

368 - My Playbook for a Lazy Genius Summer

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 368: My Playbook for a Lazy Genius Summer.

Y'all, I am so pumped for this episode. Why? Because it is a real life example of how to think about your time like a Lazy Genius, and when we do that, when we think about our time through the lens of seasons, hope tos and have tos, and various levels of kindness and ease through the thirteen Lazy Genius principles, life feels better. Is it perfect or always easy or without challenges? Of course not, and I'm fairly certain you already knew that's not what I meant. But it is one of my favorite things ever to help you feel better about the season you're walking into. For many of you, it's summer, or you might already be a couple of weeks in. Regardless, I'm going to share my plan for a Lazy Genius summer, and hopefully it'll show you some ways to apply these principles to your own plan but more importantly to how you pivot around the plan when those times come. Plural times. Plural pivots. And when, not if. We know there will be many, many pivots, and we can be thoughtful about those, too.

The first thing to remember when you're entering or in the early stages of a new season and you're trying to prepare is to think in terms of a playbook rather than a gameplan. Both have their place, but today we're making a playbook, not a gameplan. A playbook is a non-linear list of approaches to something. A playbook has ideas, priorities, an understanding of the pieces and parts you might encounter. It's the hub for the information you might need to make an informed, wise decision. It's how you can preemptively and proactively decide what matters and what doesn't in this upcoming season. A gameplan is more granular, more linear, more focused on how you'll approach a day, a week, a project, etc. Again, that matters, but that's not what we're doing today. In fact, I think one of the many reasons we struggle to prepare for upcoming seasons is because we start with a gameplan. We make a series of complicated gameplans instead of stepping back and creating a playbook that will actually simplify our future gameplans and make them even more effective. So today is playbook day.

As we get started, you might be familiar with the three loose steps to this process of creating a playbook. I shared them in an episode about three months ago when we needed a playbook for spring. Those three steps are look around, look back, and look ahead. Look around, look back, and look ahead. Once you do those three things, you can more easily name what matters, you can name your hope tos and have tos, you can answer some questions like "what am I really excited about this season," and you can even start putting things in their place. But the beauty is that you can choose what makes sense for you. Certain seasons require more plays so to speak than other seasons do, so you do whatever works for you. Ultimately though, look around, look back, and look ahead first. It'll help you know what comes next.

Now I'm legit going to spend the rest of this episode doing that for my own life. I mean, I already did it a couple of weeks ago, and that's why I'm coming into this episode so excited! I feel genuinely less burdened about what is coming next. I know that there's a lot to do, that my kids

will drive me crazy, that I will drive them crazy, that many plans won't shake out, but that doesn't actually matter. Those things are expected. What helps me feel good moving into those situations is knowing that I have done the work of thinking through what matters, of tending to this season in a wise and kind way, and that my family is part of that process since they're participants just like I am. If you're solo or it's just you and one other person, bringing that person into the conversation is so important. This doesn't have to fall only on you, nor should it.

Okay, let's look at my playbook. First, look around with me. When I look around at where I am, at the season I am, at what I'm currently experiencing, I notice chaos but the normal kind. We don't have any deeply difficult situations we're facing that require extra energy or functioning. I feel lucky to say that things are relatively normal, whatever normal means. As I look around, I also see two teenage boys who are at different stages of independence and their little sister. Parenting is honestly the hardest thing for us right now. The kids have such different needs from each other, and knowing that we're all going to be together for eleven weeks of the summer in various ways can send me spinning if I'm not careful. But even in being careful, I'm also being honest. I look around and see a challenging parenting season. It's been that way for the last year or two. Any of you who have middle schoolers know it's a weird time and exhausting in a way I don't always feel equipped for.

So in summary, I look around and see end of season chaos paired with the broader season of tricky parenting. Naming that helps as I move forward.

