

#124 - The Lazy Genius Weekly Plan

Hi, everyone! 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 #124 - The Lazy Genius Weekly Plan. I am guessing that you have purchased a lot of planners over the years, possibly more than one a year if you're like me, looking for a system to help you stay on top of your week and also your life. In this episode, I'm going to walk through three questions to ask when planning your week, and then we'll use my own weekly plan for this week as a kind of case study to see how the questions are put into practice. It's a simple approach but incredibly impactful.

Before we jump into that, I'd love to quickly tell you about a resource I think you'll love, especially if you're looking for ways to find a little sanity and savings in the kitchen. Kate from Naptime Kitchen has created The Naptime Kitchen Guide to Freezing. It's a thirty page digital download with everything you could ever need to know about how to freeze and defrost food. She covers how to wrap food, storage containers, how to avoid freezer burn, what you can and can't freeze, and how to reheat things straight from frozen or after they've been thawed. It's seriously so rich in information, and you will absolutely reap the benefits so quickly. And if you avoid freezing food because you have one small regular freezer, don't ignore a guide like this since it can really help you be smart and intentional about how you use your limited freezer space. I'll put a link in the show notes for you to check out the guide that I am so happy to be an affiliate for. And be sure to follow Naptime Kitchen on Instagram @naptimekitchen. She is remarkably generous with information about getting dinner on the table, so be sure to check her out.

Okay, let's talk about creating a weekly plan.

Why do we plan out a week, or if it's more relevant to your style, plan out a day or two weeks or a month? However often you plan, we obviously do it because we don't want to miss anything that's scheduled or forget to do something important. But I think beneath the surface for a lot of us, having a weekly plan can quickly morph into a desire for control. We plan our faces off so that we know exactly what's coming and won't experience stress.

That, sadly, is an impossible goal. You can't control everything. You can't plan your way into serenity. No amount of scheduling out a week can calm your crazy completely. It might a little but not completely.

Based on the majority of comments and DMs and emails I receive, a lot of you resonate with the same all or nothing mentality that I do, at least in some areas, and when it comes to making a weekly or daily plan, if you experience any amount of stress, the plan failed. You need a new planner, a new system, a new something. But really, we have to remember that we will never eliminate stress or more accurately the stressors that cause stress. We can't plan our way out of

a regular life that ebbs and flows and throws curveballs and all the other up and down cliches. It's just life. It happens. But that doesn't mean you have to throw out plans altogether. You can sit in the middle of planning everything and planning nothing. For me, that process involves three questions.

One, what matters this week? Two, what can I do to be a genius about it? And three, what will likely be a distraction?

First, what matters this week? This is different than asking what's happening this week or what do I need to do this week. By asking yourself what matters, you broaden the scope of what to consider as you plan a week. That might include something that's happening or something you need to do, but it can also include things like rest, connection, and play, things we often forget about in the face of lists and appointments. By naming what matters for the week, you're better able to put everything in perspective.

Second, what can I do to be a genius about it? Once you name what matters, think for a moment how you can be intentional about making that thing happen in a way that fills you up rather than drains you dry. If it really matters that your guest room gets cleaned out because your college best friend is coming to stay with you for the weekend, you can be a genius about your limited time by, for example, making super easy dinners for the week. Consider how you can make what matters happen in a way that doesn't contribute to making you crazy.

Third, what will likely be a distraction? Even though something matters, a lot of things can take our attention away from it. Something like rest during a busy week matters, but we can get sidetracked by so many other things on our list and not rest at all. You want what matters to get top billing. It should get your best time and your first effort. Distractions make what matters fall to the status of "oh, I'll fit it in" or "I'll do it later" even though it's important enough to do now, even if the doing is not doing anything at all. By naming what will likely be a distraction, you can set yourself up a little better to notice when those distractions come and even take a practical step or two to keep them from taking control.

Those three questions can make a big difference in planning your week simply by helping you setting your attention and intention on what matters, not just on what's happening. Remembering that those are two different things is massively helpful.

