

Ep. 102: The “Lazy Genius” Way To Becoming a New York Times Bestselling Author with Kendra Adachi



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Rachel Rodgers

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Ep. 102: The “Lazy Genius” Way To Becoming a New York Times Bestselling Author with Kendra Adachi

Kendra: One of the things that can be hard when you're starting a business, obviously, especially if you're starting one without capital, without credibility, without any of those things, that you have to earn the right to be heard, right?

Rachel: Yes.

Kendra: And so I had to spend time earning the right to be heard.

Rachel: Such a good way to put it because I have to tell you, sometimes people ask me, “Well, I've tried everything and none of it's working.” And I'm like, “Give me all, what's everything?” And they name three things and I'm like, ‘Honey, get out of my face with that.’ Okay?

You're not entitled to people's attention, okay? You have to earn it. And they have to say, “Why should I pay attention to you instead of this other thing that I already know I want to pay attention to?”

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[Hello Seven](#) with Rachel Rodgers

Ep. 102: The “Lazy Genius” Way To Becoming a New York Times Bestselling Author with Kendra Adachi

Rachel: We are not in our usual studio setting. Today we are in front of a live audience and I'm talking to my friend Kendra Adachi, the author of The Lazy Genius Way, and also The Lazy Genius Kitchen.

Kendra: That's right.

Rachel: Both New York Times best sellers, you know, so put some respect on it. So I want to start with just a small little story about some small thing that happened to you related to like a storm and a ship?

Kendra: You guys. So my last book, The lazy Genius Kitchen, it was supposed to come out March 22nd of 2022, the year we are in now. And about six weeks before that book was supposed to come out, which you all have launched something, you know, if you have a business you're like constantly launching things. And you know the energy required to launch things.

Rachel: Yes.

Kendra: It's different than your regular day to day, right? So I'm in it. I'm like thick in it. I get a call from my agent and she says, “Well, fun news, the boat that is carrying all 30,000 copies of your book was in a storm. And we think your books might be in the bottom of the ocean.” That is the correct response, you guys, yes.

Rachel: Wow.

Kendra: I was like, “Oh, oh.” What does one do to respond to news like that? And, yeah, it was an interesting thing because even when you have everything lined up, you have all of your plans in a row, you're feeling great energy, you're leaning into your gifts and what matters to you and all these

Ep. 102: The “Lazy Genius” Way To Becoming a New York Times Bestselling Author with Kendra Adachi

things, there are some times where something can happen that can derail that.

And so it was really, it was an excellent exercise, at least eventually, once I sort of got over the craziness of my books might be in the ocean. It was a really lovely experience to see and affirm what mattered to me and my team and my business. And being like, “Okay, we got to lean on what we've chosen matters here. Let's make this happen.”

Rachel: Yes. And so what was the, like what happened? The book came out later.

Kendra: The book came out later. So we decided that we had to, I'm trying to think of how much I want to share since this is going to be public. Basically there was a lack of decision making that I wish had been made. And so I had to say, “Okay, at what point are we too far gone?” Right? How long can we wait to see if the books are indeed drowned before we have to make a different decision?

And so we ended up changing the release date from March 22nd to May 3rd, which was the latest I wanted to go and the earliest my publisher was willing to go. So I was like, well, I guess that's what we're choosing.

Rachel: So you had to fight for that.

Kendra: We had to fight for that. But I was also really grateful that my publisher trusted me. I think that's one thing, you know, I had had success with The Lazy Genius Way. That was launched literally during the pandemic, it was August 2020. So not a great time to try to sell anything, but it did well, you know, it continued to do well.

Ep. 102: The “Lazy Genius” Way To Becoming a New York Times Bestselling Author with Kendra Adachi

And so I do think that my trust in my own skill set, in my audience and readers and all of that, it did give me the credibility with the people who were making the decision to say okay, we trust you, we're going to try to make this happen. So we moved it to May 3rd, they got a secondary publisher to try to like get some printed really fast in case all the books were in the ocean and all the things.

And there are three words that are a huge part of my team's culture. I think it's really, really important anytime you're running any sort of business that you have these markers, right? These values in your business that help direct you every day, but especially when things go crazy town.

Rachel: Yes.

Kendra: So three of the words that are really important to our team are nimble, we're going to be nimble, we always want to be nimble. Creative, that we're not just doing things the way that everyone else does them just because. Because what works for someone else might not work for you.

You don't need to reinvent the wheel if it doesn't matter to you, but you also don't have to be stuck doing exactly what everybody else is doing for their business, right? And then the third one was we protect the vibe, we really seek to not be cynical. Can I tell you how hard it is to not be cynical when your books are at the bottom of the sea? Very hard.

Rachel: Yes.

Kendra: So those three things especially, because they were already part of our marrow.

Rachel: Yeah.

Ep. 102: The “Lazy Genius” Way To Becoming a New York Times Bestselling Author with Kendra Adachi

Kendra: It helped us tremendously. We really did not flounder because we knew what we needed to do. It's like, well, we're built for this. We're built to do this.

Rachel: Yes, we're nimble, we're creative.

Kendra: Exactly.

Rachel: Yes.

Kendra: And so we, you know, we moved the, obviously, the publishing date moved to May 3rd. And I came up with this idea to do a pub crawl, where we crawled from one publication date to the next publication date and we had different events between those two dates. And what we ended up doing, because here's what matters to me, and that's the whole foundation of the lazy genius way, is what matters to you.

Rachel: Right.

Kendra: One of the things that matters to me personally, I don't like to work a lot in the summer. I don't want to do it.

Rachel: Same. I want a recess.

Kendra: No, I want to go to the pool, I want to hang out with my kids. My husband is a school counselor so he gets a lot of the summers off. It's a really beautiful time for us to be together as a family. I did not want to be selling a book in the summer.

