

#248 - The Lazy Genius Guide to Easier Travel

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 248 - the Lazy Genius Guide to Easier Travel. This episode is heavy on the practicality, y'all. There are so many decisions we make when we travel, and I want to give you just a slew of ways you can apply one of the most popular of the 13 Lazy Genius principles - decide once - to your travel. I hope this is an episode that you'll come back to before you take your next trip whether it's a family vacation, a work trip, a surprise visit to see a relative, or wherever your life takes you. But even if you're not travelling for awhile, I encourage you to listen now because listening now is a way that you can Magic Question travel. - Remember, the Magic Question is "what can I do now to make something easier later?" A way that you can make your travel easier later is by listening to this episode and thinking through some of the ideas so that you have some helpful decisions made the next time you go somewhere.

Let's address the Covid-sized elephant in the room. Travelling is a complicated thing right now. Everyone is assessing their risk differently, some people are travelling, others are not, and adjustments are happening all over the place. My sharing this episode is not any sort of stance on travel. Everyone gets to make their own decisions. Also I understand that if you are a person who loves to travel but have chosen for now that it's not worth the risk, this episode title might make you feel sad and resentful because all you want to do is travel but it's not a choice you're making right now. I just want you to know that I see you, too!

I realize this is a slightly heavy way to start an episode about taking trips, but very little in our lives has been unaffected by the last two years and I want to acknowledge the potential complexity you could be feeling because of this episode. So, I see the complexity, and I see you.

Okay, let's talk about how to experience easier travel.

For context, I am not an expert traveler. I am, perhaps, the opposite actually. I have been outside North America only twice in my life, and the first time was over 20 years ago. Until a few months ago, I was like a nervous cat when I was in an airport. Y'all, I am 40 years old and have never ordered my own Uber. Is ordered even the word you use? Our family isn't trying to visit every state in the US, we don't camp, I don't have a lot of miles built up from excessive business travel. I am not an expert traveler. I don't even travel that much. I have experts I listen to and I'll get to that in a minute, but I think it's important to let you know that I am not a well-traveled traveler with a ton of expertise. Which is why I think I'm a really great person to make this episode. Traveling isn't easy for me because I don't do it that often. It's severely overwhelming at times, but I've had to be a Lazy Genius about it to make it easier. If I can feel more at ease with travel, anyone can.

The most helpful principle - dare I say, the most life changing principle - you can apply to any type of travel is Decide Once. If you're new here, Decide Once is one of 13 Lazy Genius

principles I share in my book, *The Lazy Genius Way*, which is the foundational book of all things Lazy Genius. Every podcast episode, every Instagram post, and almost every real-life situation I'm in is informed by the 13 principles in that book.

Now Decide Once is simply making a decision one time about one thing until that decision doesn't work for you anymore. Why? Because we make so many dingdang decisions. Like, all the time. A fantastic way to ease some of your caffeinated squirrel brain energy or to just create less friction in your life is eliminating repetitive decisions by choosing something once and then letting it roll. Travel is one of the best categories to utilize this principle, and I'm going to give you a ton of ways you can Decide Once with your travel, as well as some of my personal favorite decisions that make my own travel easier.

One foundational thing to remember with this is what matters most to you. If budget is your top priority, choosing to always get a rental car from the same place is not a good Decide Once because another company might have a better rate. On the flip side, you might still comb through rental car sites looking for the very best deal and get super stressed out and annoyed by the practice because what you have failed to name is that ease and simplicity matter more than budget does. So you're spinning your wheels and wasting your energy trying to save twenty dollars when your energy is worth way more than twenty dollars to you. Name what matters. Remember that as you hear these ideas.

Let's do air travel decisions first.

Some ideas. Decide once what airline you'll always fly, whether you'll choose the window seat or the aisle, even when you choose to stand up and get in line to board the plane. I see so many people stand and wait around for their boarding group to be called, the anxiety and impatience mounting, and everyone is so stressed out by it. You're going to get on the plane! We're all going to get on the plane. I think there's a nervous energy when we're waiting for something to happen, and that's very palpable in an airport. So if other people's travel anxiety triggers yours (and I know that's true because I've had many conversations with people over the years about that), you can decide once that you'll stay in your seat until after your group is called. Maybe you don't even start packing up your phone or getting out your boarding pass until your group is called because you're going to get in line either way. You don't have to be at the ready so much unless that matters to you.

