

#225 - The Shoe Episode

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 225 - the shoe episode. We are going to plow through common challenges we all face with shoes and apply some Lazy Genius principles to help make those challenges easier. Obviously we can't cover every possible shoe scenario, but I am hoping to cover some common ones to help cover our bases and also to give you some practice on applying principles so you can do it for yourself and your personal shoe challenges.

There are two main categories we're going to zoom through today when it comes to shoes: shoe organization and shoe rhythms. I'll explain that second one more when we get to it. And this isn't just an episode about family shoes or kid shoes by the way. This is for everybody.

Before we look at those categories, let's have a quick chat about personal choice. You can decide how many shoes you want to own. You can decide how many shoes you want your kids to own. You can decide if you like new shoes or used shoes or shoes you invest in or shoes that can be cheap because they're not going to make it through half a year anyway. You get to decide what matters. So much of what we'll talk about in this episode is impacted by how many shoes you own. I'm not saying that you need to have fewer shoes for your life to work better. At all.

Until recently, I had never been a huge fan of shoes. Emily P. Freeman, author, podcaster, and my favorite human, once told me that she's lost more shoes than I own in totality. That was at a time of my life when I really didn't care about shoes and had only a handful of pairs. But in the last couple of years, I have started to broaden my shoe horizons and am beginning to better understand the sheer joy of shoes. I have added shoes to my life way more than I have subtracted, and I'm really happy with that choice. So I'm not saying you should have fewer shoes. What is important though is to be a little thoughtful about your personal choices when it comes to shoes. That's for your own personal shoes, your kids' shoes if you have kids, and if you have a spouse or partner and you share money and a closet, it might be good to understand their personal choices for shoes, too. This isn't some deep heart to heart, but it's good to know what your priorities are for your shoes so that you can make better choices to support that priority.

I'll share my own priorities. For me, I'm pretty classic in my choices, I really want comfort, but I also know that because my clothing choices are even more classic than my shoes, it's nice to have a little pizzazz with my shoes. I also have a basket by our back door for all of my shoes, and the shoes still fit in the basket. Until they don't anymore, I'm not too worried about having too many. The storage choice impacts the buying choice. So that's what matters to me.

For my kids, we keep things very very simple. Our boys both have two pairs of sneakers. One is the newest pair that they wear literally every day. The other is their old pair that still fits but is more beat up and fine to wear when we know we're going somewhere that's super muddy or

something. They also each have a pair of flip flops for the summer. And that's it. They wear those sneakers to everything - school, church, all of it. Now are we going to probably need to get Sam a pair of dressier shoes because he's in middle school and joined the band and will have to do a concert? Yes, we are. But we don't buy shoes for the kids unless they're necessary. Annie has a pair of sandals, a pair of slip-on sneakers, and a pair of flops. Same thing really. Each kid has a daily pair of shoes, a back-up pair of shoes, and flops. It works so great for the boys especially. Now let me share the challenge we've had with Annie. Annie gets hand-me-down shoes from her cousin which is amazing. Some of those shoes she adores. Annie also loves fashion and choosing pretty, sparkly things, and she is often drawn to a fun new pair of shoes when we're at Target. I've given in a couple of times, and you know what? She still only wears her daily pair. And you know what else? The other extra pairs still litter our shoe shelf and makes it harder to find the shoes she wants and organize everything.

Which is the perfect segue into our first category of organization. Your personal choices of how many shoes, how often you add to the collection and why, and all of that directly impacts how you organize your shoes.

Organization is simply giving something a place and then putting it there over and over again. **And** it's almost always limited by the physical boundaries of the place you choose. I have my basket for my shoes. Kaz lines his shoes under this shelf by the back door, and we have a separate shoe bench and shelf situation for the kids. That's our organization. The location. For me, my shoes aren't lined up or color-coded or anything. All my shoes are literally in a 13-inch square basket from Ikea that we've had for almost ten years. The kids just toss their shoes onto the shelf. They're not lined up either. Kaz's are lined up, but they kind of have to be because of where they are. But he's also a grownup and has the fewest shoes of anyone in the house.

So if organization is giving something a place and then putting it there over and over again, that's what we've done. That's it. We don't care about it being pretty. We don't care about it being hidden even. We just want the shoe organization to be easy to maintain and easily accessible. The baskets and shelves by the door without a lot of rules attached to them do that.

So when you want to organize your shoes or your family's shoes, let's pick a place. Start there. Lazy Geniuses put everything in its place, so what's the best place for your shoes? Ideally, it's the same place day after day so that you can find your shoes, and it would probably be good to have them close to whatever matters most. If you're a person or family that takes shoes off when you come in the house, you probably want shoe storage by the door. But if you're not, you can totally put the shoes somewhere else like a closet. That means your shoes are closer to your clothes so you can put an outfit together all at once instead of running to another room to grab a couple of pairs of shoes to see which one works better. It all depends on what matters to you, not on what you've always done or what other people do.