Ep. 102: The “Lazy Genius” Way To Becoming a New York Times Bestselling Author with Kendra Adachi

And so I decided, all right, well, if we move this to May 3rd, in the ways that books are normally released into the world, I need to give another at least four if not six weeks after that publication date.

Rachel: Correct, because my publication date was May 4th 2021.

Kendra: You just got to keep going. It's no fun, man. It's no fun. And so I decided, all right, what matters to me is that I end this work as soon as possible. As soon as possible. So what the pub crawl did is it turned the beginning, May 3rd, into the end.

Rachel: Yes.

Kendra: We ended with this like great launch party in town and we had a couple hundred people come and it was so fun. But we had been building up to it. So once we got to the launch party, it was like, “The book is in the world, and I’m done!”

Rachel: Bye y'all.

Kendra: And it was great. So I think though, I wish that it had not, well actually I don't know if that's true. I was going to say I wish it hadn't happened. But that kind of situation happening showed, confirmed, like reinforced these values that we really, really hold as people and as a company. And I don't know that we would have known that otherwise.

And it just showed that we could pivot. We could be nimble, we could be creative. We could stay above the fray of the pessimism and the cynicism that was threatening to drag us down.

Rachel: Yes.

Ep. 102: The “Lazy Genius” Way To Becoming a New York Times Bestselling Author with Kendra Adachi

Kendra: Because it was so hard, yeah.

Rachel: That's great, I love this story. And it's also, like you don't realize how important culture is until you need it. And then you realize, like, oh, I wish I would have already set the stage for the culture that we need right now during this difficult time.

Kendra: Yes.

Rachel: Because usually when stuff like that happens, you need your team to trust you, right? And if that trust hasn't been built and if they don't feel like you live the values that you say you do, so if you are saying one thing in public and your team sees you do something different behind the scenes, then that breaks trust, right? And so having those values, it means that we're all sort of, they're accountable to them but so are you as the leader.

Kendra: Yes. And I think also it's good to have them in place before because not only do you want your team to trust you, you want your team to trust themselves and their own decisions.

Rachel: Yes.

Kendra: And so they already also had practice in those values. So when we moved in, that's why it was like, “You guys, were ready for this. We're built for this. We've been talking about this in smaller, less dramatic ways up to this point. But we know how to do this, so let's do it.” And it was such a like a rallying cry that, like you said, it already existed. So it was really empowering.

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[Hello Seven](#) with Rachel Rodgers

Ep. 102: The “Lazy Genius” Way To Becoming a New York Times Bestselling Author with Kendra Adachi

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Rachel: That's awesome, I love it because you took a challenging moment and found a way to make it a win anyway. And to understand how dramatic this is, you like literally plan book launches like six months, sometimes 12 months in advance. So you're dropping all of these hints and you have a whole thing choreographed to lead up to this exact moment. And if right before the moment nothing happens, it's like, okay, so we got all this momentum rising to a crescendo that doesn't exist now.

Kendra: Here was the analogy that I felt like it was. It was like I was getting married. I was in my dress, I was like ready. And then I'm just waiting to go out there, right? And then the wedding coordinator comes in and is like, “Hey, what's up? So the groom has been kidnapped and we don't know when he's coming back, if he's coming back, we're not really sure. We're just going to hang out and wait.” And I'm like, “I'm sorry. What? What?”

That's really what it felt like. We were very hamstrung for a while because there was nothing, nothing had been decided. We were just sort of in this holding pattern.

Rachel: Let's see if these books make it, because also, one thing I will say about publishers is that they cheap, okay?

Kendra: She's not wrong.

Ep. 102: The “Lazy Genius” Way To Becoming a New York Times Bestselling Author with Kendra Adachi

Rachel: They are cheap and they just wanted to see if those books were going to appear. They were like, “Wait, what if we get this investment back?” Also they will talk to you, like you will spend all this time crafting these words and they will talk to you in-depth about paper. What kind of paper it is, the shortage on paper, the struggles with paper. There's a paper shortage right now my publisher has just informed me. And then they want talk to you about the printing, right? We could use this print. Do you want a French flap? Do you want this?

I know more about paper and printing and bookmaking than I want. I'm like, I'm responsible for what the words say, I need y'all to worry about that. Don't even talk to me about the paper, I don't care. So they were probably poured over the paper and exactly the format of what the book is going to be and were stressed about paper shortage or whatever. And then that book was gone and they were like, :Oh no.”

Kendra: And I think that all of that is absolutely right. And to know that I was not the only book on that boat, like there were other books that were on that boat.

Rachel: Oh my gosh, yes.

Kendra: There was one woman who, she had a cookbook on the same boat and her book came out two weeks ago.

Rachel: What?

Kendra: We are in September, like they just immediately pushed it to September.

Rachel: Wow.

Ep. 102: The “Lazy Genius” Way To Becoming a New York Times Bestselling Author with Kendra Adachi

Kendra: And I will say that there is, I think that's why the cultural value of our team of not being cynical is really, really helpful. Because it was so easy for me to be like, “Fix my problems. Fix my problems.”

Rachel: Yes.

Kendra: And instead realizing like, okay, I realize that perhaps the way that this has gone about, it's not ideal for anybody and we're all doing our best. And I'm going to advocate for myself as best I can. But really trying to have an attitude of like, another value we have is empathy. And just to think like, okay, put myself in their shoes. Put myself in a publisher's shoes, which is hard to do because I would run a publishing company pretty differently than I think a lot of publishers run theirs.

Rachel: 100%.

Kendra: But it's also, if you think about it, that is an industry. That's why being an entrepreneur is so great. Publishing is an industry that has been around a very long time and it's enormous. And it's like, you know, trying to turn a cruise ship with a spoon, you can't do that.

