

#144 - How to Lazy Genius a Girls Night

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 144 - how to lazy genius a girls night. This might feel like basic stuff. I mean just go out with your friends, right? The truth is that I get so much communication from all of you over email and Instagram about how you long for community. You want to get together with friends and do fun things, have traditions and all of that. So this episode is important in its simplicity because friendship matters, especially friendship together as women.

Before we jump in and speaking of friendship and community, did you guys know that there is a Lazy Genius Facebook group? I know that a lot of people have a certain allergy to Facebook and others love it, and all the ways are great. But one of the agreed-upon benefits of Facebook is the ability to connect with people you normally wouldn't. Like, strangers. Like, people who listen to the same podcast for example.

Here's the thing. This is a Facebook group, and the group is lovely. Every person who joins the group wants to be a Lazy Genius. Everyone is working from the same starting place of caring about the right things and letting go of everything else. People ask questions in that group all the time, and I've never seen anyone post a question or ask for a recommendation or ask for help about something that didn't get a response. And bonus, the responses are really thoughtful and helpful and kind. It's just a friendly, helpful place to be, to ask your questions and not feel weird. Somebody recently asked about how to LG an outside cat, and there were ideas. Everything counts because it's your life and sometimes we need help figuring out how to live it. So if you've ever wanted to process an episode or ask a question about how to LG something, try the Facebook group. I think you'll find it super helpful. Someone recently posted in the group "So much laundry to do and I don't want to do it. What motivates you guys?" And someone else responded "seeing my family naked" and it made me laugh so hard. So it's funny and helpful. There is a link in the show notes, and you can request access. That's the other thing: it's technically a private group, so only people who are in the group can see what you're posting. So if you're struggling with something or feel a little weird talking about something that people in your regular Facebook life might not be as game for, you don't have to worry in this group. It's private and contained and Lazy Geniuses only. I don't mean for that to sound mean. The members asked early on if we could make it private for that reason, and we did. So feel free to join if you're interested. Again, link in the show notes.

Okay, let's LG a girls night. Again, you might think this is kind of dumb. Do you really need perspective on this? But I would like to posit that if you're engaging in regular times of gathering with women in your life and it's fulfilling and keeps happening, then you are naturally doing what I'm about to lay out. So yeah you're ahead the game it's working. But it's not working because it's easy or it's just about doing the thing and setting it up. You and your friends are already approaching your time together with intentionality. Maybe you named it a long time ago. Maybe you never had to because you were all on the same page so quickly. But the same page exists, so if you are looking for girls night thoughts and you're wanting to have those types of

gatherings in your life more often, we need to create your page so that all the women be on the same one.

So the first question to ask is what we always ask when we want to LG something: what matters? What matters most about having this girls night? And sidenote: I realize that the term girls night might not land with you as much, especially for what you're wanting and how you already interpret that phrase, but it's what we're using because it's already in our vocabulary. In your head, call it whatever you want, but I'm putting this entire idea under the umbrella of girls night just to make it easier.

Okay, so what matters about your girls night? You need to say words about this or even better a word about this. What actually matters? Because here are some options, and I'd like for you to notice how some of these options might be in conflict with each other.

Conversation, laughter, deepening connections, experiences, the regularity, longer stretches of time... you see what I mean? Obviously you'd like for all of these to be part of your relationships with your friends, but when you're thinking about a particular gathering, like the very next girls night or very first girls night that you want to have, you need to think about what matters. What singular purpose, really try and just name one - other relevant ones will come along for the ride if they make sense, but name the one thing that matters most about this particular gathering.

Next question, what choices will contribute to that purpose? You'll also start to see what choices get in the way of that purpose. If what matters most is a space for vulnerable conversation, doing that in the middle of a tapas restaurant on a Friday is probably not gonna work. If you're wanting to deepen friendships with a handful of women that you know because you're all school moms together, inviting your neighbor that no one else knows might not really do that. I'm not saying don't invite new people to things, but recognize that if you include people who don't fit the purpose, your girls night isn't going to do what you hope it will.

