

#219 - A Midsummer Pep Talk

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 219 - a midsummer pep talk. We're halfway through July, halfway through a crazy year that followed the craziest year of any in quite awhile, and I think our bodies and minds might be feeling it. So let's just take a few short minutes for a quick pep talk.

First, let's lay the groundwork of where we are. Summer is a season. Like any season, it has a beginning, middle, and end. I think the middles have a particularly unusual quality because they are far enough away from the beginning where things might have felt fresh and possible. Although some beginnings are also a bit scary and overwhelming and unknown, but there is still a different kind of energy at a beginning. But the middle is still too far from the ending to have any kind of finality or knowing what the next season might be. The middle is far away from everything. You're just in it. So to start, I want to offer the tiniest bit of acknowledgment of that. Middles can be difficult and challenging.

Another piece to this particular middle we're in is that it's the summer slightly after but also still in this pandemic. I am not the first nor will I be the last person to say that this whole experience of the last year and a half has changed us and taken things from us that we probably won't see for quite some time. The emotional and physical and psychological toll this past season has taken is something else, so living in the summer and being in the middle of that summer after such a time is not an easy place to be. Summer for a lot of folks is out of the ordinary anyway. If you're home with kids, every day is the same but also might feel like it has no routine. If you're a working parent, summer is bonkers because you're having to work and figure out care for your kids and still get all the things done. If you don't have kids, the other adults in your life likely have fairly different routines and availability in the summer simply because of the nature of summer, and that doesn't feel normal. Summer, by nature, is singular in how it feels for most people. You might love that singularity, you might hate it, it might depend you're asked, but summer is generally out of the ordinary.

So if you think about being in an already out of the ordinary season after an extraordinary year, it is very normal to feel far more tired than you usually do. I shared this word picture with my therapist a couple of weeks ago, and it was really helpful to me so I'll share it with you now in case it helps you.

Imagine a lake. It has a clear edge all the way around. And this lake is the embodiment of overwhelm. You want to stay out of the lake because the water is metaphorically all the things in your life in one big overwhelming space. There's no distinction, right? It's just a big lake full of everything. We actually use water analogies a lot when we talk about being overwhelmed. I feel like I'm drowning. I'm trying to stay afloat. I feel like I'm being swallowed. I'm treading water. I'm getting hit by wave after wave. Water is a helpful analogy when talking about overwhelm. So in this scenario, being in the water is not ideal. The hope is to stay on the shore. When we're on

the shore, we can see the lake, we can see the things, we can sit and walk and assess and rest and more or less feel like things are within a certain modicum of control.

In fact, part of my job is to give you tools and strategies to stay on the shore. Or offer a hand out of the water when you feel like you're drowning. And also maybe even sit with you when you're tired and treading water or hanging on because sometimes things are just hard.

And that's where I feel like I am right now. I shared with my therapist that I am definitely in the water right now, gripping to the side of the shore. I'm not drowning, I'm not out in the middle, but I'm there holding on. I think a reason that I'm not drowning is because of the tools and perspectives and Lazy Genius principles I share here. I'm letting people in. I'm scheduling rest. I'm batching my work. I am living in my season. I'm paying attention to going in the right order and essentializing different parts of my life. And guess what? I'm still in the water.

And I don't like being in the water. I don't like being overwhelmed. I don't like not being able to see all the things behind and around me because I'm stuck here holding on for dear life. It's hard to have perspective when you're trying to survive.

I don't know about you, but what I try and do when I'm in the water is get out of it as quickly as I can. I run out of breath quicker with all the trying, but the problem with that is I'm already so tired and weary from being in the water in the first place that I have nothing left to get out of it.

I get a lot of messages that are some version "I just don't know where to begin" or "Everything feels like it matters" or "Everything is falling apart and it's impossible to know how to even start small." A lot of us are very overwhelmed by just being human, and back to the beginning of this episode, that checks out. Being a human has been put to the test in recent months. And no matter where you fall on the political spectrum, the first few years of the past administration that came before the pandemic started were already really trying and divisive. It wasn't like those of us who are Americans or individual people were doing all that great when the pandemic hit in the first place. We had already gotten the wind knocked out of us a few times. We were already pretty emotionally thin. And then COVID. So it is very very very normal to feel overwhelmed by simply existing. It's been hard to just exist lately no matter your circumstances.

