

#132 - Ten Steps to Creating Your Own Traditions

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 132 - Ten Steps to Creating Your Own Traditions. Last week during the Instagram live which you can always take part in by following me @thelazygenius and hopping on most Thursdays around noon eastern time, I shared with you guys that I didn't have an episode plan for today. Thankfully, @mrsktoyou had the idea of talking about creating your own family traditions, several folks seconded the motion, and here we are. I love the idea of being thoughtful and intentional about anything, and traditions definitely fit the bill. So today, we're going to walk through ten steps to creating your own. I'll share some of our family's traditions as examples, but this episode isn't so much a list of ideas. Ideas are plentiful. These steps are meant to help you think about the why, how, when, and all the things about your own traditions. Just giving you ideas will only create stress as you try and add something else to your life which none of us really need. Instead, you'll be able to think about traditions like a Lazy Genius and then maybe actually do them.

I also want to say up front that this doesn't have to be about family traditions. If you're single, family traditions feel alienating. If your kids have recently moved out, maybe the idea of family traditions makes you sad because your family doesn't look the way it once did. This conversation is all about creating your own traditions, so no matter what your family unit looks like, this conversation is for you.

Before we get into the ten steps, I have very exciting news. I'm often asked will The Swap be available again, will The Meal Plan be available again, and if it's worth getting The Holiday Docket now that it's almost December. The answer to all three of those questions is yes.

On Black Friday, I'm offering all three digital products for one sale price in the first ever Lazy Genius Bundle. Basically, I realize that a lot of you are on tight budgets and struggle to spend money on anything that doesn't feel essential. I get that for real. So as a fun way to participate in the spirit of Black Friday, The Swap, The Meal Plan, and The Holiday Docket are all available for one discounted price on Black Friday, November 29th until 8am eastern on Saturday the 30th. I'll be sending out two reminder emails to the mailing list, so if you want to make sure you get the word, join that list at thelazygeniuscollective.com/join or click the link in the profile. I'll remind you again in next week's episode, too, but I wanted to give you a heads up now so you can plan in case you're interested!

Okay, let's walk through the ten steps to creating your own traditions.

Step one, name what matters.

Shocker. This is always where you need to start with pretty much anything. If you don't name what matters about your traditions, you're not going to know what to be a genius about and what to be lazy about. For example, a lot of people have a family tradition of getting Christmas photos taken for Christmas cards. Well, we don't send Christmas cards. It's not something we've ever done, and even though we might one day, we aren't this day. That means that adding the tradition of family photos to the busiest time of year is not being a genius about what matters. We can plan to capture our growing family other times of the year and be very lazy about that being a holiday tradition.

One thing for our family that does matter is participating in our city. We love going to things in our town, seeing people we know on the street at a parade, taking part in this place we love to call home. Being an active part in the events of our city matters to us, so we have several family traditions centered around things in our town. One of those is coming up in a couple of weeks actually. The first weekend of every December, our city has something called Winterfest. It begins on Friday night where much of downtown is shut down to leave the streets open for all kinds of holiday stuff. All the shops stay open, Santa comes, there are different musical acts spread up and down the street, food trucks, the last couple of years they've had a snow machine in the busiest intersection of downtown... it's just the best fun. We always eat an early dinner at the same downtown restaurant and then walk the streets. As our kids have gotten older, we've been able to stay longer. We've also invited another family to join us, and it's now become a family tradition for our two families together over the last couple of years. Which really helps because every kid has a buddy and not just a mom or dad to hang out with. As the kids get older, that's important to remember.

And that actually reminds me of something else that matters - connection. We love having traditions that include other people, too, because doing life with other people matters. We always go trick-or-treating with my sister and her family and my parents. We've done that since the kids were tiny. The route gets longer each time, but we've always done that. Now, might that change as the kids age and want to trick-or-treat with their friends? Probably. But for now, it's a family tradition we enjoy because it prioritizes what matters to us.

So step one and easily the most important step of this whole thing, name what matters. As you name what matters in your life, you'll be able to name what you'd like to mark and celebrate every single year.

Step two, consider what you already do. You likely have traditions you love, but in the haze of trying to have more or be better at them, you might have forgotten what you already have. So take a second and write down what traditions you already do. I already mentioned Winterfest. Which, I didn't even mention the rest of it which is a holiday parade that Saturday morning and then something called Candlefest that Saturday night where an entire public park is lined with luminaries. It's so pretty and something we love doing. That weekend, in fact, is our family's opening ceremony to the Christmas season. It's possibly my favorite weekend of the year.

Other traditions - we do a corn maze and hay ride and stuff every October. We put up our Christmas decorations the Sunday after Thanksgiving. I have business traditions of getting together with two different groups of women once a year for a weekend of work and processing and rest with friends who do the same work I do. We go out for hamburgers on the night before the first day of school. We watch fireworks with friends every Fourth of July. The birthday boy or girl gets to choose what we eat all week the week of their birthday. It's tradition. And that's a lot of beautiful tradition. When you list out all the things you likely already do, it puts the desire for creating new traditions into perspective. Enjoying what you have will have a lot of impact on choosing what else you want to do.

Step three, consider what you can repeat. Think about things you've done this past year that were really meaningful or fun or both. What is something you did to mark a certain time of your life or season or maybe something completely random? Is that something you'd like to repeat? Traditions are really just a choice to repeat something, so if you've done something you really loved, consider repeating it. That's the start of a new tradition. I know that's simple, but man do we forget the simple things.

