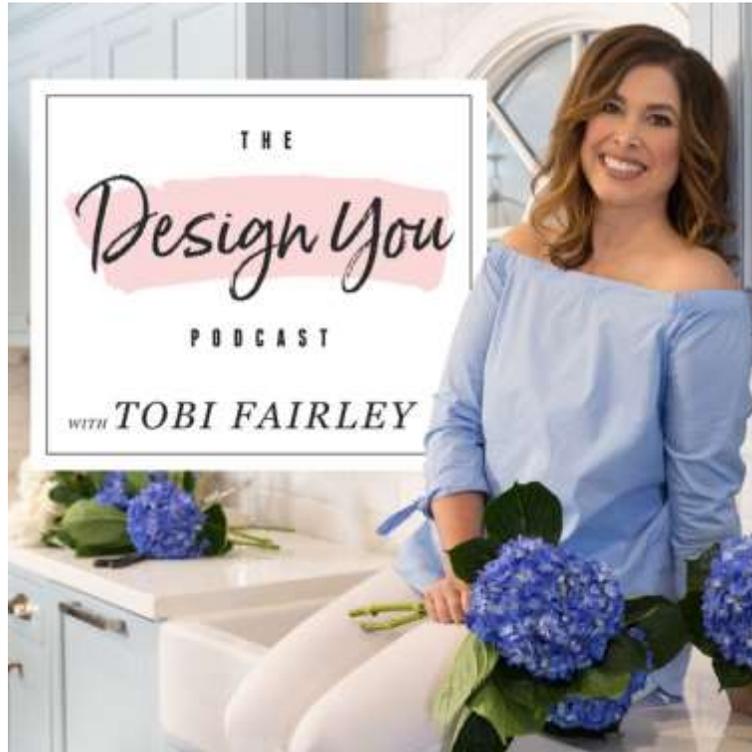


Ep #34: How to Thrive During the Holidays



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Tobi Fairley

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You are listening to *The Design You Podcast* with Tobi Fairley, episode number 34.

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 everyone. You want to know what I'm thinking about today? I'm thinking about that Christmas is like, six weeks from now or something, and if you live in the US, Thanksgiving is basically like, right now, which, I guess it's not quite today but it's really close. And we're in the holidays, friends, and everything changes during the holidays, right?

So for most of us, the holidays can bring up a lot of added stress, right? Money stress, house stress, food stress, health and wellness stress, family and relationship stress, and then there's the stress to keep up with work while trying to be festive and attend all those holiday extras and parties, right?

Woo-hoo, no wonder we love the holidays so much. It is just a stress-a-palooza. But it doesn't have to be, or it can be less stressful if you know how to get ready. So before you go messing up all the amazing work we've been doing together on your mindset and your schedule and your relationships, let's make a strategy for surviving holiday stress.

And it's really what I call thriving the holidays, not surviving the holidays. And trust me, I'm talking to myself as much as I'm talking to you today. I love it when in giving a podcast for all of you, I'm actually giving myself an attitude adjustment or a schedule adjustment or a slap on the wrist because I need it too.

So even though I have a lot of great habits in place that I didn't use to have, the holidays are the very time those habits seem to fly out the window, or at least some of them if I'm not careful. But I'm really trying hard to avoid that this year. So Santa, not this year. I'm going to be a good girl. Not on the

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naughty list because I'm keeping my habits in check and I'm going to help you do that too.

So what areas do we need to look at if we want to make our next six or so - six to eight weeks easier than they could be? Well, I think we should start with our mindset. It's always the first place I start with everything, isn't it? The old mindset.

So first, remember how all thoughts are optional? If you've been listening to this podcast at all, you know that I'm of the philosophy that I learned at The Life Coach School. I mean, in fact, I learned it - that's why I went to The Life Coach School because I heard their philosophy and I'm like, that's my philosophy.

