

Ep #7: Operating in Your Zone of Genius



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Tobi Fairley

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

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, my creative friends. I am so glad you're here with me today. What is new in your beautiful world? Are you happy? Are you healthy? Are you living the life that you want? And if not, why the heck not?

Well, I sure hope you are, and if not, maybe today's podcast will help. I've been rocking and rolling today, knocking things off my list and feeling like a million bucks. And I think that's because all day long I've been working in what I call my zone of genius.

Now, I didn't come up with that term. I've heard it for a few years from various business and personal development sources and gurus and peeps and all the people I follow out in the world. But I can completely understand and relate to this concept. And today, I'm going to tell you what zone of genius means and why I think it's important to your happiness and to your financial success. Two important things. I know I want both of those. How about you? I do, I do.

Okay, so here we go, let's get 'em. So do you know what it feels like to be in flow? Or to be in the zone? You know, those days, or maybe just moments, where everything about you feels like you're operating at your highest level. It's when you feel like you're making the biggest difference in the world or to your clients, or to your family.

It's that place where you feel like you're on fire, or on a roll, or you're on your A game, or whatever else you call that place. Well, I believe the reason you feel on fire in those moments is because you're operating in

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your zone of genius, which I would define as a place where your unique power exists.

It's the physical and the mental space where your interests and your passions and your skills all converge to make you unstoppable. It's where your talent and your purpose intersect. Okay, got it? You know that spot? The zone of genius is a magical place, and I think that the zone of genius is where we make the most money and give our highest contribution to the world.

But here's the problem with the zone of genius for most of us. We can't find it. We move into it sometimes but almost by accident. And we don't realize that us feeling sort of in flow or in the zone means we're in that sweet spot that I call our zone of genius. We don't necessarily know what we did to get there, and we can't really replicate it.

Or if we can replicate it, we don't even believe that staying in that zone most of the time is an option. We believe it's just a fun and exciting place we get to visit occasionally but that we're not allowed to live there. And because of this, we only spend a small portion of our world life and our personal life in our zone of genius.

And I believe this causes all sorts of issues in our life both physically, emotionally, and financially actually. And being in our zone of genius lights us on fire, and I don't know about you, but my goal is to live in that zone 80% of the time or more. I love that feeling.

When I work and live in my zone of genius, I make the most money, I serve the most people, and I'm at my happiest and my healthiest and I'm my best. And when I'm not in my zone of genius, I believe that I'm just operating at a fraction of my potential, and I believe you are too.

And when we do that, when we operate at a fraction of our potential, we're keeping the world and our clients and our families, and really even ourselves from our unique gifts and talents. And don't do that, friends. Don't keep the world from your talents and your purpose. Don't do it.

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I can't think of any reason we would want to do that. Just imagine if all the most successful people that have changed the world, like cured diseases, or invented technology, had allowed themselves to not operate in their zone of genius more often than not.

We wouldn't have all sorts of technological and medical and other kinds of advances that we have today and we wouldn't have a whole lot of other things that thankfully have occurred when great humans operate at this level. And let's be clear, we're all great humans. So there.

But here's the thing, we all have the option of operating in this zone as often as possible. There is a quote by John F. Kennedy that says, "Don't ask what the world needs, ask what makes you come alive and go do it. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive."

And I think what JFK was saying there is we need people operating in their zone of genius, where they are unstoppable, where they are alive. But most of us spend so little time feeling alive, and a whole lot of time feeling the opposite of alive, which is things like drained, exhausted and burned out.

And my question is why are you allowing yourself to spend your days feeling this way? Why are you not working in the zone? And did you even realize that you weren't? And have you ever wondered why you weren't making as much money as you should or you could? Could it be that you spend so little time operating in that space where your talent and your purpose intersect that you just aren't adding a lot of value to the world?

Do you realize that money is just an exchange for value? In other words, you give someone something of value, and in exchange they give you money? So if what you are producing or giving to the world and your clients isn't bringing in much money, then that may mean that it isn't that valuable to others. That makes sense, right?

And if you want to make money - more money than you have, then you have to create more value. And I believe that the way you create the most value you possibly can is by working in your zone of genius. That place

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where you are unstoppable, as much as possible. In other words, working there almost all the time.

So if you want to make the most money you possibly can, which I know I do, then you have to figure out what your zone of genius is. Easy-peasy, right? Okay, so maybe not so easy. But you get the idea here that the reason so many of us aren't getting paid as much as possible is because we are offering the world less than our unique power. Do you see that? Okay good.

So how do you find out if you are in your zone of genius? Well, you can start by asking yourself some questions about your current job or work or your daily task and schedule. And I found this really great list of questions out on the internet from Inc Magazine that was all about this idea of the zone of genius, and then I added some more questions of my own to the list.

And I have that list for you now. So grab a pen and paper and see what kind of answers you get when you ask yourself these questions, okay? Number one, do I know my purpose, or at least the thing I do that makes the most difference in the world?

Number two, am I clear about what lights me on fire and do I use it in my day-to-day work? Number three, do I use my gifts and talents in my daily work at least 80% of the time? 80%, y'all.