That's why it's so lovely to have even communities like this, where you are running your own thing so you can be nimble, you can be creative. And you can even model that, to a point, to other businesses that are bigger than yours, that are bigger, you know, have been around for longer or maybe stuck doing things in a certain way just because they've done them for so long.

So there were a lot of things that kind of came into play. I'm glad that it's over. I mean I'm so glad that it's over, but we leaned into it. For our pub crawl graphic we made it a tugboat, we leaned into the ocean thing. It was great. It was really great.

[Hello Seven](#) with Rachel Rodgers

Ep. 102: The “Lazy Genius” Way To Becoming a New York Times Bestselling Author with Kendra Adachi

Rachel: You're like, “This is a great story and we're going to make it hilarious.”

Kendra: Let's make it fun. Like if we're going to, if we have to talk about this, let's make it fun. Yeah, we had under the sea themes for like everything.

Rachel: Under the sea, I love it. And also one thing I want to point out and then we'll move on is what you're talking about, about influencing the publisher. So you could be in a podcast network, right, or you could have a deal with a big organization that you're working with and you can still influence them, right?

So making sure that you're willing to do that and willing to have those conversations and being willing to be on a conference call with 30 employees from them and you and your one assistant because that's your whole business, right? And say what you need to say and let them all hear it.

So make sure that you are an influence for how your stuff rolls out in the world, even when you're dealing with these large organizations because you can have more impact than you think, right? I think you have more weight to throw around than you realize in those settings often.

Okay, so tell us where did the term “The Lazy Genius” stem from?

Kendra: I wish I had a great story for that but it's just my best friend came up with it. It's just the way it goes. She's an author as well. Her name is Emily P Freeman, that's her author name. And she is just really good at naming things. And when I was creating this business, because this is my third internet business.

Ep. 102: The “Lazy Genius” Way To Becoming a New York Times Bestselling Author with Kendra Adachi

My first one was I taught cooking classes and had like a food blog. And then my second one, I start a business with every child I have, it's weird. My second business was still on the internet and it was called The Sugar Box and I would make, because I'm a baker, and I would make pop culture themed desserts.

So it was like there's like a Harry Potter box, there was Downton Abbey box, there's a Wizard of Oz box. And people would buy a box and once a month they'd come to my house and they'd pick it up. And it was so fun except for when I was like, “Hey, how much money am I making on this thing? Like, what do I want to do here?” Two cents an hour per box I sold.

Rachel: Oh my God.

Kendra: That would not get me into a Hello Seven mastermind, everyone.

Rachel: Two cents a box.

Kendra: Two cents a box, two cents an hour per box I sold. And at my highest capacity I could do 85 boxes on my own. That's not a lot of money. So I just had to go, all right, what are we going to do? Are we going to try to scale this? Are we going to get like a building and a team and learn how to ship? But then it removes me from sort of the creativity, I just become like a fulfillment service, right? Or do I pivot and do something different?

And I got pregnant and so I was like, “Okay, we're going to pivot and do something different.” And so I knew in those years of working on the internet, even though I was predominantly talking about food in all those years, I noticed like just this low, like this really sad energy around so many people, women especially, who were just so tired.

Ep. 102: The “Lazy Genius” Way To Becoming a New York Times Bestselling Author with Kendra Adachi

Everyone was so tired. And when I would have conversations with people in my real life and then people online, I noticed this pattern. People were tired about things they didn't care about. And I'm like, I don't understand this. This does not make sense.

Rachel: Why do you let this thing you don't care about exhaust you?

Kendra: I don't understand. And so I thought that, you know, I had noticed that as I would speak to people online and I would speak to people in my life light bulbs would go off when I would share things. And I thought maybe I just, maybe I have a good perspective on this. Maybe there's something about how I communicate that helps people feel like I can give them the permission to let this thing go.

Like who am I to say that? Somebody actually said that in the comment recently like, “Who are you to give permission?” I was like, “Well, 200,000 people seem to like it so I don't know. I don't know what to say to you.”

Rachel: There you go.

Kendra: Anyway, so I just noticed that pattern and I wanted to contribute to its relief. And so that's when I started to think I would just like to write about that, I don't really know what it would be. And I said to my friend, Emily, and I was like, “It's just kind of like I want people to sort of put their energy in things that they care about, but kind of let go of the things that they don't really care about.” And she goes, “Lazy genius.” And we both went, “Ooh.” It was so exciting, we're like, “That's it!”

So that's kind of how the name began. And then the business, I wrote online for probably maybe nine months before I started the podcast.

Rachel: Did you make any money writing online?

[Hello Seven](#) with Rachel Rodgers

Ep. 102: The “Lazy Genius” Way To Becoming a New York Times Bestselling Author with Kendra Adachi

Kendra: 0%. 0%.

Rachel: Which is less than two cents an hour.

Kendra: It is. Less than a lateral move, it's not great. Well, I also, you know, I think that one of the things that can be hard when you're starting a business, obviously, especially if you're starting one without capital, without credibility, without any of those things, that you have to earn the right to be heard, right?

Rachel: Yes.

Kendra: And so I had to spend time earning the right to be heard.

Rachel: Such a good way to put it. Because I have to tell you, sometimes people ask me, “Well, I've tried everything and none of it's working.” And I'm like, “Give me all, what's everything?” And they name three things and I'm like, “Honey, get out of my face with that.” Okay?

You're not entitled to people's attention, okay? You have to earn it. And they have to say, “Why should I pay attention to you instead of this other thing that I already know I want to pay attention to?” Right? People's time is very valuable, and you have to care enough about what they care about to earn it, right? So I love the way that you put that.

