

## Ep #2: Saying No to Busy



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With Your Host

**Tobi Fairley**

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## Ep #2: Saying No to Busy

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

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.

Hi friends, how are you? It's a rainy spring day here in Arkansas, and a perfect day for taking a nap. But the podcast has to go on, so no nap taking for me right now, but we're going to talk about how to create a lot of time for naps in our lives.

But first, let's talk about my hydrangeas because they are so beautiful and I can see them out my window, and they're soaking up all this yummy rain. And they are covered in leaves and will soon be blooming like crazy. And you know what that means? It means I'll have a house full of fresh cut flowers, and I will be in an all-around great mood, right?

Well, let's hope so. And I hope you're having a spring day too instead of some cold and gloomy Easter, which I know some of my friends are still having around the country. But let's talk about something else that's going to make us in a great mood, or at least it makes me in a great mood because today we're talking about how to say no to busy.

And I'm going to explain what that even means, and then in the next podcast, I'm going to teach you how to go from busy to creating a life with lots of room in it for what is really important. So that will mean creating a lot of what I call white space and margin, so you can start to design a life that you really, really, really, really, really love.

But I want to start today with the idea of saying no to busy because you know, the subtitle of my podcast is even how to say no to busy, and how to say yes to more health, wealth, and joy. So here's the thing: the important reason to say no to busy is that then you can say yes to all the really good stuff in life.

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But before we can start adding in the good stuff, we have to make room for it. So first let me clarify what I mean by busy and saying no to it, just so we're all on the same page and nobody's confused, okay? So here's what I'm not saying. I do want you to have customers, I'm not saying that you should say no to all your business.

But what I am saying is say no to your busyness. Not your business, your busyness. But here's the thing, some parts of your business could be part of your busyness, and that was definitely true for me. And in another future podcast, and somewhere a few months from now, we're going to talk a whole lot more about beliefs.

In fact, we'll probably talk about that multiple times. But for now, I want to talk about a couple of core beliefs that were causing me problems in this area of busyness. And we'll dig way into beliefs in the future because that can really, really wreak havoc in the results we're getting in our life, but for now, let's talk about what my beliefs did to me around the idea of busy.

So you see, I had these beliefs that were causing me to say yes to busy because I believed that you have to work really, really, really, really, really hard to make a whole bunch of money, which is not necessarily the truth. We all know people who work really, really hard, even two or three jobs, and don't make a lot of money.

But I believed that if you wanted to make a lot of money, you had to work super hard. And I also believed that working really hard meant you had to be busy. So ultimately, if you connect the dots, I believed that busy equaled making a lot of money.

But guys, where the heck was all the money? I mean, I was definitely busy for years, I was making good money, but not money equal to my busyness. Wow, that would have been like, buckets of money. And I certainly wasn't making that. No, that kind of money that I really started to feel financial freedom with, that kind of money didn't show up until after I said no to busy.

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So then I started to realize, unless my beliefs were wrong, how was being busy not creating abundant wealth? Well, let's take a look at that. So in podcast number one, I was talking about all the stuff I've said no to in the past few years to create a much better life. And if you were thinking, "Good grief, this crazy lady is putting herself out of business, she's saying no to everything that's making her famous and successful," well, if that's what you thought, then I need to explain a bit more of what I was saying no to, or really even why I was saying no to those things, and how that really transformed my life.

So a lot of times, it's the busyness that's actually keeping us from earning what we're worth, and it's definitely the busyness that keeps us from earning the most amount of money in the least amount of time. And it's certainly the busyness that prevents us from having free time to do the other things we say we want to do.

So the busyness is a distraction from the real work that actually makes a difference in our paycheck, and our quality of life. So let me be clear. I'm talking about the idea of saying no to busy, which also I guess, means saying no to wearing busy as a badge of honor.

So let's think about that for a minute. Yes, I'm saying that you have to give up busy as your identity. And I had to do that too. So whether you realize it or not, we are making busy so important in our lives. It's not only become our identity, it's become our response to almost everything, especially greetings, right?

