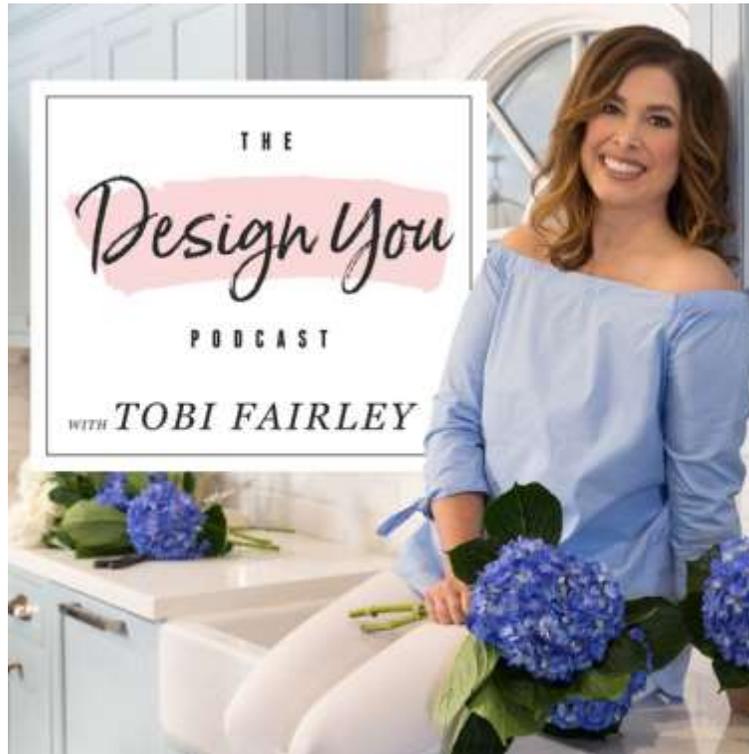


Ep #26: Are Your Thoughts About Your Past Holding You Back?



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Tobi Fairley

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You are listening to *The Design You Podcast* with Tobi Fairley, episode number 26.

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, how's your day going? I'm kind of mellow today, can you tell? I probably won't be for long because I always get passionate about these podcast topics. But I do hope your day is amazing and if it's not, then you're in the right place because you know what happens here on *The Design You Podcast*. Yeah, we give you an attitude adjustment, right? Or we give you a solution or a strategy or something to change your not so amazing day.

So yeah, you know what? I literally give myself attitude adjustments all the time. Like, basically every day. Yeah, I'm not perfect, y'all. Can you believe it? So many days I'm just like you. I wake up anxious or I have a hectic morning and, in the past, it would have completely derailed me for hours, if not days if I started my day that way. But you know what? Now, because I have these cool, what I call Jedi mindset tools, it usually only takes a few minutes or maybe an hour max to get me back in shape and thinking in a way that really serves me.

And I've been practicing these mindset skills and awareness now in a very focused way for probably about two years, so my daily existence is so much better as a result. My joy is literally day and night different. So I'm here to help with your attitude adjustment if needed today. And if you don't need it today, you will need it sometime, right? So do know that I'm going to help you but you can also totally learn to do this for yourself too.

Okay, so today we're going to talk about a related topic and that is past, present, and future thinking. It's so related to what we were just saying because after you listen to this podcast, you're going to understand how what I would call, for me, the old me used to spiral from a bad morning thanks to a lot of past focused thinking. And that thinking would literally

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hijack my life. Sometimes for days over an issue, but especially for hours. So how do we keep that from happening?

Well, like most of our mindset work, this concept goes back to becoming aware of our thoughts, and specifically this idea of what makes us believe our current thoughts. So what does make us believe our current thoughts? Well, here's what does: it's two things. Practice and repetition. Believing means that we have decided and accepted something as true and believing doesn't make it actually true. It just means we believe it's true and the past is great at reinforcing current thoughts because we think them over and over and over again through practice and repetition, right?