Kendra: Yes. The pivot for me, the biggest investment is I took an online kind of business training course. And actually it was finding that person. It was that avatar, it was that customer avatar of like, okay, who is this for? Who am I talking to and what do they need?

Ep. 102: The “Lazy Genius” Way To Becoming a New York Times Bestselling Author with Kendra Adachi

And my first way I made money is I made a digital product, you know, I just made an ebook. Sold that puppy for like 10 bucks. I’m like, “Look at that, it’s like Monopoly money, it just sort of like comes in.”

Rachel: It just appears.

Kendra: So I started the podcast, I actually started my podcast with guests at first. I did 10 episodes with guests. And no lie, the reason I did that is because I didn't think I alone had anything worthwhile to say. And the only reason people would listen is if someone else was there. But as you know, the logistics of coordinating other humans to be on your show is a whole thing.

Rachel: That’s a lot. Yes, solo episodes are way easier, you just sit there and talk to yourself.

Kendra: Yes. So I got to a point where I thought, well, logistically it would be so much easier for me. This is kind of the lazy way to make this podcast, if it’s just me.

Rachel: You’re like, “What’s the lazy genius version of this podcast?”

Kendra: Yes, I know, I know. But then I realized like, no, you do have things to say and don't be afraid to say them. And so I started the podcast, I now have like 280 something episodes, so that's been a few years. But I didn't start monetizing the podcast until like midway through, I guess it was this year, 2022? Middle of last year maybe.

Rachel: Yeah. So your only offer was the \$10 ebook?

Ep. 102: The “Lazy Genius” Way To Becoming a New York Times Bestselling Author with Kendra Adachi

Kendra: It was a \$10 ebook. And then I wrote The Lazy Genius Way, so I got paid for that. And then it was like another ebook. And then it just kind of, but now we're pretty diversified. We've got podcast ads, we've got the books, we've got a lot of digital products that we make available.

Rachel: Yeah.

Kendra: So it took time.

Rachel: So like how long? I just want to know how long did let the \$10 ebook sell?

Kendra: Oh, like over a year.

Rachel: Wow!

Kendra: Yeah, for sure, for sure.

Rachel: I love it.

Kendra: But also, I think this is important too. Also, when I started my business I did not necessarily have the goal that this is going to be the primary thing that's going to support my family. My husband had a job, he still has the same job, but he's a middle school counselor. I mean, there's not a lot of money in the school system.

Rachel: Does that mean you're not shopping for a private jet?

Kendra: Nope, we're not.

Rachel: Not yet.

Ep. 102: The “Lazy Genius” Way To Becoming a New York Times Bestselling Author with Kendra Adachi

Kendra: Barely a plane ticket, guys, we're not even getting, no. But I think there was something, and actually reading your book was a huge shift for me in sort of thinking about, “Oh, that idea of we're told to skimp and to go backwards, instead of going forwards.” And I was like, “Oh, that is so good.” So there were lots of those kinds of moments, of just reminders of you can take up space.

Rachel: Yes.

Kendra: You can say your words, you can value the fact that people are going to listen to you. And you can be weirded out by it, as I am sometimes. I said to my husband last night, I'm like, “Why are people listening to me? I don't even understand.”

And also I'm like, but nobody's saying a lot of these things. And maybe they're not saying them the way that I am. Maybe that permission giving thing is just something that is uniquely attributed to my personality. I don't know. I don't know, I'm just trying to be faithful to the work and be faithful to the person that I'm trying to serve.

And it's grown. It has grown slowly. There has not been any viral anything, not any big spurts. It has just been, I'm just a tractor in a field a race cars. Were just like, we're still going, we're still going. But we're going, like the numbers steadily just keep going up.

Rachel: Yes.

Kendra: And I think the more that you consistently stay true to your voice and the person you're talking to, and you do it consistently, you're going to keep going.

Rachel: That's literally all it takes.

[Hello Seven](#) with Rachel Rodgers

Ep. 102: The “Lazy Genius” Way To Becoming a New York Times Bestselling Author with Kendra Adachi

Kendra: It really does.

Rachel: People are like, “What's the secret?” Just keep showing up and keep doing it every week, preferably twice a week.

Kendra: And offer something of value.

Rachel: Yes.

Kendra: I think what you said about the entitlement, like you do not deserve anyone's attention. And it takes a lot of work, a lot of work to think what does this person need to hear? What does this person need me to offer them?

And the work to name that and then to go, “Okay, what's the best package for that, right? This is the offering, what's going to be the package?” That's a lot of effort. And a lot of people quit before they use that effort.

Rachel: Exactly, and it's also the stuff that's done in dark that you don't get paid for.

Kendra: No money.

Rachel: You don't even get two cents an hour for that.

Kendra: Nope.

Rachel: You get no money and then you have to go out there and do it consistently. And then, you know, people do it for six weeks then they're

Ep. 102: The “Lazy Genius” Way To Becoming a New York Times Bestselling Author with Kendra Adachi

like, “Well, it's not working.” Yeah, not yet. Try six more months, right? And see if you're willing to commit to it long term. It's just like any relationship, you have to commit long term.

Kendra: Yes.

Rachel: The longer you commit, the more people commit to you. And that's really how you grow an audience, unfortunately.

Kendra: And I do think too, because we had talked a little bit before about I think that there are some authors or aspiring authors in this room, and I think a great example of that is for a book proposal. Is the work required to think, okay, where am I in the market? Who is this book for?

Rachel: Yeah.

Kendra: I'm going to break the book and figure out an outline. I'm going to even send you sample chapters and all these things. And I have had so many people say to me, “Well, I just want to write a book.” Well, if you can't do that, you don't deserve to write a book.

Rachel: Yeah.

Kendra: You have to do this first. You have to do this first. And if you can't do that work, there's no way you can write a book because a book is even way harder than that.

