

#153 - Time Management When Time Makes No Sense

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 153 - time management when time makes no sense. Yes, we're still in the coronavirus pandemic, but honestly there are lots of times when time makes no sense. Having a newborn baby for example. Time makes no sense then. When you're home with tiny kids and nobody is in school and you live the same kind of day over and over again. Time doesn't make sense. When you're you watch someone you love go through chemotherapy. When you're waiting to hear back from graduate schools and you don't have a job yet and wonder if you're supposed to get one. Honestly, there are months when just being on my period turns time upside-down. Basically, anything that takes your regular average day and the regular average things you normally do to fill it and then shifts it around and upside-down, it's a struggle to get a handle on how to manage our time. Obviously, the situation we're all in is a massive example of that, but it's real outside of a pandemic, too. So today we're going to revisit the three Lazy Genius pillars of time through the lens of time making no sense.

Before we get into those, one way you can use your time when time makes no sense is to do something ridiculous and fun, something like The Favorites File! If you're new here or didn't hear me talk about it last week on the podcast or don't follow me on Instagram, you don't know what it is, so let me tell you! The Favorites File is a free downloadable little project where you name all kinds of your favorite things in pop culture. There are directions and assignments, obvious things like favorite movie and TV show but also favorite episode, the actor who gets a season pass, who you'd like to be stuck in a quarantine with, all kinds of important things. Last week, we went through the Show File. Today we start the Film File. Now you can absolutely download these whenever and fill them out whenever you want to, but it's such a fun project and an extra fun project to do together. Your together could be a few friends and you have this fun thing to connect you during social distancing, or you could do it in a bigger together on Instagram with me. We've got fun prompts of stupid but still important stuff to share everyday, and you're welcome to share once, occasionally, every single time... the whole point is to do something fun, to distract yourself from all the craziness in the world when you need to, and to maybe still feel the satisfaction of finishing a project, even if that project is making a bunch of lists that involve people you will never meet. If you want it, there's a link in the show notes, or you can go to thelazygeniuscollective.com/tff for The Favorites File, and please come play on Instagram too and share some fun tidbits about yourself. Today's prompt is about your favorite movie theater experience, so get all the info for that stuff @thelazygenius on Instagram.

I have been spending some of my time working on my Favorites File, and it's time well spent for my emotional health for sure. But obviously we all have a lot more to do every day than that. In fact, some of us feel busier now being home than we did before. There is a slowness to not having soccer practice and meetings and rehearsals for school plays. Even just the not having to get up and out the door every day for school or work for some of you is its own kind of

slowness. But that doesn't mean there's nothing to do. So many of us have more to do. Time is shrinking almost. It's really strange. In this current situation, I just think about the woman whose husband still has to go to physically to work in an essential job, who is a teacher and has to teach online classes and figure out how to do the whole online platform thing and coach students and parents through how to use the technology, *and* has her own kids at home who need some help doing school. And if one of those kids is in preschool or daycare or something? Stop it. You, my friend, do not have a slow life. Your time is definitely turned upside-down.

So what do we do when time makes no sense? Let's revisit the three Lazy Genius pillars of time. Hopefully, they can hold true even when things are weird. That's the hope. And if you're wondering where I first talked about these pillars, it's in episode 48 called The Lazy Genius and Time Management.

Okay, pillar #1: Your beliefs affect your time more than your schedule does. The idea behind this is that we think we have zero time, but often how we see our schedule, our responsibilities, even our worth affects our time more than the blocks on our calendar. The irony of this current upside-down time is that there is virtually nothing on my calendar. Literally nothing. I've deleted stuff that is no longer relevant - meetings and such - and it's all gone. It's weird. And yet I still feel busy. I still have stuff to manage. So before we even get into the beliefs part of pillar one, that our beliefs affect our time more than our schedule does, it's weird to think that our schedules have way less power over our time than we thought. I mean right now there's no calendar. Schedules don't look at all like they did. We're living each day one at a time in the most intense way we ever have. But there's still time to manage. So let that be an encouragement as we have this conversation, that no matter how you get your schedule together, your time still has power in more ways than one. No matter how much you get your calendar under control, time still has to be managed or at the very least your attitude towards it has to be managed, noticed maybe if managed feels too strong.

