

## #218 - Let's Talk About the Body, Part Two

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 218 - let's talk about your body, part two. Can you guess what last week's episode was? Yes, I'm sure you can. Last week was Let's Talk About the Body, Part One, and I highly encourage you to listen to it if you haven't already. I'm laying out ten principles to think about when it comes to your body and other people's bodies; five were last week. Five are this week. As a reminder, last week's principles were one, the body is amazing; two, there is no normal body; three, there isn't a hierarchy of bodies; four, bodies don't have to be healthy in order to count; and five, there are privileged bodies. Ready for the next five? Let's jump in.

Number six, body neutrality is better than body positivity. Body neutrality is better than body positivity. Okay, hear me out. Body positivity is very positive. It really is. If you've talked junk about your own body which I am very certain you have, you've experienced the body negativity that has been so pervasive, especially for women, in recent years. I remember being in college, and every single magazine had something about losing weight or getting a flat stomach or bikini ready or how to get sculpted arms or whatever else. It was obvious that my body was very flawed. Side note, maybe a good companion episode to this one is the episode Your Body Is Not Flawed. Because it isn't. But we're often told it is. It's getting better which is lovely. It used to be that we were told that constantly. Thankfully the language is shifting, but it's in our psyches, for some of us really deep. We're conditioned to see what's wrong about our bodies instead of what's good. Which is why body positivity is positive! It's great. I want us to be positive about our bodies. But I think there needs to be a third option, and that's body neutrality. There are a lot of great voices and teachers in this, so I'm not being a revolutionary here. The idea though is to see all bodies as good bodies. A body is a body. We don't have to give it a grade as good or bad. We don't have to force ourselves into false positivity when our pants don't fit anymore and it takes a little mental effort to jump that cultural hurdle of our body suddenly being bad because it got bigger. There's just a lot of freedom in seeing bodies neutrally. You don't have to psych yourself up to love your body and everything about it all the time. It can just be a body - a marvelous, amazing, body that is yours and good, no matter how bloated or sprained or sick or thin it is. It's just there and great and you can live your life.

I think that's why I went on a mini rant in last month's issue of the Latest Lazy Letter. I'll read you a little real quick.

Now is the time of year where we're told to "wear the shorts!" and "wear the swimsuit!" and I wholeheartedly support both of those statements. It's way too hot in North Carolina to not wear shorts.

What I'm ready to move away from is the "bravery" of the moms who do those things. Or maybe I'm tired of carrying the mantle of "confidence" when I just want to be regular and wear my suit and no one give me a medal for it.

The shape of one's body is neutral. There shouldn't be morality or value statements or even "you go, girls" attached to it, not in the end anyway. I'm ready for all of us to be in our bodies as they are without it being part of our statement of faith or something.

*I just want to be a person and wear my swimsuit and no one care.* As [Kate Kennedy](#) often says, it would be nice if women were allowed to just *exist*.

End of the newsletter excerpt. Side note, if you'd like to get rants such as this in your inbox, click the link in the show notes or go to [thelazygeniuscollective.com/join](http://thelazygeniuscollective.com/join). Okay, but that's what body neutrality is - just being able to exist. Let's all just exist in our bodies.

Number seven, hormones should not be ignored. If you are a woman, hormones are a major part of how your body operates and processes information and moves in the world. In the last episode, I mentioned Bill Bryson's book *The Body*, and this is how he defines hormones: "Hormones are the bicycle couriers of the body, delivering chemical messages all around the teeming metropolis that is you. They are defined as any substance that is produced in one part of the body and causes an action somewhere else. But beyond that they are not easy to characterize. They come in different sizes, have different chemistries, go to different places, have different effects when they get there. Some are proteins, some are steroids, some are from a group called amines. They are linked by their purpose, not their chemistry. Our understanding of them is far from complete, and much of what we do know is surprisingly recent."

Kate Northrup, author of the book *Do Less*, and Maisie Hill, author of *Period Power*, would both tell you to notice the power of the patriarchy in that lack of research and knowledge regarding hormones. Because women weren't in the medical and research fields, female hormones weren't studied in detail. That's very recent. Isn't that wild? But our hormones are a big part of our bodies - how they function, how we view our bodies, and how we view the world.

