

Ep #1: How to Live On Purpose



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With Your Host

Tobi Fairley

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Ep #1: How to Live On Purpose

You are listening to *The Design You Podcast* with Tobi Fairley, episode number one.

Welcome to *The Design You Podcast*, a show where interior designers and creatives learn to say no to busy and say yes to more health, wealth, and joy. Here is your host, Tobi Fairley.

Hello friends, hey interior designers and creatives, hi female entrepreneurs and hello to my mom. That's right, my mom, I'm sure, is listening to my first podcast and she may be the only listener right now, but I hope that changes really soon.

So welcome, I am so excited. I have had a blog for about 10 years, but I've wanted to start a podcast for a long time and today is the day. Today, we're going to talk about how to live with intention, meaning how to live on purpose. And in this new podcast, I'm going to bring you many ideas for creative female entrepreneurs.

And specifically today, I'm talking to you female entrepreneurs, but also more specifically, you mompreneurs, mom entrepreneurs who are workaholics like me. So I call myself a recovering workaholic, but it's definitely something that I have to work on all the time.

So today, if you can relate to that, I'm talking to you. Now, let's get back to this idea of living with intention. So this may not be a new concept to you. It's likely, though, one you are not practicing; at least that intentional part. Most of us are just reacting to all the pressures each day or doing what I lovingly call flying by the seat of our pants, right. You know exactly what I'm talking about.

So first, let me tell you about me, especially for those of you who've never heard of me, and then we'll get into a little bit more of what living on purpose looks like. Okay, so no I'm a person who lives an intentional life, and that is bringing me so much more joy and health and profit than ever before. But that was not always the case.

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In fact, most of my life, I was the exact opposite of living with intention, but I didn't even know it. I thought I was doing it all right and you can probably relate to that too. So the first thing you should know about me, and I think the most important thing, is that I am a wife and a mom to a teenager; a teenage daughter. And those are definitely my favorite roles, but if you looked at my life just a few years ago, you would have discovered those two things long after learning that I'm an over-achieving workaholic super driven interior designer, a business consultant, I design product lines like furniture for national companies and I do a whole bunch of other stuff.

Now, in my mind, I was putting my family first, because it sure felt like I was giving it all – I had to balance work and family like a champ. And I certainly was making all the big stuff like the birthdays and the school performances and the holidays. But my daily choices made it clear to everyone else, maybe but me, that work was definitely my priority because I would spend hours each day working and telling my family things like, I have to and I don't have a choice and mommy has to work.

But thankfully, not anymore. Now don't get me wrong, I didn't stop being all those things that are on my work resume, but I did stop all the ones that weren't really important to me. I began to say no to a ton of things that were making me crazy, stressful, and were taking me away from those people I love most.

So I'm going to tell you how you can do that too in a bit. And it's definitely a process that starts with changing the way you think. So just a few years ago, I was on fire. Like, I was on fire, but not in a good way. I was burning the candle at both ends and in the middle, and I didn't have a fire extinguisher. I was actually fanning the flames with every commitment, every partner, every client and project, every trip and speaking engagement and designer show house and personal commitment and so much more that I was saying yes to.

And to the world, I looked really successful, but I often didn't feel successful. I just felt tired and stretched too thin and like I was losing the

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war against my to-do list every single day. And I felt like I couldn't do it anymore.

So let's talk about this problem we female entrepreneurs and business owners and moms, and often just women in general, have of saying yes to so much. I mean, it feels good to say yes, doesn't it? Well, at least it does at first until you realize that later, you actually have to do all the stuff you committed to, right.

But as a woman, and especially a good southern girl like me, we're taught to make people feel good and happy and to not rock the boat. And nothing feels better than saying yes, right, it gets people excited. But fast forward from a whole lot of those yeses in my life and you would find an overwhelmed, exhausted, frustrated – maybe a better term is actually angry – mompreneur juggling all my commitments and failing miserably.

And it was all hidden behind a beautiful, outward perfect façade, of life that designers like me and creatives like me have a way of presenting to the world. And yes, social media makes it even easier for us to just brag about the great stuff, so we create enough smoke and mirrors so that no one sees what's really going on in the background.

