

349 - 10 Small Changes I'm Glad I Made

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 349 - 10 Small Changes I'm Glad I Made.

It's the smackdab middle of January, and we all know about the January Feelings. Kate Bowler has been talking about January Feelings on her Instagram lately, and we all know what those are, right? It's the potential energy, the goals, the big changes, the fresh starts. We're in the middle of a season where we're trying to figure out which of those things and in what context they matter to us, all while just trying to get back into the swing of life.

P.S. Why is it that when the calendar changes years you can suddenly visualize October and you're like wait what is happening. Somehow, when I'm in December, the following October is lightyears away, but once I hit January, it's not that October is almost here but it's a lot closer than it was. It's so bizarre. Anybody else?

Anyway, we're carrying lots of weird energy in January, having a lot of those January feelings, and since many of those feelings tend to be big and expansive and beyond, I want to bring us in today. I want us to think about small things, small changes, small steps that can have a big impact.

If you're new around here, there are 13 Lazy Genius principles that I describe in my first book, *The Lazy Genius Way*, and one of the most impactful, albeit the most annoying, is to start small. We are slowly learning the value of not only starting small in our systems and our thinking about also in making small changes. Small changes don't have to have big impact to count, but we often don't notice how big of an impact a small change can have on our lives unless we're actively looking for it.

I've been noticing the small changes in my life recently and wanted to take time to share those with you. This episode is 10 small changes I'm glad I made so you can see a variety of examples of the value of small changes. And at the end of the episode, I'm going to share a list of some of your small changes you made that you shared with me on Instagram! Basically, I want more airtime given to small changes.

And for clarity's sake, I'm not talking about small progress. I'm not talking about taking small steps continuously in one direction to *get* to a big change. I'm talking about one small change that was made, and now it's done. The consequences of that small change are ongoing, but these are small, singular changes that are complete, not ongoing. I feel like that's another topic entirely.

Okay, let's get into my 10 small changes!

The first small change I'm glad I made is one you already know about if you follow me on Instagram, and it is the loose inspiration for this episode. It is having multiple hairbrushes in the house *and* particularly changing the color of the hairbrush that's always in my living room. Let me explain.

My daughter Annie is in second grade and has very long, very tangly hair. Every night, we sit on the couch (it used to be her bed, but she's now pivoted to the couch) and I braid her hair while she watches guys yell about slime on YouTube. For awhile, I'd go to her room to try and find the brush and comb since both are required, as well as a hair tie. Often, I'd forget to do this before I sat down which was annoying. Also annoying was having to return the brush and comb to her room at some point. Otherwise, I'd just have a hot pink hairbrush on the couch forever. So I got an empty planter, put it on the table next to the couch, and filled it with a living room hairbrush, a living room comb, and living room hair ties. Amazing. It's all in its place exactly where I need it. But the little bit of hot pink got on my nerves. My living room is warm woods, light blues, rich blacks... it's hot pink is not part of my color story. Still, what can you do, right?

Well, a few weeks ago, I went to Target to get two more hairbrushes since we both have hair and do it in two different rooms and were down to just a living room hairbrush and one that floated between bathrooms and bedrooms. No thanks. Since the two hairbrushes we do have are both hot pink, I was prepared to buy two more that were hot pink. Why would I do anything else? Only the store didn't have hot pink. They only had one white and one black. Well, I love a neutral, so I went with it, even though I was weirdly disappointed they didn't have hot pink so that they'd all be the same. Then when I got home, I realized that I could put the black hairbrush in the planter. The pink one could go to a bedroom or bathroom where it wasn't a decoration and mattered not an ounce. But the black one could stay in the living room and practically be invisible. When I say this small change brought me the most tremendous joy, I cannot express the expansiveness of that statement. It makes me genuinely happy and grateful every time I reach for that black brush. It's always in the planter since it's the living room brush, and it doesn't get on my visual nerves. That brush was the best nine dollars I've ever spent.