This is where a little of that body neutrality comes in too. When I am ovulating, my stomach is significantly bigger than when I'm not. Like I have to wear a different pair of jeans. But understanding my hormones and seeing my body in a loving but neutral way helps me look at that change in my stomach as just part of my body doing its thing. It's not bad or good. It just is. I'm just ovulating, and when I ovulate, my hormones and organs and whatever is going on in there makes my stomach bigger. Rather than beating myself up because I have to wear a pair of jeans in a bigger size because size equals worth - yeah right - I just stay comfortable and wear the pants that fit my body during that time. Totally neutral. Hormones just doing their thing.

It's also good to pay attention to what hormones do to your moods and energies. Every period book I've read maps the cycle out in different ways, all of them very helpful, but the one I resonated with the most that made a lot of sense was from Kate Northrup's book *Do Less*. She talks about the cycle in seasons. The week you bleed is like winter. It's a great time to rest and reflect. The week after you bleed is like spring. It's when you likely have more creative energy and new ideas. The third week is when you ovulate, and it's like summer. You're open to the world, open to people, and probably pretty fun to be around. Just, if you're me, wear bigger pants so you can be more comfortable and enjoy yourself. And the fourth week before your period is like autumn. You're winding down and finishing up projects. Somewhere in that autumn season is also where you might grab on to your

least helpful patterns in your work, relationships, and kindness to yourself. Autumn is a lot of people's favorite season in reality, but in hormones, not so much. And that's good to know. It's neutral. The number of times I'm able to catch myself and notice those patterns is amazingly helpful. When I'm in autumn, I'm weirdly conspiratorial. Everyone hates me. No one really wants to be around me. My friends are waiting with their lists of all the ways I've failed them. It's very dire. But paying attention to my hormones in this way, in this very kind neutral way, is helping me be kinder to my body.

I know when I need to rest, I know when it's good for me to schedule interviews and hang out with people. I know when I need to wear bigger pants without it being a jumping off point for throwing out all the ice cream in the house. I would never do that anyway; ice cream is my favorite. Sushi, pizza, ice cream, and a good caesar salad. And in season blackberries. If I have only those things, I'd be pretty content. This isn't a favorite foods podcast though, so we'll move on. The point? Pay attention to your hormones.

Number eight, the body is not separate from who you are. There's a weird paradox a lot of us carry with this one. We let our bodies determine our worth. If our bodies aren't ideal, if we're not crossing that finish line we think we're supposed to cross with our bodies, we beat ourselves up and think we're not really worthy. And we miss out. We let our perception of our bodies impact our whole life. But also at the same time - hence the paradox - we're completely separate from our bodies. We don't breathe thoughtfully. We don't listen when our headaches or neck pain or heart rates are trying to tell us something. We can be very detached from our bodies. But it's all connected. Your body, your mind, your feelings, your soul... they're all connected. When we divorce our bodies or other people's bodies from their humanity, it's not great. Sonya Renee Taylor said this about fat bodies in her book *The Body Is Not An Apology*: "Making fat familiar means bearing witness to fat bodies in joy, pleasure, desire, nature, rest, love, movement, and nourishment." I think that's just absolutely beautiful. If we detach the body from joy, pleasure, desire, nature, rest, love, movement, and nourishment, we're either living in half measures ourselves or not bearing witness to the humanity in bodies we've been conditioned to think aren't normal. The body is not separate from who you are. You can and should embrace your own body and the bodies of others as amazing, good, neutral, and integrated into a person's very being.

Number nine, your body is not something to fix. One of my favorite teachers about this is Sarah Landry, known on Instagram as @thebirdspapaya. Most of her posts are giving us permission to not fix our bodies. That they are good as they are. She's experienced disordered eating, four children, three over a decade ago and a new baby in the last few months. She has been such an encouragement to me both in her words and her pictures. She shows her body in lots of seasons, honoring it each time. There's no fixing. There's only living. A lot of what I've said in this episode and in last week's fits under this point pretty broadly, but I wanted to say it specifically: your body is not something to fix. Because it isn't flawed. Again, there's an entire episode dedicated to that idea.

