

378 - 13 Principles That Will Change Your Life Forever

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 378 - 13 Principles That Will Change Your Life Forever.

This week marks the four year anniversary of my first book, *The Lazy Genius Way*, and we're going to celebrate by dedicating an entire episode to the 13 Lazy Genius principles. For those of you who have read the book, you know that those principles have the power to change your life forever. And not in an infomercial way. I'm not the Shamwow guy here. These are lifelong, long haul principles that will make your life more grounded, content, and help you continue to name and focus on what matters most to you in whatever season you're in. Plus, they help you get your stuff done. What a world that something can actually help you live your life and without an ounce of shame or shoulds.

We've never done an episode that just highlights the principles, so today, in *The Lazy Genius Way's* birthday week, feels like the perfect time to do that.

First, I'm going to remind you of the 13 principles, and then I'm going to share a few of the ways they can work together to make your life feel a little bit easier. That's the beauty of these principles: the points of connection are plentiful. It's like pairing ingredients together in a recipe. Certain principles together or in a certain order just sing, and I'm going to share some of my favorite combinations.

Alright, so first, let's do a quick runthrough of the principles so if you're new to the 13, you'll know what all of them mean.

First principle: Decide Once. This is the workhouse of the group, and she is fantastic. You make one decision, one time, about one thing, and then you keep making that decision until it doesn't work for you anymore. You wear the same thing on a certain day of the week, cook the same meal after soccer practice, get the same gift for a friend's birthday, go to the same ice cream place when you're on vacation at the beach, the list is literally endless. If you want a list of my personal favorites, listen to Episode 366: Twenty Helpful Decisions I Keep Repeating.

Second principle: Start Small. She comes off as annoying, but really she's your best friend. Start small is fairly countercultural, so it's a harder principle to apply. Starting small also doesn't give us immediate results which we love and are programmed to prioritize. But despite what the productivity world tells you, going big is not your only option. Start small. Like I say in the book, small steps are easy, easy steps are sustainable, and sustainable steps actually go somewhere. If you'd like more thoughts, listen to Episode 349: 10 Small Changes I'm Glad I Made.

Third principle: Ask the Magic Question. She's so smart and shiny and makes your future self very happy. The Magic Question is "what can I do now to make something easier later?" The something is up to you. You can make anything easier later. All you need to do is ask the

question. Quick note here. Is it possible to over magic question your life? Yes. If you stay so focused on making the future easier, you won't be connected to your present. I talked about this with time management expert Laura Vanderkam, discussing if it is possible to overthink and overprepare for the future? Of course it is, but Laura said the funniest thing that I'll never forget. She said, "Your future self is not incompetent." So file that away, please, anytime you're trying to Magic Question literally everything. Your future self is not incompetent. If you'd like more ideas here, listen to Episode 262: Answers to the Magic Question That Paid Off.

Fourth principle: Live in the Season. This principle is the sturdy oak tree you can see from your window. It's the consistent principle that you should consider in pretty much any decision you make. If you forget the season you're living in, you might make choices that aren't appropriate for who and where you are right now. I said this in the book, but I remember a mom asking me how her family should eat dinner together at night because her boys were on traveling baseball teams and they often didn't get home until 9pm. She was worried about how wrong she was doing dinner rather than naming she's in a season where dinner around the table is just not a thing. And that's okay. Live in your season, guys. Such a foundational principle.

Fifth principle: Build the Right Routines. The thing to remember about building a Lazy Genius routine is that it is less about doing a certain list of things in a certain order. A Lazy Genius routine focuses on where the routine is taking you. It's an onramp to a particular feeling or met need. So a morning routine isn't built on doing these seven things in a certain order. Its purpose is to gently ease you into the day or whatever your goal is. That way, you're less focused on checking off the boxes of the routine which can get mired in guilt very quickly and instead focused on what you're hoping to achieve or feel at the end of the routine. Sometimes you can do that with one of the seven things as long as you remember what matters. For more, listen to Episode 317: 5 Steps to a Routine That Actually Works or Episode 359: 7 Routines That Work for Me.

Sixth principle: Set House Rules. House Rules is the teacher you love but who doesn't play around. She helps you stay focused on what matters without being mean about it. House Rules are decisions that are meant for either you or everyone you live with, and the point of them is to prevent chaos. If you often find yourself in a situation where chaos reigns, perhaps there is a place earlier in the chaotic downturn where a House Rule can keep things from falling apart as often. I have lots of examples in *The Lazy Genius Way*.

