

382 - How to Manage Calendar Logistics

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 382 - How to Manage Calendar Logistics.

Good gravy do we need this! Everyone has calendars to logistic (I know that's not right, but I like it), and for certain people, seasons, families, those logistics feel like they're going to eat you alive. Right now, my Google calendar has so many blocks in it, some of which overlap and I haven't quite figured out how to reconcile those overlaps yet. It's a whole thing, and maybe your calendar looks or at least feels like that. This time of year is big on calendar logistics. Maybe every time of the year is, depending on your life.

So let's talk about how to do this like a Lazy Genius. How can you manage calendar logistics in a reasonably efficient, intentionally kind way?

First, let's name what makes calendar logistics stressful. It could be that a lot is happening. You literally have a lot of things to do or attend or remember. Life is just full, and when you open your Google calendar or your planner and you see all of that fullness, your brain runs scared. You're like, "Oh... no. This is terrible." And you close the planner and distract yourself, or you decide that your planner is the problem and start looking for a new one. When I open my calendar app, I have to be vigilant to not feel overwhelmed by it. It's a lot. It doesn't matter how many colors I use or how pretty it might be. That puppy can turn into a stress ball if I don't recognize that looking at a busy calendar makes my brain react. So just remember that for your brain, too. Most of the time, you can do the things on your calendar. You just have to remember that a lot of blocks doesn't immediately require the emergency sirens to go off. So calendar logistics could be stressful because of all you have going on or because of how you feel about how much is going on.

Second, calendar logistics could be stressful because you are dealing with not just your schedule but the schedules of multiple people. And if those people are children, you're probably the main person handling it all, including the transportation and the supplies they need and if their uniform is clean or whatever. The more people you have involved in your calendar, the more complicated your calendar probably becomes.

Third, maybe you have multiple calendars! You have a paper planner, a wall calendar, a digital calendar, or you use this thing for meals and this thing for kid activities and this other thing for your own schedule. Maybe you share Google calendars with a spouse, but some of their stuff clogs up yours and makes seeing your stuff even harder. Multiple calendars could cause some gnarly logistics.

And the fourth reason, and truly the most significant, is that every calendar entry comes with an invisible list of things to do. Every calendar entry isn't just that thing; it contains decisions and tasks that you don't see. For example, I just looked at my calendar for today, and one kid has a

clarinet lesson from 5-5:30pm, and another kid has to be picked up from marching band rehearsal at 6:30pm. Connected to both of those calendar items are who is going to take and pick up those kids from those things. That's fairly obvious, but it has to be named. Both of those calendar items are also right overtop of the dinner hour, so what happens there? When do we eat? Do we eat together? I'm also working until 4:30pm, so unless I make that dinner decision on the early side, a meal scramble is hidden in those calendar items. And I have *three* children, so what does that mean for the third one when her brothers are off doing things, presumably with their mother doing the driving? This is the hardest thing about calendar logistics: every entry has other invisible stuff that you have to recognize is there and then figure out how to manage. And if you don't see that aspect of your calendar, the invisible details are suddenly very visible and feel like a slap in the face.

So what do we do? How do we manage calendar logistics? I'm going to get into all the practicality of that, but first I'll say, do it kindly. Manage your calendar logistics kindly because you're not doing it wrong, and do one thing at a time. This is definitely a place where the Lazy Genius principles Start Small and Be Kind to Yourself need to be front and center. If you try and figure out your entire calendar in one fell swoop or stay so clenched that you forget you're a human being who is just doing what she can on this particular day, it'll be harder to figure out much of anything. Start small and be kind.

Okay, now with that foundation in mind, let's get practical.

We're going to use the Lazy Genius Method to help us. The Lazy Genius Method is a five step process that helps you manage something that has multiple pieces and parts. Those five steps are - say it with me - prioritize or name what matters, essentialize or have what you need and get rid of what's in the way, organize or put everything in its place, personalize or feel like yourself, and systemize or stay in a flow.

We start with prioritize. We need to name what matters. When you step back and think about managing your calendar specifically, what is the biggest pain point? Often naming that pain point and making it smaller helps you name what matters. And remember, the smaller you make your problem and your solution and even your season, the more likely you are to find an approach that works well for right now.

