

#78 - The Lazy Genius House Purge

Hi there! You're listening to The Lazy Genius Podcast! I'm Kendra, 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 #78 - The Lazy Genius House Purge. Are you feeling it, too? Are you feeling the itch to get rid of everything and start over? Do you want to make your home feel like fall but have too much stuff in the way? Whenever we experience transition - a new season, a new job, a new baby, a new house, a new outlook on life - we want our space to reflect the freshness of that new thing. Or maybe we want our homes to feel organized and comfy and settled to help negate the craziness of that new transition. We'll take order wherever we can get it. In this episode, we're going to talk about how to purge the house like a Lazy Genius, how to see our stuff with new eyes, and how to give ourselves a break when we can't seem to create the space we want.

First up, stuff creates background noise. I'm not anti-stuff. I like stuff a lot, but no matter how much or little you have, stuff creates background noise. When you walk into a cluttered room, you feel the hum. There's a buzz in your brain that you might not have named before, but it's there. The more stuff, the louder the buzz, and the louder the buzz, the more desperate you might feel. It's that thing when you walk into your kid's bedroom and it's covered in every Lego and Hot Wheels car imaginable, and you feel like you might break into a million pieces like you're a Marvel villain. It's the buzz that causes that pressure.

And as we're talking about transitions, about moving from one thing to another, your mind is already fairly noisy. Forget the tangible stuff. You're already trying to sift through new schedules or perspectives. You're already trying to figure something out that doesn't have an answer. For this recent step into October, you might be seeing the holidays looming like an oppressive black cloud because you're so not ready to deal with that crazy, and so the din of your house contributes to the din in your mind. There's physical noise and mental noise, and it can just feel like too much. Which is why you start mercilessly ripping things out of closets and showing no mercy to the stuff in your house.

Desperation can happen quickly when we're trying to quiet a noisy mind or noisy house or both. The desperation makes us swing big. Go big or go home. Or maybe leave home more appropriately. I love my house, and sometimes I'm like, "can you we just sell this thing and start over?" It's a very normal feeling to be desperate about our space.

So what do we do about it? I don't have three days to devote completely to purging my house even though that's what I want in an ideal world. And if you do have three days, that's great! There's nothing inherently wrong with getting rid of stuff in your entire house all at once just like there's nothing wrong with keeping all your stuff and living with the noise. There's no morality attached to any of these things. They're not good or bad. They just are. The choice instead depends on your own capacity for the noise and how it affects the rest of your life. If the noise of your stuff keeps you from paying attention to the good things you have, maybe it's time for a little purge if only to give you a more enjoyable perspective for what's coming in this new

season. If the affect of the stuff in your life doesn't make much of a ripple emotionally, don't sweat it. But if it's making waves, let's talk about a plan.

I don't want you turning into a sweaty monster that scares little children trying to clean out your house. Desperate house purging all at once from a mind already spinning out of control is a recipe for yelling and the merciless treatment toward stuff that might actually matter, and you'll probably quit in the middle anyway because it was just too much. That's not our ideal scenario, so let's find another way.

I'm going to give you five steps to purging the house like a Lazy Genius. And here I am saying this again in yet another episode, but you guys. Small steps matter. They matter more than the big ones I think. If you develop the practice of seeing your stuff with calm eyes, those desperate purges happen very rarely. It's fine for them to happen, but they won't feel as desperate because you've already done the regular, small-step thinking of what really matters. Throughout the year, you can take a small step in giving away that giant bowl that's clogging up a cabinet or the small step of getting rid of one sweater that no longer fits your body or your life. Don't dismiss the small steps. And when you do need to do a bigger purge because a your baby is no longer a baby or you're not cooking for a family of six anymore but a family of three, you can approach the bigger purges with more calm. Small steps matter. I won't get into the science, but it's proven that small steps have a far more lasting impact than big steps do. It's okay to do this one thing at a time, and I believe it's the best place to start.

Now let's quickly run through the five steps.

Step one, choose the most frustrating space. Don't say you're going to purge the whole house because that just might be a little crazy. Instead, choose one space - a drawer, a closet, or even a room - that creates the most physical and mental noise. You might think you need to purge the whole house when really the effects of one particular space could change everything. So choose your most frustrating space, the space with the most noise.

Step two, choose an exit strategy. Before you touch a single thing, you need to know your exit strategy. How is the stuff leaving your house? Because it really needs to leave your house. Have you ever cleaned out your closet and loved the feeling of all the clothes being exactly what you love and need, but there's this pile of rejects in the corner of the room because you're not sure if you want to give them away or consign a few things or maybe have a little yard sale. So the pile sits. And taunts. And creates new noise which distracts you from the calm you created in your closet in the first place. So it's really important to choose an exit strategy before you begin. I'm a big fan of one path out the door. One continuum. It's overwhelming to try and sell this thing on eBay and this pile on CraigsList and this pile can go to your sister and this pile... it's too many piles. All piles go down the same path. Whenever I finish purging a space, I'll alert a couple of friends, tell them they're welcome to take what they want, and donate the rest. Or if I'm prepared for it, I'll have a yard sale. The friends seeing the stuff is still on the same continuum because I didn't move the stuff for them. It's still in a little pile on my dining table, so if they want something, cool!. Either way, what's left on the table gets taken to the thrift store. And if you're wanting some early fall yard sale help, episode #66 is The Lazy Genius Yard Sale. I'll link it up in the show notes. So again, choose an exit strategy, and choose it before you start cleaning anything out. That way, you'll actually get the stuff out of your house.

