

383 - What's Saving My Life Hall of Fame

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 383 - the What's Saving My Life Hall of Fame!

Holy moly, I am so excited about this episode. We do What's Saving My Life episodes on a regular basis, just about every quarter, and I find the practice to be so helpful and light and enjoyable and necessary to keep me rooted in my season. Y'all enjoy it too because the What's Saving My Life episodes get super high downloads.

But today is a little different in that it is a hall of fame episode. There are ten things that are hall of fame status as they regularly save my life, and I love that I did not have to force ten because ten is a fun, round number. No. There are ten. A clean ten. And I love them. Are there other things that save my life? Of course. But without these ten, I'm basically a shell of a human, and we're actively trying to avoid a shell existence.

Remember, this is my personal list. This is not supposed to be replicated. I'm not saying that everyone should have these ten things. I mean, a couple of them maybe, but this is my list. Hear why these things are on my list to help you make yours, but by no means should our lists be the same.

Alright, let's jump in!

First hall of fame item that saves my life: paying for house cleaners. I've done an entire episode on this topic, so if you're interested, have a listen to episode 145. I realize this is not something available to everyone, nor is it prioritized by everyone. Depending on your home, the number of people in it, if you have pets, the amount of time available to you, all kinds of things, hiring someone to regularly clean your house might not be in the budget or of interest at all. I do not want anyone thinking that this choice is a better than situation. For me, hiring someone to clean my house every other week saves my life. I hate cleaning. I mean, most people do I suppose, but I do not get the satisfaction so many seem to from a job well done. I really don't, y'all. I like the feeling when I'm done and I can be disciplined and do it, but I do not get a cleaner's high just like I don't get a runner's high. I'm not saying those highs are made up, but they don't happen in me.

Knowing that every two weeks, the floors will be mopped, the bathrooms will be cleaned, and shelves will be dusted takes such a load off. And one of the benefits I enjoy outside of just a clean house is that it helps us as a family focus on regular maintenance cleaning which feels smaller and doable than big cleaning. We also have a built-in time to regularly tidy those places where stuff builds up since everything has to be baseline tidy in order for the cleaning itself to happen well. I would give up a lot of things before I gave up hiring a house cleaner. It is a massive contributor to Kendra being a full person.

The second hall of fame thing that regularly saves my life is my day off. No matter your faith background or practiced religion, I think we can all agree that the God of the Bible was on to something with the whole remember the Sabbath thing. Taking a full day to rest is so good for us and is definitely not something upheld in our hustle culture. And since most people work and then have to clean the house and be a grownup on the weekends, or if you have kids you're taking them to all their things which is not restful, it's genuinely hard to find a couple of hours let alone an entire day to truly take off. I recognize the gift I have in being able to do this as my own boss, but I take Fridays off of work and can't imagine it any other way. I am back in mom mode once the kids get off of school, but we try and do takeout on Fridays too so I don't have to cook. Or if it's cooking, it's something fun like homemade pizza. Even still, Fridays are sacred to me.

Because of this book launch season I'm in, last week I had to record an interview on a Friday because there was just no other time, and holy moly did it throw off my whole day. Now, that's okay. I'm not going to die. But I saw the value of preserving that day off.

Y'all, at my core, I'm not a very nice person. I get so cranky and snappy when I'm not taking care of myself and tapping into things bigger than I am, and taking a day to just read and sit and walk and do whatever I need to do to get back to feeling all the way like myself is essential for Kendra being a kind, present person. It's also fun and a nice thing to have available to me in this season of life, so I'll take it.

The third hall of fame thing that saves my life is music. I mean, I have a tattoo on my arm that says the line from *The Sound of Music* "And I'll sing once more." Singing, playing music, listening to music, even writing music, all of it is so critical to who I am as a person. If I had to look at music, movies, TV, art, and even books and had to choose only one to the exclusion of all the others, I would choose music. For real. That's how critical it is to me. I would give up books for music, and y'all know how much I love books. Music can change my mood on a dime. It's how I process feelings. It makes me feel good. It's a way for me to express creativity. It's a way to connect with people by either sharing music with them or even making it. It's genuinely my favorite thing, and I would be devastated to be without it.

The fourth hall of fame thing that regularly saves my life is taking a lunch break. I've talked about this so many times, but a few years ago, my therapist was like "girl, you need to take a lunch break." I was working through lunch, eating fast, eating scraps... there was just nothing pleasant or fulfilling about my regular lunchtime. Now it is protected at all costs. In fact, I keep making my lunch break longer and longer on days that I can. I stop and listen to music or a book, I eat food that I love, I read or watch a show while I eat, I take a nap after, and I don't think about work at all. It is critical and one of my least favorite parts of summer because I don't get a solo lunch break where I'm not having to think about other people and things.

The fifth hall of fame thing that regularly saves my life is anything having to do with birds. My Merlin app, my birdfeeders, watching all my birds every day. Our front yard has become a bit of a hot spot, and I can't deal with how much fun it is. We have cardinals who are super mean, we have bluebirds who are also mean but I feel like are fighting for deeper reasons than the male

cardinals are, we have tufted titmouses and carolina wrens and song sparrows and chickadees which are my favorite and a ton of house finches the visit the feeder as a family like it's a holiday table. We have juncos and warblers and the occasional goldfinch which is always exciting.

My favorite thing is sitting on my porch which I get to do now since it's no longer aggressive summer, and if I sit there long enough reading or just being quiet, the birds will come to the feeder right near me. They'll fly right past my head. It is a bit terrifying but mostly in an exhilarating way. I have definitely become a stereotype, but I love my birds.