For me, what matters most is that I have given myself enough time to think through the invisible tasks connected to the events on my calendar before they happen. Since I have a lot going on and it involves a lot of people and since my husband doesn't have a terribly flexible job when it comes to helping with daily logistics, I prefer for those unseen details to not sneak up on me. The more they do, the more fragmented I become. And the more fragmented I become, the harder it is for me to access softness and kindness. I get spinny and a little mean, and that intensity seeps into the moods of my family in a way I don't love. So it matters most to me that whatever is on the calendar is accompanied by time enough to think through the invisible details of that calendar.

For you, the priority could be looking at the calendar or that everyone in your family uses the process the same way so items don't slip through the cracks or that everything is visible and obvious because you have ADHD.

I would encourage you that if you haven't yet prioritized only putting things that matter on your calendar to start that now. In the same way we don't organize what we don't need in a hall closet or junk drawer, don't manage the logistics of a calendar full of things that don't matter. For awhile, that was my priority with my family. Over time, we said yes a limited amount, were super thoughtful about our commitments, and that practice has become baked into our family culture. It's automatic in a way I'm grateful for but took some time. So I would encourage you that if you see things on your calendar and you're like "why is this even here," maybe it's an interesting question to actually answer. Why are you doing that? If it's possible to slowly start moving away from things that matter less but still take up a lot of time, it might be worth considering. Don't organize what you don't need.

Not organizing what you don't need leads us to step two quite perfectly: essentialize. This is where you name what you need and also get rid of what's in the way of what matters. For example, if it matters to you that you have more evenings at home than away from home but you are part of a couple of groups or clubs or whatever that meet at night and you don't actually love all of those groups a ton, one of them might be worth removing so that you can support what matters: being home more in the evenings. Make sense? Have what you need, and get rid of what you don't.

Now, what are some things you might need? When it comes to managing calendar logistics, you definitely need to acknowledge how you think and plan. My son has a recent adhd diagnosis, and as he learns to manage his own calendar, one of the things he needs to name is that the more steps he has in his system, the less likely his system is to work. Multiple calendars, multiple steps are not for him. Complexity has to be removed in order for his brain to thrive and get stuff done. So he has a paper calendar where he writes down stuff that's coming up - homework due dates, football games, stuff like that, and then a daily sticky note on the front of that planner where that day's to-do list goes. And 95% of that organization is really just about schoolwork. And that's it. That's what he needs in order to support what matters most to him which is probably to keep his mother off his back to get his stuff done because she is a situation sometimes. Have what you need, so name what that is.

How do you plan? How do you think? Do you need support? Partnership? Consistency? Visibility? Rhythm? Is there something missing from your calendar logistics that you need in order to support what matters? Add that in, and if it's something big and a little unwieldy, start small by making it as small and as manageable as you can.

And is there anything in the way? Are you overcomplicating your calendar by compartmentalizing it too much? Are you making your Google calendar look like a giant blob

because everything is the same color and you need to bring more colors in? Are you spending so much time maintaining a multicolored calendar that you don't even like putting in entries because you can't remember what color stands for what kind of thing? Do you have too much going on and need to leave that one group you joined? Is the expectation that you're supposed to manage everything in the way and you realize you need some help so you're not doing it all alone? Lots of things could be needed, and lots could be in the way. So first, name what matters most in the most specific language you can, and then examine what you need to make that happen and what's in its way.

Now step three: organize or put everything in its place.

Let's not organize what we don't need, so as you enter into your calendar management era, always keep that in mind. Noticing what doesn't belong on your calendar in this season of life is a forever task for you. It's part of living a Lazy Genius life, so don't get frustrated when you're confronted with yet another potential calendar item and if it's worth locking in. That's going to happen for the rest of your life, and it's why paying attention to the season you're in, what matters while you're there, and then even deciding once on some things or making calendar house rules can help automate some of those logistics over time. My point is to expect that you'll always need to pay attention to not organizing what you don't need.

