

## 363 - Office Hours with Kendra

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 363 - Office Hours with Kendra!

This is our quarterly episode where I take your problems and try and Lazy Genius them! There are some great questions and responses on the Instagram post in my feed @thelazygenius, so check it out if you'd like! Today, as always for these episodes, I'll put the questions focused on kids and parenting at the end in one chunk so that those of you without kids don't have to listen if you'd rather move along with your day. I will say though that hearing how to think about any problem, whether it's relatable to your life or not, helps you think about your own. The process, the mindset, the principles we use are pretty much the same, so maybe you could use it as practice to keep Lazy Geniusing the challenges in your own life.

Okay, let's get started!

The first question comes from @myzombiepancreas. Excellent handle and lighthearted take on dealing with diabetes. Well done. Okay, here's her problem. "Quitting my job to work for myself (eek!) - how do I end the work day feeling 'done' when I'm never really done?" The first thing I notice with this question is that it is proactive and not reactive. Zombie Pancreas, you're either in the process or just quit your job and started working for yourself based on the wording of the question. That means you're anticipating wanting there to be a boundary between work and non-work as you transition into this new job. That's awesome. I love a proactive problem. For y'all listening, pay attention to if you're thinking about something proactively or reactively. The approach might feel different depending on which one it is.

Since this is a proactive problem, it's hard to name the precise triggers for work carrying beyond work hours. Will it be email? Will it be social media where you open it up for your own personal use but then see DMs from clients or followers? Will it be ideating, where you have a hard time turning your brain off from work even when the time has technically passed? It's hard to know what precisely will cause the carryover if you haven't been in it for awhile yet, so my advice is to do what you're already doing but carry it through a bit. Let's use the Lazy Genius Method.

Step one, prioritize. What matters most here? You want to feel done with work. Awesome. Step two, essentialize. What is in the way of feeling that way? Maybe it's simply the proximity and opportunity of work to be at your fingertips at any moment. Something else that might be in the way is having your work email on your phone or your laptop set up your main living area. Is there anything in the way that you can remove? Try one thing. Or is there something missing that you need to feel done? Maybe it's a dedicated work space or some accountability if you live alone. If there's something you don't have that you need, name what that thing is. Step three, organize. Let's put things in their place. Maybe you set up that workspace in your home. Maybe you schedule a workout class at 5pm on

weekdays so that you have a clear marker and commitment and will leave your computer. Maybe you have a screentime or downtime setting on your phone to turn off certain apps after a certain time. Put things in their proper place. Or not even things! Just one thing. Step four, personalize. How can you feel like yourself in this? Do something to mark the end of the day that feels like you. It could be a walk around the block, blowing out the lit candle by your desk and saying a breath prayer, playing a song that either calms you down or ramps you up. Maybe it's calling a friend or catching up on Voxer. Do what feels like you to mark the end. And step five, systemize. How can you stay in a flow with this? Renewed intention helps. Limits on phones help. Someone else involved in the end helps. Your answer to any of these questions depends on the answer from the question before, so these are just ideas. But since this is a proactive problem, take a few minutes to walk through the Lazy Genius Method, name some things, pick one to start small with, and be kind as you live in this new season.

Next up we have @gracemawhorter. Grace says, "This summer feels overwhelming (we have a newborn, we're moving, my husband is starting a new job...) but when I look at the calendar it kind of breaks down into three week chunks for each adjustment. End of the school year, then about 3 weeks until we move, then 3 weeks of my husband studying for a big exam, then 3 weeks of family time until his new job starts, then 3 weeks until everyone starts new schools. Is there anything to that? Should I be embracing those cycles of 3 weeks? And if so, how? What rhythms can I build into those three week chunks to help us keep our heads on straight and help my kiddos (6, 4, 4, newborn) adjust to each transition?" First off, Grace, you mentioned the newborn and then dropped three other kids six and under, so high five to you and your energy, my friend. Even though Grace has kids, this isn't a parenting challenge but a scheduling, rhythmic challenge.