And the background is where most days we feel like a total mess and we aren't sure we can make it through one more day, which is exactly how I felt. And I know a lot of you know exactly what I'm talking about. I was recently on my friend Amanda's podcast, and I'll put the link to that episode in the show notes so you can listen to it for yourself, but we had a fabulous conversation about this very thing. And she reminded me of a quote I had written on my blog a few months back, and I think it's an important place for us to start digging into the topic today.

So have you ever written or said anything and then when you hear someone repeat it back to you, and you're like, "Dang girl, that sounds good. Did I really say that?" Well that's what I thought when she told me what I had written. So let me tell you what that was. This is what I had written on my blog; "By trying to avoid lazy, I created a life as a workaholic,

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a person addicted to achieving. And whether I consciously realized it or not, in my mind, achievement equaled my worth.”

And when I heard what I had said – when she told me what I had said or written, what I actually thought was, hell yes, preach it, sister. Tell the world about it. Pull back the curtain because this addiction to busy and achieving is killing us and our families and it’s time for it to stop. Can you tell I’m passionate about this topic?

These expectations that we put on ourselves, combined with our perfectionism – and did you know, women are more perfectionist than men? Combine that with our insecurities and our fears that make us choose a life that is different than what we say we want, now that is what I want to talk about because I created that too.

Now, I’m a goal-setter and a planner and honestly about as far from flying by the seat of my pants, by nature, as anyone I know. But I still accidentally, or should I say unintentionally, created a life that was killing my family and me all in the name of success and fame and money and, for goodness sakes, not to be lazy.

Don’t be lazy or irresponsible, Tobi, I told myself all the time. By all means, be overwhelmed, exhausted, moody, depressed, checked-out, frazzled, but don’t freaking be lazy. You know what I mean, don’t you? Your word may not be lazy, but you have a word or a thought or several, and they are causing you to make choices that are not intentional. It may be a fear of something. It may be a fear of not being enough.

It may be a fear of not having money, but there’s a reason that you’re doing this to yourself and now I’m going to talk to you about how to stop doing that. This way, you can start living a life and creating a business that you absolutely love, exactly the way I have done.

So you may be thinking, seriously Tobi, I can do that? Is that even possible? Yes, it is totally possible. I’m living proof. I know you’re also thinking that those things that I’m going to talk to you about, you’re thinking,

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“But Tobi, those things that you’re going to tell me to stop doing, those are the things I did all this work for. How can I possibly say no to those things?”

But I’m here to tell you, what we are looking for is not those things – because I tried it and it didn’t work. Most days, those things are more empty than you can possibly imagine. It’s what we think those things will make us feel, that’s what we’re looking for.

I mean, if you think about it, that, to me, is a wow moment; like an a-ha moment. Just think about that for a minute. If we can feel what we want to feel without having to go through the struggle and the drain on us and our family, wouldn’t you want to do that instead? I definitely would. I wish someone had told me, you know, it’s not getting on the cover of a magazine that we ultimately want. It’s what we think that getting on the cover of a magazine will make us feel, like confident or successful or rich or important.

But here’s the thing, it doesn’t, or at least not for very long. For a hustler like me, those feelings are super-temporary, as in sometimes, I didn’t even slow down to celebrate those successes because I was right back on the hamster wheel, avoiding lazy, to get to the next rung up the ladder.

That’s why I say this was an addiction to achieving, like a drug. There was never enough of it and the feelings it brought were so fleeting that I had to immediately start hustling again. You know, one misconception I had was that I thought the ladder was to success-land, where the money would flow like milk and honey.

You know, I could just see it, like I’m going to get there and I’m going to have all this money and I’m going to have all this time and it’s going to be amazing and that’s why I’m killing us all, me and my family, to make this happen. But here’s the truth – the ladder is to the big island of burnout, where the daily entertainment is overwhelm, stress, exhaustion, more fear and isolation from those you most want to connect with, which is probably, like me, your family.

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I wanted to connect with them more than anything. And in the land of burnout, guess what, money is scarce. So I know what you're thinking, boy, Tobi, podcast number one, super upbeat. Making me feel like a million bucks today, Tob... I know what you mean, but this is a really important topic. We can laugh, but it's so important.

