About what? That's quite a large question, and because we're Lazy Geniuses, we start small, right? We make our decisions smaller.

When I get DMs and emails from y'all asking how to name what matters, you're usually asking on very broad terms. "I don't know how to name what matters about my life because there's so much going on." Absolutely there is, which is why you can't start from everything. You have to start small from somewhere specific. And here's how you can do that. Now, I'm going to share this process as though you are writing stuff on a piece of paper, but you don't have to write anything down if you're not a writer downer. But I will use that language because I imagine that's what a lot of you will likely do. We're just keeping it a little streamlined here.

So first, I want you to narrow down the area of life. What area of your life would benefit most right now in this season of life or on this actual day from naming what matters about it? Some areas include, your home, your work, your family, your time management, or you as a person. What broad category feels the most overwhelming? Another way to think about it is what broad category feels like if it were considered and nurtured and paid attention to would impact the health of the other categories? That's another angle. So first, name a broad category.

We'll be right back...

Second, you're going to make that category smaller. Let's say your category is you. You just feel off, you feel tired, you feel cranky, you feel uncomfortable and in your skin, you just don't feel like yourself. Okay, now we're not going to ask yet what matters most about you? Because that's still too big, especially if you haven't been in a regular practice of naming what matters, that's just way too big. So let's break down you into categories.

What area of you could be tended to? Is it your energy, your mental health, your physical body, your joy, your sleep, your attitude... what is overwhelming or difficult for you? What category about you?

Then, we keep going smaller. Let's say it's your body, your physical body. You just physically feel off or whatever word you want to use. What categories could be contributing to that? Is it how your clothes fit, how you think your clothes should fit? Is what you're eating or not eating? Is it how you're sleeping or not sleeping? Is it pain? What is it? Or what do you think could be contributing to how you're feeling.

Now you've made it smaller.

I shared this somewhere - I don't remember where actually - I think it was the most recent episode about what's saving my life I think? But recently I realized that I was feeling uncomfortable physically and just off because I was wearing pants that are too small. Many people have talked about this. I remember reading about bigger pants in one of Leeanne Tankersley's books. Emily P. Freeman I think has a whole Next Right Thing episode about wearing bigger pants. I think. But this is not a new concept, but for some reason, we don't let it sink in. We keep trying to wear the smaller pants even though bigger ones will fit us better and make us more comfortable. When I started wearing pants that actually fit in the last month or two, it was a game changer. I felt better. I looked better. I wasn't groaning or feeling all cramped up in when I was driving to pick up kids or sitting at my desk. I had a pair of quote "bigger" pants in my closet, but those bigger pants are now my regular pants, and I needed more regular pants. I kept reaching for the bigger ones and feeling bad about it and then was like umm no thank you that's a waste of energy and just got some bigger pants. And it really changed so much about my day to day life. What mattered was that I wear pants that fit. We should all wear pants that fit.

But if your problem is you're wearing pants that are too small but you start too big in the "how can I Lazy Genius this," you're going to create a much larger solution than is necessary because your problem is also much too large. You have named that you're feeling off and just kind of blech all the time, but instead of narrowing down what's not going the way you want it to go and creating smaller, simpler solutions around smaller, simpler definitions of what matters, you might create some new lunch regimen, you are going to do some big workout commitment, you're going to stay grumpy at your people in the late afternoon because you have been uncomfortable pants for eight hours, you might be wearing your sweatpants a lot more than you want to because those are the ones that are the most comfortable and fit you but sweatpant energy multiple days in a row might not be good for you. I'm not saying that's universally true by the way; I'm just giving an example.

But you see what I'm saying? If you try and name what matters about something big, you won't be able to create solutions that do anything. You won't be able to even name what matters.

So start small. Make it smaller. Choose a category and keep breaking that category down.

Now once you're pretty far down and you're like, "oh okay, I see it now. I see that I don't need to name what matters about my whole house. I need to name what matters about my kitchen, more specifically my fridge, more specifically how it's organized because I can't find anything and things are going bad, and more specifically what we're putting in there in the first place." See, now that you're there, you can go, okay. What matters about what goes in our fridge?

You have a specific question, a specific place to pour your Lazy Genius energy into. Now that you're here at this specific place, you can use those three questions I've mentioned in multiple places to help you name what matters - what could matter, what does matter, and what matters most? You're just narrowing it down. Once you narrow down the problem, then you narrow down the solution.

