

## #159 - Closing Ceremony Magic

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 159 - Closing Ceremony Magic. I've talked about opening and closing ceremonies a couple of times now on the podcast and will put some links in the show notes to those episodes if you're interested in deep diving, but today we're going to talk about the magic of closing ceremonies in particular.

The idea here is to simply mark the end of something with intention. This idea initially came to me a few years ago after a busy holiday season. When I looked back over those holiday weeks, everything was amebic and smushed together. There was no distinction in my brain between Halloween and Thanksgiving and Christmas. It was just one big blur of busy. So I started marking the endings and beginnings of the actual holidays, not just the bigger holiday season. When I realized how valuable that practice was for me and my family, we started having closing ceremonies for the end of school and then the end of summer and then things unrelated to holidays and seasons like finishing writing my book.

We are in a time now where we're ready to close something out. It's time. Closing ceremonies are more or less part of the vocabulary around here in Lazy Genius Land, which is probably why I've gotten several slightly panicked requests over the last couple of weeks about how to have closing ceremonies when what you normally do won't work because of the pandemic. Or how do you even close a school year that barely felt like a school year? I get it. It's tricky, especially if you already have a closing ceremony for this time of year that you love but can't do. We go to our favorite burger place for dinner the last day of school, but it's been closed for two months. It's not even open for takeout. So... yeah, now what do we do?

What do we do when the restaurant we get food from or the park that we eat at or the movie theater we go to are all closed? Maybe you close out the school year by going to a friend's party that probably won't happen because of gathering restrictions. Maybe you celebrate by going to your pool opening, but you're not sure if it's going to open at all and then how weird is it to socially distance at a pool? Maybe ironically the thing that you do for your closing ceremonies is to have a movie night at home because the school year is so busy and frantic and it's nice to finally not have anywhere to be but home. The irony of that is nasty.

It can feel like our closing ceremonies are shot because of how things are, and that's a very real thing. I've said it several times in episodes about a variety of topics, but there's a lot to grieve right now. But here's an important thing to remember: the magic of a closing ceremony isn't really about what you do but that you just do something. It really is. You can be disappointed about not being able to do what you normally do and still have a magical closing ceremony. The magic isn't in what you do but that you do something. And in a lot of ways, I think of all the school years to have a closing ceremony for, it's this one.

So let's end this episode with a couple of questions that can help you name what you and your family need to wrap up this year, and I'll share some rapid fire ideas as well. First though, a very important reminder. Just because closing ceremony has the word ceremony in it doesn't mean it has to be elaborate. You'll get that from the list of ideas, but the scale of this, much like what you actually do, isn't the important thing. Marking it is really what makes that magical difference in your mentality. Sometimes I have opening or closing ceremonies for different life transitions in my head only. I just breathe and mark the end of something, and that still makes a difference. We're simply paying attention, and you can do that however grandly or simply you want to.

Okay, a couple of questions to help you figure out what to do. First, what does everybody need in this transition from weird online school year at home to summer still at home? Only you can know the answer because of how different we all are. Is it about noticing and naming some beautiful parts of how we've been living? Is it about celebrating that we got through this really hard thing? Is it about kicking this school year out the door on its butt? It could be a bit of all of it. Your closing ceremony might need to almost be a wake for all the things you lost these last few months. Maybe you or your kid didn't get to actually graduate in the traditional way. Maybe your daughter didn't get to go to her first high school dance that she was excited about. I know that the last year of elementary school can be a big deal because you're leaving a place you've been for six years or something. Now it's just over? And you or more likely your kid is just going to start middle school? But are they even going to do that? We can spin out really fast, can't we?