Seventh principle: Put Everything In Its Place. This principle feels like the high you get walking into an office supply store. Order can be a beautiful thing, especially when it's oriented around what matters most to you. So put everything in its place means what it sounds like. When the things in your life have a place, both physically and metaphorically, ease often follows. There are so many ways to implement this, and I wrote a whole chapter about it in the book.

Eighth principle: Let People In. This one is a bit divisive because of the whole extrovert/introvert thing. Some people don't love asking for help or feel weird sharing things they're excited about or feel like a burden if they share something they're struggling with. But as you are aware,

having meaningful relationships is now the proven most important contributor to a fulfilled life. It matters. Let people in.

Ninth principle: Batch It. Some of you hear something else, and that will always make me laugh. Batching is not a new concept. You do the same type of task all at once instead of in sequence. I batched last night by sorting out a basket of laundry and then folding each type of item. It was quicker which is what batching is supposed to do.

Tenth principle: Essentialize. I first read about the concept of Essentialism from Greg McKeown, and he applies the concept to business. But in regular life, you can essentialize, too. Essentially (get it?), you remove what is in the way of what matters, only keeping what is essential. This is such an important, helpful concept with the organization of your home, your schedule, even your relationships. Have what you need and get rid of what's in the way.

Eleventh principle: Go in the Right Order. This one is a sneaky favorite. It's that guy in middle school who you never noticed and then he told a few funny jokes and looked at you a certain way one time, and now you have a lowkey crush on him forever. The right order often gets overlooked, but it is good stuff. Certain things like how to clean a bathroom and how to make soup do go in a particular order that applies to pretty much everybody. Then there are personal situations where you're doing the right things, just maybe in the wrong order. For example, you don't organize a space for you essentialize it. Otherwise, you're organizing what you don't need, right? But you still organize! The right order for most things can be distilled down to 1) name what matters, 2) calm the crazy, and 3) trust yourself with what comes next. You're a smart cookie. You just need to settle yourself and your immediate space first. Then you'll know what to do.

Twelfth principle: Schedule Rest. For the love, please do this. I think you're doing it more than you used to because we've been talking about intentional, scheduled rest in this space for almost five years now, but please please please don't forget to schedule rest. Not just rest. Schedule it. Because otherwise, it doesn't happen as often as you need it to. In *The Lazy Genius Way*, there's an entire chapter on rest, including the different kinds. I don't just mean schedule a weekend away. In fact, that's not what you need the most. You need daily, intentional rest as much as you're able to find it, so find it. Schedule it. Make it happen because it matters in keeping you grounded and yourself.

And the thirteenth and final principle: Be Kind to Yourself. This one is foundational just like Live in the Season. In the Lazy Genius space, we do everything with kindness. Kindness, self-compassion, empathy... all of those things are high values for those of you listening, but you're often much kinder to others than you are to yourself. A lot of you hold yourselves to such a high standard that when you think you've failed at something, you do not talk to yourself kindly about it. There's a lot of self-shaming happening in between your ears, pals, which is why Be Kind to Yourself is a foundational Lazy Genius principle. If you are kind to yourself, it helps you be kind to others, and both help you see your circumstances with eyes of wisdom and contentment rather than judgment and shame. Be kind to yourself.

So those are the 13 Lazy Genius principles! Again, they are described in great detail with lots of examples in *The Lazy Genius Way*, so if you've not yet read that book, I highly encourage you to. I know a lot of you read it this time of year right before school starts because it helps you get into the headspace of kindness and intentionality in a way you desire going into a busy season. It's a great time to get it. And if you're an audiobook person, I read it! The voice is me. Well, the first voice is Emily P. Freeman because she wrote and read the foreword. That threw some people off at first, so just a heads up.

Okay, now let's talk about some of the ways you can categorize or combine these principles to make them extra in the best possible way.