Number four, do I feel energized, focused and excited in my work several times a week and possibly even at some point every day? Number five, do I get bored with my work and my tasks? Number six, am I serving or making a contribution to others every week that gives me extreme satisfaction?

Number seven, do people see me as an expert at what I do, and do they think it comes naturally to me? Number eight, do people often tell me I am

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inspiring? Number nine, are my own thoughts, my own ideas, and my own talents a key component of my success?

Number 10, do I have a clear vision of how to use my zone of genius, which is my talents plus my purpose, in my work and in my future? Number 11, do I rarely think of retiring or changing jobs? And number 12, the last question, am I currently in my dream job?

Okay, so tally up your answers and if you got 10 or more, you are operating in your zone of genius most of the time. Yay you. And you should be reaping both the emotional and the financial rewards of that. So your life should be pretty fulfilled and you should be having some major financial rewards coming from your zone of genius. If not, go back and make sure you answered those questions correctly, okay? But that's a 10. If you got 10 out of 12, that's a great place to be.

If you got six or more, then you have to realize you're really only about halfway to your zone of genius. And this is likely why you aren't as fulfilled as you want to be or as financially free as you want to be.

And if you got fewer than six, then you may even be miserable in your job and with your finances, and it's time you figure out where you can offer your highest value to the world more often than not.

So where do we go from here? Well first, let's be clear about something, or at least something I believe. I believe that this conversation is not only the key to achieving our own personal and financial dreams, I believe this is the key to our children's future too.

More than ever, as industries and the economy change, and as humans are continually replaced by machines, and as Amazon takes over the world - aren't they taking over the world? Now, don't get me wrong, I love me some Amazon. But as Amazon takes over the world and that impacts small businesses, I believe that we and future generations like our children must

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learn where we make the most difference if we want to create both financial freedom and be fulfilled in our work.

So this is hugely important for more than one reason. But the first real step in finding your zone of genius and staying in it 80% of the time or more requires that you even believe that that is possible. So if you believe you can find your zone of genius, just got to believe it first. It starts with the believing, okay?

Then I want you to start paying attention to what you love doing and what lights you up. You'll notice now when you feel that feeling of being on fire, in the zone, on your A game, and write it down. Describe what you're doing, notice what you're doing, notice what area of your life or business you're working in, okay? Write that down.

And then, when you realize everything else that isn't in your zone of genius, all the stuff that's draining you and that fit a lot of those other questions that were one through 12 that make you want to change jobs or change your life, I want you to write those down too.

Because you have to decide if those things that aren't in your zone of genius actually have to be done. And if they have to be done and can't be eliminated, do they have to be done by you? And if they have to be done by you, and they can't be eliminated, can you fit them into that other 20% of your time that's not your 80% zone of genius?

So it's like putting a puzzle together here, right? And again, if they have to be done but not necessarily by you, then you can start to decide who to delegate them to, or maybe even how to automate them, where they can be done over and over again in some way with a computer or with something else. So that's where automation comes in.

Whatever it takes to protect that 80% of your time so you can stay in your zone of genius, that much time is what you have to do. And there's two more things that you need to think about here because you've most likely

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got to get paid and paid well. That's the reason it is our zone of genius. It's making us more money. And so we need to make sure that that's the case for you.

So number one, when you're trying to identify that zone of genius, think differently, which means challenge the status quo and the way things have always been done in your job or your industry. Question things, try things. See if you have a unique way of presenting your purpose and your talent that can be packaged so that other people not only want it, but that they need it and that they will easily pay for it.

So that's number one. So notice there, if everyone's already doing something a certain way, or at least doing it in a similar way, it's likely not your unique power or your unique zone of genius. You've got to think differently.

And number two, figure out a way to deliver your zone of genius that is sustainable. Now, I'm not talking about eco friendly. Now, that's great too, I love the planet and I like to take care of things and design sustainably, but I'm talking about sustainable for you to deliver it. As in you can do it over and over and over again easily. It's got to be something that you can do 80% of the time without it draining you and your energy.

In fact, if it drains you, it's not by definition, your zone of genius. So realize, yeah, there are plenty of things you're good at, but that drain you. And those aren't the things we're talking about. What you'll find is that your zone of genius actually energizes you. You could do it forever and never get tired of it, and you can't wait to get up and do it again tomorrow, even if you've been doing it all day today.

So it energizes you, and you can sustainably deliver it over and over and over again. So those last two things were package it uniquely so people can't help but want to buy it, and deliver in a way that you can do it over and over and over again, and not only does it not drain you, it energizes you.

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Okay, so that's what I think about the zone of genius. Find it, stay in it, and you will likely be more fulfilled, and more financially free than ever before. And to help you map out your plan for finding your zone of genius, I have a little present for you. I have a handout for you with those 12 questions I asked earlier in the podcast.

That way, you can see where you currently rate on those zone of genius questions, and sort of that zone of genius scale, and then you can decide what to do next. So if you want to get your hands on those questions on a handout that I made for you, all you have to do is go to tobifairley.com/7 because this is podcast number seven.

So again, it's tobifairley.com/7 and if you go there, you will be able to download this free worksheet with all those zone of genius questions and you can start today mapping out how to stay in that zone 80% of your time. So go get your genius on, and I'll see you again in another podcast really soon. Bye for now, y'all.

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