

## #186 - A Pep Talk for Not Knowing

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 186, a pep talk for not knowing. I'm weary from all the not knowing. I'm weary from this last Thanksgiving weekend that looked nothing like it ever has. I'm weary from months of living in what feels like a time loop with no end in sight. I'm weary wondering if my kids will in fact go back to school the first week of January like they're supposed to. I'm weary of a contested election and all that it's requiring of us as a country and also in our personal relationships. I'm weary wondering if I will actually get this second book written in this crazy ten week timeframe when everything around me feels uncertain. I'm even weary of not knowing whether or not we're going to have an actual college basketball season which is one of the delights of my life.

There is so much we don't know. So today on this Monday after Thanksgiving and this final day of November and (side note) my middle son's ninth birthday - happy birthday, Ben! - I think we could all use a short little pep talk and a way to start small with all of this not knowing.

First, what do we know? What do *you* know? My list of what I don't know and what's overwhelming me because I don't know is so long that sometimes it's all I can see. The small mighty move to counteract that is to name one thing I do know. And then maybe another. And another. I remember hearing Oprah talk about that all those years ago - what do I know to be true? Truth is an anchor to us, so name something you know, that you can be sure of. Your list is your list, and my list is mine. We don't have to have the same one. You don't have to have the same one as your sister or friend or neighbor. Like for me, one of the things I know that helps me is that I'll always have music. Which has big time self-indulgent artist vibes, but also - side note - I think we often label artists as self-indulgent when really they're just moved to speak about their art with confidence. We don't always have confidence in the space that we take up, so when an artist does it, we pop them into a stereotype and move on. But I think we can learn something from them. So removing that stereotype or that quick judgment on the sentence "there will always be music" I'm going to say that is something I know and that I'm so glad I know. If you've been around here for a short or long time, you know that I love music more than just about anything. I have a ton of playlists, I share album and song recommendations on Instagram and in the Latest Lazy Letter that goes to the email list, and in my real life, I talk with friends about music all the time. When I'm sad, I listen to music. When I'm happy, I listen to music. It's such a reset for me. And I know I will always have it. Even in the worst circumstances where my internet goes out and I can't get to spotify, I have my record player. And if my record player breaks, we are a musical family and have a piano and a couple of guitars. And if my house burns down, I can still sing. Which sounds like the beginnings of a Mary Oliver poem, but naming what I know and taking it to the extreme even still shows me that there are certain things I do know, that I can count on, even when there's so much around me that I don't know. Music can be close by and help me deal with these days of unknowing so much better than if I didn't have music.

Again, kind of a long winding example, but the point is you get to decide what you know, what can anchor you, what makes you take a deeper breath even when there's so much you don't know. So name what you know.

The second thought is to remember that just because you don't know something doesn't mean you have to know it right now. Not everything is on a timeline. There are things that can't be known or solved or figured out. Or maybe they need a much longer season of unknowing before the knowing can make any sense. In Emily P. Freeman's book *The Next Right Thing*, she talks about waiting and how darkness and time and unknowing is often part of it and likens it to burying a seed, hoping it will grow. Because seeds don't just need light; they start out needing darkness. And for us, darkness equals unknowing and uncertainty. But darkness is actually good. Emily says, "Am I allowing the darkness to do what the darkness does best - cover, protect, and grow?" Maybe even in all of this not knowing, we can see it as covering, protection, and growth. I know that I've grown this year in ways I might not even be able to name until years from now. And even that unknowing feels a little overwhelming. Like I can't even characterize my own growth during a season of growth. If I can't name it, did it even happen. Does it even count?

And the answer is yes. Which is why I say that not everything is on a timeline or at least the one we created. Just because we don't know doesn't mean we have to spend a bunch of energy trying to know or that we even ever will. Some things will remain unknown. Which sucks. But accepting that as a possibility lets me release a little bit of control, at least for a moment, of what I'm trying to grip tightly and make work. It's acceptance I guess, accepting that we might not know. Which takes the pressure off of trying to know.

Finding reasons and whys and grand plans feels like a good use of our time until we do it and don't have an answer and then feel annoyed at all of it. So maybe just for today, in all the not knowing, you and I can let go of trying to DaVinci's Code this thing. We don't have to be codebreakers. We can just be people living one day at a time, one hour at a time, taking small steps towards what matters to us, towards what we know to be true. We can live in this season of not knowing and be kind to ourselves when we're mad about it or overcome with sadness or take out this collective trauma on our kids or the guy who cut us off on the road. We're not codebreakers. We're just people who can survive not knowing. So name what you do know and release the expectation that your knowing is on a predictable timeline. Instead, just be a person, not a codebreaker. One thing at a time.

So often we think that letting go is going to leave us untethered even more, that we won't have anything to hold on to. That if we don't know what school for our kids is going to look like in January that everything is falling apart, that if we don't know who we're going to see at Christmastime and can't figure it out right now that Christmas is shot, that if we just found out that someone we had contact with got a positive COVID test and now we have to quarantine and have no idea what it's going to look like. In those moments and seasons of deep unknowing and the stress around it, there's actually more freedom in letting go of trying to figure it out and just holding space for what you do know to be true, holding to what matters, to who matters, and

to the reality of the season that you're in, letting it teach you instead of seeing it as something that's simply there to make your life miserable. It's okay to not know. In fact, it can be a pretty amazing practice to show yourself that you can do hard things and not know and still make it. One day at a time. You can do this. You are doing this. Let today be today, release your need to be codebreakers, and just be people who give and receive love and who focus on what matters. All the best to you in that today.

Thanks for being here and 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.