So what could matter about what goes in your fridge? That it will last a long time, that you're using what could spoil earlier, that you know what's inside it, that it's not crammed full, that your kids can access what they need to access... you see? All of those are things that could matter about what goes in your fridge and therefore how it's used and organized? Simply keep narrowing that list down to one thing. This is what matters most. It's not that the rest doesn't matter at all; it's just that you need one primary thing to matter most. Knowing what matters most to you will help you make better, more specific and intentional decisions about whatever area of life you're thinking through.

So the gist is you narrow down the problem. You make it smaller. Then you narrow down the solution and make it smaller. Smaller steps actually move, you guys. They do. You might think that the simple choice of wearing pants that fit couldn't possibly change all the chaos you feel like you're living in, but if your physical comfort matters to you and you can see that it impacts your emotions and your attitude, that is a beautiful small step you can take that will have a huge impact. That's what happens a lot with this. When you name what matters about something super small, it has exponential impact. It's the big stuff that doesn't do anything. It just doesn't. If it did, we'd all be doing the big things successfully, but that's where an entire industry built on self-help. Because we can't seem to get it all together and do everything and be totally optimized with amazing big goals. That's the posture of the self-help industry. Bigger, better. And I'm here to say no ma'am. No ma'am. Smaller. Simpler. You. Just be you. Name what matters to you in a very small area of your life and apply a simple solution to that thing in a small way. And then keep living. I promise it's so much better and easier and more you than any of the other stuff.

And the more you do this, the more you practice this and pay attention to moments, small moments, that you can go "huh, what matters here in this particular point in this particular moment" you start to notice patterns about what matters to you. You start to collect evidence. It's almost like a puzzle. Actually it's exactly like a puzzle and I'm so excited about this metaphor. Okay, it's like a puzzle. Every piece feels too small and insignificant on its own, right? It's just a piece. But each piece has an identity. It has a part of the picture, and all of those parts come together to paint a fuller picture of you and your life and what matters overall. So the more

you identify what matters piece by piece, the more you'll be able to name what matters on the whole. The picture will become clearer. It's all connected. There's a whole section in my first book, *The Lazy Genius Way*, where I talk about how what matters to you in different areas, how those talk to each other. Your priorities talk to each other, and the more individual words or puzzle pieces or small things that matter, the more of those you have, that you've slowly named in whatever season of life you're in, the more complete your purpose will become. I'm actually very excited about this puzzle thing.

So again, narrow down the problem by starting with big categories, choosing one, breaking that down, choosing another one thing, breaking that down, until you get to a small enough problem you can easily solve. Then in order to find the right solution, ask yourself what matters about this particular small problem? And if you need to narrow that down, ask what could matter about it, what does matter about it, and then what matters most? Just make a list and eliminate. This feels overwhelming but it's because you've been trying to do this with things and ideas and challenges that are too big. Make your problem small and make your solution small by naming what matters about one puzzle piece. Just one.

And that's how to name what matters.

Before we go, let's celebrate the Lazy Genius of the Week! This week, it's Erin Vidlaird, and this might be one of my favorite Lazy Genius ideas ever. Erin wrote me this: "Hi! I use LG principles on the daily but wanted to share a new way I recently used setting a house rule. My husband was accepted into a PhD program that means we'll be moving states. It's an exciting change, but of course comes with so many layers of emotion (many different between us). So shortly after the news, I said, let's set a rule where we only talk about moving or new houses or dreams or plans at a restaurant or coffee shop because we'll be nicer to each other. We often have better, kinder, and more connected conversations in a different place than our apartment. It's been so helpful and we've felt like a much stronger team in making this envisioning intentional and more special. Thanks for writing and teaching in ways that allow us all to take your concepts and apply them to our unique lives in any season." You guys. This is amazing and beautiful and I'm obsessed with this. Erin, thank you for sharing this with me so I could share it with the entire Lazy Genius community, and I just love that you've modeled how a house rule can do exactly what it's meant to do - create connection, not protection. This is so good. Congratulations on being our Lazy Genius of the Week!

That's it! Don't forget to get your tickets for the Chicago Pub Crawl event that's happening in Chicago on April 7th! It's going to be so much fun, I can't wait to meet you, and if you're going to the Popcast show in Chicago the very next day, you have just a midweek bundle of frivolity. We'll have just a blast. Okay, thanks for listening! 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!