But it's of the philosophy that all thoughts are optional. All of them. Every single one of them. So let's give you some examples of thoughts that might come up during the holidays that are optional. So what about, "My mother-in-law drives me crazy and she's staying at my house all week." Or, "I can't believe my husband bought me this stupid sweater when I wanted a bag." Or, "There is no way I can get all my shopping and my work done and be in a good mood. Not possible." Or, how about this one? "Why can't there be 30 hours in the day?"

I think that one a lot. Of course, we'd just fill them up and be stressed five more hours than we already are - six more hours that we already are, so why would we want to do that? What about this one? "Who created this damn elf on the shelf? I'm going to murder them." Thankfully my daughter at 13 doesn't need elf on the shelf anymore, but man, those days of waking up early and remembering we didn't move the elf and like, scrambling to try and figure out where he was so we could move him were crazy.

Also, we think thoughts like, "If I see another holiday cookie or hors-d'oeuvre I will absolutely scream." Or maybe, "I have three parties this week and absolutely nothing to wear and none of my clothes fit." So every one of these are thoughts. They seem like the truth, they seem so close to the truth, but they're really just thoughts that we're thinking and they can

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cause us so much stress, overwhelm, frustration, or a whole lot of other negative feelings.

And that's not at all what we want to create during this already busier than normal time of year, right? So if you remember from podcast number four, if you listened to number four, and if you haven't go listen to it. It's where I teach you the thought model that I learned at The Life Coach School and it's an exercise or a tool where you write down your thoughts about a circumstance.

So the circumstance might be that your mother-in-law is going to stay with you for a week, and if you need just a refresher of how the model works, here's how it works. So there's a circumstance, mother-in-law is staying for a week. And then you think a thought about it, and that thought, whichever one or ones you allow yourself to think or choose to think cause a feeling in you, and that feeling causes you to take an action or an inaction and then you get whatever result it is that - it's going to come from that action or inaction.

So in other words, your thoughts about everything cause all your feelings, and all your actions and results. So they're super important to keep them in check. So, if you want to get a certain result in, say, your relationships or with your to-do list or in your health and wellness during this holiday season, then you must be extremely careful with the thoughts you choose during this time of year.

And I know you're thinking, "Okay, Tobi, in theory, this sounds great, but how in the heck do you expect me to choose the right thoughts when I have so much else going on?" And I get it. It's hard. But - well, it's only hard if we think it's hard, right? That's another thought. But it can be one more thing to squeeze in your schedule, I will definitely say that. But I want you to be a little more diligent this time of year than ever about journaling and your morning routine.

Because during the holidays, a lot of times, once our mornings get started good, it's all downhill from there. Things get derailed, our schedules get

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derailed. So it's going to be really important that you plan your days and your thoughts in the mornings, and I do that with journaling. And you might even have to get up a little bit earlier, and I know that doesn't sound fun for those of you who aren't morning people like me, but it's worth it if you can have better, calmer, happier, more joyful days during the holiday.

So, I want you to use the holidays and your journaling as an excuse to check in on your thoughts, and maybe while you're there, you also check in on your shopping list and your menu planning and just really get some things on paper. And we're going to talk about some of these other steps in a minute because they're part of this podcast. I'm giving you, I think, six steps to transform your holidays.

So I want you to have that journal, write down your thoughts, write down any of those other things that are on your mind, but while you've got that pen in hand, be sure, if you do nothing else, that you jot down the thoughts that are popping up each morning and notice if they're thoughts that are going to make you feel better about the day and the holiday season, or if they're going to make you feel worse.

Because if you're thinking thoughts that are more about the scarcity of the amount of time or money you have, or you're feeling frustrated about relationships and you're allowing yourself to think negative thoughts there, it's only going to snowball - pun intended - during this holiday season. So we don't want you to do that.

And if what you find when you're journaling is that the thoughts you're thinking are going to make you feel worse, then I want you to do some work with help of the model to choose different thoughts instead that are going to give you energy and joy and confidence and peace, or whatever feelings it is that you prefer to feel this season instead of stress, overwhelm, frustration, or something even worse.