You get the idea? These are the small changes we're talking about. Super actionable in whatever your life needs. Hopefully the rest of the list will spark something that will help make a big difference in your life, too.

The second small change I'm glad I made is similar, and it is that there are scissors everywhere. We, like many people, seem to always be cutting stuff up. Cutting tags off things, cutting stubborn snacks open, cutting paper for crafts. Scissors are used often and in every room. For years, we had one pair of good scissors. Can you even imagine. That is no way to live. I was forever annoyed at my family for taking the scissors and leaving them in random rooms instead of in the little tub of pens in the kitchen. Well, now we have three pairs of scissors in the same room even. There are pens everywhere; three buckets in the same big space. One in the kitchen by the counter, one 15 feet away where the mail is, and a third 15 feet from there by the kitchen table and living room. I don't want to have to go far for a pen, and I came to find how lovely it was to not have to go far for a pair of scissors. Now there's a pair in every pen jar as

well as a pair in my bedroom. When I made this list, I realized that we still run into a scissors problem because there aren't any on the boys' side of the house. So you know what I ordered last week after making this list? Another three pack of scissors. Hallelujah. Eight bucks, and all is good and true.

The third small change I'm glad I made which is also similar to the first two and the final of this general category is that we have umbrellas everywhere. More umbrellas than I even know. I got tired of needing the one umbrella we had and it was in the car through the rain or in a car that wasn't even at our house. Plus, we have a family of five people, and if you've ever been a person and especially a kid, you know how preferred and fun it is to have your own umbrella. I think we probably have ten in various places. Some are cheap, some are not, some are tiny, some are huge, all are brightly colored because that's a Decide Once I have, and I never have to wonder where one is. There's always one where I need it, even when they move around. Rain is no longer stressful.

The fourth small change I'm glad I made is that I got good socks. For awhile, I only had a few pairs of non athletic socks, and they were fine. I'd get the cheapest but cutest pack at Target and call it good. But then they'd be too thin or slide off my heel or any number of annoyances. But socks are socks so who cares, right? Clearly, you know that answer cannot stand. Last year, I bought two packs of Bombas wool socks, and they are all I wear. I have plenty, so I never worry about running out before laundry is done. They are excellent quality and stay put. They are so warm without being bulky. I just love them. I didn't realize how much good socks would make my days better, but they do.

The fifth small change I'm glad I made is our cup zone on the kitchen counter. This has been in our kitchen for years. Here's the problem: everyone in your house, even if it's just you, drinks throughout the day, right? You might have your water bottle and then also a mug for tea you steep throughout the day. Those drinking vessels are all over the living area, one or more for each person in your house. When I would go to tidy our living area, I never knew what to do with all the cups and water bottles. I mean, we still need them the rest of the day so they're not dirty, but I'm not going to just leave them lying around like some kind of animal?! I'm joking. You can totally leave them out. But I personally didn't want to. The visual clutter got on my nerves. Plus no one ever knew where their drink was. Ever. I got so tired of hearing, "Mom, where's my water bottle?" So I used the Lazy Genius principle "put everything in its place" and I made a cup zone. On our kitchen island now lies a Lazy Susan. It's wooden and quite lovely, but it is the cup zone. It's where all the water bottles and cups and mugs and things that aren't done for the day live. While it's visible, it's contained. It has a place. We call it the drink spinner. When the kids get home from school and they unpack their backpacks, one of the things that all automatically do now is put their water bottles on the drink spinner. When they clear the table after dinner, dirty dishes go in the dirty dishes zone which is one particular piece of countertop and the cups and water bottles go on the drink spinner. They already know where they go, and that small change has been enormously helpful over the years.