First of all, let's look at these three week blocks. Grace, you asked if you should be embracing the three week cycles, and my answer is the loudest yes ever. Y'all, life gets unwieldy because we make it too big. We look at months at a time, seasons on the calendar, even years, and while those stretches of time are valuable, if they are the smallest stretches we're considering, we will get overwhelmed so fast. So the fact, Grace, that this upcoming transitional season naturally breaks into three week chunks is such a beautiful gift, and I'm thrilled you noticed that. Now, specifically you asked what rhythms you can build into the chunks to keep your heads on straight and help your kids adjust. First, kids take their cues from the adults in their lives. If you are stressed, they'll feel it. That's not a criticism. We all feel stress around our people, kids or not. I think the key is if we do feel it around others, no matter who they are, if our stress impacts them, name that out loud. Acknowledge it by saying to whoever, "Hey, I know I'm tightly wound right now because of the stress of this thing. Thank you for being patient with me." Something like that. Just acknowledge it. But my point of that to you, Grace, is that a kid's experience of transition is very likely directly tied to how their adults feel about it. So you might not need to create much for them as you create for you. Kids are resilient and will likely be fine. You will still pay attention to them and notice what each one needs, being patient when you name that a new sibling and a new room is a big deal to them and explains the tantrums or whatever, but I would concentrate on creating rhythms for yourself and your husband so that you both are more full and present for the kids.

What are those? Well, let's use the Lazy Genius Method again. Step one, prioritize. What matters most during these three week seasons? It's like each one has a different answer, right? So start

there. Then go through the rest: essentialize, organize, personalize, and systemize. Maybe a way to prioritize that process is to put something on your calendar now that's the couple of days before each three week chunk shifts to the next. Name what matters, and make some small adjustments to support that thing.

You also will likely want to create some calm and ease in your life. What repetitive aspects of your life create the opposite? Name them and then a small solution to make them easier. Maybe having a meal rotation would be helpful if meals are stressful. Ask a friend to set you up a meal train for a week or three during your move. New babies aren't the only reason to ask people to bring food. We need to normalize meal trains for other things, y'all. Maybe you decide once that this is what you have for breakfast for the next three weeks. Simplify stressful decisions. Or even just one. And then I would consider if you have the margin to create some sort of tiny marker, some tiny opening or closing or transitional ceremony between each of these three week chunks. Maybe you and your husband cling a drink and share a go team high five. Maybe you schedule an easy dinner at a fun fast casual restaurant with another family or something at some of those transitions to mark the moment and invite people in. Maybe you choose a book you'd like to read for yourself during this transition time, using it as a lovely chance to refuel during a challenging season.

The fact that you, Grace, have already broken this season down into three week chunks is magical, and I hope some of these perspectives help make them feel even better. And for those of you who have a transitional season with a lot going on, make your own chunks. I need a new work that isn't chunks. Create your own timeframes within the big one completely arbitrarily so that you can see your season with kinder eyes.

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Next up is @alianderson317 Okay I know this is too big, but how do I support my husband in friendships? I've learned so much from you and @laura.tremaine and have really hit a friendship groove, but my husband is still struggling. What can I do to help?

Great question, Ali. This is less about the Lazy Genius Method and more about something you might notice. When you say your husband is still struggling, what does that mean? Does he say he's struggling? Is there something specific about how he feels his relationships are? I know a lot of you listening might have a partner who is the same, who doesn't have the same kind of friendships that you do. I bring this up because I am married to a man who has far different social needs than I do, and he doesn't struggle with it. I'm the one who struggles with it. He would be totally fine saying hi to people at church and at our community group, occasionally texting with his college roommates about some sports event, and being home with me when I'm there and happily on his own when I'm not. He's relationally very content. Me, being with friends on a regular basis is essential for my human survival. I invest in people, have deep relationships, text and Vox and walk together and go to as many relational things that my life has reasonable margin for. Kaz is just not that way. But because that way is so essential and life-giving for me, I assume that he's missing out, that he's struggling with something he should be struggling with even though he's really not. So for anyone

who relates to Ali's comment, my first question is who is struggling here? Is it you or your partner? If it's you, that's a different answer, right?

Now, for Ali or anyone else, if you are with someone who struggles to have friendships, you can certainly help that person think through why that is. Ask questions, listen to how they feel about, ask what they've tried so far, encourage another option, whatever comes to mind. If your partner is really shy, it might be that you do things with couples or groups sometimes and not just things with your own friends to expose your partner to other people. It could be helping your partner name someone they do feel comfortable with and just connect with that person again. But my spidey sense tells me that this is more about different relational needs than a partner struggling. Either way, I know that there are people listening who fall into both camps. Hopefully a little permission to let go or lean in helps.

Next up is @yesilikecurry. Husband and I are moving in two months. I work entirely from home, and don't have any "group" hobbies. We will find a new church, but outside of that...LG a starting point to making friends in a new place. I cannot figure out how to make this problem small, so maybe just LG a way for me to make this problem small?