So for a refresher on how to use the model to manage your thoughts during the holidays, or really any time of year, it would be really helpful if you could carve out some time and go back and listen to episode number four again. I

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promise you, it will be worth it because you really cannot have too many reminders of how this great tool works and how you can use it to really create the feelings that you want this time of year, and I don't think you want to create stress and negativity.

So that was tip number one of how to thrive during the holiday season. What's tip number two? Well, let's tackle your calendar. To me, mindset and calendar are two key things to my success in every area of my life all year round so they definitely are number one and two during this time of year.

So if I haven't already convinced you in episode number 11 that's about how to create more time in your life by the way you think about time and your calendar, then now would be a fantastic time to get on board with this concept. In a season where we have far more to do than we normally have to do, your calendar can be your best friend, can be your ally, can be your saving grace, and the only thing that ensures that your priorities are actually met and accomplished during this time of year.

And your calendar can also be what keeps you from discarding all of your good habits when those holiday parties start to roll in because it's in my calendar where I keep my workouts, my massages, my yoga lessons, time for meditation and reading, and maybe reading doesn't always happen during the holidays but all those others really have to. It's also where I keep dates with my husband so that he doesn't feel left out or I don't feel like I'm not getting the attention I need during this time of year. And really, all the things that matter to me and that nurture me, they are in my calendar, including what I'm eating.

We're going to talk about food in a minute, but the calendar is so critical and I think one of the things that's really critical to have in your calendar is self-care because self-care is one of the main things that doesn't make the cut for most of us during the holidays because we think, "Well, I can't do that for me. I've got to do all this other stuff for everybody else." But what we know from that old adage of put the oxygen mask on your first, if we don't take care of us, how in the world will we get all this other stuff done?

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And the funny thing is we may get it done but we may be in a horrible crabby mood and really impatient and intense, and that's not really the version of us that our family wants to experience, and we don't really want to give them that either, right? So it's going to be really important to us feeling calm and feeling good and feeling nurtured that we don't throw self-care out the window.

So carefully planning all of your days during the holidays and keeping your word to yourself about whatever is on that calendar, if you see a block that has self-care, even though you think, I don't have time for that, if it's on there, you got time for it. You made time for it and you've got to think to it because this kind of planning is what's going to keep things like the holiday weight creep or burnout from setting in during this time of year.

So how do I do this with my time? Well, I use what I call zero balance time blocking, which means I literally block out every hour of every day including sleep and meals and self-care and downtime and all the work I have to do and when I adopted this practice, it was completely life-changing for me. And I have practiced it more in 2018 than in any other year. I really had perfected it by the beginning of this year and I've done it every day for 2018 and my accomplishments, my results, my profitability, everything that I'm working on is off of the charts.

So I know that it works. So it sounds super restrictive. I get that. I thought so too at first. In fact, when I really started thinking about calendaring myself a few years ago and was talking to one of my employees about it because I was really having a difficult time managing my schedule and I was really feeling burnout, I remember thinking, "There is no way that I'm going to do that. You are not going to box me in." I was talking to this employee that was suggesting scheduling and I was thinking, "I'm a creative and I will feel totally trapped," and so I really balked at the idea.

But a few years later I was like, okay, there's got to be a better way, and I started this practice, and I realized that the zero balance piece, I picked that up from the concepts that Dave Ramsey uses for his budgeting and he says, you know, if you leave a big pot of money left over that's kind of just

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the rest of the money, like, it's not your mortgage and it's not the kid's school or whatever but it's just like, everything else, if you just leave it in a big chunk, before you know it, it's going to just dwindle away and you're not going to know what happened to it.

And so I realized that that was the same thing that happens with time. So I started this approach that I really created for myself of you've got to block every hour. Even if that block says watch TV, rest, don't do anything, zone out, whatever it says, every single minute needs to be blocked so that you're not just fooling yourself that there's this big block of time and oh sure, I'll get all that stuff done in that time because you won't. You'll get like, two things done and the other 70 things you thought you could get done in that time won't happen because you weren't realistic about how much time they would take.

