

380 - Finding What You Need When You're Feeling Overwhelmed

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 380 - Finding What You Need When You're Feeling Overwhelmed.

Since overwhelm can come in different forms and for different reasons, it's so hard to know what to do next. This reminds me of Episode 258: The Seven Kinds of Rest and How to Know Which One You Need. We say, "Ugh, I'm so tired" and we think the answer is rest. But what kind? There are several kinds because we're tired for different reasons. The same is true for feeling overwhelmed.

To put us in context on the different things we might need for different kinds of overwhelm, let me set the stage. Guess what today is? It's the first day of school for my children. And because podcasts are podcasts, I'm obviously not recording this on that actual day. I don't fully know how I'm feeling today, but I can guess. It's been a wild last few weeks, I do know that! We're doing open houses and getting school supplies and going to the doctor. Kaz is back to work, so I'm solo again, trying to plan a book launch while also planning two different carpools. While I have gotten a couple of small stretches of alone time in my own house, I am so overstimulated. I mean, so. Over. stimulated. It reminds me of a meme I saw recently about motherhood, how mothering in the morning was like the fairy godmother sweetly saying to Cinderella "Oh come now, dry those tears" and then mothering in the evening was the sea witch saying to the little mermaid, "no more talking, singing, zipppp." I am absolutely the sea witch in my heart, and I'd like to add no more touching to the list, too.

This is a time of year that is naturally overwhelming in various ways. But you could be overwhelmed by non-kid, non-start-of-school things, too. Not everyone has kids or school. We feel underwater because of logistics, emotions, behaviors we can't control in ourselves or other people, grief, resentment, exhaustion, simply not knowing what to do. It can be a pervasive sense of overwhelm or one that just pops up randomly on what you thought was a pretty good day.

When you feel overwhelmed without knowing what to do, the overwhelming feeling stays big and might get bigger which then feels like a problem, and what do we know about big problems? They need big solutions. And what do we know about big solutions? They don't work. So here you are, overwhelmed, unsure of what to do about it, the feeling gets bigger, the problem even though it's unnamed also gets bigger, and so you start throwing big solutions at an unnamed problem which don't work which then causes you to feel even more overwhelmed.

Good times. Instead, today I want to share with you seven ways to meet overwhelm, and listen to me right now I did not plan this but they all start with P. It's not my fault! It's just how it lined up, but I'm also so happy about it!

So these are seven things that start with the letter P, and if you are overwhelmed, I guarantee one of them is your answer.

The first thing you might need when you're overwhelmed is to pivot. Everybody has unexpected things that come up, that require attention, that need some kind of immediate response. If you are situationally overwhelmed, if the stress is rooted exactly where you are and what's happening around you, chances are the thing you need the most right then is to pivot. You need to let go of whatever expectations you had and change direction.

Now, hear me, that isn't always easy. Pivoting isn't always easy or even intuitive. Pivoting isn't just solving a problem right where you are. I think pivoting also involves staying grounded, staying connected to yourself, staying as kind to your people as you can, *and* solving the problem right where you are. Fortunately for you, I have an episode all about pivoting. Episode 310 is How to Pivot Around Any Obstacle, and we'll have a link in the show notes. It's a low-key fan favorite episode. The way to pivot around any obstacle is to number one, breathe; number two, actively seek softness; number three, name what matters; number four, make the problem smaller; number five, put what you need in its place; number six, stay connected to yourself; and number seven, ask the magic question. Again, all of those are broken down in Episode 310, but if you just breathe and actively seek softness and then name what matters? Wow. You'll be able to pivot around pretty much anything regular and daily that sneaks up on you.

So that's the first P you might need when you're feeling overwhelmed. If you're situational overwhelmed, focus on pivoting.

The second P you might need when you're feeling overwhelmed is to problem-solve. This is when you're overwhelmed by something repeatedly frustrating. Maybe it's dishes that never get clean, laundry that never gets done, projects that never get finished. Now, I'm going to address something really quick. Did you hear anything mildly concerning in that last sentence? I did it on purpose, and it's the word never. Dishes that never get clean, laundry that never gets done, projects that never get finished. Never isn't a terribly kind word, y'all. It's also rarely true. When you classify your frustrations with words like always and never, you automatically make them too big, and as we've already said, it's pretty hard to solve big problems.