The sixth hall of fame thing that regularly saves my life, which is the newest member of the family, is drawing and painting faces. This is maybe the most centering thing I can do in the quickest amount of time. I get out my sketchbook, do a quick contour drawing where I don't lift the Sharpie because I love the strong lines of a Sharpie, and then I do a quick two or three color watercolor painting. If I'm feeling super off kilter and need to reset my whole self quickly, I paint a face. Which turns into painting four or five. It goes so quickly but in a freeing way, and now I have filled like five or six sketchbooks with faces over the last four or five months. There's nothing like it for me. I will definitely take my brushes with me when I go on book tour. I might not have much time to do anything, but in those moments in the airport or the hotel room when I need a quick winddown, painting a face will be the best idea.

The seventh hall of fame thing that regularly saves my life is repeat meals and grocery rhythms. Sometimes this feels like a rut, but in general, the predictability of our dinner situation is a huge lifesaver for me. We have the same list of about 25-30 meals we eat on a regular basis, and I just keep making them. I buy the same groceries, prep the same foods, plan the same dinners in similar order to deal with produce not going bad, and my kids still tend to have the same reactions to those meals. Ben hates spaghetti while Annie and Sam love it. Ben loves pork and mushroom rice bowls while Sam tolerates it and Annie thinks it's from the depths of hell. We have five people in my house, and my goal with any dinner is three out of five people like it. I feel like that's winning, but the biggest win is that in this busy season of parenting and two working parents and three kids spread out in age and personality and need, automating dinner this way, while boring, is so helpful.

The eighth hall of fame thing that regularly saves my life is the least surprising if you've been here awhile, and that is reading. I love to read. Holy moly. Every part of the reading life makes me happy. I love actually reading in any way made available to me (although right now, I'm showing a strong preference to physical books), I love organizing books, choosing books from my shelf, choosing books from Book of the Month or Aardvark, shopping at used book sales, talking about books with other people, listening to reading podcasts. I'm just all in.

Sure, I have seasons where reading falters a little, where I hit a rut, where I can't seem to match my mood with the book I chose, but to me, reading is like pizza: even when it's bad it's still pretty good.

The ninth hall of fame thing that regularly saves my life is my friends. And no, family is not the tenth thing. I love my family. More than anything. This is not a list of the things that I love the most. It's the list of things that regularly save my life, and in this season of parenting, my family drains my energy more than fills it, and that's okay. It's also okay for our experiences to be different because they will be, but I'm just saying for the record that family, no matter what it looks like, can matter more than anything while not being high on the list of things that makes you feel like yourself. Just normalizing that for us.

Okay, back to my friends. My friends are the place where I can be the cleanest version of myself. I don't mean clean like appropriate. I mean they don't see me as multiple things or multiple roles. I'm just Kendra. And maybe I'm overcomplicating it a little in my own head which I tend to do, but the simplicity of friendship matters a lot to me and is incredibly life-giving. My friends are exactly what we want friends to be - with you, for you, ready to help, ready to celebrate, ready to do nothing. I put this in the acknowledgements of *The PLAN*, but I honestly feel the embarrassment of riches in my bones at the friendships I have. And I think Laura Tremaine helped me name that even more in her book *The Life Council*. When I started to realize that not all friends had to look the same, that not all friendships had to lead to the same place, it really freed me up to see my friendships for what they are and appreciate them even more in that place. I just feel really lucky to be loved and cared for and cheered on by the people in my life, and because I am such a relational person, their presence is essential. I know people, in fact I'm married to one, who would be fine without friendship being a critical element to life, and I am not that person. And I feel incredibly lucky to have what I need in that area.

And then the tenth hall of fame thing that regularly saves my life is my faith. I don't talk about that much, but it feels disingenuous to talk about what saves my life without mentioning the thing that literally does that every single day. I'm a Christian which is a vibe right now let's be honest. We need better PR, but I know that without my faith and the purpose and love it brings, I wouldn't be able to be the person I am.

I often get asked how to move from being super uptight and controlling to releasing some of your power and being more balanced, being more Lazy Genius. I think there are multiple ways a person can experience that shift, and they all take time. Therapy is a big one, but for the day to day, moment by moment times where I personally want to access softness and be kind to myself and others, where I learn to let go of my plans and pivot around things instead, all of those movements for me are dependant upon my faith and my belief in the presence of the Holy Spirit inside me. Will I tell you that you need the same in order to figure out a good meal plan or afternoon routine? No, ma'am. That's dumb. But in the spirit of naming what really does save my life and being honest about that with all of you, knowing that this is a beautiful safe space we've created where all kinds of people can gather and believe the same core principles of kindness, contentment, and starting small, I feel like it's right to share that with you today. Jesus saves my life. And there you have it.

And those are the ten hall of fame things that regularly save my life.

Before we go, let's celebrate the Lazy Genius of the Week! This week it's Jennifer Kelley. Jennifer writes, "My husband and I share a walk-in closet with more than one rack. That means anytime we wear something, we have to take it off a hanger. I got tired of going through each rack to find empty hangers while doing laundry so I designated a rack that had space and started putting empty hangers there so they were all in one place. It saved me time hunting for hangers while putting away our laundry and it made it so easy to just reach into the closet for a hanger whenever I needed one." Y'all, it's another super simple idea that for the person using it made all the difference. This might not seem like a huge deal in your own life, but when you are living with something day in and day out and it's just the tiniest bit annoying, find a tiny solution to make it less so and I am telling you, it impacts your entire day. And the more you pay attention to those tiny annoyances and solve them with smallness and kindness, the more life will start to feel less chaotic. One small step, baby. Thanks for sharing this idea, Jennifer, 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!