How often do you hear yourself respond to others with, "We're so busy. Oh my gosh, I'm just too busy." Or, "We're just so busy, I wish we could, but we're so busy." You know, no one even says fine anymore, I don't think. No one answers the question, "How are you?" anymore with just a simple, "Fine."

We answer it with, "I'm so busy." You know what, we're for sure not saying, "I'm fabulous, or I'm amazing, or I'm fantastic," which by the way, I love to say those things. You should see the look on people's faces when I say, "I

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am fabulous." They're like, "Okay, that lady's either really weird, or she's doing something amazing and I want to be doing that too."

But either way, it gets people's attention. But here's the thing, our standard answer to everything, including how are you is, "I'm so busy." And we think that's a good thing. Busy is our go-to response, and do we even realize we're saying it? I'm not sure we're conscious of it, and how could we be? Because we're too busy to be conscious of anything.

So yes, it's true we rarely even care anymore about how other people are, and we don't ask them that because we're too busy complaining about our busyness to be interested in anybody else. We also seem to think that the phrase, "Busy is a good problem to have," is true, and I know you've heard that saying.

You maybe even said it. I've heard it too and I probably said it at one point or another of, "Yeah, I'm really busy, but I guess that's a good problem to have." But is it? Is busy a good problem to have?

Well, I no longer think so. So let's not confuse busyness with business, or making money, friends, because they aren't the same thing. And I believe now that one of the reasons we don't already have what we want in our life is because our standard excuse for anything that we don't accomplish or attend or complete or show up for is, "I'm just too busy."

And I personally think that's really sad. But I was guilty of it too until I made a conscious effort to stop being busy. So why did I want to change? Well, a few years ago, I started seeing this sort of, what would you call it, like, a grassroots effort or movement around the internet about this idea to stop the glorification of busy, meaning stop celebrating the idea that being busy is a good thing.

And in other words, stop wearing busy as that badge of honor. And then I started seeing this quote, "Stop the glorification of busy," on Pinterest and on blogs, and it really got my attention. And it was true, we were then and

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we still are wearing busy as a badge of honor. It's like our little self-worth meter.

If I'm completely busy and overcommitted, then I must be a success. And at least the world will think so. But if we're honest, it doesn't feel like success a lot of times when we're that busy, does it? And nobody's talking about that part.

This idea of busy equals success really doesn't make any common sense at all. You know, we all know the term busy work, like when we were in school and when we were kids, and it was usually the stuff that we didn't really think had a lot of value, right? It was just something to do, to keep us occupied. The teacher gave us some busy work so she could get her real work done.

So why and when did we start to think that busyness is valuable? And why do we think, especially in America, that choosing busy over balance means we're doing something right? It doesn't feel right, but we ignore how it feels because everyone celebrates it as right. So who are we to argue?

The American workplace seems to value long hours more than effectiveness. But what if we turned this idea on its head? What if we had a culture where we were given a job to do and if we could do it with excellence but quickly and then go home and not just hang around being busy, that we would get rewarded with that time off and maybe even get a bonus.

Just imagine that. Imagine a life where adding amazing value to our companies and to the world was the standard, but we also had enough time left over around our work to be healthy and to be happy, and to be able to enjoy the important things in our lives. I mean, what a novel idea.

But what an idea that is the exact opposite of celebrating busy. So when I began to become aware of my busyness, I realized that I had another problem similar to many of these other companies, and bosses and CEOs. I didn't believe deep down that balance and success could go together.

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I had completely fallen in line with this idea that balance and success are mutually exclusive, but that busyness and success go hand in hand. And I wasn't really even aware that I felt that way, that balance and success couldn't go together. But now looking back, I see why I rarely had balance and success.

So I was just one more typically American businesswoman trying to do it all and be it all to everybody all the time. But then I became aware of it. So what did I do about it? Well, first just that. I became aware. I started realizing that there were a lot of business icons and business consultants and I was one of them, and celebrities and people in the media, pushing for busy in our lives in our businesses because they were all pushing more on us in the way of business strategies and social media strategies and health strategies, and articles on things we must add into our lives if we wanted to be successful.