We often revisit past experiences over and over and over. The good ones too, but especially the bad ones. And so that means when we're thinking those thoughts, they're not old thoughts. They're current thoughts that are influenced by the past but we're practicing them, and these thoughts and beliefs just become so ingrained because we're repeating them in our minds for years and years. No wonder, right? No wonder we're so entrenched in these habits.

So yeah, the past, it can seem wonderful and you might be nostalgic about parts of it. Or it could be full of pain and negative experiences for you, and maybe you keep thinking about those and it really prolongs your suffering. Now, what's the problem with continuing to think about our past so often? Especially if it's a negative thought?

Well, first of all, yeah, the suffering. When we do, we just create misery that is unnecessary, first of all. And most of us do this without even knowing it. And most of our suffering, if not really all of it is optional because our thoughts are optional, right? And when we do this, when we continue to think about our past, many of us start to define our future based on things like past failures. A failed business, failed marriages, failed diets, even just bad habits and behaviors that we thought were failures that we've been practicing for years, just like getting upset over the morning routine or trying to go on a trip.

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Think of those things that you do that you're like, ugh, every time we start to get ready for school, my daughter and I both have a total meltdown with each other. That is just basing your new habits, tomorrow what's going to happen before school on past behavior and habits, and you don't want to do that, but we're going to dig into why and how to change it.

So those things that we do like that when a moment ruins our whole day and we think about how it played out the last time or something similar happened, we're just automatically repeating those same thoughts and ultimately, those same bad behaviors because our behaviors, which are our actions come from our thoughts, right? And a lot of times we even almost foreshadow this because we're like, "Oh my gosh, every single morning we have a complete meltdown, I'm sure it's going to happen again tomorrow."

Well, that is letting your past define your future. We don't want to do that. When we define ourselves in our future and our future potential based on any past attempt, even if it didn't go the way we wanted it to, we - a lot of things happen, right? Feelings come up, we become discouraged. We might even become paralyzed. Sometimes when we're thinking about our future and maybe you want to think about a future business venture but we had one that went wrong in the past, we become so paralyzed with fear or with regret or other emotions that we literally never make it happen.

That can happen with past marriages that failed and then going into a new one. In any situation in your life, if you're letting your past define your future, it can be a big problem. So what if we took a different approach? What if we believed that our past happened exactly the way it was supposed to have happened? What if we believed that everything in our lives happens for us and not against us? How would this change things in your life?

I think this myself all the time, so when I do have a moment, a morning that doesn't go the way that I want to with my daughter, I now think, "You know, that happened for a reason. What is it? What have I not yet learned? What

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behavior have I not yet changed that I could change to make these mornings smooth and peaceful and happy or even fun?" So I think about those situations, those blow-ups or those kinds of challenges that we all have, I think of them as happening for me. Not like, oh my god, my morning was a nightmare but wow, we had a challenge this morning, how I can learn from this so we don't have it tomorrow? Because I don't believe my past defines my future. But so many people accidentally do think this.

So if we started to believe that everything in our life happens for us and not against us, things can drastically change. And what about this? What if we believed that literally from our past, every misstep, every challenge, every experience was setting us up for success in our future? Instead of giving us evidence that we would have those same struggles the next time around, they actually were giving us evidence of how we can change in the future. Maybe what didn't work, what not to do again, how to shift and adjust and get a different result.

When you think this way, everything changes. This sort of shift is huge. If you shift your beliefs to embrace that in this moment you are exactly where you're supposed to be instead of thinking you're behind or that you're an underachiever, or that you're a late bloomer, or that you're a loser, or any other negative thing, what happens? What happens when you change your beliefs around that? What if you think I am exactly where I'm supposed to be and I'm going to where I want to go in the future? Completely different.

If you believe that you are prepared for your future because of all the wonderful albeit painful lessons that your past taught you, can you see how your life can completely change? It's huge, right? This thinking is really the only option we have if we want to have a wonderful and successful life. Y'all, the past is over. There is no reason to argue with the past or wish it were different. There is no way to change it, even if the past just happened five minutes ago, you still can't go back.