In just a second, I'll go through planning my own week to give you an idea of how it can come together, but first, I'll mention a couple of other considerations that might help bring a bit more clarity to your weekly plan and round it out a bit.

The first is weather. I'm very affected by the weather on an emotional level, but it also affects things like what you make for dinner, whether or not you play at a park one afternoon after you get kids from school, or if you can go for a run after work. Whenever I pull out my planner and ask myself the three questions, I also look at the weather.

The second thing is sleep. I try and pay attention to how well or not well I've been sleeping as I make any plans for the upcoming week. If I'm worn out and need to go to bed on time or even early for a couple of nights, it's important to consider that as I plan. Even something as simple as what to make dinner plays into that. I usually don't make meals that have a lot of cleanup after, but I definitely don't want to plan a meal that requires multiple pans to wash on a night I want to go to bed early. If you're tired and therefore running on fumes, it's easy to forget sleep as a thing to consider because it happens no matter what, but it's good to give yourself a little grace in your soul and a little more margin in your plans by thinking about it on purpose.

And third is my family. They're not third in matters of importance, just in this list. My husband and one of my sons are introverts and homebodies. They need space and time at home, so it's really important for me to remember that as I look at a weekly plan. I'm fine if we have evening plans four out of the seven nights of the week, so it's easy for me to forget that that percentage isn't great for other people in my family. Sometimes I can't do anything about the appointments that exist in a week, but by considering my family's energy, I can do other things to help them feel more comfortable and cared for when our schedule is a little more intense.

So a quick recap:

A weekly plan isn't so much about gaining control or eliminating stress. Hold it loosely, and don't expect everything to go exactly as planned, especially if you tend to think of stress equaling a failed plan.

Then you have your three questions: what matters this week, not just what's happening or what needs doing; what can I do to be a genius about it, and what will likely be a distraction. Then you might consider weather, sleep, and your family's energy if those are relevant. You might have other considerations that I don't, so name what those are for you.

Now let's walk through my own weekly plan for this week to see a case study on how all of this can work.

My first step is to open my Google calendar and pull out my paper planner. I have a digital calendar and then do analog planning. I've gone through lots of iterations of how I organize my life, and this one currently works well for me. And I'm currently using the Sacred Ordinary Days planner if you're interested.

Next, I ask what matters this week? After a quick glance of my calendar, I see that my assistant is out of town on vacation which means I'll have to do all my own work ohmygosh, that I'm gone two weeknights, and I have one early afternoon occupied, too. Early afternoons are when Annie is taking a nap and my other two are still in school, so that hour is usually a restful one and one of those is taken up by an appointment. An appointment I love but an appointment nonetheless.

So by noticing those things, I can easily see that one thing that matters is white space. I need to leave space for myself and sometimes use that space to relieve stress.

A second thing that matters is intentional afternoons with my kids after school, especially on Thursday. I'm gone both Wednesday and Thursday nights, so if I'm not connected to my kids in the afternoons, especially on Thursday afternoon on the tail end of being gone one night and still being gone the next, my kids will suffer. So intentional afternoons matter, especially Thursday afternoon.

And the third thing that matters is the podcast. I'm not ahead right now in terms of having the podcast recorded, so I need to get at least one if not two episodes in the bank so that I'm not scrambling on my own and my assistant is scrambling once she gets back from vacation. And also so that you get a new episode next Monday on schedule!

So those are the three things that matter: personal white space, intentional afternoons with my kids especially on Thursday, and getting the podcast done.

So the second question is how can I be a genius about those things?

The first thing is to plan my runs now. I've mentioned this before in maybe another podcast episode or on Instagram, but I have been required by my therapist to either walk really fast or run three times a week for my stress. My patronus is a feral cat, so I need some help in getting that stressful energy out of my body. I've never been an athlete and have a tricky relationship with exercise, but I've been going for a jog slash fast walk at least three times a week for the last couple of months, and it's made an incredible difference in my quality of life. Truly. So it's really important that I schedule those exercise sessions this week, especially since I usually do them in the evenings and two evenings are already taken up. So I'm going to run tonight and tomorrow for sure. The weather is hot but not rainy, and I can make it. I can handle the heat. So they're now entered into my Google calendar as appointments for those two days. The weekend is surprisingly empty, so I'll easily fit in a morning or evening run over the weekend without any planning needed.