And they were suggesting these same things for our kids too. It was like, if we want to be successful, we should adopt the more is more approach. But I started wondering if those advocating more, if they were living an abundant and joyful life themselves, and a life that paid them really well and a life that had a lot of meaning.

So I started questioning this source of any new task I was going to take on, or piece of advice, or a new practice, and I began to examine whether adding one more thing into my life would get me closer to both of my goals, which were balance and success. And in questioning everything, I realized I had to do some work.

I had to redefine what success looked like for me, not because it was some definition of success that fit someone else's model, or their picture of success, but because it was the right mix for me, of financial achievement and personal fulfillment, and freedom of time for the things that mattered the most.

So I started to map out my own rules for my own success. And then next, I made a conscious effort - this is kind of funny to me, but I did it, and I still

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practice it. I made a conscious effort to eliminate this word busy from my vocabulary entirely.

So I started practicing other words to use instead. If - I even started looking up synonyms in the online thesaurus so I didn't have to say the B word out loud ever again. Well, why? Why Tobi, why did you need to get rid of the word?

Well, here's the thing. When we tell ourselves we're busy, which is really just a thought, it's not necessarily the truth, it's a thought we have. That thought creates our feelings, which create our actions, or inactions, and ultimately that thought creates the results we're getting in our life.

And you know what? I didn't like the results I was getting in my life when my thought was, "I'm too busy." And I realized that many of us, myself included, use busy as a legitimate reason for having a life that is less than what we dream about. And I realized that we're teaching our kids that busy is more important than happy.

So in my life, the word busy absolutely had to go. I mean, like, done, out of there. If I find myself saying busy or even thinking it, I get so frustrated. But the more I practice other options, the less busy comes to mind. So then what?

Well, next I decided that I did have enough hours in the day to do anything that was important to me. And this was a huge shift from my thoughts that I had been thinking over the last 10 or more years, which all sounded something like, "I'm too busy." And when I changed just this one thought, when I changed from, "I'm too busy," to, "I absolutely have enough time to do anything that's important to me," you know what happened? I suddenly had enough time to do everything that was important to me.

I had time to go to coffee or wine with a friend, I had time to take lunch to my daughter at school and hangout with her while she ate, I had time to have a date with my husband. I had time to read a book, y'all. I had time to just visit with a peer on the phone simply because we wanted to catch up.



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And I even had time to completely lose myself in something that I really enjoy, no matter what that was. Cooking, or watching a show on Netflix, or something else that in the past I definitely didn't have time to do.

And you know what else? I had time for exercise - gasp - exercise and eating right. I had time to take care of my health. Wow, it was remarkable. Just changing my thought made my same 24 hours in the day go so much farther in achieving my goals and my dreams than it ever did when my most used words were, "I'm so busy."

So how about you? Is busy your identity? Is it time that you started to ask yourself what in the heck you're doing all of this busy for? Or what the goal of busy even is? Because if busy doesn't allow for health or connection, or quality time with the people you care about the most, then something has got to change.

I want you to learn like I did and treat your 24 hours a day as the most precious thing that you have. Become a rebel against what the world says you should do and decide what is right for you to do and what's right for those that you love. And remember here's the thing, saying no to busy is not saying no to your business.

Most of us have to make a living. But there's so much in your day disguised as important that really doesn't make a difference in your bottom line. But it does keep you from the life that you want and that you deserve. And in the next podcast, we're going to talk about how to go from busy to having margin or white space, or both in our lives because to me they're just slightly different.

So if you want to have white space, which is where all the good stuff, as I call it, where all the magic really starts to happen, then listen to podcast number three. But for now, I invite you to start to rethink busy. I invite you to question what you're putting in your life and why, and I give you permission from me, because I had to have permission too, I give you that permission to start to dream about a life with enough space in it so you

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don't have to always be frantic and to be stressed the way you are when busy is your definition of success.

So yes, this is where we say no to busy and next, we're going to start to learn to say yes to more health and more wealth and more joy. Are you with me? Okay, good. And if you're liking my podcast and you have a minute because you're not too busy, then please leave me a rating and a review on iTunes. So you can search my show on iTunes, and there you can subscribe to it and click on ratings and reviews to leave your review.

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