Rachel: It's so much more work.

Kendra: This is also really hard. This is hard. And I do think that the like internet work, because we see work that we believe in and it appears to be

Ep. 102: The “Lazy Genius” Way To Becoming a New York Times Bestselling Author with Kendra Adachi

effortless. And the amount of work required, the amount of effort required to make something look effortless, is very, very high.

Rachel: So true.

Kendra: And so just to honor the effort and be like, “No, I'm the one who's going to put in this effort. A lot of people are giving up and I'm not going to. I'm going to do this hard work.”

Rachel: Exactly. Listen, yes, that deserves a clap for sure. I agree. It's just like when people say, “Well, I don't know if I'll be successful.” I know. Do you know how I know I'm going to be successful? It's because I'm just not going to quit until it happens.

That's really all it is, is hanging in there and pushing through the hard parts, like when your books are at the bottom of the ocean, right? Or any number of challenges that you're going to have. Or when you're making two cents and you do the math and you're like, “Well, I failed.” right?

Kendra: How are we going to pivot? Yep.

Rachel: Yeah, exactly. And just continuing to just keep showing up and being consistent. Those are the people who are going to win. When it's hard, when you have razor thin margins, or if something goes wrong, or your launch fails and you pick yourself up and dust yourself off and do it again, fix whatever wasn't working and do it again. And because you're committed to your mission, because you're committed to your client and what you're trying to help them produce.

And that's why I say, like if you can do something that you really believe in that matters to you, right? Like purpose or passion, I think the stem word from passion means something that you're willing to die for, right? And

[Hello Seven](#) with Rachel Rodgers

Ep. 102: The “Lazy Genius” Way To Becoming a New York Times Bestselling Author with Kendra Adachi

that's what it's about. It's about having a mission that matters that much to you that you're willing to put effort in for and have some pain for, right?

All the people that you see being successful, there were a lot of dark years before you saw them rise and have that success, right? And a lot of times, we're literally on the way, we're on the cusp, and we give up. We're like, “This feels hard, never mind.” And it's like, okay, well, then you don't get the prize at the end. You know, like you got push through those hard parts.

And also what you were saying earlier about sometimes you just have an insight that other people don't have and you kind of take it for granted. And then you start repeating it to people and they're like- I was on the Drew Barrymore show talking about mothers not having to do everything for their children.

Like believe it or not somebody else can do this laundry and you're not bad mother. Somebody else can feed them. I'm going to sit down with them and talk to them while they eat, but I ain't cooking this food, like, that's okay. And she was acting like, she was like, “This is so revolutionary. I've never heard it.”

And I was like, “What? How is this revolutionary for you to just not do laundry? You're Drew Barrymore. Are you kidding me?” Like she literally forgot she was host for a moment. A lot of that got cut from that scene, but you could see a little bit of it where she was just like, “Okay, wait, tell me more about how to do laundry.” She's like never mind whatever you're here for, let's talk about that.

Okay, so let's talk about that, so the podcast, just tell us a little bit. So you had 10 episodes with interviews and you were like, “That's whack. Let's make it easy.” And so you started just talking to yourself with a microphone.

Ep. 102: The “Lazy Genius” Way To Becoming a New York Times Bestselling Author with Kendra Adachi

Kendra: I started talking to myself, I did. The first episode I did by myself was the lazy genius shops at Aldi. That was the very first episode I did. So, yeah, so we have about 280 something episodes at this point. And they all, it's every week. I can't remember the last time we took off a week, it's been a while.

But yeah, we do an episode every Monday. They're about 20 minutes or so and they're just really specific. I think one of the things that mattered to me, and it's different for everybody, that's why knowing what matters to you matters, right?

And what one of the things that mattered to me, for my own listeners, is when I would listen to a podcast and an episode title was not very descriptive or kind of tricky. You know, like you had to like break the code to figure out like this is a joke, but what are you talking about? I don't know what you're actually talking about.

So I decided we are going to make these titles like as clear as possible, right? And I don't want them to be so long that a mom has to, because I do have a lot, like my audience is mostly women. And there are a lot of moms, but half of them are working moms. So it's kind of a variation. But I wanted something that was short enough that you didn't have to fit in or you had to quit in the middle. I just wanted it to be easy for people.

Rachel: Yes.

Kendra: So that's kind of been my thing, is we just pay attention to the seasons, we pay attention to where we are and you are not going to be tricked by my episode titles. And I really enjoy it.

And one of the reasons why the podcast is an important part of the business is because it's the most scalable thing. It can grow and I don't

[Hello Seven](#) with Rachel Rodgers

Ep. 102: The “Lazy Genius” Way To Becoming a New York Times Bestselling Author with Kendra Adachi

have to change a bit of what I do, like a bit, one thing. Because the growth, the way that it would grow in revenue is more listeners. Guess how you get more listeners? You make a good podcast.

Rachel: Yep.

Kendra: So that's what I focus on, is opposed to how can I get more people to do this thing, or I need to make this other product, I need to make another \$10 ebook or whatever. It's like, no, just keep making the podcast good.

Rachel: Yes.

Kendra: Just keep doing that. So it's a really valuable piece of our revenue stream because it's the most scalable.

Rachel: Yes. And it's a one to many offer, right? You've figured out how to monetize it. And then that's your key KPI. You know, like if I just keep getting more podcast listeners, everything else will do what it needs to do.

Kendra: Everything else grows. When the podcast grows, everything else grows.

Rachel: Yes. And so that's why it's so important to understand like, what makes my business work? What is the business model here? And what is the thing that drives more revenue or that drives more of whatever it is that we want? And then you could just focus on that. That's like the top of your flywheel, right?