Next up is to look back. I can get so in the weeds about how I think a season is going to do and turn a little Chicken Little with it all. The sky is falling, but is it really? Did it last year? Am I remembering it correctly? So I look back. There are lots of ways you can do this: look through your camera roll from this time last year, look back at a journal or something like Emily P. Freeman's Next Right Thing Guided Journal, look at your Instagram or Facebook feed. Ask someone you live with if they remember how it felt this time last year. One of the simplest ways I look back is to read through my one line a day journal. I've been keeping the same one for going on three years now, so I have a couple of summers' worth of information to examine.

In June of 2022, we were dealing with the stomach bug that ran through everybody and had to cancel an anticipated trip to visit out of town cousins. In the wake of that, on June 6, 2022, I wrote "so much complaining, but the kids are my favorite." The next day, June 7, 2022, I wrote a quote from Ben who said, "Even though you're the only mom I've ever had, you're still the best." And that was right after a canceled trip to see cousins he adores. The thing I remembered and the thing that happened was Ben saying I was his best mom which means I was with him in his sadness, and we all ended up okay.

Let's look back at another June. Last year, in June of 2023, it rained the first week of school being out, and I mean rained. And I was writing *The PLAN* at the time which is my next book that comes out October 8. It was a weird vibe that month with deadlines and disappointments

and all the things. And even the next month, July of 2023, the family all got sick again with Covid and couldn't go see those same cousins a second summer in a row. Are you kidding me?! There were little moments like we went to the pool and it was closed for a meet, but we rallied and pivoted and went to get ice cream instead. One day two years ago, I wrote, "Sam's summer boredom has led him to kind of liking movies now, so I'll take it." If you're new here, my kids hate movies as a concept because there is "too much escalating conflict," but honestly they're coming around. Apparently boredom started that. I looked back and saw evidence of summer camps where kids conveniently forgot to shower and our power went out a ton weirdly. We had people over and went to the pool and sat around reading. I worked sometimes with a sitter and sometimes in the cracks. Other families rallied and hung out with my people. Annie learned a kickball change from a friend, and she accompanied Kaz and me to a meeting with our financial planner because we couldn't find anyone to stay with her. If you read the entirety of my daily entries over the last two summers which I recently did, those entries don't tell a story of stress. They tell a story of lovely moments and pivoting and seeing the good that's here right now, and it's quite moving if I'm honest. That's a lot of words about looking back, but I want you to see how valuable it is. When I pulled out my journal, I wasn't freaking out, but I wasn't calm either. I was feeling those early stressors of an upcoming season, that tingle of anticipated chaos and no alone time for eleven weeks. But when I looked back, I felt so much better. I mean, I don't even have to make a playbook. I can just remember that I went through some crazy things these last two seasons, and not only did I survive them, the things that stood out to me that were worthy of writing down were mostly beautiful, human things. I mean, y'all, on the same day that Annie learned her kickball change, I found out I had thousands of dollars stolen from an account. You know what I wrote down? First, I wrote down the kickball change which is hilarious if I'm honest, but I wrote down how thankful I was for Susan, my financial planner, and Leslie, my Director of Operations here at Team LG for helping me sort it all out. What a gift looking back is.

Now, was every day sparkly? No. Was every entry sparkly? No. But most were. But let's say they weren't, what I learned from this look back and what I want to encourage you in is that no matter your circumstances, you can experience some form of peace. You can look for some semblance of good. You can breathe and be kind to yourself even when everything feels like it's falling apart. The looking back is less about seeing if the circumstances were good or not. I loved seeing how I responded to them. I've come such a long way in how I see my life, and that way of seeing is what I try and teach and encourage you toward in every single episode of this podcast, every page of every book I write, and anything I share publicly. The way you see your life matters. The kindness you access matters. The daily moments matter. Not in a Hallmark way although there's nothing wrong with Hallmark. I mean the real fingers in the metaphorical dirt human moments of our daily lives. You're not a Stepford robot trying to manufacture a perfect summer. You're probably a lady named Amanda or Sarah who's trying to be an integrated person day to day. That's what we're after. Let's just be a person, and looking back helps you see how you already have been.

