

#177 - The Lazy Genius Plans a Day

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 177 - The Lazy Genius Plans a Day. You might already be excited for this particular topic, so cool! Welcome! But if you need a little convincing that it's worth spending an entire podcast episode thinking about how to plan your day, remember that starting small matters. Small moments matter. Small choices matter. The author Chris Bohjalian wrote "Life is filled with small moments that feel prosaic until one has the distance to look back and see the chain of large moments they unleashed." There's something really special about paying attention to our small moments and intentionally making small choices, like how we plan a day. A single day.

Now as usual, I'm not going to give you my single day and tell you to copy it. I'm not even going to tell you what should be included in your day. This isn't a one-size-fits-all situation. It rarely is. We're going to quickly work through a lens you can use to plan your day, any day in any circumstance. It's incredibly simple and maybe even simplistic if you don't try it first. But we often overcomplicate things before we even start, thinking that if it's not a multi-step process or doesn't have charts or whatever that it can't possibly work. Nope. The opposite is true. Small steps matter, so we'll start small and stay focused on what matters to you about your day. So the Lazy Genius way of planning your day involves flags, chairs, and bunting. For real. Word pictures are such a delight. But let's start where we should always start. What matters.

Name what matters about today. Or tomorrow if you're planning your day the night before. Name what matters. Is it that you finish a project that's due? That you spend time outside because it hasn't been cool and beautiful in weeks? That you go to sleep before 10pm? That you have that conversation with that loved one about that thing? That you don't snap at your kids in so much as you have the power to do so? What matters about today? The reason you ask this every day is because the answer will change every day. No day will look exactly like the one before. Different things matter to different people in different seasons. What mattered on days I had two kids under two at home versus what matters lately having all the medium kids home with different needs and schedules and different personalities... those answers are different. I don't have to convince you, right? There is tremendous value in daily asking yourself "what matters most about today?"

Now if you want to categorize it a bit, I ask three versions of this question at the start of every week and sometimes every day. I shared this on IGTV awhile back, so this might sound familiar. What matters in my schedule? What matters in my home? And what matters in my soul? If I were to tell you to just ask what one thing matters every day and you answer "paying the bills" but your kid is also sitting there in front of you wanting to play, you feel like a turd saying that paying the bills matters. But it does matter. Paying bills on time is something that enhances many aspects of your life. So sometimes it helps to put loose categories around what matters so that you feel permission to put deadlines and non-relational stuff on the forefront, too.

So once you have named what matters most, plant your flags. That's your next step. Flags. Flags mark the things in your day that are fixed. You definitely have a doctor's appointment at 9:30am. That's a flag. You definitely have a grocery pickup at 3pm. That's a flag. You definitely need to eat lunch for real today because you keep skipping it and feeling cranky and tired by the time you hit that 3pm grocery pickup. That's a flag. So plant your flags. Mark the times of day that are fixed and/or immovably important. You can do that digitally in your calendar app, putting the flags in their own color even. You can do that in your planner where you highlight the flags once you've named and written them down. Mark your flags in whatever way helps the most and helps you see them as flags if you can.

Here's why. There are two things that are helpful about flags. Number one, flags give context to your day. They offer a loose path from one thing to the next. You know you've got to get to that next flag. How you get there or how quickly kind of depends, but you have a context within which to make your choice. So it's nice to see the flags as a separate thing from the rest of your stuff so everything doesn't carry the same urgency or lack of urgency. Just an opinion, but setting them apart somehow I think helps. Number two, flags help you see when you have too many flags. If you have a day full of flags, of immovable things, especially when they're really close together, you can make better decisions about how to still be a person in a day like that. Maybe you'll start to notice why you're more tired than you want to be. Flags, whether a color on your calendar or highlighted in your planner or written on a whiteboard or scribbled on a post-it note, help you see when you're doing too much. Our days can only be filled with so many immovable things.

Side note. I think that's one of the reasons why moms at home with kids are so tired right now. I mean we all have reason to be tired. I'm not trying to idolize moms here. But most of the moms I know are living in a life of flags. We've got our flags and everyone else's. We've got the emotional burden of everyone's flags, too. And when there are too many flags, you feel the weight of it. So flags are helpful in giving context to your day, but they also help you see where you need to change a thing or two to keep yourself from drowning in flags. It's too much to not have a little white space here and there.

Which leads us to the next part. Chairs. Park your chairs. Now that you have your flags planted, park a few chairs where you can. Maybe it's mentally blocking off an hour in the afternoon to listen to music and make dinner while your kids float in and out from the yard or the table that's covered in glue and construction paper. That's a place you're going to park and just be. It might be the way you imagine it, with a grateful tiny smile on your face as your kids magically get along perfectly. Or it might be chaos and dinner is more rushed. But because you parked your chair there, you're more mentally prepared for whatever happens. You're there no matter what. You're sitting in that space doing that thing no matter how it goes. The thing about chairs too is that whatever you're parked doing is not as essential as the flags. If you park your chair in the space of dinner making but something happens where you don't get things prepped for what you were going to cook and you end up just boiling water again for another night of spaghetti, that's fine. The end result doesn't change where your chair is parked.

Now if you can imagine a yard, lots of green and pretty trees, the backyard of Nora Ephron's dreams basically, and you imagine your flags and chairs in chronological order, you'll get an idea of what we're going for. If your day is flag after flag without any chairs, without any chances to relax into whatever you're going to try to do, without any place to sit, like literally sit because sometimes I get to the end of the day and sit on the sofa and think, "dude, this is the first time I've sat down that wasn't to eat or pee." We need chairs. We need the flags and chairs to be spaced out. So if you see one day as a circle, almost like a clock, notice how distributed the flags and chairs are. Is it a clumpy day? Does a chair not show up until the end of the day? That's when you bring in the bunting.

