

#157 - What Does It Mean to Take Care of Yourself?

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 157 - what does it mean to take care of yourself? Obviously if you're listening to this in real time, we're in a season of being stretched. We're alone a lot more or a lot less depending on our living circumstances, our schedules are strange, we can't go anywhere, we can't see people's faces because of masks. Just the other day I was getting groceries at Aldi and somebody said hi to me and it took me a minute to realize it was my friend Mark because all I could see were his eyes. I mean. We miss faces! And if you're stressed about all that's going on, you might be sleeping less, not eating the same things because of apocalyptic grocery shopping, maybe you're not able to read or run or get drinks with girlfriends, all things that normally make you feel really good on hard days. So yeah. I feel like it's a good time to talk about what it means to take care of ourselves.

So let's just jump in. What does it mean to take care of yourself? One way we can take care of ourselves right now is to not make this episode complicated. I'm not going to give you a dozen things to think about because we barely have time to brush our teeth. So here's what we're going to do. I want to share what I think are the two main questions to consider when you're trying to name what it means for you personally to take care of yourself.

The first question is: is this going to help me right now or help me later? And maybe another level of that question is which do you need? Do you need to take care of your "right now" self or your "later" self? A way to take care of yourself right now is sleeping when your body needs to sleep. You need to take care of yourself in that way right now. Sleep can be put off, but we're not taking good care of ourselves when we do it. That's not a shaming thing. Just an observation. There are plenty of times I'm tired but don't want to go to bed yet or can't because it's in the middle of the day and my kids could wreak a good amount of havoc if left unattended for half an hour. But sleep is a way to take care of yourself right now.

What about taking care of your later self? What does that look like? Maybe cleaning up the kitchen after lunch is a way to take care of your later self because you can enter into dinnertime without walking into a room full of mess. Honestly, some things are a drag to do now, but they really benefit you later and are a way you can take care of yourself.

Some things are both. Going for a walk around the block takes care of your right now self and your later self. For right now, it calms you down, gives you some quiet, gets you in the fresh air, and immediately separates you from whatever stress you had. It changes how you feel in the moment. It also can be a way to take care of your later self, especially if it becomes a practice that you can look forward to and depend on. Knowing that you're going to walk around the block alone every night after dinner becomes something sacred and feels like a practice you as a person can benefit from in the long run. And even if you take a walk to take care of yourself right now, it still helps you later because you get a chance to release some of the stress that might

have been building up, and you're saving later you from having a breakdown. But I think that pretty much every single choice you make to take care of yourself falls into something that takes care of you right now or has the intention to help take care of you later.

Why ask this question at all? Why ask if something is taking care of you right now or later? It connects to the second question which is: how do I want to feel once I'm taken care of? How will this thing I'm doing affect or even change how I feel?

If you want to feel peaceful, if that's the thing you need to take care of yourself, you are best served if you make a peaceful choice. However, do you want to feel peaceful right now or are you creating a situation or environment where you're creating peace to experience later? Well, it depends on how desperate you are for the peace right now I guess. But if you don't consider that question, you will likely make a decision that isn't really creating a chance or space for you to take care of yourself in the way you actually need to.

An overused but still helpful example of this for me is being on my phone, particularly on social media. Part of my job is social media, and I genuinely love being on Instagram. I really do. However, it isn't always the thing I need to take care of myself, especially when my right now needs are pretty specific. So if I need to feel peaceful right now, like as soon as possible, but don't name that, I'll feel discontent and overwhelmed and reach for the closest distraction: Instagram. Does Instagram make me peaceful? Not at all, especially when I'm already a little riled up. Instagram and I are the most healthy friends when we hang out when I'm in a good place. If I go hang out with her because Instagram is definitely female and I'm already whiny and distracted with my life, Instagram is only going to make me more whiny and distracted, not at all peaceful which is what I need. Peace is what I want to experience and feel, so a way to take care of myself is to ask those two questions: do I need to take care of myself right now or do something to take care of me later? Right now. And what do I want to feel after I've been taken care of? Peace. Okay. Then I need to choose something that will bring me peace right now. For me, nature and art bring me peace. So I'll go outside for a walk or just sit on the porch if I can't leave the house. I might listen to music or read a story or engage in some other kind of art that speaks to me. Peace might come for you in different ways and likely does because we're all different, but the naming is where we're all the same. Do you need to take care of you right now or do something to help take care of you later?

And honestly that's it. I could give you lists of ways to take care of yourself, but you don't need another list of things to remember. You just need a little perspective. You need a new way to see. We think that if we keep collecting tips and ideas from across the Internet that we'll find what we're looking for, but you're still looking, right? And the reason you're still looking is because you're looking for the wrong thing. You don't need another thing to do; you need a freeing way to see. I hope you feel that with this simple exercise in figuring out what it means *for you* to take care of yourself. Only you can answer that, but these are two simple questions that can help you name that.

And that's it for today. I hope you feel encouraged. I hope you feel free to do what you need without wondering if it's the right thing or has social proof or is what all of your friends are doing. Remember, being a Lazy Genius is being a genius about the things that matter and lazy about the things that don't *to you*, and that includes taking care of yourself. Let go of what doesn't matter, lean into what does, and experience the permission of asking yourself what you need and how you can tend to yourself well right now and later.

Thanks for listening and being here with me today. 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.