And when we're stuck in the past, we allow it to influence our future decisions. We guarantee that we won't get the life we want but rather that

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we will repeat the exact one that we are constantly thinking about. Wow. Your thoughts are so powerful. It is a waste of emotional energy to think about your past. Instead, take all of that time that you're so in the habit of focusing on your past and focus that energy into the future because the future is where you can still have an impact. The future is where you still have a chance to make a different decision.

Thinking about where you want to be in the future is what can guide you to make progress in the present. If you were thinking that this afternoon or tonight, in the future, I will regret it if I lose my temper over something this morning with my child that isn't a big deal, so seeing how I want to feel later tonight stops me from having a meltdown this morning. It's the same thing no matter what you're trying to do. If three days from now I don't want to have gained weight, then today I'm not going to eat this cupcake.

Future thinking is so important. Many, many people live their whole lives past focused, always waiting for the other shoe to drop or just repeating the same behaviors. And how do you know if you or someone you know is past focused? Well, past focused people have no idea where they're going, first of all. They don't have a plan or goals for what's to come. They are confused and they're stuck. And they use a lot of these phrases that you're going to recognize. I'm going to tell you what they sound like when they're past focused.

They say things like, "Well, that's just how I've always done it." Or, "That doesn't work for me. I tried it." Or, "I've been this way or had this issue my entire life." Or, "This is just how I am." Or, "I'm not the person who can do that or I'm not the kind of person who can do that." I've always been - fill in the blank. "I've always been overweight, I've never been a morning person, I've always been bad with techy stuff, it's just who I am." I'm not a good - fill in the blank. "I'm not a good athlete, I'm not a good writer, I'm not a good public speaker, I'm not a good mom, I'm not a good friend. No one in my family ever gets along. We always have meltdowns before we go on a trip. We never get out of debt, we've been living paycheck to paycheck for years."

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My husband calls this hyperbole. The lawyer in him and the wordsmith in him always calls me out when I'm like, you never do so and so. He calls it hyperbole, which is what it is, but you get the idea. It's being focused in the past and believing that what happened previously is what's going to happen again. So ask yourself right now, are you being defined by who you used to be or are you taking control of who you want to be? Because you get to choose. Your past sets you up beautifully for the person you are today. It was wonderful even when it didn't feel like it because it turned you into who you are right now.

So I want you to love and appreciate it even that's not the way you've thought about it before. And just give it a big old thank you and a big old dose of gratitude and then bid that stuff farewell. At least the parts that are holding you back. It's time to stop thinking about the past and to get excited about what's to come. It's important for you to understand that during this process of shifting from being past focused and all those old thoughts that you've practiced for years to becoming future focused, you've got to do some work.

You've got to unconsciously unaccept something that you've believed for a long time as being true about you or even someone else, but mainly you can only change you so especially the things that you've believed were true about you, you've got to unaccept them consciously before you can change them. because when you say I no longer accept that I'm always going to be paycheck to paycheck, I no longer accept that I'm always going to be overweight, I no longer accept that I'm not a good public speaker, then you are free to believe something else about your future on purpose.

The truth is not something that exists outside of us like we think it is. The truth is really more accurately our truth. It's what we decide to believe. So there is no one truth because each person has their own truth. This is the very reason why you can see two people on opposite sides of an issue like, say politics, who firmly believe and know in their heart that they are right and that the other person is wrong. Well, it's because that's their truth. And the other person has a different truth.

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So I want you to understand this. The past is not the truth. It's just the truth you've been choosing to believe. And the trick is accepting and believing a truth that serves you at the highest level and that allows you to become the person you want to be. And the best news is we have freedom to create our own beliefs no matter what our past is, no matter what anyone else, including our parents or our children or our families or our friends, no matter what those people believe. We don't have to fight with them about it, we don't have to convince them to come join our truth. In fact, we don't even have to tell them how we believe.

