

Ep #6: One Key Goal at a Time



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Tobi Fairley

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

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.

Hey friends, how are you? Are you happy? I'm happy because it's almost summer. And you know what? That really kind of blows my mind. Like, a whole bunch of things blow my mind a lot, but that really blows my mind. I just signed up for a conference I'm going to in California in June, and then I realized that's only like, six weeks away. And I thought, "What?"

In less than two months it's full-blown summer here in Arkansas and yeah, totally blew my mind. And you know what else blew my mind? Then I realized that 2018 is almost half over. Are you ready for 2018 to be half over? Will you have accomplished half of your goals for the whole year in about six weeks from now? Or maybe eight weeks from now when we hit the mid-year mark? Or do you need to get serious?

Well, nothing like a calendar to give us a good reality check, right? So the good news for you today is that I'm going to talk about something that can help you be more successful with your goals for the second half of this year. And if you start using it right now, it's going to make a big difference. So today we're talking about the power of having just one goal at a time.

And pretty much like all my podcast topics, this is an idea that has completely changed my life for the better. So where in the world did I get that idea of having one single goal at a time? Like, why did I decide - where and why did I decide that that makes any sense? Especially since I have so many things that I want to accomplish in life. Like, my wish list, you know, my bucket list, all those things are long.

And how in the world could I make all those things happen if I do them one at a time? Well, that's actually where the idea did come from for me. So if you've listened to my other podcasts, you've heard me talk about how

[The Design You Podcast](#) with Tobi Fairley

Ep #6: One Key Goal at a Time

overextended and "busy" I was until I made some major changes to start living on purpose. That's what I call it, living on purpose.

And the reason that my life looked the way it did before, that super busy look that it had - it wasn't just a look actually, it was busy. I was living it. But the reason it was that way was because of good intention. I mean, it was because I was trying to accomplish as much as I possibly could on my list. And in other words, I was trying to be my best. You know, live up to your potential, Tobi, and live your purpose, and all that good stuff.

But I accidentally created a life that wasn't sustainable. My schedule was too booked to keep up with all the stuff on my list that I was trying to do. And it was also too busy, my schedule, too busy and too booked to allow me to be healthy and sane while I was trying to accomplish anything. And those weren't the only problems.

Because I had so many irons in the fire and kind of like, think of those irons as all my goals, it wasn't just like a bunch of silly stuff. Like, it was goals. But I had so many of them in the fire that I was becoming what I would call - at least I called myself, a master of mediocre.

And I'm sure if you saw my life and my accomplishments you wouldn't really think I was mediocre, but to me, it was my version of mediocre. And yeah, I do things really well, I know that, but what I'm saying is at least I was holding myself back from really soaring.

Specifically, from really soaring financially and with my health, two of the things that were most important to me because I was trying to do too many things at once. And my thoughts about how hard it was to do all that stuff at once was really taking a toll on me because it was making me tired and frustrated. When I would think, I can't do all this, but I have to do all this, and I said I was going to do all this, and I wrote it on my goals list, I've got to do all this. But it's frustrating, right?

And then I discovered an amazing book. Absolutely amazing, crazy good book called *Essentialism* by a guy named Greg McKeown. And it looks like

Ep #6: One Key Goal at a Time

McAllen or something to that effect. It's like, McKeown. He's British and he has the best little accent ever, if you watch any videos with him on it. But Greg McKeown wrote this amazing book called *Essentialism* and I found out about it say, probably three years ago maybe, when I was taking an online course by this fashion stylist Instagram guru gal named Hilary Rushford.

So when I took Hilary's course and I found out about Essentialism talking - I mean, earlier I was saying it's half of 2018 which blew my mind, well, the entire book, *Essentialism* just blew my mind like, right off my head. Like, it felt like it exploded because I had never ever thought about this concept. The subtitle of this book is - well, the title's *Essentialism*, and the subtitle is *The Disciplined Pursuit of Less*.