And before you know it, you're into like, day three of the holiday season and you are already so far behind that you're like, what's the point? So it's really, really important. It does not make you feel trapped, I promise you, it does exactly the opposite. It was when I started zero balance time blocking that I really started to feel liberated and where I had time freedom for the first time ever.

And just think about this for a minute. Think about why. If you're still like, "I don't know about that, Tobi," here's what I want you to realize about what makes you feel trapped. Being scheduled might feel a little restrictive until you get used to it, but having 150 things on your to-do list that never seem to get done and when you get to the end of each day there's still at least 150 even though you did 30 things because more crept on to your list, that's when you feel trapped.

That's when you feel like you want to get away from it all and run screaming and just throw your hands up in the air, and I think that's what people get frustrated with about Christmas time or the holiday time, depending on which holidays you celebrate is there's so much to do, and there's so much commercialism and buying and we're like, "Ugh, I just want to give it all away and go back to Thanksgiving where nobody gets gifts."

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And I get it. I feel that way too. So I promise you, if you use a schedule, you will feel so much less trapped and if somebody says, "Hey, did you do that thing for me?" because it happens to me all the time and I haven't gotten to it yet, I don't then feel embarrassed or frustrated that I have to drop everything and do that for them because they're waiting on me and now I'm thinking about what they're thinking about me because I can just say, "You know what, I haven't yet but let me tell you when I'm going to get to it because it's on a block on my calendar."

And I can say, "You know what, I'm going to do that Thursday at three o'clock," and they will for sure have it by four on Thursday because I follow the schedule to a T and that makes me feel so much better, so much less pressure. I don't feel like I'm letting everybody down, including myself anymore, and it is a game changer.

So with this time blocking approach, I know exactly when I'm going to do everything, including take care of myself, get massages, do yoga, workout, have dates with my hubs and friends, go to those Christmas parties, do my Christmas shopping, and get all my work done too because it's all in there. And if it won't fit, then I have to make some decisions. If it won't fit, I have to constrain some things because not everything we try to do during the holidays is as important as we want to pretend like it is, right?

So that's what that looks like, and it is so helpful. Another key thing to avoiding holiday stress that also goes with your calendar is this idea I was just talking about of constraining, or really, kind of the concept of overcommitting, and you cannot overcommit during this season or you will be so burned out and so frustrated.

And having everything in your calendar is the way to know if you're overcommitting because you can look at your calendar, and when someone says, hey, can you come to this party or host this party, or do this thing for me, or add this other thing on at work even though you're already busy, you can look at your calendar and be like, "No, I can't. I wish I could." Or if it's super important to you, then you can but you've got to move something else off of your plate by either cancelling it or delegating it

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because you can't just make 40 hours' worth of stuff fit in a 24-hour day, right?

Okay, so I think you get the idea of calendaring and it is going to be your BFF during the holidays if you want to thrive. Okay, so that's step number two. What's step number three? Well, I touched on it in this model, but let's not just talk about it as part of calendaring. Let's make it an actual step, and it is self-care.

And if you listened to episode 18 of my podcast called Showing Up for Yourself, then you've heard my favorite definition of self-care, which is not just getting your nails done or taking a bath or getting a massage, but rather it's a definition by a nutritionist named Heather K. Jones, I think, and this is the definition: "Showing up for yourself with respect and kindness on a moment to moment basis. It is how you treat yourself, how you feed yourself, and how you talk to yourself."

So yeah, Heather K. Jones wrote that and this is when I really realized that self-care wasn't an activity but it is a mindset. Self-care is a mindset. Self-care is showing up for yourself moment to moment. And this really gets important when our moments are packed because that's when we don't treat ourselves well, that's when we don't feed ourselves well, that's when we talk to ourselves horribly. We would not talk to our best friend or our child that way, but we'll talk to ourselves that way, and that is the opposite of self-care.

So I want you to pick yourself during the holidays and what's best for you in every single moment, even when you have all this other stuff going on. And you can only do that if you think about it ahead of time, if you plan it ahead of time because it's in the moment when there's no groceries in the house or you didn't have time to eat before you went to a party so you stuffed your face with all the fattening hors-d'oeuvres and like, down three glasses of wine, that is not how self-care moment to moment is going to show up very well, and you're not going to be happy about it afterwards.