Bunting is your third and final step. It's what exists between the flags and gently hangs over the chairs. What does your bunting need to look like today? Is your bunting music that keeps you buoyed on a pretty flag-heavy day? Is the bunting a stack of mindless tasks that need to get done but can get done in random order as you have time between your flags or while you're sitting in a chair? Is your bunting a mantra you need to repeat all day to keep you from not drowning in all your flags? Is your bunting another human who's sharing the load with you as you about your day? Basically what's the connective life-giving joyful thread through your day? Bunting hangs from point to arbitrary point. It's just a simple thing to hang at a party or in your living room that gives a sweet bit of joy. Our days need metaphorical bunting. We're not burning the flags or ignoring the chairs. We're just noticing that our days are filled with all three things. We have elements that have to happen. They just have to; there's no real way out of it. We also have other stuff that needs to happen, like laundry and making dinner and experiencing rest, that are important every day but more flexible. We all have chairs to park throughout the day. And we all need threads of joy to propel us through.

Now listen the goal here isn't some perfectly balanced day of equally distributed flags and ample seating and perfect bunting. Your days are going to be different from day to day. Lots of flags. One flag. Bunting hung well intentioned at the start of the day and dragging in the mud by day's end. Evil wicker chairs instead of chaise lounges. But this image of flags, chairs, and bunting really helps me put stuff in the right place.

There's a principle in *The Lazy Genius Way* of putting everything in its place. Most of the chapter talks about your stuff, like your plates and jackets and kids' toys and stuff. But putting everything in its place extends far beyond your stuff. Putting your to-do list in its proper place is so helpful. Naming what's a flag and what's a chair takes the pressure off the chairs and helps you focus on the flags. Paying attention to how you can incorporate a thread of joy through your day's bunting is such a nice place to put that new album you've been wanting to listen to or that sunshine you've been meaning to take advantage of. Like, if fall sunshine is your bunting, you park your chair outside. You roll the windows down on your way to your next flag.

I realize some of you might think I'm talking in riddles, and I'm sorry for Rumpelstiltskin-ing you. But planning your day in a concrete way just doesn't work. Even the idea of eating the frog which is doing the thing you hate the most first, or marking your big three you want to get done, or whatever other productivity hacks you run across, those things don't always work. I

remember when I was a stay at home without a job and tiny humans and would hear people talk about their big three each day and be like I have big nothing except big exhaustion. Productivity looks so different for people based on personality and stage of life, and also we put so much emphasis on productivity as the chief marker of our days. If we didn't get anything done, the day was a waste. But I think seeing your day this way can help us shift that narrative and that focus. Because the goal is to embrace what matters to you, ditch what doesn't, and then get stuff done within that context. Flags get stuff done. You get stuff done while sitting in your chair. But the goal is to feel like a person at the end of that day, not to have more lines through your task list or have a house that's clean even though you have two babies at home and can't imagine cleaning a bathroom at all right now. We just get so distracted by what doesn't matter because we're letting everything hold equal weight and be in the wrong place.

So the lazy genius plans a day by naming what matters, planting flags, parking chairs, and hanging bunting. Think through what that can look like for you day to day. Every day doesn't have to be the most productive ever. I have a saying which sounds weird but go with it. I have a saying: don't judge every day against your best day. We think that if we have a day where everything gets done and we're also clean and didn't stress eat or yell at a kid, where the house was relatively picked up and nobody complained about dinner and we actually smiled, all the things we think are supposed to exist in a regular day, when that doesn't happen every day, we blame ourselves and say we don't have it together. That's just not a thing. Don't judge every day against your best day. And maybe we should amend the saying in the first place. Stop thinking that's your best day. Use a different word than best. Best is already comparing your days to each other which is a recipe for disaster. Kindness every day. So maybe it's don't judge every day against your most productive day. Optimization is not the goal. Being a person is the goal. You can get stuff done with that being the goal, but starting in the right place, with what matters, will put your day and its purpose in the right place. And tools like flags and chairs and buntings and having visuals for how you want your day to feel can really help that.

And that's how a Lazy Genius plans a day. I hope you enjoyed this episode, and I'm so grateful that you listened. Okay, really quickly before we go, I'm going to be on Instagram live this Thursday at 11:30am EST to show you - wait for it - The Holiday Docket! Some of you know what The Holiday Docket is and even have it if you preordered The Lazy Genius Way and claimed your free Lazy Genius digital library, but for those of you who don't have The Holiday Docket or would like to walk through it with me if you do have it, I'll go live on Thursday to show it to you.

What is The Holiday Docket? It's the Lazy Genius Guide to Celebrating Well. This time of year is usually kind of scattered and crazy and great but also tiring, and who knows what holidays in 2020 will look like. I want to give you a path to naming what matters about your holidays and then planning the stuff that matters so it doesn't have to get crammed into the cracks. I want to help you say no, come up with family traditions, put the different components of the holidays in the right context for you, and basically help you celebrate in the way you'd really like to. So The Holiday Docket will be available on Thursday, October 1st. I'll announce it on Instagram and over email, so be sure you're connected with me in at least one of those places. I'm on

Instagram @thelazygenius, and you can click the link in the show notes to join the mailing list or just go to thelazygeniuscollective.com/join. I love the Holiday Docket so much. It's the best selling LG product by a lot and has made a huge impact in the lives of a lot of folks to enjoy the holidays in the way they want to individually. I'm really excited to offer it again, so join me Thursday October 1st on Instagram at 11:30am EST to walk through what's inside!

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!