Next up is to look ahead. Okay, now we're getting to the nitty gritty. What is coming up in my life? Well, this is still far away but also not, and it's the release of my next book, *The PLAN: Manage Your Time Like a Lazy Genius*. If you're into how this episode makes you feel, you're

going to love that book. Sure, it doesn't release until October 8th, but there is so much work to be done in preparing for that day. A lot we've already done, a lot we'll do in August and September, and then I'll try and stay a sane person in October with all the launching and traveling and being a slightly chaotic author in one of the busiest months of the year already. Depending on the day, I'm either not worried about it at all or worried about it very deeply. So while that's a bit of a "later" problem, it's still there. I still see the book launch when I look ahead.

For the summer specifically, I ultimately see inconsistencies. We have camps for all three kids that often do not line up. We have three different months of childcare rhythms because of when Kaz has time off this summer. I have different days of the week I'll be working and even different weeks of the month where I can and can't. There's very little that is consistent this summer, and as I look ahead, that's what I'm seeing. I don't see much of a rhythm.

Remember at the start of the episode when I sat that these three steps of looking around, looking back, and looking ahead would help inform what you do next? You can choose what you feel like you need! What I need, especially because of the lack of rhythm and consistency, are two things. I need a list of have tos and hope tos for the summer, and I need some kind of baseline expectation for our days, no matter what is happening. If we need to adjust, we adjust, but having something in place helps us have something to adjust from.

So I have already made my list of have tos and hope tos, and we're continuing to add to that list. Some have tos this summer are to get Ben a smart watch because that's our house rule. When you finish sixth grade, you get a smart watch. Sam is going into high school next year, and that's still all he has. It works great for us. Other have tos are to keep ahead of work so that the fall doesn't creep up on me and eat my lunch, to take care of a couple of medical things with the kids before school start again, to plan a church event I'm helping out with, and to schedule solo time for me to be in my house. Those are have tos.

Our hope tos are a family affair. We did our first pass at the hope tos just last week, and we'll keep adding as the summer goes along. I'll explain where we put those in just a second. But I have personal have tos and hope tos, and we have family have tos and hope tos. Seeing that difference helps me triage all the things in a relatively inconsistent summer.

The other thing I need now that I've looked around, back, and ahead is some kind of baseline expectation for the kids especially but really for all of us on as many days as possible. We need something consistent and rhythmic. One of the pieces that is causing me the most anxiety about that daily rhythm is how we handle screen time. It's easier during the school year to have set screen time because most of the day, the kids are at school. But during the summer when they're not, it's tricky. Without some kind of guideline, they'll just play on screens all day. While I'm not commenting on that from a moral standpoint because some seasons need a screen babysitter, for us in this season, it's not necessary or preferred. Our kids enjoy their screen time and get a lot of it. I'm okay with that, but what I don't like is when it's the central piece of every day's planning. I don't want everything to be revolving around when someone can have screen time.

In the past as many of you with kids have probably done, there's a checklist of things kids have to do before they get screens. Maybe they have to read or make something or do their chores or whatever, and then they can have screen time. But because our days are unique and some mornings it works out better for the kids to watch their rare movie or play a video game together which they've been doing more and more which is fun, the "do these things before screen time" model doesn't feel like it's going to work for us this year. Plus, my boys sleep in now. It's a whole new season. So we're going to try an adjustment. Instead of having to do this list of things before you get screen time today, you do this list of things that enable you to have access to screen time tomorrow. So every day, the kids have a list of things they need to do, and that list might change here and there based on what we have going on, if either of the boys are still in some of their summer classes, if anyone is at a camp, what the weather is like, that kind of thing, but you have to do these things today. If you choose to not finish your list before you go to bed, you're also choosing to not have screen time the next day. Maybe I'm naively optimistic, but I think that slight adjustment is going to be great for us.