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So even on a weekend with three parties or gatherings, or even when those family members that push all your buttons are in your house for three days straight, really especially then, that is when you have to do self-care. And I have often used the holidays as an excuse to fall into what I call all or nothing behavior and really, all or nothing mindset too.

And I learned that if I'm going to be adding in a lot of other stressful stuff, then all or nothing is the worst idea because if I'm going to be adding in all this other stuff, at the very least, it is super important that I keep my health care, wellness, and self-care practices in place as much as possible. So decide ahead of time, use that calendar and the time blocking we just talked about of course, and put in the minimum amount of exercise and self-care that you will do during the holidays to stay sane and healthy.

And that doesn't mean necessarily a 60-minute workout every day because the holidays aren't necessarily when you can ramp up on something. You've got too many other things to think about, but you can at least do a 20-minute walk three times a week, right? So you're not going backwards.

And during this time, when you're pouring out all of your time and love and money to everybody else, again, if you're not nurturing yourself with self-care and health and wellness, how do you expect to give anything to anybody else? You're not going to. So use that calendar, sit down, carve out some time maybe on a Sunday afternoon, maybe you do it every Sunday afternoon because the weeks get crazy, and you look at what is the minimum amount of exercise and self-care that I'm going to hit this week and make sure that you do that.

Step number four to thriving during the holidays is this; done is better than perfect, which means for all of us perfectionists, do it. Don't procrastinate and just it's good enough. I get that we want to do everything exquisitely, I am that person too. But learning to do things the fastest way possible and the easiest way possible, especially on the things that don't really matter, it's going to be huge for you during this time of year.

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So for me, that means things like shopping online and doing it early. Procrastination is one of the biggest drivers of stress, and yes, it's fun to go out shopping but I do all my "real" shopping online from my pajamas and my bed on like, Saturday morning in November. And then maybe if I want to go out and experience the holly jolliness of being out and shopping, sure, I plan some fun dates with my mom or a friend and I can go out and shop.

And then if I see something small that I want to pick up for somebody's stocking or something somebody couldn't live without, great. But I don't leave my real and important must have items for my family members to those hurried shopping excursions where stores are crazy and things are picked over. It is just way too much.

I also don't procrastinate on gift wrapping. I wrap presents as I go. So when things come in, I literally may wrap two or three presents a day, or I may take one or two nights a week and go ahead and get the things wrapped and get them under the tree because otherwise, you know that wrapping job becomes a monster, right? And I know you're like me. We find ourselves wrapping everything like, on Christmas Eve at 4pm right before you're going to get with your family at six so everybody can unwrap them, right?

And that's not fun. And that's just stressful and then you're like, just throw it in a sack and throw some tissue on there. So I really do this as I go and as far ahead of time as I can because I love to wrap. For me, personally, it's enjoyable. It may not be for you. You can hire it done. You can hire it done early if that's what you want to do. I think that's a fantastic idea, but I love to get them done and they're under the tree and they look so pretty all season and my family gets excited, sort of peeking under the tree and wondering which gifts are for them.

And it's just so much better. So learning that doing shopping and wrapping and other tasks like this, doing those early and enjoying the process and enjoying those pretty packages under the tree all month long makes me so much happier. It makes me feel accomplished and organized because I am, right? And those feelings are the opposite of feeling stressed.

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And what about holiday decorating? You know, I used to do it all myself because I am an interior designer, right? I pride myself on my decorating abilities, but as much as I enjoy it, it is a huge job. And yeah, I am a decorator, so how in the world could I hire someone to do my decorating? Well, let me tell you, it's pretty dang easy.

So here's what happens with my holiday decorating. I planned all my Christmas décor and I got all new beautiful stuff when I redid my house about two years ago and I have a really great friend who's a floral designer, and she does Christmas decorating. I call her like, the Christmas decorating ninja.