Step three, choose what deserves to stay. Your stuff needs to earn its keep. If you don't really use it, perhaps you don't really need it. You don't have to be merciless and get rid of everything, but think strategically in terms of how much value this thing is offering you versus the exchange of how much physical and emotional space it takes up. If you use it and love it, it deserves to stay. Don't get mad in three weeks when it's taking up space. If it's worthy of keeping, it deserves the space it takes up. Give the thing the space it needs, or say goodbye.

In terms of how to go through what stays and what goes, depending on the space you're cleaning out, you can take everything out and sort it by keep and exit, or if the space is a kitchen that just has too much to pull out all at once, pull out what you're getting rid of, leaving the keepers behind. Once you've cleared out every space and all that's left is what's staying, you can open all the cabinets and drawers at once, scan, and see if a little movement is a good idea. Don't start relocating stuff until the entire space is empty of what no longer is helpful.

And just remember, when you're trying to figure out where to store something, don't choose the best place. Choose the place you'd look for it first. Because that's the best place.

Step four, exit. You have your stuff you're saying goodbye to. Now actually say goodbye. This is why choosing an exit strategy earlier is important. It's so tough to actually remove that pile, no matter how tiny, from your house. There are too many possible paths to take, and you get crippled by the noise of indecision just like you feel the pressure of the noise of your stuff. Exit. You have to get the stuff out of your house.

And I'm begging you no matter how big or small your purge pile, don't leave it in your car. The best way to keep your car from being a mobile thrift store is to put all of the stuff to donate or drop off at a friend's in the front seat of your car, not the trunk. Trust me on this one.

And step five, notice. Pay attention to the difference that room or drawer or space feels once you've gotten out the stuff that doesn't matter anymore. Notice the calm and the quieter level of noise from the stuff you love keeping around. Anytime we bring something new into our homes, we're contributing to its noise, so it's important to notice how good certain levels of noise feel. It might just make you put down that thing at Target that's going to make more noise than it will bring joy. So pay attention to how your space feels after the purge. That doesn't mean that you can't ever buy anything or that you'll never purge any space again. Nothing is one-and-done, but you can keep the desperation at bay with a perspective of small steps, of giving space - physical and mental - to what matters, and by having a simple gameplan when it's time to purge.

So choose a frustrating space, choose an exit strategy, choose what deserves to stay, exit the stuff that doesn't, and notice the effects. You can do this room by room over a couple of weeks, or you can do the most frustrating space and reap the benefits without touching the rest of your home.

If you're feeling any kind of frustration at your current home and the state of your stuff or even your life, I want to do something I've never done before and that's leave you with a blessing. The best blessing reader ever is Emily P. Freeman on The Next Right Thing Podcast, and during our trip to London, she told our group about a book of blessings from John O'Donohue called *To Bless the Space Between Us*. I'm pretty sure all of us added it to your Amazon carts in minutes because every blessing she read to us from that book was beautiful and meaningful in

ways we didn't know we needed. So while I love to give you practical advice and virtual high fives, our homes feel a little deeper than that, that you might need something to reclaim the truth of home, of its history and what it means. So to close this episode, I'm going to read a blessing from this book.

It's called Elemental Blessing for a New Home.

Before a human voice was ever heard here,
This place has known the respect of stone,
The friendship of the wind, always returning
With news of elsewhere, whispered in seed and pollen,
The thin symphonies of birdsong softening the silence,
The litanies of rain rearranging the air,
Cascades of sunlight opening and closing days,
And the glow of the moon gazing through darkness.
May all that elemental enrichment
Bless the foundation and standing of your home.

Before you came here, this place has known
The wonder of children's eyes,
The hope of mornings in troubled hearts,
The tranquility of twilight easing the night,
The drama of dreams under sleeping eyelids,
The generous disturbance of birth,
The anxieties of old age unclenching into grace
And the final elegant of calmly embraced death.
May the life of your new home enter
Into this inheritance of spirit.

May the rain fall kindly,
May delight illuminate your hearts,
May the darkness never burden,
May those who dwell here in the unseen
Watch over your coming and going,
May your lives of love and promise
Refine and deepen the mind of this land.

Last week, we talked about rest, and this week we're talking about purging the house. Those aren't accidents; I need to talk about both of those things because I've been much more easily distracted recently by my own narrow view of time and home and purpose. Being intentional about rest and valuing my home, not just from a stuff standpoint but also seeing my home as an inheritance of spirit of much that's come before, it's been such a gift. So I share these words in the hope that it's a gift for you, too.

That's it for today! Thanks so much for listening and sharing and leaving reviews on Apple Podcasts. The show has had a good jump in numbers lately, and that's 100% because you guys are spreading the Lazy Genius love and wanting your friends and sisters and neighbors to be encouraged, and I'm so grateful. And a lot of you have been telling me on Instagram and email that you're coming to either Nest Fest or The Popcast Live Show on October 20th. I'm just so

excited to meet you, so if you seeing me, please say hi! And finally, don't forget that I'll be live on Instagram every Thursday talking about that week's podcast episode, so come join me this Thursday to talk about purging the house. We're in this together. Alright, friends, thanks for listening! Until next time, be a genius about the things that matter and lazy about the things that don't. Bye, guys!