

#166 - Book Launching 101

This episode is sponsored by my new book, *The Lazy Genius Way*! If you like what you find around here, I'd love to invite you to preorder *The Lazy Genius Way* which releases on August 11th, and as a thank you and as a way to tide you over until the book itself arrives, I'm giving you the entire Lazy Genius digital library for free! That's four A to Z actionable guides on decluttering, meal planning, staying sane through the holidays which you'll be glad to have once September rolls around, and cleaning the house. If you'd like more details, head to thelazygeniuscollective.com/book. *The Lazy Genius Way* is a book of thirteen principles that are like a Swiss army knife for crafting a life that matters to you, not a life that matches everyone else's. It's the perfect combination of efficiency and soul, and I hope you check it out. For details go to, thelazygeniuscollective.com/book. *The Lazy Genius Way: Embrace What Matters, Ditch What Doesn't, and Get Stuff Done*.

Hey, everybody! 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 166 - Book Launching 101. There is something so fun about getting a behind-the-scenes look at something like publishing. We all read books, but y'all the whole industry is something else. There's so much happening, and it's all really interesting! Well, some of it is. Today, I want to share with you five things I learned about launching a book that I didn't know before and that will be interesting to you if one of the following three things are true: 1) you like me and the idea of my book, *The Lazy Genius Way*, and want some scoop about how it's gone down, 2) you have curiosity about publishing and launching because you hope to do that some day, or 3) you know that life lessons learned from one area always affect the others and are curious about how book lessons apply to other things. So hopefully all of you.

Let's jump in with our five things. And they will get progressively shorter as we go through the list for sure, so just a heads up there. Okay!

Number one, you don't have to turn in a perfect book.

I talked about the process of writing the book in a previous episode which I'll put in the show notes, but the editing was not what I expected. I thought that when my first major manuscript deadline rolled around that my editor would expect a pretty fully formed book. Maybe not perfect but kind of close. Which is definitely my default brand and vibe. I'm trying to release that idea of "yeah I don't need to be perfect but I'll come as close as I can!" That's stupid, y'all. Let's calm down with all that.

Here's the chronology of editing. I turned in my manuscript in May of 2019. It was a big day. And what's funny is you know when you write a blog post or an Instagram caption or even thinking back to writing an essay in college or something, you think "let me just read through this real quick one more time." Well, the inclination to do that is still there, but when what you wrote is an

actual book, you can't just read through one more time. It's a book. It's too long for that. It's also really hard to edit and work on something that's one singular piece but so big. It's weird. It's hard. It's really hard. So when I turned in my first manuscript, I thought it was in really good shape. And to a point it was I guess. But here's what an editor can do better than I can. An editor can somehow read the book, the really big actual book, and still keep up with what it feels like as a whole. That's her job, to see the whole thing as one while still reading it in pieces or in reading it over a larger amount of time because that's what a book requires. So when my editor, her name is Susan, read my book, she saw so many things from a structural standpoint that I didn't see. The content was there, but the way it was put together was definitely raw.

So if you're curious, my edits were basically this: I needed to have the same structure in each chapter which the chapters did not have before. Some started with a story, some ended with a story, some had really practical step by step ideas and others had none. And basically I had to go back and create a chapter structure that could work for every single chapter, no matter what that chapter's principle was. And that was really hard because some of the principles are so tangible and helpful and actionable and concrete and others are not. They're more soulful and abstract. You need both; that's what I love about this book and this Lazy Genius way is that we equally embrace efficiency and being soulful, we see that lists are great but so is rest. You need both; you can't really live life well without both. But the book needed to hold both in the same way, in the same shaped hands. So that took a long time to figure out.

The other big thing that came from edits was realizing that how you write a book is a lot different than how you write a blog post or a podcast episode. Most of my work online is written to a group of people. A lot of you guys and y'all's and such. But a book is written to one person. I didn't know that was kind of the norm, so when I found out, I realized I had to essentially go back and write the entire book to one person. I also had to assume that the reader didn't know me. Which I super not do the first time around. I made a lot of assumptions that someone like you who listens to this show a lot and follows me on Instagram would be the one reading, not a stranger. My book was too familiar. I made jokes and told stories and wrote in such a way that someone who isn't familiar with me would be a little left out. And that's not great. So it's not that I had to write the entire book again, but like kind of? It wasn't a section thing, like fix that paragraph and shape up this sentence and whatever. There were massive structural changes on every single page which made the book so much better. But it took a lot of editing to get it that way.

So number one, you don't have to turn in a perfect book. Editing is essential in making it a great book. More eyes, more expertise, and collaboration create something better than you'd make on your own, almost always. It's a ton of work, but you don't have to be perfect by yourself.

Number two, you don't have to say yes to the first book cover they give you. Covers are like a big deal, so when that process started, I was so excited. Different publishers probably work different ways, but I put together a Pinterest board of book covers I really loved and sent that to the design team. When they sent me some ideas and they sent me maybe eight or ten, I didn't love any of them. There was one that could maybe work, but I didn't love at all. Fortunately,

Emily P. Freeman who is an established, successful author and also my best friend was like “hey listen you don’t have to go with what they offered. You can ask for more options.” And I’m so glad she said that. It’s always a gift to have people in your corner who have kind of done what you’re doing. It doesn’t have to be book writing. Ask for help. Let people in, and you’ll get ideas and counsel that you wouldn’t have gotten otherwise.