Sure thing. I think you're getting ahead of yourself a little bit. This is another example of proactively Lazy Geniusing something, and it's such a good skill to have. But sometimes you don't know what you have until you get where you're going. What you might need is to be patient once you get there, look for a church like you said you would do, and keep your eyes open to things that pique your interest. You don't have to have a social plan laid out yet or know when a book club meets and have it on your calendar. A plan of action here might just be to pay attention once you arrive. It's easy to get ahead of ourselves, especially when a transition is looming. It's maybe one of the most normal responses honestly. So I'll just be here to say hang tight for a few more weeks. You can start small by researching churches if you want since you already said that's where you'd start, and beyond that, see if your new city's visitors center or a downtown organization or a local library or something has an instagram handle. Follow those. Our city's parks and rec department has an Instagram account, and they post community runs, clean up projects, sidewalk chalk contests, and all kinds of things that are happening. Or sometimes there are travel people who focus on things to do in a certain town and there's one for wherever you're moving. You could do that now, follow an account or two and see what types of things sound fun to try. But my biggest encouragement to you is to start small by waiting. You don't have to have it figured out now. You can simply let your question at this point be an indication to how you're noticing what matters to you: relationships, and that's a beautiful thing.

Final non-kid question is from @dway\_nuh Duana Gorley. So many things I could lazy genius but washing my face before bed is something I would love to start doing. I usually wait until the very last second to get ready for bed and washing my face feels like too much when I'm so ready to hop into bed. 20 years ago would have been a good time to start taking care of my skin but the next best time is right now!

I like that last line. Super kind and optimistic. The next best time is right now. This is probably frustrating to Duana and anyone else who struggles with something daily like this. It's not hard,

right?! Why is this so hard? And yet it is. One of the reasons I think it's hard is because for something like washing your face at night, we do have something in our heads that says at night means before bed. It's assumed, right? Like putting cups in cabinets instead of drawers. There are things that we think are supposed to go in a certain place or supposed to happen at a certain time. That's just not true. You make things work the way you need them to. So maybe washing your face at night doesn't have to mean right before bed.

I had that problem too for a long time. I would get so tired and then would kind of pout and resent something that, when given more time, I really enjoy. So I started washing my face after dinner or when my daughter is taking a bath. Just do it earlier. In fact, that could be a nice thing to do when you come home from work if you come home from work is to change into cozy clothes and then also wash your face. You don't have to do a ten step skincare routine, but you can wash the makeup off your face, maybe put a moisturizer on, and be done if that's all you have margin or priority for. Just change up the time and see how it goes.

Okay, let's pivot to a couple of kid-related questions.

First up is @karishavens How can I Lazy Genius craft supplies storage for my kids? We have space for it in our playroom but Pinterest ideas feel overwhelming and unattainable. What matters is that it's all stored in the playroom, that the crayons and paper are accessible to my kids, and that all the scissors are out of reach from my havoc-wrecking 2 year old 🙄

Alright, Kari, this is a very real thing. If what matters is accessible and that everything is in the playroom, you can probably skip Pinterest. You're right; those ideas are overwhelming and unattainable for you because aesthetics and order were not listed as things that matter. Aesthetics and order are fantastic things, and I love both. But both are not required anywhere except for on Pinterest. Think about it: an organizational idea on Pinterest is probably not going to take off if it doesn't check off either aesthetics or order. So my first observation is that Pinterest isn't where you need to go.

We have a lot of art supplies, too, and the thing that matters the most to me is the same as you. It's accessibility, but the containment is less about a room and more about a cabinet. Our art stuff is in our main kitchen and living area, so I would rather not see a lot of it if possible. But we both have containment as a priority. We have an IKEA shelf situation that we got ages ago that I don't even think they make anymore, but it's a deep shelf with doors. Inside those doors are three enormous baskets. Enormous enormous. One is for paper things, one is for projects that are in process, and the other is for all the markers and stuff. We also have a smaller basket with paint and other with stamps and ink. Now, the giant basket with all the markers and pencils and crayons and glue and everything is loosely divided inside the big basket. But in like the bottom half of a cereal box or a red solo cup. Are they contained? Definitely. Are they accessible? Definitely. Are the tools mostly separate? For a time, yes. But eventually a solo cup spills, the markers get thrown into the basket proper instead of into the Frosted Flakes box first. Honestly, no worries. Why? Because consistent organization is not what matters most. Every now and

then when accessibility becomes an issue, we'll pull out the big basket, do a quick sort, and set everything to right again.

Basically, when you name what matters, not only does it tell you what to pay attention to but it also shows you what not to pay attention to. If order and aesthetics are not top tier priorities, Pinterest isn't where you go. It'll just make you feel bad. So don't be precious with it. Just put everything in the playroom in shoeboxes or Amazon boxes or whatever. Your kids very likely don't care. They just want their markers.

