

367 - What's Saving My Life Right Now

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 367 - What's Saving My Life Right Now. We do this episode every season, and I have seven things to share with you today. But at the end, I also want to talk about what happens when things that normally save your life don't work in a new season. What do you do then? That'll be at the end.

First though, let's dive into this season's list.

The first thing that's saving my life this season is a bigger coffee mug. I have one cup of coffee every morning because my brain does not need more caffeine than that, but I really love my cup of coffee. I use Nespresso pods for the most part, and I do the extra creamy or full fat oat milk and maple syrup because it's the most delicious to me. I also put collagen powder in the milk before I heat it in the microwave because I have knees made of brittle glass. All that to say, there's a lot that goes into my coffee cup every morning, and I went through a period of frustration trying to make it all literally fit. I thought I measured the milk to not overflow the cup, but turns out I had to take several burning, non-enjoyable sips of coffee to fit all the milk into the cup. Or the amount of liquid in the cup was like a science experiment on surface tension. How full can I make it before it overflows? It was a whole thing.

Then one morning, I was not in the mood and noticed my biggest coffee mug in the back of the cabinet. It's a winter holiday themed mug - blush pink with a gingerbread house situation edged in white. It's not the mug I want to drink out of every morning aesthetically, but this particular morning, I thought, "That thing is huge. Let's use that." You guys. What a triumph that big mug was. Turns out, all I needed to solve the "will everything fit inside my coffee mug" problem was to get a bigger coffee mug. I still drink out of the gingerbread house mug every morning because big is more important than seasonal, but I am on the lookout for a non Christmas mug that's the same size. It's one of those perfect examples of how a small change makes a big difference.

The second thing that's saving my life this season is a fancy hairdryer. Does everyone need a fancy hairdryer? No. Does everyone wish to filter their limited funds in the fancy hairdryer direction? No. I didn't either for quite some time. But my hair daily gets on my nerves. It's really healthy and a great cut and in general I'm good with it, but drying it after washing it is sheer chaos. I have very fine hair but a ton of it, like so much that my hairstylist comments on how much hair I have every time I go in for a cut. It's like a bit we do. Anyway, I've tried a couple of different hairdrying approaches over the years. We have a standard hairdryer that I tend to use where my hair just goes everywhere and gets in knots and it's a whole thing. I've used one of those hairbrush wand hair dryers, but the one I had was bulky and got really hot and was a whole thing. I've tried to use a round brush with the hairdryer, but that was unwieldy and also slow. I had given up on my day one hair being anything but stick straight but also a little frizzy

because I just couldn't get the heat or the process right. Oh well. Days two through four hair are usually much better.

But then I saw someone using the Shark FlexStyle hairdryer and thought, "Whoa. That actually might work for me." It has levels of heat and intensity of the airflow, so there's way more control which is great for my hair. Plus there are multiple attachments depending on how you want to dry your hair. There's a regular blowdryer part that is so well designed and doesn't send my hair all over the place but still somehow dries it faster. There are two different wand attachments that are like a round brush and a flat brush, and then my favorite part, there are curling attachments that are the coolest things ever. You basically wrap your hair around the wand like it's a curling iron, but it's a hairdryer. So it dries your hair into the shape of a curl. Because I have such fine hair that has to work really hard to hold a curl, those curls really end up being waves, but that's great for me because usually that's all I want the first day I dry my hair. I can go in with a curling iron another day to get stronger curls. But for someone who's hair holds curl better, it would be even more of a dream.

This is an excellent time to remind everyone that my list is not meant to be a prescriptive list. This is totally personal to show the value of small decisions but also of things that you want to make matter. I'm 42 years old and have found drying my hair deeply annoying my entire adult life. If I want to invest in a fancy hairdryer, I can. If you want to invest in something that matches up a particular frustration in your life, you can. Not everyone has to be on board or want to spend their money the same way. But when I tried this hairdryer for the first time, I literally jumped up and down in my bathroom because of how happy I was. An absolutely lifesaver right now.

The third thing that's saving my life right now is something I've mentioned maybe once before, but it's Tarte blush, particularly the shade Paaaarty with several As. It's described as a rosy buff, and that's exactly how I use it. I don't like wearing a ton of makeup, but I do like to feel alive. I like a good rosy glow. So I will use a quick bit of coverage from either a light coverage liquid foundation or a powder, and then I'll put the Paarty on my cheeks and my browline and my jawline, like a bronzer. I don't know if it's the fact that we're moving into summer and my skintone is changing colors ever so slightly, but I'm enjoying Tarte's Paarty as a bronzer more than my Gucci bronzer I splurged on awhile back and mentioned in another What's Saving My Life episode. Both are great, but Tarte is significantly cheaper and has lasted me an eternity. Plus it stays put. And I use it on my eyes most days, too! It's been such a great spring to summer easy makeup staple that has multiple uses. Tarte Amazonian Clay 12-Hour blush is a winner. Again, the shade is Paarty, but colors are personal. But the product itself? Highly recommend.