And you know what? For those of you who are going to be like, well that's privileged to like, just think we can do what we want or not talk to other people about it or that's inauthentic, well, you know what? It's not. Because our beliefs are our own internal guidance system and no one else's. We're not using them to tell other people how to live. We're using them to guide our own life.

So it's time to be deliberate about your thinking. It's time to unprogram your mind and think on purpose, and it's time to turn our BS, our belief system into something that gives us the power to create the exact life we've dreamed of. You know what? If we do nothing, our past will equal our future every single time. We will keep creating limitations and we will continue to believe that we are limited based on our past experiences. If you want to create a different future, you have to create something that doesn't even exist in your mind because it didn't exist in your past.

This means that your current thoughts are useless when it comes to creating your future because you don't have evidence yet of that. You don't have evidence yet of what your future looks like. But to get different results, you've got to believe something that you've never even believed before. If you already believed it, you would already have created those results for yourself because if you've heard me talk about - which, if you've listened to this podcast very long, you have. The thought model framework that I use, the whole idea of it is that you think about something and it creates a feeling, and then it creates an action in you and then you get the result.

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So if you want to check into your own life and see what's happening, here's what I want you to see. If your current results that you're getting aren't where you want to be, that's a good indication that you're thinking about the same old thoughts. Because here's the thing: it's not the things, the circumstances that happened in our past that shape us but rather it's our beliefs, which are really our thoughts about those events and what those events mean or what we're making them mean that become the foundation for who we are and the actions that we take in the future.

And here's the crazy part: we pretty much just have generalizations about our past. And we literally guide all of our actions about that like I said, generalizations. Like, I've always been fat. Well no, I haven't always been fat. I was actually not fat when I was one and six and 13 and 12 through 18. But that hyperbole I was talking about earlier, that's those generalizations, and we make them and we literally guide all our actions with what my husband would call hyperbole. Did you hear that? Generalizations, and we use that to guide our whole lives. I don't want to be general about my life. I want to be specific.

And most of us don't even consciously decide in each moment what we're going to believe. We just sort of go with ideas that were based on those generalizations or even misinterpretations of our past. We look at everything through the lens of what we were taught to believe or that our parents or our main influencers believed about those situations in our past. And when we're taught to believe things like we're bad or that something that happened to us was bad or that we might as well just give up because we're always going to be poor or always going to be stupid or we're always going to be overweight or whatever you brought with you from that time that you learned a long time ago, likely as a child, those things become the basis for all your future decisions, right? And that's why we aren't getting the results we want.

So we spend our whole lives believing that if only that one bad thing had not happened to me then we could be happy. If only my mom hadn't had cancer and died, if only my dad hadn't lost his job, if only I hadn't been

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molested, if only this other thing had not happened to me, if only I hadn't been bullied in school, if only my brother hadn't committed suicide, I mean, honestly, it doesn't matter. It doesn't even have to be that dramatic but we spend our whole lives believing if only that thing hadn't happened, if only I hadn't gotten embarrassed that one time I got up to give a public speaking engagement then I would now be able to do it well. But since that happened, I'm just not going to try anymore. It was horrible and humiliating and I don't want to ever feel that again. We bring that stuff into our future, right?

And we tell ourselves if only those things had not happened, then we could be - fill in the blank. We could be happy, we could be successful, we could be relaxed. But guess what? We can be happy and successful and relaxed and any other feeling that you want no matter what has happened to us because we can decide not to believe and feel the shame or the pain that we think we're supposed to feel from our past. We can believe we are whole and good and smart and phenomenal people who just experienced something bad one time or even something horrific one time or multiple times.

But we can even decide if we want to that it wasn't bad. Because maybe even as painful or challenging as it was, it was setting us up for something amazing in our future. That's our choice. Circumstances don't change our worth. We are all worthy and we all deserve to be happy. And we can be as long as we don't believe that our past has any power over us now or in the future no matter how bad we've told ourselves our past was.