Organization is really just putting something in its place. You know you need the thing, you create a forever place for it, and you put it there. This is why you really have to have a calendar. That's the place. It doesn't matter what kind of calendar it is, but you have to put your appointments and carpool runs and birthday dinners and all the things connected to a time in your calendar. That's foundational.

But next, you need to organize that calendar by putting it somewhere. Do you use a digital calendar? Is your app easily accessible? Do you want it to be easily accessible, or is constantly looking at it causing you stress? Do you use a paper planner and a wall calendar and a shared digital family calendar? What goes where? What is the place for calendar items? Do they really need to be written or typed in three places? Maybe they do if that supports what matters to you, but when you're organizing the management of these calendar logistics, make sure that the events are in place but that the calendars themselves are, too. Don't do more work than is necessary.

You also need to organize when you look at the calendar. When you see what's coming next. If you're like me, you're actually going to prioritize organizing when you figure out those invisible details that the calendar holds, so you need to organize or put in place the time to make that happen as often as you need to make it happen.

Calendar organization in the Adachi house involves my Google calendar that I share with my team. I have a personal calendar and a work calendar that both show up on the same Google calendar, and I have things color-coded so I can notice what's happening at a glance. Pink is work. Orange is interview blocks so that Leslie, my director of operations, has a place to

schedule podcast interviews and publishing meetings. Green is carpool. Gray is stuff that's happening that involves my family but not me, like Sam being gone at an away football game. Yellow is birthdays and travel. Red is anything urgent. Blue is everything else. That's a lot of colors, but those colors are helpful to me. Because I have so many blocks every day, seeing the day in color helps me automatically know how the energy is spread out. If my afternoon is heavy with carpool green, I know I'm going to be in the van for two hours getting three kids from three schools with carpool lines that make you want to leave town. Knowing that at a glance is helpful to me.

So when you organize how your calendar logistics work, you're really just putting things in their place. Where do your calendar items actually go? If you have multiple calendars, be thoughtful about whether or not something needs to be written down on every single one. Where do your actual calendars go? And when and where is the place you gather up the invisible details from your calendar that make up the energy of your day? Put everything in its place.

Step four is to personalize or feel like yourself. We can touch on what I mentioned earlier where you acknowledge the kind of planner you are, the kind of thinker you are, how you thrive in organization the best. I feel like my world is just opening up trying to help my son create systems that work for him. For years, we have argued with him about putting away his laundry. It's in his own basket clean, and we're just asking him to put it away. But his argument is always "why do I need to put it away? I'm going to wear all of those clothes again and they're easier to get to in the basket." But that's not conventional, is it? I'm the first to encourage y'all to use items and processes in unconventional ways, but we all can get tripped up on the right way to do something, like putting away laundry. So when it comes to managing your calendar logistics, what do you need to feel like yourself, to lower your stress, to trust yourself, to even have fun with it? What do you need? I feel more like myself when I'm able to take my time and not rush in working out our calendar and who's doing what. I also feel more like myself when I'm free to just verbally dump all the unorganized details on Kaz and that he receives them without being annoyed. And a pen I love and a Mildliner highlighter in the color Gold. Those things make me feel very much like myself. So name that for yourself as you slowly discover and adjust this rhythm of managing calendar logistics like a Lazy Genius.

Which leads us to step five: systemize or stay in a flow. I want to be very clear about something here. Staying in a flow does not mean there is not stress. Have you ever been in a river? It's not the same speed all the way down? You can be in your innertube or whatever and float and mostly feel at ease, but you might see a little white water coming and pay a bit more attention, right? It's vital that you don't expect managing calendar logistics to look like a robotic, repetitive thing. It is not. Life is not like that. You will have days and weeks where you don't forget anything, where you don't feel as stressed getting all the things and people where they need to go, but most of the time, that is not your normal. The default is unlikely to be smooth sailing the whole time. The idea behind systemizing and staying in a flow is that you have something that is small enough to be doable and intentional enough to support what matters that is your baseline way of managing your calendar logistics. Then when something makes the water churn a little bit, you have something to pivot from. Does that make sense?