The fourth thing that's been saving my life is my orange almond cake. I shared this recipe in a past Latest Lazy Letter I think, and we'll put the recipe in the next Latest Lazy Listens email if you'd like to sign up for that. But more than the recipe, it's having a food that is so easy to make,

positively delicious, lasts forever before it goes bad if it even makes it that long, and works for breakfast, snack, and dessert. It's magical. And it's naturally gluten free which is the best! It's my version of the Tarte de Santiago, a traditional Spanish cake made with eggs, sugar, and almond flour. You work lemon and orange zest into the sugar to release all the oils, beat the citrus sugar with the eggs, just with a hand whisk. No mixer required. Then you gently fold in almond flour, salt, and a little cinnamon, bake it in a pie dish, and you'll be astonished at how delicious it is. Filling, bright, sweet but not overly so, and just magical. Again, we'll put the recipe in the next Latest Lazy Listens email which is our podcast summary email that goes out every two weeks. It's a great email. It highlights the episode, shares the steps or lists if there are any, has links to things you might need, and also includes the Lazy Genius of the Week. And in the next one, we'll put this recipe! If you'd like to get it, go to thelazygeniuscollective.com/listens.

The fifth thing that's been saving my life is apologies. Particularly apologies to my kids. I don't know if you've noticed, but it's May and May is bonkers. When life is bonkers, I am generally closer to being unkind than I am to being kind. Chaos requires me to be even more intentional about breathing and accessing kindness, but I don't always enter that space very quickly or even willingly. Sometimes I just want to be annoyed. This might make me feel good for all of three seconds, but ultimately it does nothing but harm. Fortunately, harm can be repaired, hence the apologies. I feel like I have done a lot of apologizing to my kids especially the last few weeks. It's not their fault that their schools aren't releasing important dates for graduations and awards days and performances until almost the day it happens. They have no control over the fact that my schedule is in a constant state of upheaval. And yet I take it out on them. Not in a gross way, but I definitely will be snappy or sigh when they tell me there's a music performance in two days at 10 in the morning. Sigh. But I don't want them to feel that sigh. It's too easy for them to interpret that sigh as frustration towards them, that coming to celebrate whatever their thing is isn't important to me. Obviously that is not true, but they don't know that. They don't see who I'm frustrated at or recognize that when we've been overstimulated for awhile in a firehose season of life, it comes out on their mom's face. They don't see that. They just see that they told me about something they're doing, and I sighed about it. Not what I want. So lately I've been doing a lot of apologizing, a lot of noticing how I come across to them in this busy season, and it's been quite lovely to see how beautiful relational repair is, even on the most mundane level.

The sixth thing that's been saving my life right now is my small collection of summer overalls and shortalls. Not every overall is created equal, and a lot of the ones that are pants don't work as well in the summer because they're heavy or whatever. Well, I got this one style from Free People that I saw literally everywhere, and now they don't sell them anymore which is kind of devastating, but I wear them constantly. One is lilac and another is darker purple, and I wear them both all the time with a white tee underneath. All the time. Walmart has a decent knockoff that I haven't tried in person but looks pretty close. I ordered a pair so I'm not always purple, and I'll keep you posted on how they work. I'll also link to the denim shortalls I got from Walmart that I really love. They're the Pink Queen Women's Denim Classic Bib Overalls, and they fit great on me. Not too long which is nice for my surprisingly short self. It's less about the actual items and more about having a summer uniform that you know you'll be emotionally and physically comfortable in. I feel like myself in an overall or romper or jumpsuit or shortall

situation. I love a one piece vibe. Knowing that allows me to limit my decisions when I'm looking for new pieces in a new season, and since I know I always feel comfortable in those, getting dressed is easier too. If you'd like to see the actual items, maybe I'll have the Free People knockoff by the time the next Latest Lazy Listens goes out. If I get them and they're great, I'll link those in that email.