@krobertson84 As working parents whose kids can't have many long lazy days at home (summer camps abound!), how do we make summer have that slow and free feeling when "lazy summer feeling/down time" is what matters. @becky.jean.1 followup Yes!!! I struggle with this too! Day camp is essentially the same hours as school, so how do we make summer feel like summer?

This is such a good question. Okay, let's do a quick brainstorm of what makes summer feel like summer? K already said the phrase "slow and free feeling" and also "lazy" and "downtime." So because the weekdays are more structured, that slow, free, lazy, downtime doesn't exist, right? So your priority is to inject that feeling everywhere else. You can't change the structure of the day camp days or that the kids need to go in the first place. That's set. And let's remember they don't have school work, so it's for sure lazier and easier than the school year. But when it's the evening and the weekends, think about what you can or more accurately can NOT do to keep that slow, free, downtime feeling. Stock up on summer things that are easy but such a vibe like bubbles and popsicles and microwave popcorn. Eat dinner at a pool. Declare most Saturdays No Chore Saturday so that the kids can just chill and play and sleep in or whatever they need.

This reminds me of something The Nester says (The Nester who has a new book out called House Rules, and it is so fantastic you should go get it because she's the Lazy Genius of Home). She talks about lovely limitations, how the limitations in our home often provide some of the most interesting and cherished decorating or organizational or living moments in our homes. I think the same can be true for managing your time. Try to not look at the summer camp schedule as something to fight against or change. Instead see it as a lovely limitation, and cherish the time you have around it. It'll make your free, slow, downtime summer even more enjoyable because you're being more intentional.

And finally @micdunc. Socks everywhere in my house from all members of the family. Help!

What is it with families and socks? Not just kids! Adults too. Socks being everywhere is kind of a nightmare. Here's my suggestion. You just need them to be contained and rhythm to get them there. You could have a small container that's pretty like a planter or something in the central hub of sock central. When you or anyone else sees a sock lying around, it goes in the sock spot. The other thing is to simply have a House Rule that whenever you yell "Sock spot!" everyone needs to grab any socks they see that isn't in a drawer and put it in the laundry or wherever is the easiest place for them to put it. The struggle for you, Mic, is probably that you're the only one who notices the socks or cares that they're everywhere. That's tough and the bane of many a mother's existence. Instead, teach them to notice it. Sam Kelly talks about this all the time on her Instagram. Teaching our kids to notice what

needs doing is far more important than chore charts. So shouting "Sock spot!" teaches them to look out for socks. And eventually, they'll probably notice them without the prompt and put them in the laundry or the sock spot on their own.

Alright, those are our questions for today! Thanks to everyone who submitted ideas, and we'll do another Office Hours episode in about three months.

Before we go, let's celebrate the Lazy Genius of the Week! This week it's Rebecca with no last name sadly, but to all the Rebeccas listening, this is one of you! Rebecca writes, "Hello Kendra, One thing I have done to calm the crazy in the morning is to have two sets of toothbrushes for my kids, one in the upstairs bathroom (which they primarily use at bedtime) and one downstairs in a kitchen drawer (because the downstairs bathroom has a small pedestal sink and no storage). Once my kids are dressed and downstairs in the morning, I don't want them going back upstairs lest they get sidetracked, but I want them to brush their teeth after their vitamin and breakfast. This prevents that issue. Hope this can help another listener!" Rebecca, this is a great idea and a perfect Lazy Genius of the Week for this episode. It's such a small change that makes a big difference. Also an extra tip for any of you thinking about storing toothbrushes in drawers somewhere other than a bathroom especially, we use a cheap utensil caddy from the dollar store or something. We got it during our bathroom renovation since all of us were brushing our teeth in the hallway half bathroom, but now that the renovation is over, my boys still brush their teeth in that bathroom because it's closest to their bedrooms and they brush right before bed. The plastic utensil caddy is still in a drawer, and it works great. Plus, we throw it in the dishwasher every couple of weeks to easily clear the germs and toothpaste gunk that children inevitably leave behind. So that's an extra tip if anyone wants to try this to make your own life easier. Thanks for sharing, Rebecca, and congratulations on being the Lazy Genius of the Week!

This episode is hosted by me, Kendra Adachi, and executive produced by Kendra Adachi, Jenna Fischer, and Angela Kinsey. The Lazy Genius Podcast is enthusiastically part of the Office Ladies Network. Special thanks to Leah Jarvis for weekly production.

Thanks, y'all, for listening, 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!