The second way I can be a genius about what matters to me this week is to have a mental health chunk of time. The only open window for that is on Friday, but I'm putting that in the calendar as well. I need some time to not be productive or to just piddle around my house or Target or something. I have a lot of energy, and it's often very productive and spinny in nature. Planning a mental health day where I require nothing of myself will help me recover from a busy week on purpose.

The third way I see that I can be a genius about what matters this week is to not have a task list on Thursday. If I have a long to do list on a day where I want to spend the afternoon super engaged with my kids, I won't be super engaged with my kids because I'll be distracted by what's still on my list. So once I run my errands or do whatever gets done in the morning, I

mentally burn any remaining list, physical or mental. The only thing I need to do on Thursday is sit at the table with my boys while they do their homework and make them a snack platter and have a dinner that's already made and read to my daughter and all the things that matter about connecting with them.

And the fourth way I can be a genius about what matters as it relates to getting the podcast done is to not have email open or my phone facing up while I'm working. I need to get it done quickly without distraction, so I'm going to go ahead and make plans to eliminate those distractions when I work this week. I don't always, but this week I need to.

Okay, so that's how I can be a genius about what matters this week. The third question of the three planning questions is what will likely be a distraction from what matters?

I just answered that in one way. Email and voxes and texts are distracting when I'm trying to dig deep in a task and get it done quickly, so having that commitment to turn those off this week is a way to eliminate that distraction.

Another answer to that question is to actually put my runs and mental health blocks of time in my calendar because if I don't, I'll forget or think it's not as important as I do right now. When something is on my calendar in black and white, it's harder to ignore it than if it was just an intention in my mind. I can get distracted by just life in general and forget those things that matter, like running and white space, so I schedule them in my calendar like I would if I was going to the doctor.

Another thing that could distract from what matters is to see our strangely open weekend as an invitation to fill it up, but if I need white space and my people need it more than I do, it's important to keep the weekend open, not be distracted by what could fill it because we can.

And finally another thing that could distract me from what matters this week is complicated dinners. This is a week for a simple meal plan full of brainless crowdpleasers that don't require a lot of effort from me and that my family will gladly eat. It'll help my mental health, my family's mental health since we have two nights in a row when I'm gone, and it'll eliminate a lot of prep and mess because my brainless crowdpleasers pretty much all require minimal prep or mess. You can catch this week's meal plan on Instagram where I always share it on Meal Plan Monday. I'm @thelazygenius on Instagram. And if you're new around here or need a refresher on brainless crowdpleasers, check out episode #97 called One Simple Step That Changes Meal Planning Forever. It's a bold statement but still a true one.

And that's it! I have appointments, both typical and personal on my calendar. I've written down what matters and have created a meal plan that supports it. I also have a very limited task list this week because I don't have to have a long one because of what's happening but also because I'm actively choosing to keep it focused and limited since the week is a little busier than usual.

And that's how a lazy genius creates a weekly plan! I really love this way of approaching a week, and it helps me feel connected to myself, my people, and my tasks without being distracted by the urgent and by what doesn't matter. I would love for you to try it this week and pay attention to how you feel. Remember, the goal isn't to eliminate stress or gain a ton of control. You're setting an intention and aiming your attention in the direction of what matters, but stress doesn't mean your plan failed. It just means you're a person living life. Plans don't make you perfect. They're just a tool.

Okay, that's it for today's episode! I'll be live this Thursday around noon EST on Instagram @thelazygenius if you'd like to join me to ask any questions about this episode. And don't forget to check out the link in the show notes for The Naptime Kitchen Guide to Freezing. It's a great affordable resource, and I hope it makes your time in the kitchen much more pleasant.

Thanks so much for listening. 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!