In other words, doing less on purpose. Sounds familiar, right? I just told you all in like five other podcasts how I now do less on purpose, thanks to Greg McKeown and this book. So Greg says, if you aren't doing that, if you're not in the disciplined pursuit of less, then what you're living is the undisciplined pursuit of more. And that's definitely what I was living is the undisciplined pursuit of more.

I thought I was disciplined but discipline involves constraint, right? And I was not being disciplined about saying no to things. So this book really was one of the key things that moved me towards living in a very intentional way and using constraint with my commitments and my schedule, but also with my goals.

So in the book, Greg talks about the word priority, and he talks about how priority really means one thing. Like, being focused on one thing. A priority is singular. And he also talks about how culture, specifically I think the American culture, made the word plural when it was never intended to be plural. Think about that for a minute.

So priority was always supposed to mean one thing, but when we as Americans decided we wanted to put all our irons in the fire, then we

Ep #6: One Key Goal at a Time

started calling it priorities, plural. And he argues and even science now shows that you can't even have priorities. There's really no such thing.

Our brain is only effective at focusing on one thing at a time, and I really agree with this now because I've found it to be true. And in the last say, three to five years, there's been a lot of research coming out in this idea. You've heard it when they talk about multitasking or what researchers are now calling task switching.

Well, they've learned that you truly can't think about more than one thing at a time. So what we always called multitasking is actually just a switching back and forth quickly between a lot of different tasks. It's why they call it task switching. And the result of task switching are a huge loss in productivity and poor quality of work. Who knew?

I used to get mad at all the single taskers I knew, like they were wasting time. Who knew that they were being way more productive and had higher quality of work? Well, if I had slowed down for a minute it's pretty logical that they would, but I didn't think so.

You know, and we as women in particular have been touting our multitasking skills for years. Like they're a feather in our cap, like they're something to be proud of. And in fact, this makes me laugh really hard now. So earlier in my business, even until you know, five or six years ago before I learned all this great information, I always listed on any job search, you know when I would put out an ad or try to - posting to try to get someone to work for me, I always had listed as one of the requirements, the ability to multitask.

That is so funny to me now, except it's not because I now realize that I was basically saying and hiring people that fit the bill, I was basically saying if you want to work for me, you have to be great at poor quality work and a great loss of productivity because you are really good at switching between tasks all the time, all day long.

Ep #6: One Key Goal at a Time

So essentially, you have to be really crappy at producing anything if you want to go to work for me, which is hilarious, right? So when I began to put the pieces together of all this information that I got from *Essentialism* and other great books that I then found on similar - you know, kind of similar books on this topic, and I heard seminars and I heard people that were really starting to teach about goal setting in this way, this approach of less is not only more, less is a whole lot more. Doing less is a whole lot more productive.

Then I turned a critical eye - like, a very critical eye to my goals and my strategy for achieving my goals. And what I realized that even though I now believe I have accomplished a lot in my life because I have, when I started looking at my accomplishments and specifically my goal setting and goal achieving and I gave myself a grade or a score on my goal achievement for the last several years prior to this time when I started analyzing it, I realized that my score, my achievement each year was about 60% of what I set out to accomplish.

Now, I don't know about you but my experience, like in school and college and all the classes and education I've taken for years, a 60% is a D. I mean, that's barely passing. That's just slightly over 50%, which as I said earlier, I would call that slightly over mediocre. Who knew? I sure didn't know.

So if you looked at my life, 60% to the world looked like I was doing a lot of things and making them happen, and I was, I was doing a lot of things that was true. But what I started realizing is what if I focused on fewer things, what would happen? Would my average go up? My score? My score card? Would I get a better grade?

Yes. Would my efforts be more effective? Of course. Would my results be more of what I dreamed of? Absolutely they would. I mean, honestly, it's common sense. But as I love to say, common sense ain't so common anymore and clearly, I didn't have any when it came to goal setting because I was trying to do a whole bunch of stuff at once.