And so she came over and I ordered all this beautiful stuff and the way I envisioned it in my head and we mapped it all out and we made a plan and now we know what the plan is. So every year I set her date way early. I book her like, probably in September or October and I know exactly which day during the holiday she and her team of elves are going to show up. And I always clear my day. It's not like I don't have time to be doing it. I could do it, but it's a lot of hard work and it's a lot of stress.

So I clear my day to hang out with them, enjoy them, but I end up not even really helping that much because they're really just executing my vision and they do it so beautifully, and it's heavenly to have this done. It's truly a gift I give myself. And so I plan that they're going to come in for a day or a day and a half and then I have my cleaning person come right after that and then by that weekend, whatever weekend it is during the holidays, I sit back and I so enjoy my Christmas decorations that I didn't have to slave over to get them put up myself.

Also, there's the menus. So I host holidays at my house, so there's planning menus and grocery lists and all of that stuff. Well, I do that early too. I don't procrastinate. I get with my mom because she helps me do it and plan it for our holidays, and we know by October or so what our menus are going to be for Thanksgiving and Christmas and we get the grocery list set and I get the refrigerator and the oven cleaned the week before so I have plenty of room.

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And you know what else? When I'm doing all of this planning and purchasing and shopping, I also pick up several hostess gifts to have on hand for when people pop in or they give me a gift, they stop by and drop something off or when I have to go to a party. I put this on that grocery list because that's the thing that you're always scrambling for at the last minute, like, oh my gosh, we forgot to get a gift for these people and we're already dressed and on the way to the party.

So think about that, and even if you don't know what all parties you're going to, get five, 10 gifts at different price points that would be great as hostess items and just have them on hand. You will be so happy you did. So do you see how much planning ahead in the areas of shopping and wrapping and holiday decorating and menu planning, grocery lists, cleaning out that refrigerator, getting those hostess gifts, man, that plays a huge role in stress-free holidays, right?

Super true for life in general, in my opinion, to be organized and plan ahead and do things early and not procrastinate, but it is critical to this time of year. Okay, we got two more steps. What's step number five? Well, this one really kind of has to be done a little bit ahead of time. So you don't have a lot of time to get this done but you could do some of this work, and then at least for next year you can plan ahead even farther, maybe in like, October or September and keep this concept in mind. But it is what I call curb the clutter

So I keep a very tidy house in general. In fact, I was cracking up last week because one of my daughter's friends was over, a 14-year old boy that's one of her classmates and he walked in our house and he was like, "Oh my gosh, it's so clean in here," which cracked me up because I mean, he's like, a boy. He's not like, super into the home or anything and he noticed how clean our house was, which I sort of loved.

But in general, my house is clean and I keep it that way, not just clean but tidy, things put away, because I need that for my own mental clarity and my own attitude. I like a place for everything and everything in its place and it's even more important to me during the holiday season not just because of

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our busy schedule but because we have all that other stuff in our house, right? All those decorations and gifts and lots of people in our home.

And so this is the very time that I need things to feel really edited and tidy and clean. So I think if you can plan a couple of days ahead of the holidays, if you can even just get one it'll make a huge difference, that maybe it's before Thanksgiving if you live in the US or whatever your holidays are, maybe it's right before you put up whatever your holiday decorations are, which for me is a Christmas tree, but getting the house organized, clean some things out, edit some of your belongings, at least in your most public spaces and the kitchen and get all the stuff off the kitchen counter, maybe clean out that junk drawer and just get things edited so your holidays can run smoother.

And then go ahead, while you're doing this, and plan for all the things that you're going to need if you're going to be entertaining. So if you're like me and you entertain like me, and if you're not like me and you don't know where every single thing is in your house like, platters or trays or things that you're going to use to entertain with, then this is the time to locate all of them and store them in an easy to access place so you can be calmer on the days that you have those guests in your house, and so you're not traipsing through the attic, say, at 11pm while your in-laws are sleeping right underneath you in the room below looking for that platter that you always serve the turkey on or whatever it is that you're going to use.

