

## Ep #31: Are You Playing the Blame Game?



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**Tobi Fairley**

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## Ep #31: Are You Playing the Blame Game?

You are listening to *The Design You Podcast* with Tobi Fairley, episode number 31.

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.

Happy almost Halloween, friends. Yeah, isn't that crazy? Just a few more days until Halloween. And then we are officially in holiday season. So yeah, I enjoy Halloween. I still have a teen at home and it's a fun holiday for kiddos. It's not my favorite holiday though. My favorite one is Thanksgiving.

Why? Because I love counting my blessings. I love being grateful for so many things and I love that you don't have to buy people presents. We just get together and have fun. But you know, Halloween is the kind of precursor to that and so it gets me in the holiday mood.

So I hope you are loving this time of year and getting in the holiday mood too. So we've been talking about that a lot, we've been talking about the end of the year and finishing strong and our goals and all of that stuff and we've been in business brain a lot lately. But last week I brought you back around to our emotional side, right? I brought you back to the feelings.

And so this week I'm going to continue on that path and we're going to talk about playing the blame game. So playing the blame game. I think this is a really scary behavior. In fact, it's even scarier than Halloween because the blame game is something that so many of us do every day and we might not even realize that we're doing it.

And our culture has become one of blaming everybody else for our problems instead of taking responsibility. And really, one of my biggest pet peeves in the world, especially where my daughter is concerned or a team member or an employee, and yeah, society too is really this idea of blaming everybody else, and in particular, hearing the words, "Wasn't my fault. Wasn't my fault, mom."

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That may be my number one pet peeve in parenting and really my number one rule in parenting is the opposite of that. It's to teach responsibility. So you know what I'm talking about. The, "Honey, where did you put your backpack? Did you leave it in the car?" "Mom, wasn't my fault, you were talking to me and I had too much other stuff in my hands so wasn't my fault I left it in there."

Or maybe I say something like, "Sweetie, why are there four pairs of your shoes in the kitchen?" And I get the response, "Wasn't my fault. I didn't have time to pick them up because you made me do my homework." And you know how that goes.

So that's what it looks like for a teenager, but we hear this stuff all of the time in life. And hopefully, I've made some progress in teaching my daughter that the answer is never, "It wasn't my fault." And not saying that we have to blame ourselves either for everything going wrong. It's not that. I don't want us to be victims, I don't want us to get run over, but I want us to think about the role we play in our relationships. Because nothing is ever one person's fault, right?

So I would rather hear my daughter give pretty much any excuse in the world other than, "It wasn't my fault." And a simple, "Oh yeah, I did leave four pairs of shoes down here, mom. Let me grab those and take them to my room, thanks for the reminder," that would be dreamy.

Now, do I expect my teen to be perfectly on the same page with me and give answers like that? No. But I do love teaching her the concept that shucking responsibility is never going to get you very far in life and it's certainly not going to get you very far with relationships.

And it's not just our kiddos or our teens that are doing this. I feel like more often than not, people today want to blame everyone else for their problems and we do it too, so let's lump us all in there. We all want to blame everybody else for our problems or our unfinished task or our unreach goals and dreams.

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And we find so many people to blame. Our parents, our boss, our kids, our spouse, our mother-in-law, our friends, our coworkers, the president, the government, men, women, Facebook, Netflix, wine, food, our metabolism, our genes, our schedule, time in general and there never being enough of it. It's not our fault. There's never enough time, right?

We blame our to-do list, the weather, the mail, I mean, seriously, there are so many options. If we want to, we never have to take responsibility. We can find someone or something to blame for everything. And we pretty much have a reason just about every minute of the day to blame if we choose to.

If you hadn't done that, then I wouldn't have done - fill in the blank - right? If you hadn't made cookies, then I wouldn't have eaten four of them. You know what I mean? Now, I'm not suggesting that there aren't situations where we should hold other people accountable for their actions. There certainly are. But I do believe that those situations are really few in comparison to the number of times every single day that we're not taking responsibility for our own actions and that we are using excuses to not be our best self.