And the final thing that's saving my life right now is drawing faces. You guys, I promise I'll eventually stop talking about this, but I don't know if I can adequately communicate how much joy and rest this hobby has brought me. I love making art, but I am definitely a beginner in all mediums. Sometimes I'll draw or paint something that I really love, but most of the time I'm just moving colors around, trying to calm my brain. Well, a few months ago, I decided once that I would only draw faces. I mentioned that last week in the episode Twenty Helpful Decisions I Keep Repeating. That was the only newish decision on the list, but I had to include because of how helpful it's been. When I draw, I only draw faces, and I just cannot stop. I draw a face almost every day. I look forward to it. I can feel in my body when I haven't been able to draw in awhile. I'm going to be taking my sketchbook and pencils to the pool this summer so I can draw while my kids swim! Not only has it been helpful from a decision-making standpoint, but it's been deeply impactful on a soul level, on a creative level, on just a human level to do something that is for no other reason than my own enjoyment. I have no goals with my drawing. I just draw, and it is absolutely saving my life right now.

Okay, now. Let's talk about when things that consistently save your life suddenly have to take a break. For example, you might know that a couple of steady entries on What's Saving My Life list are my lunch breaks during the week and my day off on Friday. Those are essential to me. And guess what? I won't have them this summer. My kids are home. My house will rarely if ever be empty, at least with me in it. I also won't even have a consistent rhythm. We tend to have three summers. June is when the kids are home but my husband is still working, July is when he's home and I have more flexibility, and August is when the kids are still home but my husband has to go back to work. He's a middle school counselor, so he basically gets about four to five weeks off in the middle of the summer. It makes it so that our summer is not one type of thing. We have three summers that need three different approaches. Plus even within those three summers, there still isn't much of a consistent rhythm because of all the regular summer things that pop up like camps and trips and stuff. So I do love summer. I have to intentionally embrace what's good about it and enjoy it with a lot of thought and intention, but it's a challenge for me, emotionally and logistically. The logistics make sense, but emotionally, I just don't have a lot of time on my own. I definitely don't have any that's automatic. If I want to be alone or do something for myself by myself, I have to plan it. I have to make sure that it happens, because it won't happen on its own. That's the nature of certain seasons. What worked for us in one season and will work again in that same season simply do not work right now. What do you do when that happens?

First, live in your season. You don't have to blindly accept that things are different and just deal with it or swallow it or white-knuckle your way through it. That's not what living in your season means. It means naming whatever you're feeling about where you are, being present there,

remembering that it won't always be this way, and being compassionate towards yourself and others as you figure out a way to stay a little more integrated during a tough season. When that is your posture, finding solutions for a season's challenge is much easier. So live in your season. It's one of the 13 Lazy Genius principles for a reason. Hugely important.

Second, let's use another of the principles. Go in the right order. The right order for most of life's challenges is to name what matters, then calm the crazy, and then trust yourself with what comes next. When we name what matters and then focus our attention on calming or removing whatever is making us feel crazy around that thing, it's so much easier to figure out what is next for us to do.

And then third, one final Lazy Genius principle: start small. Once you name what is likely next for you to do, start small in moving in that direction. So live in your season, go in the right order, and then start small.

Let's apply this to my own situation so you can see the process.

Like I said, I'm losing alone time for eleven weeks. And even that is a place where I need to stop myself. I've said this before - I can't remember what episode - but so often we make our problem feel quite grand. We put words in there like "always" and "never" and "all." We comically or dramatically make a sweeping statement about what we're dealing with, and that generalization is rarely accurate. Sometimes it is, but it's good to notice when we have big language. What I just said - I'm losing alone time for eleven weeks - is big language. The more accurate statement is I will temporarily lose my usual rhythmic alone time. That's more accurate and a softer, kinder version of I'm losing alone time for eleven weeks. See that? That kind of honesty and softness helps set the stage of problem-solving so much better.

So I've named my problem. Okay, what's my first step? Live in your season. Yep. I do want to do that. I want to enjoy this summer with my kids and with Kaz once he's off work. I want to willingly embrace the slowness, the chaos, even the complaints. My kids can be resilient and be bored. They can not always love whatever family activity we're doing. We will have those sticky, hangry moments of getting home from the pool and everyone needs a shower but someone scraped their knee in the gravel parking lot and someone else forgot their water bottle and someone else thought friends were going to be there but they weren't. Those are human moments that none of us should be surprised by. This season won't always be easy. In fact, for my personality and how I thrive, this season won't be easy most of the time. It'll require a lot of presence and kindness and intention. But like we talked about two weeks ago in the How to Have an Easier Maycember episode, it's important to tell ourselves the truth and remember that we've done these busy times before. I survived last summer and the summer before that. In fact, I really enjoyed last summer, and last summer was when we started our chaotic bathroom renovation and when I was writing my next book, *The PLAN!* That summer was wild and super challenging, and I did it. I made it. And I actually think it was pretty good. So tell yourself the truth. A challenging season always feels the hardest at the start. Well, maybe not always, but our imaginations work harder than reality sometimes. Just remember that.