Ep #6: One Key Goal at a Time

So think about your life in regards to this. Think about this. Let me give you some examples. If you have one client, just one, can you take care of them better than if you have 20 clients? Of course. Of course you can. And I know you're saying, "Well Tobi, I can't afford to just have one client." But just go with me for a minute.

Like, if you have 20 clients, you're going to do a much less effective job than if you have just one person to focus on, right? And think about it if you're moms out there. If you just had one child instead of three, could you give that one child more attention? Of course you could.

Now, don't get me wrong. I'm not suggesting that you have to have just one client and I'm certainly not telling you just to have one child. I mean, that's absolutely your business and I love being a mom, I do just have one child because my business was my other one, but I love babies and I'm all for having a lot of them.

But what I'm saying is just using that for an example, imagine how the more we focus on just one thing at a time, whether it's a client or a child or a goal, which is what we're really talking about here today, then our success rates should be much, much higher. In fact, they might even go through the roof, mightn't they?

So I also realized at that time, when I started looking at my goals and I looked at that goals list each year, when I really looked at what the goals were, I had a lot of things on there but most of them I didn't even really care about that much. I mean, there were always just one or two things on there that were where my heart really was, the things I just was really dying to accomplish.

One or two things that I knew would make the most difference in my life. So I was shocked when I realized that even just putting all those other goals that I didn't really care about on the list and trying to accomplish all of them at once was likely the reason I didn't already have the level of financial freedom or work-life balance that I so desperately dreamed of. Because

Ep #6: One Key Goal at a Time

really, financial freedom and work-life balance were my two top goals year after year after year and I just wasn't getting there.

So that achiever part of me, and even when I do the strengths finders test, I think my number one or two is achiever. Achiever and activator. That's why I have a lot of stuff I do and I can make it happen, I can take action. That makes sense to me, right? But the achiever part of me because that's part of my personality, it's a huge part, like even on the strength finders test, achiever's like number one.

So that part of my that loves to achieve had decided, maybe not even consciously, but it was in there in my head that a "good goal setter," like my definition of a good goal setter would be a person who had this inspiring list of a whole lot of things to do. But what I now realize after learning about essentialism and this idea of one key goal that a great goal setter would have just one goal at a time. And they would knock that freaking goal out of the park before they took on another goal.

So I redefined what not just a good goal setter is but a great goal setter. And it's gutsy and it's scary to just have one goal at a time if you're a big old achiever goal setter like me. But this idea really started to sink in and I was ready to commit to it. And about that time, I went to The Life Coach School, about a year ago for some training, and I had been moving towards this idea and peeling away a lot of my goals for probably about a year at this point.

And then I heard that Brooke Castillo, my new mentor at The Life Coach School, I heard her talk about how she does just one thing at a time. But there was a second part to it. She not only does one thing at a time, she takes massive action on that one thing.

And I was looking at her results and she was sharing her results, and they were and still are, huge. Huge results of accomplishing things, huge financial goals. I mean huge. And she's doing one thing at a time. And that massive action piece that she mentioned, that part took my thinking about one key goal to an even higher level.

Ep #6: One Key Goal at a Time

So Brooke defines taking massive action as continuously doing a thing until we get our desired results. So let me say that again because we need to hear that one more time. Continuously doing a thing, not stopping, not quitting, not taking a break, but continuously doing a thing until we get our desired results. That's massive action. Wow.

Now, many of you who've been my clients before in my consulting business like say in my mastermind programs or some of my courses and seminars, you've heard me talk about something similar to this. You've heard me rave about another book that I love called *The 10X Rule* or if you want to pronounce it *The 10 Times Rule*, but, 10X Rule is probably how you would read it, that's what it looks like on the cover anyway. And it's by a guy named Grant Cardone, who's a big achiever sales person guy.