So I asked for a second pass. I didn’t know how to put into words what I didn’t like about the designs offered but more importantly how to communicate what I did like, what I actually wanted. Again, ask friends who have experience in things you don’t. My friend Michael is a freelance graphic designer, and he worked in the same office that I did when I was writing my book. So I looked through my Pinterest board and through the covers and gave me language, like design language, and helped me figure out words to describe what I like. He looked at all the inspirational book covers and could see what they had in common which I didn’t see at all. I just liked them all, but he could tell why. It’s kind of like when Anne Bogel on What Should I Read Next listens to three books that a reader loves and can see how those books are connected. She can see the throughline which makes her really good at hosting that podcast. That’s what Michael did. Michael could see the throughline, and it was so helpful. So I sent those words back to the designer, and a week or so later, she came back with two designs.

Now, some of you have been around awhile and who were excited about the book from the very beginning have seen versions of both covers. You might notice that the current book cover wasn’t always the one on Amazon and stuff. Well, the two original cover pitches were the beginning versions of both the cover that some of you saw for a few weeks and the cover that there is now. I can’t exactly tell you why we had to change; it’s a little too top secret to share here, but covering a book is quite a process. And I’m so glad I asked for another pass, for a second look. Sometimes we don’t have to accept what people offer. It’s okay to use our voices and say, “no I don’t think that’s right. Can we talk through what we can do on another round?”

Alright number three, nothing happens chronologically. In publishing, everything is out of order. We did cover art before the book was even close to done. We did the tagline before I had broken the book and figured out what it was going to be. We had to write the back cover copy before I knew what the book was going to be. Isn’t that crazy? There are just so many things happening at once and in no normal order. Being a person who likes linear thinking and very much is into chronology, it was really challenging. It still is. It’s a pretty chaotic process because of all the moving parts that no one is really in charge of. There’s not a single person in charge of this whole thing, not even me. I have to answer to people. They have to answer people. Then some of those people answer to other people that answer to me. It’s all so weird. It’s just one giant team without a captain, and so you have to trust each other and do your job well and hope that they are doing their jobs well, but since all of our jobs are happening separately and on different timelines, nothing happens in order. But it’s the way it is. It’s also a way I never knew existed. I didn’t know it was going to be like that.

Number four, never stop asking questions. No question is too stupid. No question is too annoying. I kept a lot of things to myself at first because I didn’t know what I was supposed to

know. I didn't want to step on anyone's toes. I just wasn't sure how any of this worked, and if I didn't ask questions, I wouldn't know. We have to ask questions. Again, not just in book publishing but any time we don't know what's going on. I want to be the kind of person who isn't afraid to not know what's going on and not afraid for people to know that. We learn when we ask. We can make things better when we ask. We can help other people when they ask when we ask. It's small but really important. I am really glad this process has made me better at asking questions.

And number five, set targets, not goals. This isn't really about publishing specifically, but it's something that I learned during this process and has been major in all kinds of areas since I started learning it. Set targets, not goals.

There's nothing wrong with goals. I've written a lot about how I see goals and how I'm learning what they mean in my life. But I'm fighting against the tendency to be an all or nothing person. Goals take a major hit with that thinking. If I set a goal and don't hit it, it's a failure. I mean it's not, but I feel like it is. Being fluid with goals and seeing them as a spectrum rather than pass or fail is something I haven't figured out yet. Literally, my brain doesn't know what to do with unmet goals. But targets? I can do that. Think about a target in archery class or whatever. Sure, the bullseye is super fun, but if you hit the target, that's still great. I'm learning to set targets, ranges of numbers that would be great to hit if I can. The outside of the target is kind of a baseline. If I don't hit that number, I legit did something wrong, and we really need to evaluate for next time. The bullseye is something really tough to get but not impossible. Book sales are so arbitrary and based on a million different things, many of which are out of my control, so not hitting the bullseye is not really a big deal. It's understandable really. So anywhere my arrow hits on that target, it feels good. And I'm good with that. It's helped me process the numbers without putting myself into an emotional tailspin. Targets, not goals.

And that's a little book launching 101. There are resources that can give more concrete thoughts than that, but those are the things about launching a book that were hugely helpful to learn that I really didn't know before going into it. If you're in the category of people who want to write a book, I hope this helps. Obviously, this is just my experience, but hearing all kinds of experiences can inform all kinds of people. I'll put a few resources in the show notes of previous episodes and a link to Hopewriters which is my best resource for writers. It's fantastic. They don't open enrollment for a couple of months, but if you're interested, you can get on their mailing list to find out when they're offering membership again.

And of course if you haven't yet and are thinking about it, I would love for you to preorder my book *The Lazy Genius Way: Embrace What Matters, Ditch What Doesn't, and Get Stuff Done*. It releases on August 11th which is in 29 days. So exciting. And as a huge thank you for buying it now, you get the entire Lazy Genius digital library for free. The total value of that when I sell the four resources separately is \$112, and they're worth every penny. But you get them for free. So jump on it pronto. The link is in the show notes. Don't forget that if you order the hardback, the ebook, or the audiobook, it counts, but you have to claim your preorder bonuses at

thelazygeniuscollective.com/book. We don't know if you buy the book until you tell us. So thank you for telling us.

Okay that's it for today! Thanks so much 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.