And the moment that we blame, the moment we use an excuse, the moment we shuck our responsibility, then we are no longer in control of our own destiny. The person or the thing we are blaming is. So let's think about this for a moment. Why does this matter in our lives? Well, it matters because most of us use the blame game daily with regard to our feelings and our dreams.

And as we've been learning here on the podcast and in my Design You coaching program, those members have been learning the reason that we do anything in our life at all, the reason we make every single decision, our goals and dreams, is because of how we think doing or getting that thing or accomplishing that thing will make us feel, right?

So our feelings are the reason that we do everything, or really a goal to feel a certain way, to feel good, to feel important, to feel relaxed, to feel happy,

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that's why we do what we do. And blaming someone else or something else is actually delegating our feelings to that person or thing. We're handing over our emotions to that other person basically on a platter. If it's not a person then it's to the weather or something else that's out of our control.

And most of us do this multiple times a day. So other people, the weather, anything else outside of us, all out of our control, yet we continue to hand our feelings over to them all day every day. And some of us have been blaming something that happened to us a long time ago for years. We've been literally holding ourselves back for years or maybe even our entire life because of this thing that happened, even though we keep saying we want a result and we just don't go after it because we're still holding on to the story of that thing and blaming it.

And you know exactly what I'm talking about, don't you? So if all of our decisions are made in order to make us feel a certain thing or way, but then we're constantly delegating responsibility for our feelings to someone or something else, then how in the world will we ever create a life or a business that we love?

We won't. So blaming others keeps you stuck right where you are in your life and your business. It disempowers you. It leads you to no action. It means things never change. And yes, blaming someone or something may feel good in the moment because it feels bad sometimes or hard to take responsibility, but in the long run, I can think of no worse situation than not being able to change our own situation because we've handed that over to someone else or something else.

Can you think of something worse? I cannot. So let's think about blame versus taking responsibility. So when we blame, we know we're blaming because it feels bad. Maybe not at the very beginning. It feels kind of like a scapegoat or a thing to get us out of a pickle, but in the long run, or even in the not so long run, pretty shortly after we start blaming, it feels bad.

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So that's how you're going to recognize when you're blaming instead of taking responsibility. Because blaming feels really awful. It comes with anger and pain and drama and sadness and fear. All of those go with blame. And you feel those feelings come up when you're telling that story of blame in your mind or out loud, either one.

Taking responsibility is completely different than that. Now, it may feel humbling at first. I'm not saying you won't have to swallow your pride a little bit sometimes in the beginning, but you won't feel those other feelings that really essentially feel out of control. So you won't feel the anger and the pain and the drama and the sadness and the fear at a level that feels out of control. You will feel the opposite. You will feel energized, or at least empowered to change and create the results that you desire.

Think about it. I think about this in my design business and if something comes in damaged and we try to blame someone else for it, it feels really frustrating. Like, I even get angry and mad, even if it's really kind of their fault. It's so much easier for me to just take responsibility for it and go, you know what, let's just agree to disagree, how much is it to fix the sofa, let's get it fixed because then I can move forward and get that to my client.

That's a scenario where I go from feeling angry and frustrated that there is no solution when I'm blaming to feeling completely empowered to move a situation forward because I took responsibility. And that's just an example of a product. But think about in our lives, when it's serious stuff, about relationships or our own health and wellness. Taking responsibility for that instead of blaming others feels so empowering.

So not only do we blame others and hand over our emotions to them really often, most of us are also terrible at holding other people responsible for their actions when we're supposed to. And we're definitely terrible at doing this while remaining calm. Not having conflict, to still hold someone accountable.

And you know, we're awful at making what others do just about their actions. We don't do that. We don't just say I need you to be accountable

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for this action. We go a lot farther. We make whatever they did mean something about us.

It's funny how truly self-centered we find that we all are without even realizing it because truly, we make everything other people do mean something about us. And it didn't mean something about us. They were doing their own thing but we have a way of turning everything always back to us, right?