So thinking ahead. So in my step number four, when I'm doing the planning, I'm already thinking not only about what I'm going to serve it on and then this period where I'm curbing the clutter and like, getting everything tidy, I'm locating and making sure I know where all that stuff is. My Christmas dishes, my centerpiece bowls, all that stuff. And for me, I pretty much know where it is all the time but I know that's not how everybody lives.

So just spend a little bit of time helping yourself get ready ahead of time. And speaking of your in-laws and speaking of getting ready ahead of time, if you're going to have guests and your family, overnight guests, then you

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want to go ahead and think about where they're going to sleep, if you have a guest room, you're going to want to get that ready for them because you don't want to have to be scrambling the afternoon before they arrive, an hour before they get there trying to make room in the guest closet for their clothes because you've got all of your stuff hanging in there and getting the room in order, and oh, by the way, did we wash these sheets after our friend slept here last month?

All that stuff that's going to pop up last minute, don't leave that to the last minute. Think about it and that's part of this curbing the clutter, getting things organized and prepared. And so definitely think about your guests and your guest room. And while you're doing that, you can also just think about how to best nurture them while they're there. Maybe you have this room ready, hopefully, days or even weeks ahead of time if you can, and you can be thinking about what they might need, getting the towels out, making sure everything smells fresh, that they have an extra blanket if it gets cold or they are extra pillows in the closet in case they need them.

Just what kind of things your guest might need and go ahead and think about those. I like to put the Wi-Fi code on a little clip of paper. Not so much for my in-laws, they don't use it, but when I have other guests in the house a lot of times they do. So you know, just thinking ahead.

Okay, and then finally, step number six, this one is all about food. So thriving during the holidays for me really involves food and alcohol and what of it I'm consuming. So this is what I call crowding out the bad with the healthy stuff. So saying no to yummy holiday food isn't really that fun, right? But neither is feeling tired, lethargic, overweight, during or after the holiday season.

So my favorite trick for feeling good this time of year is something I learned from the Institute for Integrative Nutrition when I got my health certification, and it is this idea of crowding out. So let me tell you what crowding out is. Instead of ditching all the good food that you maybe normally eat, if you're like me and you eat relatively healthy or you want to eat healthier, instead of ditching all of that during the holiday season and replacing it with all the

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bad stuff, I've learned that it's about adding, not subtracting that makes a difference.

So adding more good, not just trying to subtract the bad because that's really not that fun and it's really not very realistic, right? We are probably going to eat some of that other stuff. So what I mean is if you add in a lot of healthy foods during this time of year, you're crowding out as much of the bad as you can but it still keeps you from feeling deprived because you're not saying no to everything.

So I don't typically try to diet during the holiday season. That's hard enough to do when it's not the holidays, right? I really don't diet anymore anyway. I just eat healthy. But I make sure that as much of my food as possible, especially during this time of year is the good stuff. So if I'm going to go to a party, I eat a healthy meal at home first and then when I get there, if I say yes to a nibble or two, it's not a big deal. It's okay and I enjoyed it, but I get a lot less of it because I didn't show up starving at the party.

And I also make decisions ahead of time about what I want to eat and if I'm going to eat my treats or if I'm going to drink my treats. So for me, I usually choose food over beverage, but a lot of you like to have an alcohol drink more than you even like to have food. So you get to decide but just making a plan and being conscious of it before you go like, what's my plan for tonight? Am I drinking? Am I not? Am I eating? Am I eating sweets?

What that's going to look like because thinking about it ahead of time is going to help you a lot. In the moment, you're probably always going to make the decision that's not the one you would want, right? So what does that look like? And I don't feel bad for eating a sweet or two or having a cocktail if I want one. But what I don't like to do is I don't like to feel bad the next morning because of the food or the alcohol that I consumed.

So I want to make sure that I'm feeling good every day because there's so much to do, right? There's so much on our to-do list and I don't have time to be slower than normal or not feeling my best. So planning ahead really helps me stick to healthier habits because not only am I deciding ahead of

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time what I'm going to eat or drink, but I'm also keeping in mind what do I have to do tomorrow? What does that schedule look like?