So with all that, sure, most of us are probably in the water. And if we aren't, we're likely very close trying to keep our balance and maybe even consumed with a little bit of fear that we'll fall in at any point.

When I was sharing this analogy with my therapist, she said, "So you're trying to get out of the water?" And I said well yes of course I am. And, y'all, my therapist is like your favorite aunt. I don't know how old she is, but I'm guessing she's in her late 50s. She's southern and warm and funny and so deeply kind. So try and imagine this next thing said with a warm southern accent from a kind human. She said, "What if you stopped trying to get out of the water? What if just you relaxed a little while you're there?" And I started to cry. Because here's the thing.

Sometimes our season of life is very much in the water. This summer could feel like that for you. You could Lazy Genius literally every aspect of your life with expert precision. You could be organized and thoughtful and let things go and get help and all of it, and *still be in the water*. Some seasons of life are just like that. I think about having a new baby or adding a new baby to an existing family of kids. You will be in the water. It's just a season of being in the water. Hopefully you won't be flailing a ton, but expecting to be on the shore when you don't sleep as much and you're needed constantly and your body is changing and you live in the weird Groundhog Day that is parenting is not a realistic expectation. Some seasons you're just in the water. And that is okay.

So I'll ask you what my therapist asked me. What if you just relaxed in the water? What do you need to make being in the water not feel like an emotional death sentence? What do you need as you stay in the water?

That answer looks different for everyone. I think honestly permission to be there goes a long way. When you let go of the desperation to get out, you have an easier time staying.

I have this faint memory of being at a lake when I was in middle school or something? I was young but not super young, but it was also more than two decades ago. But I have this faint memory of being in a big body of water - I think it was a lake - and not being a very good swimmer, trying to stay afloat and gripping the side of a boat or dock or something for some relief. But that grip was still exhausting. I'm trying to support my entire body with just the tips of my fingers. And then I remember having a life jacket. Somebody literally threw me a life jacket. I strapped it on and just floated. I could relax. I was still in the water and still a little nervous about it, but I wasn't panicking or trying or gripping.

So the metaphorical but hopefully helpful question is what might a life jacket look like for you in the middle of this summer? What do you need to experience a little relief? You might not get out of the water yet. I know I won't until school starts. I have a lot of things in my water, but a couple of the logistical ones are that it's summer and everyone is home, that I have a good bit of work on my plate right now, and that I don't have a good place to do that work without being interrupted by everything who is home. School starts at the end of August, and I will have my new renovated office that was once our garage that is home but separate also at the end of August. We'll also just have more of a rhythm in those days. I also hired two new people to join the Lazy Genius team which is amazing and already making my life easier and work better. But there are a lot of moving parts to growing a team, building an office, and being present with kids during the summer. Those things alone will change completely once school starts. It'll probably feel like I can get on the shore again. But right now, I just can't. It's a season of being in the water, and I'm looking for ways to find relief in that as I give myself permission to not panic about being there in the first place.

So I just want to invite you to think about one thing that could offer you some relief. For me, one thing is going to the pool with my family. I really love it. And I have never loved the pool. Even as a kid, I tolerated the pool. Now I really love it. It's slow and relaxing and fun and dependable. It's

been a life jacket or one of those big rafts shaped like a taco. It's given me relief in this season of being in the water. Painting my nails, reading, and the NBA playoffs have also been life jackets. They're simple, not productive, calming, fun, and a great relief when I experience them. Do they change my circumstances? No. Do they help me get more work done? Zero percent. But they offer some rest and relief in the middle of the work and the stress and the hard conversations and whatever else is in my water that day.

So I'm inviting you to think about what your life jacket is, what your taco float is. Simple simple things that you can do, not to save you but to just offer a little relief. The more we relax in the water and not resent being there, the more we can feel human, even in the hardest seasons.

No Lazy Genius of the week this week. I just want to leave you with those simple words that have been profoundly helpful to me in recent weeks. I hope they give some relief to the middle of your summer. And that's it for today. Thank you 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!