However, anything at all that consistently has you frustrated might need a good problem-solve. You might not need to calm down too much. You might not need to take a nap and regroup. You legit just need to solve a problem that's been bugging you for awhile. Once again, problems are the easiest to solve the smaller they are, so whatever you do, try and make that problem as small as you can. One small solution might not solve your entire big problem, but it gives you a place to start and you'll be more likely to find something that works long-term.

I have a favorite way to solve problems, and it's called The Lazy Genius Method. If you have something that tends to cause trouble over and over again, it might get a good solve by applying a single Lazy Genius principle, but chances are, you need something a big more

comprehensive. The Lazy Genius Method is the process you follow to make that happen. If you've never heard me talk about The Lazy Genius Method before or need a good primer on what it is and how it works, listen to Episode 259: 5 Steps to Lazy Genius Anything. First, you prioritize or name what matters. Second, you essentialize or get rid of what's in the way. Third, you organize or put everything in its place. Fourth, you personalize or feel like yourself. And fifth, you systemize or keep things in a flow. By following this order, you won't miss anything that could make you solve problems that aren't really the problem or use up energy or brainspace on things that will have to be undone later. This really is your best bet if you need to problem-solve.

So if you're feeling overwhelmed by a repetitive problem that needs some attention, solve it. That's our second P: problem-solve.

The third P that might help when you're feeling overwhelmed is to pause. Pause. If you resonate when I say that I have a caffeinated squirrel brain, this one is definitely for you.

It's just so easy to plow ahead, react and respond, stay in the overwhelm and let it spiral when what we really need is to just pause. I find myself pausing when I'm feeling emotionally or relationally overwhelmed. For example, if I get into a shouting match with my almost high schooler over undone assignments I thought were done, I can get rolling quickly. It's one of the things I have to be the kindest to myself about and ask my kid's forgiveness the most about. I can get angry. I can move quickly. I can escalate and start escalations in others... unless I pause. Sometimes the only answer to feeling overwhelmed is to pause. Stop. Breathe. Give your intellect and wisdom a chance to catch up to your adrenaline. Not every moment of overwhelm needs a pause, but I think if you are emotionally heightened whether it's external and obvious or internal and withdrawn, a pause seems like an important thing to prioritize. A lot can be saved with a good pause.

I think one way to keep pauses on your mind is by getting in the practice of noticing and responding to yourself on a daily basis. When you are in a rhythm of awareness and kindness, you have a quicker and more natural access to an ability to pause. If that's you, check out Episode 80: The Lazy Genius Daily Act of Kindness. It's an oldie but a goodie. Sometimes we need the reminder that doing something for ourselves every day is kind, dare I say, necessary, and also creates muscle memory for us to notice what we need. And sometimes what we need is to pause.

The fourth P you might need when you feel overwhelmed is to pray. Now, this isn't for everybody because not everybody prays. And frankly I'm not going to say much more than just the word. But this is your reminder that if you are a person of faith and that faith matters to you, when you feel overwhelmed, maybe you would feel better if you pray. Some things need a pivot, some things need a problem solved, some things need a pause, and maybe depending on who you are and what you believe, you might need to pray. You'll feel more connected to what matters to you.

The fifth P you might need when you feel overwhelmed is to play. Y'all, maybe you need to play! Maybe the overwhelm is because you haven't experienced anything fun or joyful or playful in too long. If life just feels too heavy and serious and that is why you feel overwhelmed, try playing. Move your body, give those laugh lines a workout, do something childlike, play an actual game with somebody. Play. If you need a little episode boost, try Episode 306: What We Need to Have More Fun.