For example, if you live in a house with a few people, you might think that you need a singular organizational place for everyone's shoes and that it should probably be by the door you go in and out of the most. That seems normal, that's the situation you find on a lot of blogs and on

Pinterest when you search shoe storage, and you've been trying to make that work. But what if it works better for your family for each person to keep their shoes in their bedroom? What if the area by your door is so clogged with all the other things coming in and out of the house every day that adding shoes to that is making you crazy? Those of you who live in smaller homes or downtown apartments live with space at a premium. Your door is literally in your living room and kitchen, and you don't want to have to add a shoe cabinet to that whole thing. It's better for each person to keep their shoes in their own rooms.

So choose a place for your shoes, but don't just assume the answer. Is where they are right now really the best place? Does everyone need to organize together? Is it okay that kid shoes are by the door but yours are in your room? Of course it's okay. Whatever you choose is okay as long as it supports what matters most to you. And remember that how many shoes you want to have in your life will impact where you choose to put them.

We'll be right back.

Okay, let's move on to the rhythm of your shoes. Almost certainly, the "put away and find" rhythm includes children. If you're an adult, you can probably find your shoes and put them on without a ton of stress. Kids? Not so much.

Two weeks ago, I did an episode on getting out the door, and the biggest challenge you all shared with me when I asked on Instagram was shoes. Your kids can't find their shoes. They can't put on their shoes. They forget their socks and then when they go find some socks, they forget their shoes somewhere along the way. Putting shoes on children is a major part of getting out the door, so let's park there for a minute since that particular rhythm is really important.

First idea. I think limiting the number of kids' shoes is almost always a good call. If we say "go find your shoes" and they have six to choose from, that sentence doesn't work super well and they get hung up. Also limiting the number of kid shoes makes organization easier simply because there are fewer shoes. But in our family of five with fairly limited shoe choices across the board, we still probably have 30 pairs of shoes in baskets or shelves by our back door. That's a lot of shoes. So even if you limit it, depending on the number of people you're dealing with, it'll still feel like a challenge. But I will advocate for limiting your kids, at least the little ones, to a daily pair of shoes. If they have special occasion shoes like dress shoes or junk shoes or weather-related shoes, perhaps those can find their place in their bedroom closet or something. They're not needed every day, so they don't have to be put in the same place as the everyday shoes. That might not work for you, but if it does, it'll probably help a lot.

Now here's the thing about your kids finding their shoes. They will never always find them. They will never always nail this. Kids are adorable weirdos and live in their own worlds and have brains that are so far from being fully developed, so let's lower our expectations of their ability to maintain our carefully thought-out organizational system, okay? But they will have an easier time if they know where the shoe spot is and if they only take off and put on their shoes in that shoe spot. That's key. Wherever they store their shoes will serve you better if it's the same place

that take off and put on those same shoes. If that's better by the door, cool. If that's in their room, cool. If that's on the edge of the living room couch because that's always where they land then maybe have a little basket for them for their shoes under the coffee table or something. Think about where your kids take off and put on their shoes, try and see if those places can be the same, and that's where you store their shoes.

Another thing to offer when it comes to kid shoes is to name what matters about their relationship to their shoes. By that I mean, tying them. My sixth grader still has a hard time tying his shoes, and while that is a life skill he will eventually master without his laces coming untied every hour, it's less important to me than him getting his shoes on in the morning and getting out the door. That's why he has slip-on sneakers. He doesn't prioritize the daily tying, I don't either, and he prefers shoes that don't require it. Fine by me. His soccer cleats have to be tied, and he can tie. He's just not proficient or quick at it, and we need proficiency and quickness in the mornings when we're leaving. Slip-ons it is. Now my fourth grader Ben really wanted laced sneakers and sat down one afternoon and figured it out. He tied and tied and tied until he got good enough at it that tying his shoes in the morning wasn't stressful and didn't take forever. Awesome. So his daily sneakers are lace sneakers. Basically this is my permission to you that it's okay if your kids can't tie their shoes with perfect dexterity and accuracy at an age that you think is too old for them to not know. You can't win 'em all. Sam can clean a sink and make a sandwich. He helped Kaz fix a valve on the toilet last weekend. Could he do it again without help? Of course not. Was it good for him to try a new skill? Sure. Would we be terrible parents if Kaz had fixed the toilet without having Sam help him? No! Parenting requires a lot. There are so many skills that a tiny or medium human can learn, and you can't possibly teach your kids every single one of those skills on an arbitrary timeline and then make yourself feel bad for not following when it's just too much. So you have permission to skip laces, my friends. It's okay. The time will come. It's okay if it's not right now.

One more kids and shoes rhythm is to store their socks and shoes in the same place. Several of you messaged me when I asked about challenges of getting out the door and said that once you started putting socks and shoes together it made all the difference. I also remember someone sharing a year or two ago that they use those mesh garment bags for sock storage. Either you clip a mesh bag onto the dirty clothes hamper for socks to go in where they get washed and not lost and then sorted as a batch because they're already together. Or you clip a mesh bag by the shoes so that kids can just grab them when they're getting dressed to leave. But I would be remiss to not mention that putting socks and shoes together streamlines kids and shoes and getting out the door for a lot of people.