But if you can stop thinking that your body is something to fix, even when it's sick, even when it doesn't function ideally, even when it's changing faster than you're able to process, it doesn't mean you have to assume a posture of fixing. You can be kind to your body and honor your body while taking small steps to nurture it in a direction that matters to you. But when you dismiss it as something separate that needs to be fixed, you're dismissing your own humanity. You're setting

yourself up to delay kindness to your own circumstances because you're not "there yet." And that's just not true.

And finally number ten, your body can become a safe place. This one is likely tricky for some of you, especially people who have experienced some sort of trauma. In a couple of months, we're going to have an episode with Aundi Kolber who wrote the book *Try Softer* which I highly recommend. The book is for anyone who's ever thought about therapy or has experienced it. It's really an essential read for being a person in my opinion, and I'm really excited to share my conversation with Aundi with you guys in August, but she speaks to the processing of trauma in our bodies in really kind, informative ways. I'm not an expert in this, so I'd like to point you to her. But the point here is that some of you don't see your bodies as a safe place. If you have experienced disordered eating, abuse, discrimination, or the like, your bodies are very much not safe. They've been at the very center of real trauma. Or maybe when you listened to my episode on intuitive eating, you thought, "I can't trust my body to tell me what to eat! I'd just eat Oreos all the time!" If that's your response, your body doesn't feel like a safe space. This idea of embodiment is a newer one for a lot of us. It feels strange, even a little dangerous. How are we supposed to be safe in our own bodies? How are we supposed to trust our own bodies?

I am so excited about another book that's coming out by a woman I adore named Hillary McBride. She is a licensed therapist, has a PhD, and is releasing a book called *The Wisdom of Your Body* which comes out in October. I've been waiting for this book for over a year, and in the sales copy, it says, "Instead of the body being a problem to overcome, our bodies can be the very place where we feel most alive, the seat of our spirituality and our wisdom." Some of these ten principles are more tangible, easier to hold. This one that the body can be a safe space is a bit more ambiguous and needs personal exploration, but as a person who has been paying more attention to being in my body, listening to it, trusting it, resting in it, and not fighting against it, it's a really worthwhile journey to begin.

I will put a ton of links in the show notes to all the books I've mentioned and some accounts I encourage you to follow. We might end up putting everything in a blog post for you to reference easily, but I'll offer as many resources as I can in the easiest way available.

Your body is good. It's okay to not be positive about it all the time. Pay attention and honor your hormones. You're not brave for being over 120 pounds and wearing a bikini. You're worthy of existing in whatever way you need to. As Sonya Renee Taylor says, your body is not an apology. And seriously, *The Body* by Bill Bryson is fascinating. Fascinating. So many books to read, you guys! I love the power of books to broaden how we view the world and ourselves. It's really lovely.

Okay, before we go let's celebrate the Lazy Genius of the Week! This week it's Brandyn who lives in Germany! She shared her meal matrix which has alliteration which I love but also has some great categories if you want to steal them. As a reminder, a meal matrix is basically a plug and play for your dinner choices. Or breakfast or lunch for that matter. But it's a category that limits your decisions. You still get to be flexible and creative if you want, but you're not at the mercy of the entire Internet. Brandyn's meal matrix is Mexican Monday which I'm into because that's a loose interpretation of tacos, nachos, burritos, soups, salads, all kinds of things. So Mexican Monday, Testing Tuesday which is so fun because that could be an entirely new recipe or just testing to see if

changing out this spice for that spice in a recipe you already make will work. Whatever Wednesday. That could easily be room to make whatever, and it has a shrug mentality which I'm into. Whatever. Throwback Thursday. Would this be favorites? Stuff you haven't had in awhile but used to eat a lot. I love that idea. Pizza Friday. A classic. Snoozin Saturday, so maybe super easy stuff. And Charcuterie Sunday. Put anything on a board, and you have a meal. This is such a great meal matrix, Brandyn! I hope y'all heard something in there you want to use too.

Okay, that's it for today! Thanks for listening, everyone. 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!