Here's the thing, I want you to learn from my mistakes. I want to teach you what I wish I had known before I landed on the island of burnout. It was like a bad reality show, like Survivor or something, but not surviving. So let's dig deeper.

Here goes – first, the people you love most, here's the thing, they won't just keep waiting on you. If your empty promises of, "One day this will make us a whole bunch of money and then we'll have the life we want," keeps being in the future and you never get there, they're going to start to give up on you. They're not idiots, but they may start to think that you are and you might even think that about yourself sometimes.

And when you're not there as a mom and a wife and a friend and all of those things that you need to be, connecting with the most important people in your life, your relationships definitely will not thrive. This is probably not news to you, but you might not be admitting that to yourself.

Second, I want you to stop lying to yourself that you're doing this for them. I mean, I get it. I said a million times that I'm doing this for you guys and I truly meant it. I was trying to make lots of money for them, but those thoughts we think that make us the martyr, they really aren't the truth. Clearly, we're getting something just for us and for our ego out of this life that we've created, or we wouldn't keep doing it.

So if you want to keep doing it, that's totally up to you, but stop telling your family it's for them. All our families want is us, not some empty promise of a lucrative future that never seems to show up as we envisioned while we continue to not really be there for them, or at least when we're physically with them, we aren't emotionally available or present.

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Whoa, okay, third, the hustle is a dance but not a way of life. Okay, you know, Do the Hustle... We've all heard it – okay, well maybe you're not as old as me, but I remember that at least being around when I was a child still. And here's the thing, the hustle I was doing, it doesn't ever stop unless you stop it. There isn't a time when you will arrive.

Like I told you, there is no destination; that's the lie of the hustle. It gives you enough success to keep you hooked, but you never get to the destination. I always thought there was a destination. When one of my mentors, Brooke Castillo, told me that life will always be 50% good and 50% problems, it absolutely blew my mind. Like, for a minute, it really kind of made me mad. I'm like, what, what the heck? I thought I was striving towards and would eventually arrive at this 90% amazing life with only 10% problems.

But she was so right, now I realize that it's always going to be 50-50, or pretty close to that, or it will ebb and flow. But we're never going to get to a place where problems don't exist; that's just life. There's illness and there's struggle and there's all sorts of things that we can't control.

So now, I realize the trick is to manage your mindset. You have to learn to think thoughts that help you see your 50-50 life in a way that feels like it's 90% amazing, or heck, why not go 100%? I want mine to feel 100% amazing in spite of all the problems.

And that happens with managing your mind, not from hustling. And to be honest, when I really let this sink in, it was a huge relief. I could give up the hustle. Thank the lord.

Next, I want you to realize that you cannot make a good decision of any kind at all whatsoever in a state of overwhelm and exhaustion. And with the habits you've created, if they were like mine, those two things aren't going away anytime soon. Now, in a future podcast, I'll teach you about why overwhelm and stress are really mindset issues, not the truth, if you want to call it that. But they seem very much the truth when you're on the hamster wheel.

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So if you have created that kind of lifestyle, those things of overwhelm and stress and exhaustion are not going away anytime soon. There will never be a good time to stop and step off the hamster wheel, ever. You're never going to find that time, that spot. You're not going to someday arrive and be like, okay here we are, today's the day I get to get off the wheel.

It's not going to happen unless you make it happen. So, do it right now. Everyone you think will be upset will just have to adjust for a minute, and they will. And those people you love most will likely be elated. My people were so happy.

Okay, the fifth thing that I want you to know about creating a life of intention and getting off that hamster wheel is, take a look at your priorities. Stop for a minute and take a look at them. Well, what do you mean, Tobi? Well, if you want to know what your priorities are, take a look at your life right now.

If you looked at mine a few years ago, you might not even know I had a husband and a child, and that's really sad. Like, that makes me so sad and it's scary sometimes to take an honest look, but it might be the thing that gets your attention and helps you move toward a life of intention.

If you look at my life today, you'd see something completely different. You'd see that just recently I got back from five days in a sunny destination with my husband. Yes, we just went for us. We attended a marriage seminar. Yes, people, I got him to agree to that because I'm so present now and he's happy about it.