So think about it. A client's in a bad mood, must be something we've done. Our child or spouse is rude, they must not like us or they must think we're inadequate in some way. A friend forgets our birthday, they must not love us, or maybe we've even unlovable or unworthy of love. I mean, what the heck? We twist and contort most every situation to make it mean something about us when typically, it had nothing to do with us.

So these are sort of the two sides of this coin of blame. So if we aren't blaming others and reacting in a way that is out of control and that causes regret with regard to the blame game, then we jump over to the other side and start blaming ourselves and make other people's actions mean something about us. And both of these reactions equal drama and pain and suffering. They don't move us towards our dreams. They don't empower us.

And here's what we have to remember: all of this is optional. Seriously friends, we don't have to think or feel or act any of these ways ever if we don't want to. Because as I've been teaching you, if you've listening to *The Design You Podcast* before, our thoughts are optional and our thoughts create our feelings, so essentially our feelings are optional, and our feelings create our results so results are optional.

So truly, this whole equation is within our control. We have a choice. We have a choice to not blame others and we have a choice to not make anything that they do mean something about us. So the moment we blame and react, we have no ability to change the situation, as we've said.



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Here's some examples. I want you to think about this and really get clear on this so we can see how to not do this behavior. So for example, if I blame my behavior and my actions on having a bad day, you know what I mean. Like, how many times have you blamed your temper or your loss of productivity or a missed deadline or how you treat other people in your life on a "bad day?" "Oh, it was just a bad day."

And maybe I think part of that bad day, if I'm even going more specific with an example was that my teenager was rude to me, okay? So it was a horrible day and my teenager was rude to me. By the way, all of that is drama if you didn't notice already. But then what happens? Well then, because of her rudeness, because of her being rude to me and because it was a bad day and say it was raining outside and because that client's sofa came in damaged, those are all the reasons that I can come up with to blame the fact that I acted like a jerk and had a total meltdown

It's the day's fault and it's all those other people's fault. It is absolutely not my fault that I acted like a complete jerk and had a meltdown. That is what blame looks like, friends. And we do it so often. But we always have the option of choosing how we feel and how we behave in every situation.

And when we choose to feel like a victim, like the teenager and the weather and the sofa are all in charge of our day and our happiness and our joy, then we've got a major issue, right? Because we cannot control a single one of those things. No, we can't. Even if I'm a good parent, I can't control my teenager, I cannot control the weather, and I certainly can't control the sofa delivery people.

So if all of those people and the day in general are in charge of my happiness and joy, I'm pretty much screwed, if we're clear. If we just want to be honest like, I am absolutely screwed. And those things would have to change for me to be happy, and I'm pretty confident with my life experience so far, that my teenager acting like a sweet angel every moment and the weather only serving me up sunny days and products not getting damaged in shipping are pretty unlikely, right?



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Yeah, I promise you, those are all pretty much completely never going to happen. So I'm pretty sure that I don't want to delegate my emotions, my happiness to any of these three things that are 100% out of my control. But I can totally be content and still calmly ask my teenager to speak more kindly to me, and to take her shoes to her room. And I can't make her do it, but I can ask in a nice way and maybe get results.

And I can also decide that if she never takes her shoes to her room, I can still be happy. I can not argue and can not create drama and suffering for my sake. So that is a choice. I can also ask the shipping company to take full responsibility for their actions and get the sofa repaired. All while staying perfectly calm. Not blaming them, not being angry, but literally just calmly saying, "Okay, let me know how we're going to deal with this situation. It showed up damaged, it's on you guys, we filed the claim and let's be patient and see - let it take its course, let's get the sofa fixed."

I can be calm and in control. Blaming does not keep me calm and in control. And the reason I know this behavior is not blame when I do it is because it is calm and happy. And I can go on about my day and not derail everything that I was planning to accomplish and not move into a drama spiral or an overwhelm spiral just because these things happened, right?