Ep. 102: The “Lazy Genius” Way To Becoming a New York Times Bestselling Author with Kendra Adachi

And then as long as you're doing that and fueling that, the rest of it does what it's supposed to do. And you don't actually have to work that hard on some of the other bits.

Kendra: No, which that's kind of ideal.

Rachel: Because you want to be a lazy genius.

Kendra: I do. Somebody recently asked me, what are you going to do next? The phrase was, what's your next frontier? And I was like, I don't want a frontier, I want to take another day off a week. Like I've gotten it down to one, I work four days a week. I'd love to work three days a week.

Rachel: Yes.

Kendra: Maybe even two. Like to sit on my couch and read with that cocktail we were talking about earlier.

Rachel: Yes.

Kendra: I don't want frontiers, I want that. I want to be on my couch with a book and a drink. So like whatever I can do to get there is fantastic. You can make more money without doing more work.

Rachel: Yes you can.

Kendra: If you build your machine the right way you can.

Rachel: Correct. I mean, we are just so aligned. Isn't it hilarious that we both live in the same place?

Ep. 102: The “Lazy Genius” Way To Becoming a New York Times Bestselling Author with Kendra Adachi

Kendra: Our kids were on the same soccer team, you guys, and we did not know until the last day of the season. Didn't even know.

Rachel: Because you know why? Pro mother's, that's why. Because we did not go to practice, we sent our husbands, okay.

Kendra: Never.

Rachel: They took the kids to practice, we set our asses home. And then we saw each other at the last game I think, in the parking lot. We're like, “Wait a minute, those are your kids?”

Kendra: This whole time?

Rachel: Her son is on my daughter's team, it's hilarious. All season and we didn't see each other. I'm proud of us for that.

Kendra: I know, same.

Rachel: I'm proud of us. We live these values, okay? We don't just talk about it, we be about it. Okay, so tell us some more names of episodes of your podcast.

Kendra: Oh gosh.

Rachel: What have been your most successful ones? And did it surprise you?

Kendra: So one of the, the highest category is always time management, always. And I think I actually have a really unique way of seeing time because I think that there is great value in seeing time as something that

Ep. 102: The “Lazy Genius” Way To Becoming a New York Times Bestselling Author with Kendra Adachi

it's not just about production. And that's how a lot of time management resources are structured. It's about how much can you get done? And like I just said, I'm like, how can I do less?

Rachel: Yes.

Kendra: But still do the things that matter. So we do a time management episode at least once a month just because of that, because it really meets the need. I will say that whenever I talk about bodies, that is always a really high download number. And I think it's because people, especially women, are just seeking a lot of freedom to exist in their own bodies.

Rachel: Yes.

Kendra: So I speak about that a lot. I'm not an expert at that, I'm just like no one seems to be listening to this, that you are good, that your body is good. Like no matter what your body is good. Why are we still doubting this? So that's one of the surprising, more surprising topics. So I'll keep speaking about that until we have more confident people. We'll keep talking about that too.

But I literally talk about anything. You can lazy genius anything, which in some ways is great because I'm like, “What should we talk about now?” And then other ways I'm like, “We can talk about anything.” Limits are really helpful. So we've had to kind of build some of those in or else we'll just kind of float. And we don't want to float.

Rachel: Yes. Well, what I hear you saying, which is so crucial to success is that you really dig into the data. And you see what are people responding to, and then you give them more of what they're responding to. Oh my gosh. What a unique way to run a business.

Ep. 102: The “Lazy Genius” Way To Becoming a New York Times Bestselling Author with Kendra Adachi

Kendra: And I will say to the data averse in the room, I am somebody who I make decisions based on my gut, like almost exclusively. My gut has not failed me very many times in business. But my gut is more confident when it's affirmed by data. Or if I can have the data come in and then I can go what is your gut reaction to how we should respond to this data, right?

So just for those of you who are like, “Data,” like I kind of am sometimes, then it can work in tandem with how you actually do naturally want to make decisions, whether it's how you feel about it, what your instinct says. The data can inform that.

You don't have to be like stuck following exactly what it says because sometimes, I mean, data matters. It absolutely matters. And sometimes that's part of being nimble and creative in our own businesses is sometimes the data is like, “This is what the data says. But I really do want to try this thing.”

Rachel: Yes, exactly. And you're just like, “But I don't like it so I ain't doing that.”

Kendra: Exactly.

Rachel: But that's exactly how I do it too. I use, like my gut is one source of data, right? Like I call it my body compass, right? So I use that and it's one source of data. And then I use reports, that's another source of data, right? We can use both, we don't have to use just one. And sometimes it helps because it validates your body compass and sometimes it doesn't and you have to say do I want to bet on myself in this way? And am I okay if I fail, right? If I wind up being wrong.

Listen, if I listened to data, I would not be here, okay? The data says, broke black child, do not start a business. Do not do anything you trying to do, go

[Hello Seven](#) with Rachel Rodgers

Ep. 102: The “Lazy Genius” Way To Becoming a New York Times Bestselling Author with Kendra Adachi

sit down somewhere, right? That's what the data says. So you can't always follow it, but it is valuable. Especially when it comes to digging in and obsessing over your ideal clients, which it sounds like, to me that's what I'm taking away is your key to success, is you obsess over how you're going to help your people.

Kendra: That was the turning point, I think, in my whole business is when I named her. And she was pretend at first, her name was Melissa. And I wrote down like literally everything about her, like what magazines she read, all the things. And then I met someone in real life and I'm like, “You're Melissa. This is amazing.”

So I will actually call her, like when I'm writing a book, when I wrote The Lazy Genius Kitchen, I called her and I was like, “Listen, this is what I want to do. What do you think about this? Does this meet you where you are?” So I can actually go to that person. And I think that's tremendously valuable. Like you might not have the person in your real life right now, but once you name that person keep an eye out for an actual human avatar for that.