Okay, so I'm living in my season. Yes, please. My second step in figuring out a solution for this problem of temporarily not having my typical alone time is to go in the right order by naming what matters, then calming the crazy, and then trusting myself with what comes next.

Okay, let's name what matters. A few things do matter. One, I want to make sure I'm feeling like myself every day. Sometimes those moments are harder to find in a new season, especially at the start, but I know I'll find my way there soon enough. Still, I do want to feel like myself every day. The things that will help that will vary day to day. It could be reading at the pool, eating my lunch on the front porch instead of inside the house where the kids are watching their weird YouTube videos, going for a walk, going to bed early... lots of things could do this for me. But that's something that matters: daily feeling like myself. Another thing that matters is that I can be alone for a minimum of a couple of hours a week, and when I say a couple of hours, I mean those hours all at once. Not ten minutes here there. I think something that will matter is to have a chunk of time each week where I'm intentionally alone. I'd also like to be in my own house alone for 2-3 hours, maybe not every week but every other week? At least once every three weeks. And if I can squeeze in an extended time away alone, like a night in a hotel or an Airbnb or a quick weekend somewhere with a friend, that would be fantastic. Maybe midsummer? So those are four things that matter to me, all versions of being alone: daily feeling like myself, a weekly chunk of 2-3 hours where I can be alone, a 2-3 hour chunk every couple of weeks where I can be alone in my own house, and then an extended time of being alone or with a friend sometimes during the summer. Of those four things, the thing that screams the loudest as being the most important is being alone in my house for a large chunk of time. That fills me up like nothing else, so while all four of those things matter and I'll do what I can to make them work for me this summer, the thing that matters most is being in my house alone on a fairly regular basis.

Okay, next up in the process of going in the right is calming the crazy. The crazy is the kids in the house, but let's look more specifically at the craziness that might prevent me from doing what matters. You name what matters, and then you calm the crazy. The crazy is honestly less about the kids and more about the logistics. If I simply block off three hours on a random Thursday and then get to that morning and Kaz is like, "okay, kids, let's load up and go somewhere so Mom can be alone in the house," that is crazy-making to me. Why? Because inevitably a kid will whine or not want to go or beg to stay home and not come out of their room, and that chaos will actually make me even more frustrated. So in order to calm that crazy, the plan needs to be thoughtful and preemptive. It needs to be something that everyone is aware of well before it's time to get out of the house. See that?

Okay, so we're going in the right order by naming what matters which is that I'm alone in the house a handful of times over the summer, calming the crazy by not making those times super spontaneous and forced, and next I trust myself whatever step comes next. The next step is to sit down with Kaz, look at the calendar, mark off a couple of days that don't interfere with whatever else is going on, and start planning intentional things for the rest of the family to be away for the morning or afternoon. We just need a conversation with the calendar.

Let's recap because we have one more thing we can do. There were steps within steps here. The three Lazy Genius principles I want you to think about here are live in your season, go in the right order which we just did with those three steps of naming what matters, calming the crazy, and trusting ourselves with what comes next, and the final principle to remember here is start small. How can I start small here? Now that I know all of these important things, what is the best way to start small? It's to text Kaz and ask if we can look at the calendar tonight. After that it's brainstorm a couple of options that would be fun for the family to do. It could also be as simple as knowing that Kaz will just take everybody to the pool for one afternoon and I won't go. It doesn't have to be elaborate. But we start small by having the conversation. Then we do the next small thing and then the next until we're genuinely supporting what matters in this season.

Does all of that make sense? If you have something that usually saves your life and you're about to put it on hold for the summer, go through this process. Live in your season, think about what matters, calm the crazy, trust yourself with what comes next, and then start small and making it happen. It sounds simple in some ways and complicated in others, but this kind of compassionate, wise intention now will make an upcoming season a little easier to live inside of.

And that's what's saving my life.

Before we go, let's celebrate the Lazy Genius of the Week! This week it's Andrea Elias. Andrea writes, "Hi! Just listened to this week's episode and one thing I've done to limit the piles of clothes in my bedroom is to put over-the-door hooks on my closet doors for the not-dirty-but-don't-want-them-in-the-closet clothes. This gets them off the floor but still visible for when I want to wear them." Short and sweet and super helpful. If y'all remember, we did an Office Hours episode awhile back with the Office Ladies, Jenna Fischer and Angela Kinsey, and Angela really struggled with all her piles of clothes. She loves a basket, so we talked about containing those clothes in baskets, but if you don't love a basket as much as Angela does or you don't quite have the space for that, an over the closet hook might be just the thing to solve this problem if solving it matters to you. Thanks for sharing, Andrea, 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!