The sixth P you might need when you're feeling overwhelmed is a plan. Sometimes you actually do need a plan. Even though I talk a lot about learning to pivot is better than learning to plan, that doesn't mean planning is bad. Planning is amazing! Planning just needs a makeover. It needs more compassion, it needs more common sense, and it needs more women frankly. In case you weren't aware, I wrote a time management book with all of those things, and it's called *The PLAN!* So if you need a plan, the book has some great help for you, but if you need a plan right now before the book is out on October 8th, just remember that plans are just intentions. They are not pass/fail. The more you believe that and live like it's true, the better your plans will be and the kinder you'll be toward yourself when they don't work out the exact what you hoped. So if you're feeling overwhelmed by something in the future, something unknown, something that has lots of disconnected moving parts, maybe a plan is what you need.

And the final P you might need when you feel overwhelmed is a pep talk. A pep talk is simply a reminder of what matters spoken by someone who believes in you. And that person can totally be you. I pep talk myself all the time. Be your own Leslie Knope. Pep talk yourself when you're feeling overwhelmed by insecurity, imposter syndrome, shame, or guilt. Give yourself a pep talk. Again, I do it all the time.

I do it so much that I'm giving pep talks every single week for the rest of 2024. For real. Now, you might think I already sort of do give a pep talk every week with this podcast, but not quite. We mostly problem-solve here. We do learn to do all the other Ps every Monday, but the main purpose of the podcast is to solve problems through a very particular Lazy Genius lens, not give pep talks. Also pep talks are way shorter than twenty or thirty minutes.

So how do you get these weekly pep talks? They are technically called our Preorder Pep Talks since they are the thank you gift for preordering *The PLAN* before it comes out on October 8. Thousands of you have already done that, and I am blown away. Y'all are just as excited for this book as I am! But it's a big deal to buy a book before you can see and flip around and hear if a friend liked it already. It's a blind buy, and that's a huge deal. So to say thank you for ordering and putting your trust in me, I want to say thank you with both written and audio pep talks delivered to you every Monday for the rest of the actual year. Are you tired of your people? Pep talk. Are you suddenly stressed because it's almost December? Pep talk. Are you feeling all kinds of feelings because it's election week? Pep talk. Are you struggling to be kind to yourself? Pep talk.

All you have to do is go to thelazygeniuscollective.com/theplan which is literally where everything regarding The PLAN lives, enter your order information which means any format of

the book purchased from any place, including books you buy to attend a book tour event, and when you submit that information, you'll get access to the weekly pep talks delivered every Monday. You can even get them automatically to your favorite podcast app if you'd prefer to listen rather than read. I'm so pumped.

You can do that at thelazygeniuscollective.com/theplan.

So let's recap our seven Ps. When you are feeling overwhelmed, you might need different things depending on the type of overwhelm you're experiencing. Is there situational overwhelm? Pivot. Do you have a repeatedly frustrating situation? Problem-solve. Are you overwhelmed emotionally? Pause. Are you a person of faith? Pray. Does life feel extra heavy? Play. Are you overwhelmed by what's coming? Plan. Do you just need a reminder of what matters? Pep talk yourself or get one from me. There is actually a section of pep talks in the book by the way.

And that's how to find what you need when you're feeling overwhelmed.

Before we go, let's celebrate the Lazy Genius of the Week! This week it's Karen Simmons. Karen writes: "I keep a great big dry erase marker in the center console of my car, above every mirror in my house, and strapped to the side of my fridge. Every shiny hard surface becomes a place where you can jot down a note. You can make your grocery list right on the front of the fridge then just take a picture when you're ready to go shopping. If you're low on gas when you get to work, just note on the windshield "GAS" before you get out, and you won't find yourself in heavy traffic and unknown territory with your car pinging at you that you're on E. Every mirror becomes a place where you can just say "I love you" to the people in your home. It has been such a stress relieving life hack!" Holy moly, this is fantastic. I love a person so dedicated to dry erase markers. It's like Oprah shouting "and you get a car and you get a car" but instead it's Karen Simmons shouting "and you get an i love you and you get an i love you!" This is seriously so fantastic. I just love it. Karen, what a joyful, wise, savvy way to use markers. I almost want to be low on gas so I can write gas on my windshield just for how it feels. So great. Thank you for sharing this idea, 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.

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!