And I typically opt for non-alcoholic beverages during this time of year. You totally don't have to. I just usually do. Like, club soda with lime and a splash of cranberry so I feel festive, but to me, it's just - I feel healthier, it's definitely safer, I can be the designated driver if I need to be and I'm so much happier about it the next day when I am not feeling bad.

So think about it. I'm not saying you can't have it or shouldn't have - of course I can't tell you what you can have or can't have, but I'm not even saying you shouldn't have stuff that you want. Just think about it. Make a conscious decision and since I no longer fall off of my meditation and yoga and massage this time of year because it's in my calendar, it helps me so much because I don't need wine or cocktails to help me de-stress most of the time. so that makes it easier for me to stick with my plan of club soda if that's what I decided ahead of time.

And then when I can control the menu, when it's not at someone else's party, when it's at my own house, I make sure I include a lot of healthy and delicious entrees and sides and hors-d'oeuvres that are made from whole foods that don't feel like diet foods. I don't want to be like, that girl that can only eat like, the plain protein and a Brussels sprout. That's not very fun. Although, Brussels sprouts the way I make them are delicious and still healthy, and I do great things with sweet potatoes and fall or sort of harvest salads that are just full of goodness and really, full of the stuff that I would choose to eat anyway.

Like, think Pinterest, friends. Like, all those great recipes on Pinterest that when I see them on the table, they're my first choice. Not my diet choice. But they're so good for you and they taste yummy. So yeah, it takes a little more time planning, but it is so worth it when you feel like you can enjoy most or all of what's on the buffet because it is good for you and delicious.

And when you can go organic, even better. Organic fruits and veggies and real, homemade desserts, not processed or packaged ones with a bunch of

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chemicals in them, grass-fed meats, I often opt for goat or sheep's milk instead of dairy because I stay off of dairy for the most part and some other people do too, but you don't even miss it when you're having sheep's milk cheese. Like, hello Manchego.

So thinking about that and then healthy oils like olive oil and avocado instead of the less healthy ones. There's so many easy little hacks and tricks that you can do to make a beautiful meal or spread or even hors-d'oeuvres that are really healthy for you that do not make you feel like the girl on a diet. So crowding out your menus, your snacks, your parties with delicious, healthy, good tasting options is the easiest way to relax and enjoy this season and not feel like, again, that girl who's always on a diet or who's not supposed to be eating this stuff.

I don't like to be her. I like to just be myself and have a good time. So this sets me up for success. So for me, it's not all in moderation because for me, moderation means pretty much having everything I want during the holiday season. That's how I - moderation always sneaks up on me and it equals me feeling sort of mediocre and not great, and I want to be my best and feel my best during this season.

So planning ahead with my schedule and my shopping and my home and my decorating, my food, my menus, my beverages, all of that is the way to enjoy a healthy, relaxed, and fun holiday season with less stress no matter who your holiday house guest may be.

So happy planning and for all of my US friends getting ready for Thanksgiving, happy Thanksgiving to you, and for everybody listening, I hope that you have the most wonderful holiday season, whatever your celebrations may be and I hope that these help you make things less hard and less hectic. And guess what? My holiday gift to you today is I created a little reminder of these tips, these ideas to print out, and you can put it on your fridge or tuck it in your journal, or maybe you hang it on your bathroom mirror, but to get it, go to tobifairley.com/34 because this is episode 34 to get my thriving, not surviving the holidays guide.

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And I will see you next week on Thanksgiving no less, here in America, to talk about an idea or a concept called obstacle thoughts because when you get into the holidays and you're like, I love Tobi's concepts and I'm going to thrive during the holidays and then these obstacle thoughts pop into your brain and start to derail you, I want you to know what to do about them.

So I'll see you next week and we'll kick those pesky little buggers, those obstacle thoughts that creep into your mind and ruin best plans, we'll kick those to the curb so you can hit all of your goals during the holidays and into the new year. So I'll see you then. Bye for now, friends.

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