One of my favorite books, not just on gathering but ever, is called *The Art of Gathering* by Priya Parker, and in her book, she calls this the "kindness of exclusion." It feels mean for us to not include everyone in everything we do, but in fact, purposeful gatherings, a girls night that centered around what matters most, doesn't include everyone, and that must be true in order for the purpose to happen. Priya Parker says this: "Thoughtful exclusion... can help with the important task of communicating to guests what a gathering is."

I think we've all been at parties or dinner or baby showers or some kind of gathering where if one person wasn't there, it would be completely different. It would have a different energy, and a different purpose would surface. I've been that person before. I've been the one person in the room where I'm like, "you know, if I weren't here, this would go better." And I don't mean that in some kind of martyrdom way. Group dynamics are a thing, and different gatherings have different purposes and therefore need different people involved. We just talked a lot about people, but the question we're answering right now is a bit broader, and that is what choices

contribute to your purpose? Or what choices will make it much harder for that purpose to happen?

Once you jot down a few ideas about that, then you're at your next step which is to now name the who, the what, and the where. When comes last.

I want to give you a personal example. Years ago, it was my birthday... well, it's my birthday every year, but years ago, for my birthday, I wanted to have a girls night. My birthday is two days after Christmas, so I didn't get many parties growing up because it was so close to Christmas. And even now people are out of time and doing family things, you know, it's easy for my birthday to pass by. Which is really fine; it's not really that big of a deal. But this particular year, I think I was turning 30... is that what it was? I don't remember. Maybe 33. I'm 38 now FYI. Anyway, doesn't matter, I decided I wanted to have my girlfriends over to celebrate my birthday. I was going to make my own cake which I did and put Benedict Cumberbatch's face on it in icing, and it was great. But there wasn't a real purpose other than having friends in a room. Not only that, I invited all my girlfriends. Every female that I liked was included. I knew them to varying degrees, and they definitely knew each other to varying degrees. Many were strangers, many had never spoken to each other before. And guess what I had no agenda. I was just like "let's hang out, y'all." And imagine what happened. I mean, it was fine. If you're my friend and you're listening and you were there, I'm not saying it was a crap party. You can say that if you want. But the point, there wasn't a clear purpose, and not only that, I didn't think about the who, what, and where that would benefit a purpose at all. Sitting in my living room with a dozen women who didn't know each other and not doing anything but just chatting was not the birthday party I intended. If I had changed one thing, for example if we had played a game. Maybe we could've played a get-to-you-know game or something with teams so that people could talk to each other. But as the host, you need to prepare your people for what's coming. Some people hate games. You might want to play games but feel like you're being bossy by making your party include games.

This is why purpose and the choices that follow matter. If you want to have a girls game night, you need to explicitly say that it's a game night. That you will be playing games. And if you have friends who very much hate playing games, do not invite them. That's not being mean. That's being purposeful about what you're trying to do and honoring the people who have agreed to participate. If you have a friend who rolls her eyes at boardgames, how do you think your other friends will feel if they love them and show enthusiasm for them? They probably will temper that enthusiasm. And imagine if you invite a new friend, she will likely wonder how to be because she's at a game night where not everyone likes games and she has to manage that energy.

You see what I'm saying? I realize I'm coming at this from a negative standpoint right now, but flip the other way. You have a strong purpose. You want to have a girls night where you sit around at a fun restaurant and drink and laugh and leave everything serious behind you. That might not be the best setting and gathering for a friend who doesn't like crowds or loud restaurants or alcohol. And that's okay. So once you know your purpose and you've named some things that will help elevate and support that purpose and other things that might not, then

you can choose your who, what, and where. Once those are set, pick the best when, and do the inviting.

To put a finer point on this, here's another quote from *The Art of Gathering*. Priya says, "Gatherings crackle and flourish when real thought goes into them, when often invisible structure is baked into them, and when a host has the curiosity, willingness, and generosity of spirit to try." Imagine a gathering or specifically a girls night that crackled and flourished. It's likely because this approach happened.