Okay, so how do we look at this first pillar of time management when time makes no sense? How do we consider our beliefs about time, especially when our schedules are so strange? I got a DM from someone named Danielle on Instagram a week or two ago, and she shared a story about her time that I think illustrates this pillar so well. She said, "I'm a new mom and am in the middle of maternity leave. I planned to get my son on a schedule a couple of weeks before returning to work, but after talking to friends it seemed like maybe I needed to do this whole schedule thing sooner. Up until that point, I had been feeding on demand and sleeping when the baby sleeps. Everything has been fluid and it's worked wonderfully. I've had energy and felt completely sane. My husband is working from home, so this has allowed him to spend more time with our son as well. Well, we changed our approach, got him on a schedule, and it's working perfectly. He's sleeping when he's supposed to, waking up only once at night to eat, and I'm nursing at predictable times. By the rule book, it's working, but what isn't working is that I have six more weeks of maternity leave and I'm not holding my baby when he's sleeping. I'm not wearing him around the house since he's in his room most of the day, and my husband isn't seeing him nearly as much either. Yesterday as I was struggling to decide what to do with his

schedule, your voice popped into my head: what matters to you? I realized that it matters to me that I get to snuggle my baby while he's little because in a few short weeks I'll be working and won't be able to in the same way. It matters to me that my husband gets to spend time with him. What doesn't matter to me that my six week old being on a military schedule just because I'm supposed to do it that way. I am happy to tackle this in a month. I am not happy having restrictions on my newborn right now. So I've decided to keep the schedule for another day or so to continue learning what I can, and then I'll adjust it to what works for us and what matters to us. I'll certainly take some tips with me, but I'm not going to follow this schedule because I'm supposed to. I'm reprogramming my brain to think "what matters to us" and to make choices in light of that. I'm approaching this with meaningful intention, and my whole family is benefitting from the joy, peace, and love that comes with that."

Danielle, thank you for sending that to me, and I share that here with all of you because it's such a perfect example of how our beliefs affect our time more than a schedule does. Danielle could've managed her time by this schedule she felt like she was supposed to create for her baby. Most of us do manage time by schedules, but she decided to lead instead with what mattered, and that affected how she managed her time.

You don't have to have a newborn to do this obviously, even though having a newborn is definitely an example of when time makes no sense. There are other scenarios where time doesn't fall into place the same way, where down is up and up is down. In those situations especially, it's so important to name what matters, to tease out what you believe about the situation. If you're stuck at home and are going to be helping your kids with online school for the rest of the school year and trying to balance your own work and your partner's work and you miss your people and all the things and if you let all of that stuff crush your brain and make you spend every day walking around believing "this will never end" or "I can't do this" it's going to affect how you manage your time. When I get into that desperate headspace, I overplan. I overschedule. I overmanage. And then I just get overwhelmed. I go crazy with the time management or I just give up and throw in the towel because my belief says that it's never going to end and I can't do it. I'm not saying we're not all going to have moments of emotional collapse because life right now is weird and hard. We're going to fall apart. But falling apart isn't the end. The really lovely thing about falling apart is that when all the pieces are broken and lying on the floor in a crying heap, we can see what we're made of. And then we can decide what pieces might not be serving us very well. Beth Silvers on the podcast Pantsuit Politics said the same thing about our country as we fall apart during this crisis. The blocks have fallen down, but rather than rushing to rebuild them in the same way, we can use the falling apart to assess what we no longer need, what we need to make bigger, and rebuild in a new and better way. I do think that analogy works to a point for our own inner work. Vulnerability and falling apart do help us see the pieces of ourselves. A light shines, and we can see more clearly what we're allowing to matter and what might not need to matter so much anymore.

Okay, so pillar #1: your beliefs affect your time more than your schedule does. I think that's totally still true when time makes no sense.