But for your rhythm with your kids and their shoes, the most important tip I can give you is to practice and find a way that works for you and your family where the kids is both taking off and putting on shoes in the same place and that place is also where the shoes always live when they're not being worn. That's their place. If the on and off happens next to the place, the likelihood of those shoes staying in their place goes up by a factor of ten. Which is arbitrary math but it sounds smart.

Now quickly what about the rhythm of getting rid of old shoes and bringing in new ones? Or even saving shoes that your kid hasn't grown into yet or storing special occasion shoes? Here is where you make a house rule, and here is my suggestion for that house rule. "Save for later" shoes, whether that's because of size or special occasion, go somewhere different than daily shoes. I think they need two different approaches. Otherwise, you're managing way more shoes in your daily rhythm than you need to. So perhaps you can have a house rule where save for later shoes go somewhere different than daily shoes.

When you know where that place is, it helps you know your limits for those save for later and special occasion shoes. If you have a basket or bin or shelf or whatever for that kind of shoe, you have a natural limit. You know that the basket of shoes you've found at Goodwill for your kids to wear when they grow into them is already overflowing and that if you add this pair you found that's a solid find but not any more important or valuable than the other seven solid finds that are in that "save for later" basket, you can leave those shoes. Your limit is naturally set by the organizational choice you've made.

What about the rhythm of getting rid of shoes you don't wear anymore? There are two questions here. What do you do with shoes that don't fit anyone anymore or that you don't wear, and where do those shoes live until you actually send them on that path away? You can decide that all shoes go to the local thrift store, but are you going to drop by that thrift store every time you have a single pair of shoes that's ready to leave your house? You can, and that's great. But if you don't want to do that, you need a holding ground. You need a place to store shoes that are on their way out. Choose that place. Maybe you have a box in the back of your car or the back of your closet that's for donations. When it's full, no matter what it's full of, you take it in. This is very true if you live in a city with public transportation and you have limited apartment space and also don't want to lug around a bunch of donations all the time. Choose a box or container or bag or whatever that's reasonable enough to carry through public transportation, and know that when it's full, you'll take care of that box, whether it's full of shoes or clothes or any combination of things you no longer need. The point here with your shoes rhythm? Have a separate place to store shoes that are on their way out. You get to decide where they go, whether it's to a thrift store or a family with a kid younger than yours, and how often you take them, but let those choices dictate the limits of your organization. If you can only donate what you can lug onto the subway, don't make your donation box bigger than you can carry. Make sense?

Okay, let's recap.

First, be thoughtful about your personal choices when it comes to shoes. What matters? Something matters, so see if you can name it since that thing will be a big part of the rest of your choices.

Your big categories are likely organization and rhythm. Organization is putting something in its place, and you'll have a rhythm if you maintain that organization by putting the thing in its place over and over again. Choose a place that makes the most sense for you and your family. It doesn't have to be by the door or in a closet. It just needs to support what matters to you.

However, if you have kids, a likely great place to store their shoes is in the same place they take off and put on those shoes so they're easier to find with a rhythm you can more easily maintain. Because rhythm matters too. But also remember, y'all, to live in the season and accept that your kids aren't going to do this every time. Make it easy for them and yourself, but also be kind when it doesn't happen. Because it will super dupe not always happen.

And consider storing shoes you're saving for later or shoes that are not daily use shoes in a separate place. It keeps your daily space, which might already be at a bit of a premium, easier to manage.

And that's the shoe episode. I hope you have something to make your own shoe life feel less overwhelming!

Okay, before we go, we're going to skip the Lazy Genius of the Week in lieu of a big fat Lazy Genius announcement where so many of you can be Lazy Geniuses in print for eternity! Not eternity. Books aren't immortal. It doesn't matter whatever. I have written a second book called The Lazy Genius Kitchen. It is a toolkit to help you have what you need, use what you have, and enjoy your kitchen like never before. It does what I hope The Lazy Genius Way did - provide really helpful steps and principles for you to create a life that makes sense to you and that moves with you through all kinds of life stages and skill levels in the kitchen and children and cooking for one and all the things. I love this book, I am so proud of this book, and one of the things I'm doing to launch this book is to basically make a TV show. It won't be on actual TV, but the internet is basically TV at this point, right? Anyway, this project is so cool, involves some really special people, some of whom you might know, and will be filming this fall. It also costs a lot of money to make. Who knew. So I am asking anyone who is a fan of this Lazy Genius space to consider being a financial backer of this really cool project for the book, and as a thank you for your \$10 contribution, you'll get behind-the-scenes access to literally everything regarding the book release, the video shoots, you'll get invitations to meetups when I'm traveling, all kinds of things. If it's either helpful or fun and related to the book, you get access to it on a private Instagram account that you'll get access to once you become a backer of the project. AND the first 1500 people who join this special group we're calling The Kitchen Crew will get their names printed in the book. For real. It's pretty awesome. So be sure to click the link in the show notes if you're interested in learning more, or just go to thelazygeniuscollective.com/kitchen. All of you are Lazy Geniuses of the Week! And if you've already joined the crew, thank you genuinely from the bottom of my heart. It's too much how kind y'all are to me and to this work.

Okay, that's it for today! Thank you 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!