Rachel: Yes.

Kendra: And talk to them. Ask them how you're serving them well and how you're not so that you can do it better.

Rachel: It's so true. We have New To Business Nicole.

Kendra: I love that, New To Business Nicole.

Rachel: New To Business Nicole is our ideal client in terms of starting at the beginning and working with us over time, right. Okay, so tell me, what I

Ep. 102: The “Lazy Genius” Way To Becoming a New York Times Bestselling Author with Kendra Adachi

think a lot of people in this room want to know is how do you write a New York Times bestseller? How do you hit a bestseller list? Is there a formula?

Kendra: Nope, there is not. Next question. No, I'm kidding. So okay, bestseller lists are a mystery and they're all based on different things. The problem is the one that everyone wants the “most” is The New York Times. And it is the most arbitrary of all the lists.

Rachel: Yes.

Kendra: So you're putting your faith in the least dependable of all the boats. And that can be really hard because you know in your head this is so arbitrary. This is not based on the best book, or the most sales or any of that. Like this is an editorial decision and they're allowed to do that.

Like they're allowed to do that, there's nothing wrong with it. But it is such an interesting paradox that there is so much effort, and energy, and sadness that goes into trying to make this list that you literally cannot make. You could do all the right things and not make it. You can do none of the right things and make it.

Rachel: Exactly, its editorial.

Kendra: It's real frustrating.

Rachel: Right. So it's like basically that means that there's editors making a decision based on what they want to do, right? So you could have sold more than lots of other books, because it's all about like the first week, your launch week. So if you have enough pre-launch numbers plus your launch week it can get, you know, they say like, I don't know. There's all kinds of articles that tried to create a formula for it.

Ep. 102: The “Lazy Genius” Way To Becoming a New York Times Bestselling Author with Kendra Adachi

Kendra: There are certain things that they do say you need to do at least this to be in the conversation. So you need to sell at least 10,000 copies, but there are tons of books on there that do not sell them any copies.

Rachel: Yeah.

Kendra: But you need to sell at least 10,000 copies across all the formats. And it's not just for one retailer, it's a variety of retailers, so it's independent bookstores and like all the things. You have to have some sort of national media. You have to come from one of like the main publishers, you can't come from like a boutique publisher. And that's just to get into the room.

Now, there are plenty people who have been on the list who don't have those things, and they are on it. So it's sort of hard. But I recognize the privilege that I have to be like, “I know, like The New York Times, like it doesn't matter.” And I made it. Like I see that. I see that.

Rachel: Yes.

Kendra: And because I can say I know, but it doesn't really matter. But I made it so it's not fair for me to be like, “Yeah, it doesn't really matter,” when I did and I received the “credibility” that comes from that when really, there's not a lot.

But I did get on my Instagram bio real fast when Kitchen hit it and I was like, “Two time, 2X, 2X NYT.” There is something really exciting about it and I recognize, I feel that tension in myself of how to value that in the proper context, right? To value that it is really exciting, but to dismiss it as like, well, you just don't know.

When I did make it, it's weird. It's a weird thing. It's hard to have conversations with my peers who have written books. Like it is, it's a really

[Hello Seven](#) with Rachel Rodgers

Ep. 102: The “Lazy Genius” Way To Becoming a New York Times Bestselling Author with Kendra Adachi

hard thing because it's that box you really, really want to check and you have so little control in who's even holding the pen, you know? It's like I just don't even know how to make this happen.

So there is no formula. But I do think that the goal, and your book does this. The goal of writing a book to me is I want to write something that serves people, that they return to again and again, and it has a long tail.

Rachel: Yes.

Kendra: I would rather keep selling, keep selling, keep selling. Like the book is still selling, both of them are. Than be a flash in the pan and work so hard to make a list and then maybe do it or maybe not, and then crap out and do something else.

Rachel: Yes. And here's the thing, everyone is going to say to you as a new author, don't focus on the bestseller list, just focus on reaching your readers. And a lot of ambitious people are going to ignore that completely and be like, “No, we're going to do it. We're going to pre-launch, we're going to hit these numbers.” Right? And you'll hit the numbers, and then you still might not get on the list. Like what I experienced, right? We sold a ton of books.

Kendra: And you had national press. Like you had all the things.

Rachel: I checked all the boxes.

Kendra: You checked all the boxes. I remember checking the list that week and I was so mad. I was like, “Where is Rachel's book?” I was so mad.

Ep. 102: The “Lazy Genius” Way To Becoming a New York Times Bestselling Author with Kendra Adachi

Rachel: But it's true, so like you're never going to understand it until after it passes. And it's always going to be, it hurts, right? Especially if you put a lot of stock in it. But then when you get to the other side, you realize your agent and everybody that you talked to about it was totally right.

That it's so much more exciting to actually have readers be moved by it and have them changing their lives where people are like negotiating higher salaries and they DM me and tell me about how much more money they made, right? And they're probably telling you about how much more time they have back and how much they're so much happier with their lives, right?

Kendra: Yeah.

Rachel: And so that is so much more rewarding than any accolade that you're going to get anyway. And the book can give you so much credibility whether you have that bestseller status or not, it doesn't matter, as long as the people who were supposed to get it are reached by it. And it can do so much for your business as well.

Kendra: And I will say this, and I think this is relevant, not just to this conversation. Like the goal of something above serving our customer or reader or whoever, that's going to get you in trouble.

Rachel: Yep.

Kendra: And your customer is going to feel it. I think if I were super focused, especially with this first book, if I were super focused on I'm going to, like I want to make a list, everybody help me buy the books so that I can maybe make a list. That's about me, that's not about them. And people feel that. I think they really do feel that and they trust you for longer when you continue to honor them.