Do you see the difference? I found that it is in the staying calm that you actually have the power to get the results you want. It's in the staying calm that you're actually effective at holding others accountable for their actions. Staying calm with my teen is always more productive than yelling at her. And staying calm about the sofa being messed up is always more likely to get results in getting it fixed than if I were to yell at the manufacturer or the delivery company or somebody else.

When we react, we give the other party an excuse not to take responsibility for their part. We give them a huge reason just to chalk it up to us being a jerk. And yes, they may do that anyway, even if we are calm, but I promise we catch more flies with honey. And we also don't derail our own day and everything else we wanted to accomplish and I think that may just be the most important part.

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So I think you're getting the point here that blaming is never useful, including blaming yourself. So whether you want to blame your parents for your childhood, blame your spouse for forgetting your anniversary or birthday, blame your employees for low profits in your business, or blame yourself for overeating or yelling at your kids, any sort of blame cuts you off from solutions.

Now, I'm not saying that you're supposed to be happy all the time and that you should never be upset. That's not what I'm saying. Sometimes we want to be upset and I get that, but I want you to check in with yourself when you are and see if you're playing the blame game. Are you believing you should be mad at things and that you should get angry and that it's justified and that it is their fault?

Because in my experience when we do that, we don't move to action. We instead stay stuck right there in the drama and the suffering and the pain. And when we keep ourselves in this place of disempowerment, we feel hopeless. We feel hopeless in our lives, in our careers, in our relationships. And the moment we own our behaviors, the moment we own all of our mistakes without blame, including without blaming ourselves, that is when we have authority over any situation. That is when we have the ability to make changes in our life.

So check in with yourself right now and look at the areas in your life where you feel frustrated, angry, and hopeless. Because there's a really good chance that you're blaming someone else. Are your finances in your business less than you desire? And are you blaming your industry or the economy or your clients? If so, change isn't going to happen with your finances.

Are your relationships less than what you want? Is your marriage struggling and you're blaming your spouse? Are you frustrated with your teen and blaming her hormones? If so, neither of those are the place where change will happen in your relationships.

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If your life is not what you thought it would be at this point, are you blaming your childhood, your parents, your marriage, your career, or something else? If so, no wonder you don't already have the life you want because none of those situations move you forward in your life.

Is your weight or your body not the way you want it to be? Are you blaming your genes or your high stress job or your family who eats junk food in your presence all the time? Because unfortunately, that kind of thinking is going to keep you stuck at that weight forever. It's going to, friends.

So can you start today and take responsibility for everything in your life right now without blaming someone or something, and especially without blaming yourself? Can you see that even if taking responsibility in this way doesn't make you feel happy right this minute, at least it makes you feel empowered? It might even light a fire under you to change because it gives you authority over each and every situation in your life that isn't already what you want it to be.

And you can see that this work is an inside job. It's about changing your thoughts. Not changing the other people or the weather to get the results you want. Blaming is the worst thing you can do to yourself. It doesn't hurt the other person. It hurts you. It holds you back. And if you are making anything in your life that someone else does mean something about you, then you will also stay stuck.

Because hear me out, a teen's behavior isn't about you. It's about them. A spouse's behavior isn't about you. It's about them. A boss's behavior isn't about you. It's about them. A client's behavior isn't about you. It's about them. And when you can let the responsibility for their actions lie on them and you not make it mean anything about you, then you have the complete authority to go forward with making your life exactly what you want it to be no matter what they do today or in the future.

And this is completely liberating, friends, so take a hard look at your life. Who are you blaming? How are you blaming those people that you love or

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don't love, for that matter? How are you blaming yourself and who are you not holding responsible for their actions in a calm way?

Take back your emotions right now. Take back your life from any and every instance of blame and you will soon see your life start to look like the one you've been dreaming about for years. You can absolutely do this. You have got this.

And I will see you back next week with another amazing and life-changing episode of *The Design You Podcast*. See you then.

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](http://tobifairley.com).