And I read *The 10X Rule* about six or seven years ago when it first came out, and I've actually read it multiple times, and it's an amazing book. But when I read it the first time, I still had a goals list with multiple items on it all at once. I'd say like five to 10 goals at once. So trying to take the 10 times approach or what Brooke would call massive action approach on five to 10 things at once is virtually impossible.

I mean, we just talked about how there's no such thing as multitasking. So if you're constantly switching between five or 10 things, that's not the definition of massive action because we just said continuously doing, not stopping and starting, but continuously doing one thing until we get the desired result.

So that's where I was going wrong. I thought I was taking massive action and I was working on each one of my goals a lot, but how can you take massive action when you have multiple things to focus on? So when I realized that the sweet spot, or really like that X factor of achieving goals is when you marry the idea of one key goal, which is the essentialist approach, with the idea of massive action, then your results for that goal absolutely skyrocket.

Ep #6: One Key Goal at a Time

And now I wouldn't think of achieving anything any other way. So the challenge, probably for you, and it was definitely the challenge for me at first, but it still creeps in, is continually practicing constraint. Continually keeping distractions at bay and circling back every single week and often every single day to that one key goal. It requires saying no a lot. And yeah, week after week and day after day, you come back to that one main goal with your habits and your practices and everything you do until it's done, until you hit the goal.

And that's hard. It's hard to say no to other stuff but let me tell you what. It is exciting. It is so much more fun and one of the reasons is because you see results so much faster. And the results are so much bigger. And just to be clear, I mean absolutely one goal at a time. Not one goal in your finances while you're also doing one goal in your weight loss while you're also doing one goal with a hobby. Just one of those at a time end to end. Like you string them together like a chain, but they do not overlap.

And yeah, I know that's hard and you have to get super serious about what you want, you have to say like, do I want to lose 20 pounds first or do I want to launch a new website for my business first, or do I want to take up fly-fishing first, or do I want to launch a new revenue stream at work that brings in \$10,000 first? But you have to pick one if you really want to get the results that one key goal at a time gives you.

And what you also need to know is that by picking just one, if you're looking at two and you're like, which one of these do I pick? I think I'll do them both at the same time, don't do it. Pick one because by picking just one, you actually speed them both up. By focusing on one thing until it's done and then immediately starting the next thing and taking massive action on it until its done, in a year's time, you're going to be absolutely shocked at how much you can accomplish.

I have been more productive in the last six months alone than at any other time in my entire life, and it's all because I've gotten so good at focusing on one goal at a time. So I highly, highly, highly recommend you try this. Can you tell I'm excited about it? I love it.

[The Design You Podcast](#) with Tobi Fairley

Ep #6: One Key Goal at a Time

And if you need help, even knowing what you want in life or how to identify your goals or how to bring it down to that one key thing, I actually have something for you. So if you go to my website, tobifairley.com and you look for the tab that's called Free Blueprint, you're going to find a link to download my *Design You* blueprint.

So it is absolutely free and what it is, it's really a roadmap that helps you figure out where you are right now, what you've accomplished and what your challenges were, what maybe held you back and you're probably going to figure out what it's because you had too many goals at once, and it walks you step by step through deciding what you want in all the areas of your life and then bringing it down to that one key goal that you want to start with.

So go to my website at tobifairley.com and click on the Free Blueprint and you'll get a series of emails so it's going to come to you in pieces so it's a little easier to go through in chunks. So a five-part series of emails that are going to walk you through this process of where you are right now all the way down to where you want to go with that one key goal, and that you can then take massive action on it.

So have fun deciding what you really want and have fun taking massive action on it, and I can't wait to hear about your results. Because if you do this this way and you truly say no to everything else and just do one at a time, you are going to get huge results. And trust me, you're going to thank yourself a whole lot when your bank account becomes massive due to this switch in your thinking and your achieving all around that idea of one key goal and massive action.

So thank you so much for listening today and I will see you back here next week with another podcast really soon. Bye, friends.

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.

[The Design You Podcast](#) with Tobi Fairley

Ep #6: One Key Goal at a Time