Just this morning I was walking Annie into school and passed another mom who I'm in a separate middle school carpool with. She has multiple kids in two different schools with a full time job, and it's a lot to remember every single day. I saw her walking into school with her kid as I was walking out without mine, and in those few seconds without Annie as I headed back home, I was already thinking about the next thing, about getting home quickly to make sure Ben was all set to be picked up for school and then to get ready while also getting my oldest up and driving him and another friend to school because transporting children is my life now. I was feeling that tiny bit of scatter as I passed this other mom, and when we greeted each other with, "Morning, how's it going?" we were both mid-sigh basically. You know that feeling? Where you're like, "You know, just doing my best, keeping it going." And at first, I felt weird feeling that way, like I was doing something wrong. But I'm not! You're not either! Depending on your season of life, what you have going on, what you're committed to, how many humans you're tending to whether your kids, your parents, or anyone else, you might always feel busy and mid-sigh. I really think that in many households across America and in other parts of the world, life just moves quickly. There are so many parts to keep track of and little room built into our culture and our own lives to rest from that. We can learn a lot from cultures and religions that practice a Sabbath, a day of complete rest. It's a necessary thing to feel like yourself, to put your calendar into perspective, and to take the time to slow down and play and just enjoy your life. So as you think about systemizing the management of your calendar logistics, remember that the goal here is not to have every piece figured out and running like a machine. You're not a machine. You're likely going to have at least some level of stress as you move from thing to thing because for better or worse, that's the world we live in. But you can make that energy easier by scheduling rest, by letting people in in the form of helping each other or just companionship in the chaos. You can make that energy easier by deciding once in a couple of places or setting some house rules about how the calendar works. You can build the right routine that focuses on feeling like yourself as you plan no matter what happens to be on your schedule that week. All of these Lazy Genius principles and methods and ways of viewing ourselves and the world are here to make us more ourselves, more grounded, more human, more connected to our lives. It's not about management for its own sake or mastering our time. That's not a thing. We're just trying to stay in a reasonable flow as we live our lives as ourselves.

So as you look at your calendar logistics, it may be you don't need a new system. You just needed the reminder that the way you feel is normal and that you're actually doing pretty great. But whenever you feel the need to examine what you're doing and why, use the Lazy Genius Method: prioritize, essentialize, organize, personalize, and systemize in that order. Because going in the right order is also a Lazy Genius principle.

And that's how to manage calendar logistics.

Before we go, let's celebrate the Lazy Genius of the Week! This week it's Elise Pflederer. Elise writes, "Hi Kendra, In early 2020 (before the pandemic), we didn't have many babysitters and were missing regular date nights. We decided that what mattered most to us about dates was the uninterrupted time to talk to each other. So, we came up with what we call "Steak Night."

Once a month (the day can vary!), we feed our kids something really easy (usually boxed mac n' cheese which is always very exciting for them!) and after they go to bed, we cook a meal together and enjoy it alone. We decided once that we would always make some kind of steak, potato and vegetable. I never have to think hard about what to make (no extra stress for my meal planning!) and we've done it so many times now, we can just talk and hang out while we both cook our parts of the meal. He's perfected his cooking technique by now too so it's always perfectly done to our preferences. We've been doing this for 3 years, every month, and we look forward to it every time. No babysitter needed, cheaper than going out, and we get several hours of uninterrupted time to connect over a great meal!" This is so great, Elise. In seasons when kids are little and getting out of the house for a date is sometimes harder than it is worth it, naming what matters is extra important. I love that you named that just being able to talk to each other uninterrupted mattered and made a way to do that that fit in your season of life. Love this idea, Elise, 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.

Also if you're needing some help with calendar logistics, especially as we get into the holiday season, I encourage you to check out The Holiday Docket. It's a digital resource that helps you think through what matters in this upcoming season of many holidays and traditions and experiences so you can actually spend time doing what you love and what matters to you and your family. And since The Holiday Docket is undated, you can buy it once and use it every single year! So this is your reminder that if you've already purchased The Holiday Docket, now is a great time to print it out and have it ready when you have the time and energy to look at your upcoming season. You can check it out in the link in the show notes.

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!