I got these dry erase clipboards that I'll have for every kid for their daily sheets which is what we call them, and we can adjust however we need to. I'm kind of pumped about it honestly. And what I love is it empowers the kids to have their own rhythm. Some of them have more energy in the morning than others do, so it makes sense to do things that require more early than later. They can choose. I'm into it, and those tasks have their place on the clipboards.

Speaking of putting things in their place, my favorite thing to keep track of what we have going on and of our have tos and hope tos is the summer break essential calendar. We'll put a link in the show notes, but I have used calendars from The Essential Calendar company for years now, and they are a staple for us. Super simple but perfectly designed with the best accessories, too. I set up our summer break calendar which goes from memorial Day to Labor Day, putting in all the flags, all the things that are locked barring any sickness or something. Summer camps, trips, birthdays, that kind of thing. I use different colored tape that Essential Calendar sells for different types of activities, so things feel segmented in a great way but also colorful and fun. Then I gathered the family up and asked them what they all hoped they got to do this summer. As they said their things like "go to Outback!" from Ben or "have Mariah over for a sleepover!" from Annie or "get a French horn!" from Sam, I wrote those things down on these little round sticky notes that are also from Essential Calendar and put those along the border of the calendar itself. Since those are not locked things but they still matter, their place is on individual stickers on the calendar we look at every day. So as we come upon a day, we can decide, "hey, let's go to Outback for dinner!" and then leave that sticky note on that day which is fun as we look back at the calendar. It's seriously the best way for us to keep track of our summer have tos and hope tos, and since the stickers come in different colors that match the tape, it's all coordinated and divided however you need it to be. This isn't an ad by the way. They didn't pay me to say this. I love them so much.

Some other parts to my playbook that I haven't quite made yet are some summer house rules and maybe a decide once or two. But honestly this is all I need right now. I needed to remember

that I can do summer. I can even enjoy it. I also needed to have a great place for my hope to and have to so we wouldn't miss things that matter in the inconsistency of our summer. I also needed to recognize the need for something rhythmic and daily in our family, and I'll keep you posted on how this "screen time tomorrow daily sheet" situation works out. But do you see how helpful this is? Just look around and acknowledge your season, look back and notice how you have lived before, and look ahead so you can prepare in a way that feels human and kind, knowing that you will absolutely have to pivot many times as you go.

And that is my playbook for a Lazy Genius summer.

Before we go, let's celebrate the Lazy Genius of the Week! This week it's Marie France Noel! Marie writes, "My toddlers would always ask for me for, well, everything. Mom x1000 everyday, and I couldn't do it anymore. So we taught our 2 boys to call out "Parent!" when they needed help. They are now 10 and 12 and still do it. It was a game changer for us!! My husband got even more involved and I felt way less like I held the world on my shoulders." This made me laugh, Marie. Now, obviously this is a tip for parents, and it's also assuming that a household has both a mom and a dad. However, the sentiment is quite lovely and can be adjusted for other situations. Sometimes we cannot change the behavior of others, and we have to tend to ourselves, right? We can't change how someone treats us, but we can be aware of how we respond to it. And also there are circumstances where we can try and teach someone how to adjust their behavior to make it more equitable for everyone. This is a great example of that. My kids always shout Mom. Always. It's mostly because I'm the parent around in their time of need because of my husband working out of the home, but it's also become a habit for them. Everyone yells Mom. I'm curious if this is something to try in our house. Talk about a way to Lazy Genius the summer. And it does communicate to kids in particular that Mom doesn't always need to be the first responder. Such a simple thing to encourage our kids to do, and it's a great example of how to kindly encourage someone else to adjust their behavior rather than bending our frustration into something more palatable all the time. Such a great idea, Marie, and congratulations on being the Lazy Genius of the Week!

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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!