We had couple's spa time, we had great dinners, we took naps, we had conversation and had breakfast watching the sunrise over the ocean and I did things like I wore the fabulous designer scarf he gave me for Christmas so he could be so proud of me and I could show him how much I love it. And I honestly, a few years ago, I probably wouldn't even have remembered he gave me a scarf. Talk about sad.

If you looked at my life now, or if you do look at it, you would also see that I got rid of my 6000 square foot office and I moved my studio into my home.

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We did a home remodel recently and that gave me the perfect excuse and opportunity to move my studio into my home. So my two employees work here with me. I have another employee who works remotely in another state, but we work here every day.

And guess what that means, that means that I am here when my daughter gets out of school. I'm the first person she sees when she walks in that door and she can tell me how her day was. And I even do things like drive carpool, drive carpool y'all at 4PM, and what I would used to consider the middle of the day, I drive carpool to volleyball and I hear all the important stuff that comes with being in the car with six teenagers. And this is stuff, trust me, that I definitely don't need to miss. And if you're a mom of teenagers, you know what I'm talking about or you need to.

So yes, now with one quick peek at my life, you can totally see my priorities the same way I see them. In the past, I saw one thing and everybody else saw something else. And you know what else, my work, it's thriving because I'm not overbooked and I'm not spread too thin like I used to be. I'm focused on one or two key areas at a time and it's thriving, and I said no to everything else that didn't really matter.

And even in the beginning, when I started making these shifts and I started peeling things back and I started saying no, I didn't make less money. I was afraid I would, but I didn't. and now, a few years later, I make a whole lot more money. So again, crazy idea that the hustle is where money is scarce, on that island of burnout, and in the intentional lifestyle is where you can really thrive personally, emotionally, and financially. It is really mind-blowing.

You know, every week, honestly, weekly, multiple times a week sometimes, I get texts or emails or calls from long-time friends in the industry, both men and women and they're saying things like, "What are you doing? Like, what are you doing? Like you kind of sort of went off the radar a little bit, but like, when I see you, you look different. Like, you look happier than I've ever seen you, you're glowing, you look relaxed. Like, how are you making that happen? What in the world are you doing because I want to do that too."

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When people heard I had moved my studio home, people that had big businesses like me, businesses where I was afraid people would think that was not professional or I'd become irrelevant, they're also going, "How's that working for you? Tell me how you do that. I'm thinking about doing that too." Friends, you can do this, but it's a choice.

Living with intention is totally doable, but it is not having it all. And we're told, especially as women, we can have it all, but we can't. It's about choosing. It's about not saying yes to everything, but it's also not full of empty promises and broken relationships like the hustle. It's full. It is so full to the brim of what really, really matters.

I want you to choose a life you love. I mean a life that you really love, even when you're not on social media, you're not making that pretty, beautiful post of your perfect life on social media, I want you to know that your life is truly perfect, yes, even when no one is watching.

I want you to choose the authentic and the intentional version of you. And you know what, I'm even going to help you get there. So I believe that designing a life of intention and balance starts from the inside out. You don't just get there accidentally, you need a roadmap. And for that reason, I created one.

But you know, I'm a designer, so instead of calling it a roadmap, call it a blueprint. And it's designed to help you know exactly what steps to take to create a business and a life that you absolutely love. It's called the Design You Blueprint and it's a plan for helping you design a life with more health, wealth and joy.

And I think that's something we all want – at least I want that, don't you? So I think this is the definition of living with intention. And if you want the Blueprint absolutely free, as in free-free, as in zero dollars, as in totally free, just go to my website at tobifairley.com and click on the tab called Free Blueprint and download this baby because it is totally full of the exact steps I took to start making changes in my own life and I know it will help you do the same in yours.

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So go get started on the Blueprint at tobifairley.com and I'll see you back here in episode number two really soon. And as we say in the south, bye, y'all.

Thank you so much for joining me for this episode of *The Design You Podcast*. And if you'd like even more support for designing a business and a life that you love, then check out my exclusive monthly coaching program Design You at tobifairley.com.