Pillar #2: You can do it all if you decide what all means. We hear a lot about the woman that can do it all, and it's a bit of a tired story. At this point, we intellectually know that doing it all is a myth. And even more than that, the list of all the things we're supposed to do somehow keeps getting longer. So yeah we know we can't do it all, and the response doesn't need to be "well, I can't do it all so I'm just not going to do anything." You don't have to live that way either. Instead, decide what matters and spend your time doing that stuff as much as possible.

Right now when time makes no sense during this coronavirus pandemic, the "all" looks different. Now feeling like you have to do it all looks like being an enthusiastic confident homeschool mom, getting up even earlier than before because you have to get the same amount of work done as before, cooking meals the same way, and now since we're all home all the time should you cook lunch and breakfast too sometimes? Even when time makes no sense, we can get caught up in the trap of doing it all. In fact, when time makes no sense, we need to be reminded in a new way that we can't do it all because the all looks different and we've kind of forgotten what we know.

So in this weird time, choose what all means. Choose what matters. Then manage your time according to that, not according to Frankensteining together what mattered before time made no sense and what's being added after. Start again. The blocks have fallen, so take a minute to rebuild them in a way that makes sense for now, not haphazardly resemble what once was.

And finally pillar #3: Do what's necessary before it becomes urgent. I think this might be the most important pillar when time makes no sense. Things are upside-down, and what was once urgent isn't anymore. Getting to soccer practice on time for example. That's no longer urgent or even necessary. So in this new time, what's necessary? Eating, maybe getting school done, your list can be whatever it needs to be. But name what's necessary for you and your home to function well. That definitely starts with naming what matters maybe on a bigger scale. For Danielle, what matters is holding her baby as much as she can while she's home. That's a bigger why. From there, she can name what's necessary to support what matters.

Once you name what's necessary or just look around and see what's necessary, you tend to those things before they become urgent and you're just putting out fire after fire. Your kitchen could be a good example of this. What matters right now is staying home. One of the necessary things about staying home is eating. Now if you're like me and you have five people at home every single day for a sequence of many many days, you go through a lot of food. A lot of dishes. A lot of decision-making around food. That is necessary. So how can you tend to that now before it becomes urgent? You or whoever can put the breakfast dishes and cereal boxes and stuff away once breakfast is over. Three bowls and a couple of juice cups might not feel like much when you get to lunch, but then what if the lunch stuff is still out when it's time to make dinner? That messy kitchen feels urgent. You might eventually wait so long that there aren't clean dishes anymore and then it's really urgent. Tend to the necessary before it becomes urgent.

Your kids having snacks might be necessary. Instead of feeling the urgency of constant questions and nagging and decision making as it relates to your kids needing snacks, you could tend to the necessary thing of snacks by having a little box on the counter that you make at lunch that has all of the snack food options for the afternoon. They eat it when they want to, and that's what they get for the day. You're tending to the necessity of snack requests before it becomes urgent in the form of whining children and you hiding in the closet with chocolate.

So time management when time makes no sense actually uses the same pillars of time. That's why I love living like a Lazy Genius. So much of what we talk about is more about principles than plans. In fact, my new book *The Lazy Genius Way* that comes out on August 11th is all about that. It's a collection of principles that you can use to create a Lazy Genius system around anything. We grab for plans and particular hacks, and sometimes those are helpful. But when time makes no sense, you need a perspective that still does. I hope that these three pillars of time will help you do that.

And if you're looking for something to fill any free time you have, don't forget about The Favorites File. A link is in the show notes or go to thelazygeniuscollective.com/tff. And if you're interested in preordering *The Lazy Genius Way*, you can get details for that at thelazygeniuscollective.com/book. This could actually be a fabulous way to support your local bookstore that might be struggling right now. We can request orders through them, so consider that or any other bookseller suggested at thelazygeniuscollective.com/book.

Okay, that's it for today. Thanks so much for listening! I hope that even though time makes no sense right now that you feel like this episode was a deep breath that you can keep breathing. Take care, 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!