First is the tried and true Lazy Genius Method. It's a five step process to help you Lazy Genius anything that's on the larger side. A new season, a transition, a consistent problem that has multiple parts, a rhythm of some sort... that's where you use the Lazy Genius Method. Those five steps which are connected to principles or to foundational Lazy Genius concepts are to first, prioritize or name what matters. That's technically not one of the 13 principles, but it is foundational in knowing how to apply those principles. So first, prioritize or name what matters. Step two, essentialize which is a principle or get rid of what's in the way. Step three, organize or put everything in its place, another principle. Step four, personalize or feel like yourself. I think this is a lowkey way of being kind to yourself. Put yourself in the equation. And step five is systemize or stay in a flow. While that's not a Lazy Genius principle itself, you can use multiple principles to systemize anything, and systemizing is something we try to do in places where we're trying to be a Lazy Genius. Staying in a flow is what principles like Decide Once, Set House Rules, and Build the Right Routines help us do. So that's the first way to approach the principles.

The second way is for when you're wondering what singular principle to apply to a situation right now. It's a set of categories or questions that might be helpful. Are you out of order, out of rhythm, or out of sorts? Out of order is when a specific thing or situation is out of order. A space is messy, you don't know what's for dinner, a kid is on the ground covered in something gross and you have to leave. You need a quick fix. The best principles for that are Decide Once, Start Small, Ask the Magic Question, and Put Everything in Its Place. If you're out of rhythm, that's a slightly broader problem. A repetitive problem. Your mornings are always harried. You can't seem to find your keys ever. The kitchen is always messy. The principles for that are Essentialize, Batch It, Set House Rules, Build the Right Routines, and Go in the Right Order. And finally, are you out of sorts? Are you feeling upside-down in your brain? Are you extra judgmental right now? Are you trying to force something to work in your life that used to but doesn't anymore? Are you about to yell at the next person who speaks to you? Those principles are Live in the Season, Let People In, Schedule Rest, and Be Kind to Yourself. So those categories are one way to look at the principles.

Another favorite way to use the principles involves getting a refreshed, healthy, realistic, kind perspective on whatever is frustrating you. Life is frustrating on a pretty regular basis, so having a process that helps you see that frustration a little more calmly and kindly is huge. If you use these four principles in this order for literally anything forever, I think it will consistently change your perspectives and therefore your life. Those four principles in order are Be Kind to Yourself, Live in the Season, Essentialize, and Start Small. If you're feeling frustrated or overwhelmed, access kindness first. Calm down your body and your brain, and be kind. Next, live in the season. Remember where you are. Most likely your frustration is tied to that season, so naming it and being where you are today helps you relax into the situation a bit more. Third, essentialize. Get rid of whatever is in the way. Most likely something is, whether it's physical or metaphorical. It's hard to see a problem clearly when something is in the way. And finally start small. When we're overwhelmed and frustrated, Big Black Trash Bag Energy comes calling, and we move in giant sweeps to eliminate the problem. But as we all know, that approach never actually works. We just end up overwhelmed again but for extra reasons now because there are piles everywhere or we yelled at somebody. So file away this principle order: be kind to yourself, live in the season, essentialize, and then start small.

A house rule that applies to the Lazy Genius principles is to always essentialize before you put everything in its place. Those two principles - essentialize and put everything in its place - must always go in that order. If you organize what you don't need, you're wasting your time. My favorite, most entertaining way I've ever experienced that order was in an episode of The Lazy Genius Kitchen video series we made a couple of years ago where I helped Annie Downs organize her freezer. She was organizing too many things she didn't need, and the things she didn't need were absolutely hilarious. Go watch that if you want something to make you laugh while you eat lunch today. But essentialize before you put everything in its place. That's a steady rule forever.

Another steady rule forever is to tack on Start Small to any of the other principles. If you are considering one principle for a particular challenge in your life, always add on Start Small. It'll keep you in check before you spin out of control doing more than is necessary or within your season or abilities. If you're going to Decide Once, excellent. Also start small. Don't Decide Once about everything right now. If you're going to Ask the Magic Question, also start small. You don't need to Magic Question everything. Building the Right Routine? Start small with it. Don't build a routine for everything right now. Start small. Scheduling rest? Don't feel like you have to schedule every bit of rest of the duration of your life. Start small with resting today. Start small with literally everything always. It's more sustainable, it's kinder, it's realistic, and it works. It's boring and not the least bit sexy, but it definitely works.

The final principle combo I want to highlight is to Live in the Season and Go in the Right Order. Going in the right order is often quite helpful, but without an acknowledgement of your season, you might be a little more rigid about that order than you need to be. By combining those two principles into one energy, you've just created for yourself a lifestyle superpower that will help you get things done but with kindness and wisdom based on what's happening for you right now.