Ep. 102: The “Lazy Genius” Way To Becoming a New York Times Bestselling Author with Kendra Adachi

Rachel: Yes.

Kendra: As opposed to putting your own goals above their well-being.

Rachel: Yes. And I think you can have your goals be, you can have big ambitious goals and it can be aligned with serving your customer as well.

Kendra: Absolutely.

Rachel: But don't put it above, like have them both be part of how you win, right? So I just want to open it up, if there's one or two questions that we can take, and then we'll wrap up. Does anybody have a question? I know I'm supposed to be ending and I'm ignoring it.

Kendra: I wondered what all the hand gestures were for.

Rachel: Anybody have a question for Kendra that they want to ask? Yes, can we get her a mic?

Audience member: Hi, there. I just have a quick question. I was wondering, did you always know that you were going to be a writer and author? Or what changed for you that made you feel like a book is in my stars?

Kendra: That is such a good question because no, I never thought that. That was never a dream of mine. And I feel weird saying that because of how many people I know who that is their dream. But it was the next step in the business.

Now, I went to school, I have a degree in English and so I love writing, and I love storytelling, and I love words. I think that that was always something that was important to me. But a book was never part of the plan. But what

Ep. 102: The “Lazy Genius” Way To Becoming a New York Times Bestselling Author with Kendra Adachi

happened is I was making these podcast episodes and getting DMs and all the things, the patterns were so clear to me of what people were asking for.

And also, I wanted to be able to give them a resource as opposed to like, “Well go listen to these seven podcast episodes.” There wasn't a path, right? There were just like little drops in the bucket, little one-off things that they could do. And I realized, oh, I think it's time.

And I'm going to be honest, I was resistant to write a book because I didn't want to, I didn't. It's hard. It was harder than I thought, and I already thought it was going to be really hard. But the work required, it's like we were saying before, it's like okay, am I going to do this work? Am I going to be the one? Because a lot of people are like, “No, I'm not going to do this.” Or they write a mediocre book, because the work required to write a great book is a lot more than to write a mediocre one.

And so I was just like, okay, I'm willing to do this. Let's do it, let's jump in. And wrote the proposal and signed a contract and all the things. So no, which I think in some ways can be really freeing, that you don't actually have to have this lifelong dream. You hear that from a lot of people, like it's always been my dream to write a book. And I really would feel badly when I was like, that's not my dream.

So it can work both ways. It can be your dream and you can follow it, and it cannot and it just be another part of your business and you do it anyway.

Rachel: Awesome. Any other questions from the crew? Well, thank you. This has been an amazing conversation. I feel like I learned stuff.

Kendra: That's saying something.

Rachel: Yeah.

[Hello Seven](#) with Rachel Rodgers

Ep. 102: The “Lazy Genius” Way To Becoming a New York Times Bestselling Author with Kendra Adachi

Kendra: I'm glad.

Rachel: I love it. I love it. So good and so insightful. Everybody go out and get The Lazy Genius Way, and there's another book, The Lazy Genius Kitchen. And this one, tell me about The Lazy Genius Kitchen. Tell folks what it's about.

Kendra: Yes. Okay, so The Lazy Genius Way, it's 13 principles that you can apply by itself or in tandem with others to basically lazy genius any problem. To be a genius about the things that matter and lazy about the things that don't. Because I think that a lot of sort of self-help books, what the author does is shares their experience of this is what worked for me.

Rachel: Right.

Kendra: Well, I am not you, so I need something different. And I wanted to write a book that would work for any personality, any season of life, that you can go back to this toolkit that these principles can give you.

And then Lazy Genius Kitchen is applying these 13 principles to our most used, except at Rachel's house, our most used room in the house because we all have to eat though. And guess what? You have chosen how to feed your family?

Rachel: Yes. And intentionally, right?

Kendra: Intentionally.

Rachel: Based on my values.

Ep. 102: The “Lazy Genius” Way To Becoming a New York Times Bestselling Author with Kendra Adachi

Kendra: Yes, exactly. And there's a five step process that is in The Lazy Genius Kitchen that you can actually apply to anything, that is prioritize, name what matters. Time with your family, not time in the kitchen.

Essentialize is number two, get rid of what's in the way and make sure you have what you need. Get rid of the guilt, like I'm not the one who's cooking, right?

Rachel: Yep.

Kendra: Organize, put things in their place. Hire someone to cook the food for me, that is in its place now, right? It's organized, boom. Personalize, you want to feel like yourself in that process. And then five is systemize, you want to keep it in a flow.

And you can apply those five steps to anything but I apply those five steps to six areas in your kitchen so that you can not hate that room that you actually really want to love. It's illustrated, It's like so pretty.

Rachel: It's beautiful. It's beautiful.

Kendra: It's really pretty.

Rachel: And you know what? And there's some on the bottom of the Atlantic.

Kendra: There's 10,000 copies on the bottom of some ocean just hanging out. One of my buddies the day we got the news she said, “Well Ariel is maybe fixing her little kitchen or her little area with all her stuff.” And then she goes, “Oh, wait, is that too soon?” And I was like, “Yes, it happened today. Make that joke three days from now, please.”

Ep. 102: The “Lazy Genius” Way To Becoming a New York Times Bestselling Author with Kendra Adachi

Rachel: Exactly. Exactly. And I mean, I think that cooking and eating is one of those things that I have to constantly talk about with my clients, even though I'm talking to business women, right? Because it takes up, like when you do the measurement it takes up like 20 hours of your week.

So if you can sort that out and organize that and minimize the time on that, you get so much time back that then you can put into your business or your family or whatever else. So both of them totally worth reading, as you can see from this conversation.

Kendra: Thank you.

Rachel: Thank you so much Kendra for being here.