You can decide once the kind of food you eat in an airport, whether you bring a water bottle and fill it or buy bottled water in the terminal. Decide once what your carryon bag is and what you put in it, whether you read or watch a movie when you fly. I'm not saying you should make these decisions. At all. Some of you are like "Kendra, I can decide in the moment if I want to read or watch a movie what is wrong with you" And you're absolutely right. But for some people, the paralysis and frustration comes from the options. It's the same idea as scrolling Netflix for half an hour trying to figure out what to watch, and then it's too late to watch anything. Or you have a morning alone without your kids for the first time in forever or a day off work and you don't know what to do with yourself and therefore spend the first couple of hours just trying to decide. It's

the same thing. You don't have to decide if you'll read or watch a movie, but if that decision or something like it makes traveling easier and more pleasant for you, do it!

There are just so many micro decisions you can make when you travel and while you're in an airport specifically, so knowing what some of those can be ahead of time really helps. I'm actually going to do a bonus episode later this week specifically about my personal air travel routine. I had to do a lot of flying last fall, I'll be doing a lot of flying this spring, and I have actually Lazy Geniused my air travel to a point where I don't really mind airports. I've made it work for me pretty well, so if you're interested in that, you'll get a deep dive in a couple of days.

We'll be right back...

What about road trip travel? What can you decide once when you're in the car? Decide your approach to the kids you might have and the screens they might want. I know some people who, rather than monitoring how much screen time a kid gets, they just let their kids have access to screens the entire trip. It's like "live your life, kids! This is our decision!" and everybody goes about their business. Remember that Instagram post I did several months ago about my friend Elizabeth who used the phrase "I don't want to give myself something else to monitor"... remember that? Some of the decision-making stress is in monitoring whether something is going according to plan. Monitoring is a whole thing. While the screen time example is just that - an example - there are decisions you can make purely because they remove monitoring from your life. Consider what you monitor on a trip and if you really need to.

Decide once that you stop at rest stops and not gas stations. Decide once that you pack a snack bag instead of getting snacks at that rest stop or gas station. Or decide once that everybody gets to pick any snack they want at your first gas refill or have a bag of quarters in the car for vending machine snacks at the rest stop. We do the gas station idea, and we love it. Every road trip we take, we don't worry about starting with a full tank of gas because in the first hour, we always stop for a fillup and for the kids to get any road trip snack they want. They think it's Christmas and look forward to it every single time. That's a decide once that works great for us.

Again, think about the decisions that cause you a little bit of stress. Think specifically about a road trip. Where is the stress? Is it trying to decide where you stop to eat because everybody is hungry at different times or wants something different? Then pack food. Or on the flip side, maybe you think you should pack a cooler of food because that's what your family did growing up, but you'd rather eliminate the stress of choosing what to do put in that cooler and packing it and dealing with any whiny kids who want to stop at McDonald's and instead just decide once to eat at McDonalds. Where are road trips stressful? Decide once to keep those going. What decisions cause you to get unsettled and overwhelmed? Decide once to keep those from happening. What questions are your kids asking that you don't want to monitor? Go ahead and decide something one time now so that you don't have to keep deciding those things later.

Packing lists are another way to decide once. You can have a standard packing list already written in a planner or typed out on your Notes app, especially if remembering what to pack is a stressful decision. I have an episode about how to pack for a trip by the way, and I love it so much. It helps you name what kind of packer you are and then some ways to apply Lazy Genius principles to that packing style so the whole process is easier and works based on what matters to you. But even naming what kind of packer you are is a decision you can make one time because now you know what to focus on and what to let go of when you pack. We'll put a link to that episode in the show notes.

