

#145 - How to Hire a Housecleaner

Hi there! Welcome 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 145 - how to hire a housecleaner. Listen. I know this is nichey. I know this is privileged. I know this has baggage. But I also know it's important to talk about, particularly if you're in a season of life where something's gotta give. I mentioned in a recent Latest Lazy Letter which is my monthly newsletter that I had hired a housecleaner, and the response was something else. Pretty much every single person who responded said something like "oh, I wish I could do that. That would be amazing. I just feel bad hiring somebody to do something that I could do myself." Lis. Ten. We are going to put an end to that thinking right now. So yes this episode will have some practical thoughts about hiring a housecleaner - how you find one, what they do, what you can expect, and all that - but we're going to start with a pep talk because I'm the boss and it's my podcast and I'm about to get feisty.

Before I get feisty, a quick reminder about that Latest Lazy Letter. I send out one newsletter a month with a ton of super helpful, purposeful info. Books I read and why you might want to read them too, podcast episodes to listen to without having to listen to the entire show, thoughts I only share there - like about hiring a housecleaner - and lots more. If you'd like to join that VIP list that gets that Latest Lazy Letter, there's a link in the show notes, or you can go to thelazygeniuscollective.com/join. I'd love to see you there.

Okay, hiring a housecleaner. Should we start with why it's okay to hire a housecleaner or how to actually go about doing it? I think we start with it being okay.

Let's lay out a couple of suppositions. First, not everyone can afford a housecleaner. I get this. For years, we couldn't. We could barely afford meat. A limited fixed income is a real thing, so please hear me from the beginning that I'm not saying that you're allowed to have a housecleaner you're just not trying hard enough to find the money. Some people literally don't have the money. You could definitely use one and might be mad at me right now for talking about it when you're so desperate for some outside help but can't afford. I just want you to know that I see you in that. It's not easy to have limited resources without question.

Second supposition, hiring someone to clean your house isn't a moral issue. It's a choice. Everything I say from here on out is based purely on choice and what works for different people. My passion about you feeling justified in your desire to have help isn't a judgment on people who don't want help in the same way. We all need help, and we all get to choose what that help is for ourselves and for how our lives are set up as individuals. Okay, so that's our starting place.

Now, I want to talk specifically to those of you who have the money to probably hire someone to come clean your house once every couple of weeks but you feel badly for spending your money on something like that because you can clean your house yourself. You are who I'm talking to at this particular moment. You can ask for help. You can also pay for help. There is no rule anywhere that says you have to do everything yourself.

I sometimes imagine all of the things that I could do if I really just took the time to do them, things that I don't have to outsource. I could change my own oil. I could cut my own hair. I could make my own yogurt. I could grind my own meat. I could sew my own clothes. I could paint my own living room. I could cook my own meals from scratch every single night. I could do my own taxes. I could make my son's class Valentine's Day cards from construction paper and glue. Yes. Yes, I could in theory do all of those things. All of those things are within my scope of learning if given the time. And they are all things that someone somewhere on earth - many many someones actually - do. Tons of people make their own yogurt. People make their own clothes. My step-dad still changes the oil in his and my mom's cars. I've done my taxes every year since I was old enough to need to do my own taxes.

Yes, you can clean your house. I've got a ton of resources in Lazy Genius world that can help you do that, and I've done all of them and some I still do. I clean my kitchen every night. I tidy every day. I declutter and organize. But I no longer do the regular tasks of cleaning the bathrooms and floors and dusting and such. I could, but I would be sacrificing something else in order to make that happen.

We think we can keep adding to our lives and that we'll just have to figure out how to keep doing all the things we've always done. Your kids finally get old enough to be in elementary school, so you get a part-time job and fill your bucket doing something you love. You think you'll still have time to cook and clean and run errands because your kids are out of the way now and you'll have more time. But now you're working. Now those early morning grocery runs on your way to preschool don't happen anymore because you're going to work. You no longer have the middle of the day to spend ten minutes cleaning and ten minutes prepping dinner, and you can't figure out how to get home in the afternoon with the kids after school and get everything done because you're suddenly more behind than you've ever been. That's because you added without taking away.

This is why I wish that it was a built-in thing for all new moms to get meals brought to them for at least the first three months of having a new baby. You think you can still cook meals once you get settled after a couple of weeks, but you have added the life and care of an entirely new human. You have added a ton of stress to your life by sitting still and living Groundhog Day days and not getting even close to enough sleep. In fact, those pockets of time you used to spend Magic Questioning dinner or whatever else - what can I do now to make dinner easier later? - is now spent napping because that's how God intended it when a new baby is around. Or when your oldest is ten and your youngest is three because y'all I still take naps most every afternoon. You can't expect to maintain the same level of keeping up with everything when you add a new baby and take away sleep. You just cannot.

If you would absolutely love to hire a housecleaner but feel badly doing it, even if you can afford it, that's rooted in shame. Shame that you think you should be able to do it all. You have some kind of expectation or assume others have an expectation of you that if you hire a housecleaner, you're lazy, you think you're better than everybody else, you're unwise with your money, or any

number of things we tell ourselves. Y'all, I will shout from the rooftops that hiring a housecleaner to come to my house every two weeks makes me a better person. I run a business. I have an employee. I have three kids at various ages with different schedules and needs. I love being a good friend and a host and a member of my church and my community. I love reading books and taking naps and making food for my family. If I want all of those things - things that matter to me more than anything else - I have to be lazy about others that don't matter as much. For me, that's cleaning. I don't like cleaning at all. Why do you think I had to Lazy Genius so many aspects of it all these years? I have a lot of content around it because it was a really annoying problem that I really wanted to solve. I wanted to make it as painless and easy as I could. For awhile, that was doing Lazy Genius routines and using that Tody app and all the other things I mentioned. Now, I pay someone \$125 every other week to spend five hours making my house shiny, and it's worth every daggum penny. And it's not because I'm lazy. It's not because you're lazy. It's because other things matter more, and you want to be able to put your actual individual human energy into those things. You don't want to outsource what matters. Outsource what doesn't but still has to get done.