I encourage you to think about the principles this way for your own life. I bet there are winning combinations that serve your particular personality or season of life really well, and naming those combinations might give you a leg up the next time you need to Lazy Genius a problem in your life.

And those are the 13 principles that will change your life forever. Again, I hope you grab *The Lazy Genius Way* in honor of her four year birthday. One way you can do that is to be winning a copy on Instagram! That's a great segue into two big announcements.

First, yesterday, I posted a giveaway for signed copies of *The Lazy Genius Way* in celebration of her birthday, so go leave a comment on that post if you want to win a signed copy!

The second announcement is very exciting. We are less than two months away from the release of *The PLAN: Manage Your Time Like a Lazy Genius* which is out October 8, and today is the day we officially announce the thank you gift for preordering!

Preordering a book is a huge boost to an author's book launch because it tells retailers and bookstores that people want this book and that they should stock this book. All of that energy also helps boost a book's visibility for bestseller lists and such. It's all kind of chaotic and arbitrary but also a lot of fun. So to those of you who have already preordered *The PLAN*, some of you months ago, I am genuinely so grateful. To show my gratitude, we have a thank you gift for everyone who has preordered and will until October 8th.

Starting today, Monday August 12th, I'll be sending out a pep talk every Monday from now until the end of the year. For real. From August 12 to December 30, you can get a written or audio version of me giving you a pep talk every single Monday. *The PLAN* has a pep talk section in it, and some of you who read the book early told me that was your favorite part. In fact, I had a meeting with Jenna Fischer of the Office Ladies a couple of months ago, and she told me that that very day, she had gone to read the pep talk called When There's Too Much To Do, read it, immediately felt better, and then got on with the things she could do. Y'all, sometimes all we need is a little pep talk, and I am going to give them to you for the rest of 2024. So when we're in that October chaos where up is down and down is up, when we're about to go into the Thanksgiving holidays, when we're right up on the presidential election, I'll be sending time and season-specific pep talks each week to folks who preorder *The PLAN*.

So here's how you get today's first pep talk. Go to thelazygeniuscollective.com/theplan, and you'll see directions on what to do. Basically, you enter your order information from wherever you preordered The PLAN, whether you did it today or four months ago, and you'll automatically get this week's pep talk on any day you register. After that, you'll receive a new pep talk every Monday until the end of 2024.

It's official preorder thank you gift time, and that means we are just a breath away from this book officially being in the world. I am so excited, and thank you for celebrating all of this with

me. Plus, the book is rad and will help you in massive ways. Don't read it because you like me. Read because you like yourself. It'll make your life better, no matter your life stage, season, or personality. Truly. If you're a Lazy Genius, you'll love *The PLAN*.

Before we go, let's celebrate the Lazy Genius of the Week! This week it's Christine Neese. Christine writes: "My kids were 10 and 13 and wanted to learn to cook beyond basic scrambled eggs, grilled cheese, and pasta. None of the "Cooking Camps" in the area fit our needs. So I subscribed to a meal prep service and had two meals delivered weekly. Every week, my kids chose their meals, and on their assigned days, they got to take charge of cooking, while the other played sous chef. The meals came with clear instructions, all the ingredients, and were sophisticated enough to use real cooking skills—even grilling! I was able to defer meal planning and prep, and they learned a life skill that they continue to use as young adults. It cost a fraction of what some camps charged, and only slightly above the cost of normal groceries, plus we got some amazing meals! When summer was over, I stopped my subscription with no fuss. Not everyone's season is ready or able to subscribe to a meal prep service, but it was a perfect solution for my season at that time." Listen to me right now. This is one of the best ideas I have ever heard. Seriously. What a brilliant way to name what matters and be a Lazy Genius about it. Christine applied the principles Decide Once, Start Small, Essentialize, Go in the Right Order, Build the Right Routines, Put Everything In Its Place, Be Kind to Yourself... so many! I also love that Christine is using something that is typically meant to be used one way and changing its purpose to match her own. I've never heard of anyone using a meal delivery service to teach kids how to cook, and what a brilliant use it is. Seriously, I'm so obsessed with this I can't stand it. Thank you for sharing this great idea, Christine, and congratulations on being the Lazy Genius of the Week!

If you'd like to be considered for the Lazy Genius of the Week, email us your idea at hello@thelazygeniuscollective.com.

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 and for setting up all the pep talk mechanics! You're getting weekly pep talks because Leah figured out the machinery and all the things to get it to you.

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!