Step four, start small. You know it, don't you. If you try and sketch out a bunch of elaborate traditions, especially during this time of year, you'll lose your mind. Nothing will happen the way you want it to because big and grand often fall apart unless they're built small step by small step. So start small. Maybe creating your own traditions means starting small with what you already do and just enjoying that. Maybe instead of creating a tradition of getting new pajamas and making hot chocolate for the car and driving to see all the Christmas lights on Christmas Eve with a great holiday playlist and a movie afterwards, you just start with the pajamas. Or the lights. Or the movie. Start small. You have time to build, but often the small things are the most meaningful anyway.

Step five, make it a group thing. I'm super guilty of not doing this. I'll have an idea for a tradition, and then just spring it on everybody, assuming everyone is on board. That is not always the case. Besides, traditions are repeated because people want them to be repeated. Make sure everyone is on board before you start repeating something.

Step six, mark the moment first. Don't get hung up on creating a tradition. Again, traditions are just things we did once that we decide on purpose to repeat. So first mark the moment. If you mark it and was memorable or lovely or fun or whatever for the people involved, consider doing it again. That's why step three is important. Consider what you can repeat. What have you already done that you can repeat, but here in step six, don't even think about the repeating. Just think about what moment you want to mark. What relationship do you want to mark? What season? What event? Mark the moment first.

Step seven, write down this year's moments on next year's calendar. This is a way to set yourself up with steps three and six. If you do something this year, if you mark a moment, go ahead and add it to a digital calendar the following year. If next year you come around to that

thing and you're like nah let's not, then it's not a tradition. It was a marked moment then and was lovely, but you don't need to repeat it. But if you come upon a calendar item in a year that you're excited about and if it involves others everyone else is too, do it again. You might have a tradition on your hands.

Step eight, check your expectations. This is always a good thing to do. When you're in an experience or about to start one, check your expectations. We put so much pressure on the idea of traditions. Somehow if you're not doing them, you're not doing life right. There's something about a tradition that implies a life well lived, and maybe to an extent that's true, simply because there's intention behind marking moments, but if you put a lot of those expectations on the experience itself, the experience will likely disappoint you. If you want everyone to remember this thing or be smiling huge smiles the whole time or not be distracted by their phones or any number of secretly small but powerful expectations, you'll be disappointed and maybe even resentful. So check your expectations. Don't put so much pressure on each tradition. Just do the thing, be a person, love your people, and it'll all be okay.

Step nine, embrace your season of life. When you have little kids, certain traditions are a crapshoot. Roll with it. When your marriage is struggling and your anniversary rolls around, the tradition of going out to the restaurant where you had your first date might feel difficult. Use that as an invitation to be honest and loving toward your spouse about how you're feeling. If you're in a season of bad health or you've recently been diagnosed with something that brings with it chronic pain and the traditional winter break ski trip isn't in the cards for you, grieve the loss, go, take the fattest book you can with you into the lodge, enjoy the fire and warm drinks, and enthusiastically welcome your people as they come in from the cold. I'm not saying you should ignore the season you're in and pretend that everything is okay, but seasons are seasons. Sometimes things don't line up the way we hope they will. It's easy to let that disappointment affect everything. Instead, consider how you can grieve the loss of whatever the season is and embrace the surprises it might bring.

And step ten, remember on purpose. Having space for regular reflection is such a gift, and it'll help you name what might become a tradition in your life. Remember how you how you felt during a certain event or activity. Ask your people to remember something they enjoyed from the past three months. You're not doing a cold research project. You're remembering on purpose which has enough beauty on its own. But in the process of remembering and reflecting, be open to whatever experiences you might want to repeat next year. Go ahead and do step seven which is to go ahead and write down the thing next year at the same time. Maybe you do it, maybe you don't, but by remembering on purpose, you're giving yourself the open door of creating your own tradition if you want to.

So to recap...

1. Name what matters.
2. Consider what you already do.
3. Consider what you can repeat.

4. Start small.
5. Make it a group thing.
6. Mark the moment first.
7. Write down this year's moments on next year's calendar.
8. Check your expectations.
9. Embrace your season of life.
10. Remember on purpose.

I really believe that these steps will give you such a freeing framework to creating your own traditions. And if you're feeling overwhelmed by thinking about an entire year's worth, start with right now. Today, it's November 18th. Go through these steps just for the next six weeks or whatever. Start small even with using these steps.

I'm really excited about this for you guys, and I hope you feel encouraged in the process of creating your own traditions. There's no Instagram live this week because I have an appointment right before and because my middle son is having a procedure on Friday. He'll be fine. He's getting some stuff removed from his face, but he has to be sedated and all the things, so I'm trying to leave Thursday as empty as I can for my own personal space to prepare for being in a hospital all day with my kid. I don't do that space well. I don't know who does really, but in all of the emergencies my kids have experienced, my husband is the one who's been in the hard spots. He's held hands through spinal taps and during stitches. He spend days in the ICU with Ben as an infant when he had a blood infection. I just break in half in hospitals, so all of that information to say I won't be doing a live this week so I can breathe and rest and prepare and be a person. And if you're someone who prays, I'll certainly receive your prayers for Ben this week and am very grateful for them.

Alright, friends, that's it for today. I'm so glad you listen and share and all the things. This community is such a gift to me. 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.