The sixth small change I'm glad I made is that I order an avocado in every grocery order. This is a weird one but also awesome. I love avocados, but as we all know, their lives are full of drama. They run hot and cold, and we just don't know what we're going to get and when we're going to get it. By ordering one avocado in every grocery order which happens every three or four days, I'm almost always guaranteed a little bit of avocado that's ready to eat. I do toast, I put it on rice bowls, I put a spoonful in a smoothie, and if we have several that are ripe at once, I'll make guacamole. This has been such a strange little small change but one I very much love.

The seventh small change I'm glad I made is that I allow my oldest to play chess and make music on his computer whenever he wants. Screen time with kids is such a bear. If you want an episode about how to handle it like a Lazy Genius, we'll link to it in the show notes. But ultimately it's the deciding all the time whether or not a kid can do the screen thing. Frankly, I don't mind screen time. For our family, we love it. But not all screen time is created equal. Watching the yelling slime guys is different from watching Moana is different from playing online chess is different from doing digital art. They all require the same screen, but they all require a different use of the brain. So a small change we made for our oldest who is in eighth grade and becoming less and less interested in his family as all middle school boys do is that if he wants to play chess or make music, his two favorite hobbies, he can. He doesn't have to ask. For awhile, we made him ask, but now we don't even do that. We have start and end points for the Internet on his computer, but the window is wide. If he wants to do either of those things, he can, and that small change has been incredible for my parenting sanity.

The eighth small change I'm glad I made is that I decided once when I move my body. This is a new one but shockingly helpful in a short time. I've said a good number of words about exercise and body shape and all the things. Leah will kindly put some links to those episodes in the show notes for you, but ultimately I feel good when I move. It took me awhile to believe that and not hold on to diet culture when I did, but now I really love movement and prioritize it whenever possible. That's a term Kate Bowler brought to my attention recently: whenever possible. It's such a kind way to couch our priorities while leaving room for our humanity. Anyway, I do try to move whenever possible, but figuring out when I do it has been a challenge for years. I remember talking to my therapist about it two summers ago as a longtime problem. I have three kids, I have a job that's flexible but still a job, and it's been weirdly tough for me to find regular times to move. Recently, I was trying to plan a particularly busy week, and it felt like I couldn't get anything done. The entire plan was complicated. There were no flags. There wasn't nothing to anchor to, but there was so much to do. I got super frustrated that I couldn't figure this out. Then I realized that the single thing that was making the planning tough was when I would move. I was trying to Tetris my movement into different spots on different days, and it just made everything complicated. So I decided to decide once. For a short season, I'd try getting up at 5:30am whenever possible and moving before anyone got up. Annie doesn't get out of bed until 6:30am as required by Adachi Law, so I know I'm safe until then. So I get up, go to the gym down the street, walk super fast on the treadmill for 20-30 minutes, and then go home. That's it. The other rhythms of my life already exist from 6:30am until I go to bed. That was the problem. I was trying to insert a new rhythm into old ones that already had a flow, and I couldn't make it work. By making the small change of deciding once when I'll move has been amazing for my

days. Will it always be that way? No, but it works for this season, and I'll keep doing it until it doesn't need to work that way anymore.

The ninth small change I'm glad I made is that I put my dinner queue on my meal planning calendar. You've likely seen the dry erase calendars in my kitchen where I do monthly planning. I've used them for years and years, but in recent months, I added a permanent dinner queue to those calendars. On the side I wrote down all of our brainless crowdpleasers, those meals that are brainless for the cook to make and generally pleasing for whatever crowd is eating it, as well as some favorites we have on occasion. It's made meal planning so easy because the meal ideas are right there in front of me.

