

#163 - When to Relax the Rules

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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. This is episode 163 - when to relax the rules. Summer is a season of relaxation, of later bedtimes and loungy days, but we've also kind of already been in a weird season of pseudo-relaxation and later bedtimes and loungy days because of COVID-19. It's safe to say that easing into summer rhythms is a little complicated right now.

If you're like me, the general rhythm of summer is to start strong with the chill factor. We're hanging out, not having much of a schedule, just enjoying being off school. Then about two weeks in, that gets old, the kids are missing friends, I'm starting to panic that I didn't start a summer reading sticker chart early enough for it to count, and oh yeah we should probably do like chores and stuff. Around this time, you'll find me at the kitchen table with three giant pieces of posterboard, a handful of those massive Sharpies, and elaborate plans. Do I need to tell you what happens not even a week later when I can't even find the posterboard? No I do not.

The thing about that cycle is that we've already gone through it. We've already been chill and then freaked out and then given up. It was called online school. Now it's the middle of June, things are kind of opening up but there's still not a vaccine and still a lot of closed places and still a lot of anxiety around what the best choices are when it comes to being out in the world with our families. Also we won't even get into the idea that we don't know what school will even look like when it comes back and that's a whole other cluster we're trying to ignore.

You already know this, but in more ways than one, this summer is gonna be a weird one. And when things are weird or stressful or unknown, we either get really rigid with lots of plans and contingencies and charts or we give up completely and whatever happens happens. But then a lot of craziness happens and we don't quite know how to get back to a happy medium.

Today, let's talk for a second about what the happy medium can look like, specifically how to create a loose structure or rhythm that can serve you and your family well but also when to relax those rules or that rhythm. It's in the relaxing that we can find some normalcy; it's not in the

burning the sticker chart in a fire that you let your toddler light on her own. There's a gray space we don't allow ourselves to embrace super well, so let's do that together today.

First, let's talk about one approach to summer structure that you can adjust to fit your life whether it's just you or you and young kids or two working parents and bigger kids or whatever the case may be, and that approach is called Daily Sheets.

I've talked before about Daily Sheets, mostly, well completely, in the context of kids, but the concept can easily work for adults too. Here's the basic idea that is new to no one at all: you choose three things that you're going to do that day, that each person is going to do that day, and that's it.

Now here's the thing about that list: the three things don't have to be three things. They don't have to be productive things. They don't have to be rational things. They don't have to be the same things day after day. The idea here is that you are naming what matters, naming what is important or necessary for you and for whomever else one day at a time. Can you still use a planner or notepad or Google calendar for yourself to keep track of your stuff? Yeah. Can you still have big projects and whatever else in the rhythm? Sure. The idea of the Daily Sheet isn't that it's the only container for tasks or projects or rhythms. It's simply a method to help you see and name what matters most, and it's especially helpful with kids.

Maybe you use the Daily Sheet to fall within the loose confines of an existing rhythm. Maybe you already have a day that works for you and your family: maybe it's breakfast, do a chore, go to the pool and have lunch, come home, rest and do art or read or do screen time, play again, have dinner, go to bed. Or whatever. So even if you already have a rhythm, the Daily Sheet could be where you write the specific chore, the book the kid can read, and a reminder to put away all the pool stuff when they get home.

Let's say you don't have kids. You can still have a daily sheet. I talk about the cousin idea of the daily sheet which is basically naming what matters in the episode *The Lazy Genius Plans a Day*. I'll put a link in the show notes if you want to listen to that. Because here's the thing, we make things too big and sometimes look too far ahead. You have enough in front of you today, so keeping your daily sheet a *daily* sheet helps you be present so that you can see your week and month and the big projects and whatever else with more settled eyes once it's time to look there.

And I love a daily sheet to list out fun and rest too. Again, it's not about being productive. I talk about daily sheets for kids in an episode about chores, but sometimes one of their chores is to kiss me. I literally write "kiss your mom" and they think it's hilarious. It's connecting plus it's a check that makes them feel like they're doing something. And plus plus it makes the "do your laundry" box less annoying.

Okay, so what does this have to do with relaxing the rules? Usually we feel the need to relax the rules when the rules are too strict. Well, maybe not too strict. That might be too harsh of a word in terms of how we process it. But we relax rules when the rules aren't usually broken or when

they serve a good purpose that we might lose sight of, especially if the rule is followed day after day. It's also nice to relax the rules when you need a shift in the air or when you need a change of scenery.

So two thoughts to wrap this up. First, the daily sheets give you a built-in method of relaxing the rules. The only rule is that you have a daily sheet. What's on it, how many things, whatever is completely up to you. So when you're thinking about what is important to your third grader today and are filling out the daily sheet, what matters might be a day for his introverted heart to relax. So his daily sheet says "hang out in your room as long as you want." And that's the only checkbox. Maybe your extroverted third grader is feeling the lack of friends and not being in school for so long, so her daily sheet could say "make a list of the friends to hang out with this summer and what you could do" and let her go. You're seeing the need, seeing what matters, and writing that thing down in a place they always look. So again, the only rule is that you have a daily sheet or something like it that works for you. That means that you have the easiest path to relaxing rules because the daily sheet isn't rigid or consistent in what's on it, just that it exists. It lends itself so very well to relaxing the rules.

Second thought, remember that rules, much like routines, are a path to get somewhere specific, not the destination itself. So for example, your kids' bedtime is what it is because the main idea is to have them rested for the next day, to keep them from getting overtired, to give them a sense of what to expect from one day to the next. Structure is great. Bedtimes are great. But let's say you want to watch a meteor shower or go to a drive-in movie or camp in the backyard or drive to see grandma or watch fireworks. All of those things compete with bedtimes, right? But when you remember your purpose, when you remember what matters, you have better clarity on what rules to relax for the sake of a bigger purpose. Experiencing a meteor shower is so cool and a fun experience for a kid, even if you don't see meteors. Staying up late or being woken up in the middle of the night is a whole thing in itself. That experience is one that will connect you to your kid and is very likely more important than the kid being rested the next day. The next day they can take a nap or go to bed early or be a little grumpy and you'll know why and can make a dinner that makes the kid happy to offset the mood. Remember that rules are a path to somewhere specific, and if you're trying to go somewhere else today, relax the rule. Alter the course. Again, that's why I love the daily sheet. It gives you permission to set a new course every single day. Now if the idea of that makes you crazy, keep the same course until it doesn't work anymore. Or change one of the three things and leave the other two. You don't have to start from scratch every day. Just give yourself a chance to name what matters every day. That act alone will give you immediate perspective on when to relax the rules and built-in permission and a system to actually do it.

And that's when to relax the rules.

I'll put links to those other episodes in the show notes, but for a quick idea, the daily sheet can be a whiteboard, a notepad, a chalkboard, whatever. Just write the person's name and then whatever things go on the sheet. Erase if you want and do it again the next day. It's about as

simple as it can get and is a super helpful way to start small in creating a rhythm and knowing when to adjust it.

Thanks so much for listening! I appreciate you all so much. And a very specific grateful thanks to you all for making *The Lazy Genius Way* a #1 bestseller before it's actually released. Seriously. You all preordered that book like champs, and the book that barely anyone has seen yet hit number one in two categories. You guys. It was such a surprise, partly because it's new that Amazon ranks unreleased books - they haven't really ever done that until recently and I didn't know and partly because, I mean obviously. I didn't write a book with the intent that it would be a bestseller. I wrote it to help you! So to see that many of you excited to read it was seriously the coolest thing, and I'm so so grateful.

Alright friends, 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!