Personally, I don't have a packing list. I make a new one for every trip. That might feel like a waste, but because of how my brain works, making a packing list is how I process the trip as a whole. I think through all that I'm doing and therefore what I need to pack for it, but the process of making the packing list helps me see the broader strokes of what matters about my trip, and that is more important than the packing list it produces. It's like a few weeks ago when I shared on Instagram how I use my monthly tear-off calendar. I often need to get my swirly brain calm, and the way I do that is processing out what is coming on one of those month pages. Often I throw away the page when I'm done because the process is more important than the actual plan. The same is true for me with packing. It's better for me to make a fresh list for every trip because it helps me think through more than just what to pack but the trip itself. It's good for my brain. Static packing lists don't work for me, so that's not a place I decide once.

I also think you can decide once on the travel advice you listen to. It's so easy to Google things about easy travel, but you don't always know who is worth listening to. Before you know it, you've spent more time googling things rather than listening to a voice that matters and getting something done. My favorite practical road trip travel guru is Courtney Cleveland from All the Best Days. She is hilarious and helps me figure out how to travel well based on what matters to me and my day. I also love Monet Hambrick who runs the Instagram account @thetravelingchild. Her mantra is if kids live there, kids can visit. I have bookmarked so many things she's shared about international travel especially. And finally, Preethi Harbuck from @localpassportfamily. Her blog is especially fantastic, and I have marked a ton of trip ideas from her account. So when I need practical travel advice, I look to one of those three women almost exclusively. That is one of my favorite ways to decide once: have a specific resource for travel ideas.

A few other quick thoughts. Decide once the same meal you'll have the night before you leave for a trip or when you come home. Decide once that you'll do grocery pickup on your way in. I remember someone having the best idea for coming home from a trip where she would take all the dirty laundry to the laundromat even though she has a washer and dryer in her house, but that way she can get some vacation off-ramp time from her children, get the laundry done all at once, but get to read in silence for a bit after a trip. Absolute genius. But think about the leaving and coming home, too. What are some ways you can Lazy Genius the stress of those! Decide once is your best friend.

I'm not going to go into anymore ideas because the list is literally endless, but what I will do is post on Instagram this week where all of you Lazy Geniuses can share your favorite travel Decide Once. I have no doubt - because this happens other times y'all share your ideas - that you all will get at least several practical Decide Once ideas to add to your own life because seeing what other people do always sparks creativity in thinking about our own lives. We can be logistically inspired by each other, so look for that post. And if you don't already follow me on Instagram, I'm @thelazygenius.

And again, later this week, I'm going to do a bonus episode on how I lazy genius being in an airport. Very specific but hopefully very helpful.

Okay, before we go, let's celebrate the Lazy Genius of the Week! This week it's Kate from the Instagram account @gainingkate. She tagged me in a post of her wearing those Amazon overalls I told y'all about in the last episode about what is saving my life, and I just wanted to share her blessing for all of us. She posted this photo on December 30th and said, "May we all waddle into 2022 with the courage, strength, and energy of a confident toddler." And I just died laughing and then kind of teared up a little? I was talking with my husband Kaz just this morning about him being sad when our daughter Annie loses her little girl sparkle. And I was like "No! She'll always have her sparkle! We won't let it die!" We had also talked recently about how adults laugh a significantly less amount than kids do and what a sad thing that is. Anyway, all that to say, Kate's post felt really poignant in light of all that. So I will repeat her words: may we all continue waddling into 2022 with the courage, strength, and energy of a confident toddler with plenty of laughing and sparkle along the way. And isn't that part of what we're doing here? We're learning how to be Lazy Geniuses so that we can get things done but also so we can continue to uncover and live into who we already are, into the truest parts of ourselves, the parts that sparkle. The more we become like ourselves, the more I think we'll laugh and have all that confident toddler energy. So thank you, Kate, for being the Lazy Genius of the week.

And one more thing before we go, in case you missed it in my newsletter last week or on Instagram, the release date for my next book, The Lazy Genius Kitchen, has been moved from March 22 to May 3. You guys, my books were on a boat that was in a storm, and we still don't know if the books are in the bottom of the sea. It's nuts. And even if they're not, the boat is delayed to the point that the books can't get off the boat and to warehouses in time to ship for a March 22 release date, so if you have been planning on getting The Lazy Genius Kitchen, thank you so very much and also it'll be a few weeks later than we thought. However, it could be fall, so we will celebrate that it's at least still in the spring! I can't wait to tell you more about the book in the near future.

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.