And the tenth small change I'm glad I made is that I quit books I don't like or adjust how I'm reading a book I almost like. I mentioned this briefly in the last newsletter, but a good example of this is when I read *Jonathan Strange and Mr. Norrell* by Susanna Clarke. I loved Susanna Clarke's weird little book *Piranesi*, so I figured I'd like her other novel. Now, it's maybe ten times the size of *Piranesi* and also a completely different tone and writing style, but who cares right? Wrong. I started reading it two years ago and just couldn't get into it. I could barely even hold it it was so big. I decided a huge book like that wasn't for the season I was in, and I quit it. For that time. Well, this past December, I figured the holiday month was a good time to try again, so I got the book off the shelf. Nope. Couldn't do it. So then I pivoted to audio. Maybe I'd find it easier to fit into my life in a different format. While I did listen to pretty much the entire thing, I still didn't love the book. I listened to about 80% of it, decided I had given it my best go and could find a different path, so I looked up the synopsis, read what happened at the end, and then listened to the final half hour or whatever. While that's not technically a story about quitting a book which I do whenever I need to, it is a good example of the small change that I can do what I need to do when I read. I can quit, I can pause, I can try another format, I can read spoilers if I don't want to finish... I can read however I need to.

Just like with all of these things, they are of low significance in the scheme of grand life. We're not solving the world's problems. But I do think that the more we pay attention to small change we can make and experience the big differences they cause, we'll have a life with more space and less stress to do the things that matter. I will always always be a proponent for small problem solving without apology or disclaimer.

Now to wrap up, instead of celebrating the Lazy Genius of the Week with one person, let's make it a whole slew of you. In the spirit of the collective part of the Lazy Genius Collective, I'm going to read out a bunch of small changes y'all are glad you made that you shared with me on Instagram. I love that I can rapid fire these because the changes are so small. It's kind of perfect.

Allison Harris: moved my books to the living room so I can read in the daytime when I'm not sleepy. Genia Melton: I wrote "top" and "side" with a Sharpie on my king sized fitted sheets. Stephanie Hall: scissors in the closet to cut off all the annoying tags. Stacy C: kids' socks kept downstairs by their shoes, not in their bedrooms. Amanda Neely: all baby spoons live on the

kitchen table ready to replace spoons thrown on the floor. Marie Noel: using a small heating pad on my home office chair since that room is always cold. Martha Kent: I put a full sized trash can in our bathroom instead of the tiny bathroom can. Julie Preis: every time I go to Costco, I pick up a ready made dinner. Laura Montanez: I buy neutral tissue box covers so I don't have to look at colorful designs. Emily Dunnagan: I bought a second and third water bottle - one for work, one for home, and one with hot water. Rebekah M.: I take public transit and I bought a badge holder for the pass. Easier to grab with gloves on. Morgan Shlyn: opening a new tube of toothpaste before the old tube requires tools to eek any out. Ivy no last name: I switched our coffee maker with our toaster. Coffee is closer to the sink now and clean up is easier. Laura Kohler: I keep my kid's adhd meds in the car and have an alarm to give them to him on the way to school. Rebecca Jones: Adjusting where I store cereal to a shelf my kids can reach themselves. Kelsey Damron: moving our recycling bin to the garage. Our boxes actually make it to the bin now.

I mean, you guys. And those were just the ideas shared in the first thirty minutes of posting. Small changes make a huge difference. And the more you accept that and notice when you can and let them hold the value that they do, the collection of those small changes over time really create a beautiful life that still goes upside down and wonky and still has tragedy and hormones and all kinds of things that cause chaos, but your regular, daily, rhythmic things feel smoother because of all these small changes. So make one today. Move an appliance. Buy an extra set of scissors. Move your favorite candle from your living room to your bathroom and light it when you take a shower like Leah on my team does. That's her small change she shared with me. These small changes make a huge difference, and I hope this episode encourages you to see the value in yours.

A quick reminder that there will be no new episode next Monday! We're taking a week off to deal with some logistical behind the scenes things, but we'll have a new very exciting episode on January 29th! Speaking of the Magic Question, maybe you can go ahead and pick an old episode now that you'll download to listen to next Monday during your regular listening time which I know a lot of you do. Since a lot of what we make is seasonal, check episodes from the last couple of Januarys and see if anything seems like a helpful idea for next week. Thanks for listening today, 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 in two weeks!