Side note, this is the first year I've hired an accountant to do my taxes, and I could cry at what a relief it is. She's creating forms and asking me simple questions, and she's going to do my taxes. I used to spend an entire Saturday in the fetal position surrounded by papers I didn't understand hoping to not get arrested. I used to have to do that because again we had hardly any money. Now we have enough to hire an accountant, and I can focus on things that matter that I want to take part in myself.

So you're allowed to hire a housecleaner. If the only thing stopping you is shame or what other people think, those are not good enough reasons. I'll make you a deal. Hire a housecleaner to clean your house just one time. Pay attention to how you feel when you walk back in your house and see if that feeling and all of the ripples that come out of it are worth it. I will almost guarantee that they are.

Okay, so let's really quickly go through a couple of practical things that a lot of you have asked ever since I mentioned this in that newsletter.

How much does it cost? It depends on the person and where you live - both the size of your house and your city. I'm sure it varies. I pay \$125 every other week or \$250 a month. Our house is about 2000 square feet with two and a half bathrooms which I think usually cost more in the breakdown for a lot of housecleaners.

Next, you can choose what rooms get cleaned. I decided that we wouldn't include my kids' bedrooms or the playroom in what the housecleaners tackle, mostly because I don't want to have to tidy those rooms every two weeks. They're full of Legos and elaborate train tracks, and it's just not worth it. We'll clean those rooms ourselves as a family less often.

Next, there were questions about what a housecleaner does? Whatever you ask them to. I will say that most will have a set fee for your house for whatever tasks they do. They clean the

same things every time usually. Otherwise, the fee changes. So our housecleaner does floors and dusting and surfaces in the rooms we asked for, but anything out of that perview doesn't count. Like, if I wanted her to clean the ceiling fans or something, that would adjust the fee. It's easier for them to keep the same fee and the same task list week after week.

Something that doesn't get talked about as much but is important to remember is that the house needs to be tidy before the housecleaner comes. They don't know where your stuff goes, and they can't spend the limited hours they have picking up all the stuff. That's why we kept the kids rooms off the list. There's no way I was going to tidy those over and over again. But the night before our housecleaner comes, we do a big family tidy. Everything that doesn't always stay on a surface like lamps and candles and stuff gets put away. Everything on the floor that doesn't belong there like shoes and toys also get put away. I also try and put a lot of my skincare bottles and individual stuff like that in a basket so it's easier to move it off the sink all at once rather than one bottle at a time. But if you have an untidy house, you're putting your housecleaner in an unfair position to not only pick up but do extra work that's outside of the set fee and tasks you set up.

And finally, how do you find somebody? Ask around. Ask Facebook, ask your friends, just put it out there if anyone has a housecleaning service they'd recommend. A couple of you mentioned that you didn't want to ask because you didn't want people to think badly of you for hiring a housecleaner. You guys. You're giving work to people who are offering their services. You're giving permission to other women like you who feel weird saying it but want the freedom to hire somebody. There is no reason to not ask. Most of our embarrassment around this is rooted in false pretenses. If someone is weird with you about hiring somebody, I'm going to guess that deep down, she resents that you're getting something she wishes she had and is going to make you pay for it by being judgmental. Whether that's intentional on her part or completely subconscious, it's still a brittle reason to make someone feel badly for making a choice that meets their needs and helps them focus time and energy on what matters.

You're allowed to do this. And you don't have to justify it. If you are single and childless, you can still hire a housecleaner. There's not a set of rules that determine who's allowed to do this. Hire someone to clean your house for you so you can spend your time on what matters and on what you individually want to do.

Okay, that's it. I'm done being feisty now. And there are apps and sites like Angie's List and stuff that have reviews, but I think that real person recommendations are the best place to find somebody. A friend of mine recommended who I use, and I've been so pleased. And full disclosure, I hired another housecleaning company several years ago for a short season when things were a little nutty in our family, and I didn't love how they did things. They used their own cleaners and they smelled bad, something was broken but hidden which isn't great, and things weren't as shiny as I could get them myself. So I just never made another appointment. It doesn't have to be complicated. If you're unhappy with the job, talk to whoever is in charge of the company (which isn't always who cleans your house) and kindly but directly address your needs. If those needs aren't met a second time, it's not a good fit, and you can try again and find

someone else. That's why personal recommendations will likely work better because you know the person who's doing the recommending and can ask him or her specific questions about your expectations and what you think you need.

Okay, that's a lot of words about hiring a housecleaner, but I hope it was helpful. Just don't let embarrassment or shame stop you. I can point to that choice as one of the most impactful single decisions I've ever made. Truly. To completely take the regular cleaning of my home off my plate completely? Amazing. Okay, I'll stop for real now.

Thanks so much for listening. I hope you join me this Thursday on Instagram to talk live about this topic. I'll be there @thelazygenius around noon eastern time on Thursday. Okay, that's all for 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 time.