So what do you need to stop believing about yourself from your past that is holding you back? Here's the thing: you are worthy, you are gorgeous, you're fantastic, you're strong, you're brave, you're talented, you're smart, and so many more things. I could literally write a whole list that would take up this whole podcast of how amazing each and every one of you and I am. Because we are.

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But it's time you start believing it. You have a very unique set of gifts and talents that only you can bring to this world. And if you start believing that that is true, then you can change the world in your own unique way now and in the future. But to me, here's the even better part. If you start to believe that, you can especially change your world, your everyday life just by believing you are the valuable and spectacular human that you are right now just exactly as you are, even if nothing's changed about you yet. You can change your daily life just by believing that about you. Not believing some old story or some laundry list of all stories from your past.

I know it's frustrating that for all these years no one ever told us that we can believe whatever we want. It's so frustrating. Like, what in the heck? Why were they keeping that from us? But this is what we need to know right now today. There are no rules about what you can believe. You don't have to have anyone's approval. And you can continue to believe the past or you can start to believe that you choose your future. That you choose your today, and that it doesn't matter what anybody else says or thinks. No matter who we're talking about.

Even if your new beliefs contradict - and they will - what you already believed for a long time, you can still just start to believe the new ones simply by deciding to. Your beliefs, new or old, will determine what you create in your life. So that means you can create whatever you want to create if you believe that you can.

Now, just for a minute before we go I want you to think about this. Please don't beat yourself up over just now learning this concept. Please don't beat yourself up over thinking all those bad thoughts about yourself for so long because that doesn't help you. That's still living in the past. Again, anything you did up until now, you must believe it all happened exactly the way it was supposed to to set you up for this moment. But for anything to change about your life moving forward, you must change at the belief level if you want to change permanently.

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In other words, just changing your actions is only temporary, and just changing your actions without changing your thoughts that lead to them never works. You can see this when we think about going on a diet, right? You don't change your beliefs about food or how it should play a role in your life long-term. You really don't see how the food is going to be this new way of living in the future. You're just thinking about your results right now.

So you don't change your thoughts and beliefs about food. You just change your actions temporarily. But what happens when you go off the diet or stop the action of dieting? Right, you go right back to the result that aligns with your original belief, probably from your past, that you didn't do the work on to change. You can't just treat the symptom of a problem and get a different result. Treating the symptoms is what a diet does, and that's just changing your actions. To get real and lasting results in any area of your life in the future, you must dig deep and find the belief that's coming from your past that is causing you to get the problematic results in the first place.

So it goes much deeper than just a diet and needing to lose a few pounds. If you believe you will always be overweight or you believe you will always be strapped for cash, if you believe you will live paycheck to paycheck or any other story from your past, then it will be very difficult to permanently lose weight or create abundant wealth or whatever you wanted so badly for your future.

So understanding again, that many of these beliefs were formed when we were children and we didn't have the emotional maturity to reject them then for how nuts they were, just understanding that now like, oh, we were kids, it's not our fault, but today we have the choice to change them. It's never too late to change anything. I don't care if you are 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, 70, 80, 90, 100, it is never too late to make a change in your life and stop letting your past define your future.

So I'm here to remind you not to ignore those old past beliefs that aren't serving you. I'm here to give you permission to take a look at them, to

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question them, and to decide what you want to believe now all on your own as an adult, no matter what anyone else thinks. Because when you choose beliefs that align with the future that you want, that is the moment you will finally make those dreams your reality.

So very passionate about this topic, I think you can tell today. But it is life changing. I think all of my topics are, but this one, y'all, is way up there at the top of the list. So get busy getting rid of your own BS. Your belief system from the past that's holding you back. Stop that past thinking right now that's not serving you and think about your future and how thinking about your future's going to make you make a better decision right now in your present and go get busy creating a business and a life that you absolutely love. And I'll be back here next week to work with you on another topic again and I can't wait. So thank you so much.

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.