So let's do a rapid fire of some girls night ideas.

The purpose is to talk about *Fleabag* season two because you have to or you'll die. Contributing factors to that purpose are that everyone who comes must have seen *Fleabag* season two. In fact, this is the perfect example of how being kindly exclusive in who you host at a gathering doesn't mean it only involves people you know. If you get a text from your friend Maggie the night of the party that says "I was talking to a coworker about our *Fleabag* party tonight, and she's obsessed with the show and said she wished she could be a fly on the wall. Would you be okay if I invited her?" And that answer would be an obvious yes. Who cares if she's a stranger to you? She serves the purpose of the gathering which is to talk enthusiastically and thoughtfully about a TV show. And to finish up this example, you want to have a conversation, but it's good if it's lively and it doesn't have to be done completely sober. That means it can happen at a restaurant or a bar or on a friend's couch with great music playing and some wine. Casual and easy but on purpose.

Another one. The purpose is to get to know the moms at preschool beyond what your kid brought for show and tell. An easy casual setting is really important to put everyone at ease, and you also want the group small enough to be able to actually get to know each other rather than have a big group conversation that doesn't go anywhere. Two ideas - dinner out because maybe being in someone's home first might make women compare themselves prematurely to each other and to the host which you don't want. Make sure it's a restaurant that's casual and fun but not too loud so everyone can hear, and keep the size limited to eight. Four might be even better because everyone will get a chance to talk. Or second idea, host a game night. Remember Bunco parties? Say what you will about Bunco, but you move around, talk to different people, and if you open each round with a get-to-know-you question or introductions, you actually get to exchange words with every single person before the night is over. One last word on a preschool mom gathering: you might consider the kids to be a contribution to the purpose of getting to know each other or a hindrance. If you're a mom, you've been in situations where you're talking to a couple of moms at the park but then your kid falls down or wants you to push them on the swing and then the conversation continues on without you. That doesn't matter as much with mom friends that you already know well, but if you're already on tenuous ground in getting to know new people, being separated from the group by a needy kid might defeat the purpose.

Last one, the purpose is to really catch up with a group of girlfriends on what's going on in each others' lives - the good, the bad, the ugly. That means everyone needs to have the same level of comfort with each other. Vulnerability has to be acceptable and welcomed. If hard stuff is happening, tears might follow in the storytelling, so meeting in public might not be the best setting.

Is all of this making sense? Back to what I said before, if you have successful girls nights and are thinking this whole thing is too overwrought and complicated, it's likely because your gatherings already have an unspoken purpose that everyone is naturally in on. Otherwise, you wouldn't look forward to them and keep going. So think about the purpose, name what would serve that purpose well, and then decide the normal who, what, and where. End with when. When is the easiest once everything else is decided.

I hope you feel excited to create a girls night. Try to think through this stuff for one gathering and one gathering only. Again, not everyone needs to be at everything, including you. It's okay that we gather on purpose for things that matter to different people. It really is okay. And try and see if you can't name some of these things in the next week or so and plan something this month. February is such a womp womp month for so many of us with nothing really happening but with the desire to have a little fun. Try and think through one gathering. Just go through the steps of thinking about it. You don't have to do it. Just see how it shapes up in your head or on a piece of paper. Then if you're excited about it, actually text some friends and have your girls night, whatever it looks like for you.

Okay, that's it for today. Let's talk more about these ideas this Thursday on IG. I'll be there live around noon eastern @thelazygenius, and we can flesh out a bit more this idea of kind exclusion, too, if you need it. I know that you're all very kind, very polite people, and that concept in particular might feel weird. I get it. And we can also help each other flesh out some ideas for our own girls nights together. So Thursday the 13th at noon eastern. And if you're listening to this later, so many of the Thursday IG lives are on the IGTV section on my instagram profile. You can watch any of those any time you'd like.

Thanks for listening! And don't forget to go join that Facebook group if you're interested! 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.