The point of these ceremonies is to ease the transition from one thing to the next, not spin out in the what ifs or the grief. And maybe - and this is the second question - the transition isn't from one thing to another thing. Often we move from school to summer, from thing to thing, from experience to the next experience. But since our experiences are likely going to be fairly similar, just without online school praise the actual Lord, ask yourself what mindset you want to transition out of and maybe even what mindset you're transitioning into. You could have closing ceremonies for the daily stress of trying to get it all done. Now that school is over, that's for the birds. Summer mom is not a stressed mom, ideally anyway. The point is this is a chance to name what's been good and say thank you, to name what's been hard and say goodbye, to name the feeling that we're ready to be free of because of these strange circumstances and welcome in something new.

So the questions are simple, but the answers are vast. What do you or your family need from this closing ceremony? And what mindset are you needing to transition out of? Marking moments with closing ceremonies is just about paying attention to the moment, to your people, and acknowledging whatever you're experiencing together in a tangible way. Even if your tangible ways from the past won't work, you can still pay attention to the moment and acknowledge the experience, whatever that is for you.

So here are some ideas of closing ceremonies. Obviously different locations have different rules, and different people have different comfort levels of social interaction and leaving home.

None of these are endorsements, just ideas to spark your own thinking in what to do for you and your people. I'll just run through these without much elaboration. Again, sparks.

Ceremonially uninstall Zoom. Sure you might need to use it over the summer for keeping in touch with people, but you can reinstall as Summer Zoom.

Bake treats for friends and deliver them.

Clear off the area of the house that was used for school and declare it a fun zone. Have a meal on the table. Put together a puzzle there. Dance on the surface like a victor claiming the spoils.

Get one of those giant Lego sets and put it together as a family.

Have a backyard socially distant movie night with friends. The internet is full of great projection ideas.

Make a list or just talk about everyone's favorite thing from this weird time, something you learned, something that surprised you, that kind of thing. Any kind of reflection really.

Do a movie marathon but on purpose. You could spend the day after school is over where everyone watches their movie of choice. In a row. Not everybody has to watch every movie, but it's kind of like a marathon to celebrate no more school. Another take on the marathon is to do a closing ceremony for the whole week and binge a longer story like Lord of the Rings or Star Wars or Harry Potter.

Another way to make the whole week a closing ceremony week that can kind of morph into summer opening ceremonies is to let every person in the house if you live with other people each get a Celebration Day. They pick what to eat, they choose a movie to watch or game to play or person to try and go see from a distance. Everybody gets a day, and the whole group is game for that person's day.

For you personally if you're a mom coming off of being an accidental homeschool parent, do a yard sit with other school moms. Bring your chairs, bring a margarita, and cheers in the air to a job well done.

Move around a kid's bedroom furniture, kind of like a summer room. If there's a desk in there, move to a very different space and let the kid have some space away from at-home desks.

Start a family read-aloud book. Sarah MacKenzie at Read Aloud Revival should be your guru on that.

And finally create a little time capsule. Bury it in the yard if you want or better yet tuck it into where things go to die in your house and where it won't be discovered for years and years like

an attic or garage or something. That way it'll go with you when you move even if you forget about it.

And those are my sparks for you to come up with your own idea for a closing ceremony for this crazytown time of life. And for those of you who have finished school already or are super close like we are here in North Carolina, a big fat high five because you did it. This junk is hard. It's rewarding and awful and sweet and interesting and stupid and all the things. And you did it. You made it. So good job if that was your reality. If you're a teacher, thank you from the bottom of our very tired, grateful hearts. Your job is ridiculously hard, and we're so grateful for you and air cheers that margarita in your honor. And if you don't have kids or aren't a teacher but still feel like we're transitioning into a newer time which is true for a lot of us throughout the US, you should have a closing ceremony too. Close out whatever you want whether or not school is in the picture. We all get to celebrate. We all need to mark this time, so do what makes sense for your life, your needs, your people, your state, your health, your convictions, your desperation, your dreams... it all counts.

And that's it for today. Thank you so much for listening. And don't forget to check the show notes for links to anything I mentioned in this episode, including a link to preorder *All Things Reconsidered* by Knox McCoy. Seriously, y'all, it's such a great book. This isn't the ad talking. This is Kendra talking. Go buy his book. 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!