

Ep #35: Obstacle Thoughts



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With Your Host

Tobi Fairley

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You are listening to *The Design You Podcast* with Tobi Fairley, episode number 35.

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 Thanksgiving to all my American listeners, and happy Thursday to everyone else listening today. I'm here with you on the podcast but I'm really hosting 22 people in my house right about now for the holiday. So much fun, right?

So today, while I'm busy cooking a turkey, let's talk about something that might be the single most important thing you need to know so you stay on track with your goals as we move into the new year, which will be here before we know it. This is the concept of obstacle thoughts. Those thoughts that we think that are in opposition to our goals and our dreams, and they can derail us without us even noticing what even happened.

So what are they? What are obstacle thoughts? Well, they are the thoughts that immediately come to mind any time that we step outside of our comfort zone, or stretch ourselves, or try to change. And every week I encounter so many people who are quitting on themselves, and it's so easy to recognize it in other people when they're listening to these limiting beliefs or obstacle thoughts, but it's really hard to see it in our own selves, in our own thoughts.

So what happens when an obstacle thought comes up for most of us? Well, unfortunately, we often quit. We quit on whatever it is we were trying to achieve. For example, we decide we're finally going to get healthy and we start a new healthy eating plan, and a few days in, when it gets hard, what does our brain tell us? It says, "This is the worst idea you've ever had, Tobi. What were you thinking? My god, no one can survive on this plan. Why do you even have to be healthy and slim anyway? Why can't you just be happy the way you are?"

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Sound familiar? And then we easily justify quitting, and the problem with quitting is it slows you down because later on you're going to decide you really wanted that goal after all, and guess what? You'll have to start all over again. So what I want us to see is that the problem is not as much the obstacle thoughts themselves, but that we're not ready for them. We aren't expecting them. We don't know that they're going to come up, and we don't know when they do that they're just thoughts.

And so we believe them and we think they're the truth, and we quit. But if we knew this was going to happen, if we expected them to come up, if we recognized them when they did come up, this would be a whole other ballgame, right? Our goals would be so much easier.

So obstacle thoughts are not avoidable. You can't get rid of them really. They will always come up. But they're part of the growth, they're part of the process. They're sort of like a signal that says yes, I see you, you're trying to do something hard, and I just want to make sure you know what you're doing. I just want to make sure that you really want to do this hard thing and that you really want me, your brain, to have to change, because I like to be lazy, as brains do sometimes. And I like to just keep doing the things we've always done because it's easier. I like to take the easy way out, so I'm going to give you every reason not to do something new and amazing.

Yeah, that's what our brains are saying. But here's what I want you to realize; the only three things you must understand when obstacle thoughts are this; number one, they may come up, but you don't have to listen to them. Number two, they are not the truth. And number three, they have no power over you unless you let them, unless you allow it.

So get ready. No matter what you decide to do in life, whether it's become your best self, lose weight, quit a job, start a company, get married, start a family, put yourself out in a big way to the world, any way that you decide to do that, or do something like set boundaries with a client, or charge what you're worth, or stop being a people-pleaser, or do a 30-day Instagram stories challenge like I'm doing right now.

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I mean, it doesn't matter what it is. If it's outside your comfort zone, obstacle thoughts are going to come up every single time, always. So expect them. Plan for them. Make them your strategy. Otherwise, they will continually derail you from getting to the finish line of your goals.

So let's identify some of the big obstacle thoughts that come up for so many of us regularly and that stop us year after year after year from being who we really want to be. So let's think about this for a minute and see if any of these sound familiar.

"I don't have time for this. I can't afford this. Somebody else didn't do what I needed them to do, so I might as well quit too. I don't have support at home. I don't have support at work, so this will never work. I'm not tech savvy. I'm not, nope, not tech savvy. Can't do it. I'm not good with finances. I will never be able to make money. I'm not a good public speaker. I'm going to embarrass myself. I've never been able to lose weight, why would I be able to now? I don't know how."

No matter what it is, if it's new and you've never tried, it, you're going to think, "I don't know how." Or, "I'm not capable of this." Or the doozy, the big one, the one we all think all the time, "This is too hard." Think that all the time, right? Whether it's life, "Life is too hard. Weight loss is too hard. Building a business is too hard. Recovering from an illness is too hard. Recovering from a divorce is too hard. Being married is too hard. Dealing with clients is too hard. Learning a new concept or a new skill or a new way of life, it's all too hard, I quit, it's all hard."

Well yeah, it is all hard. And when you give into the obstacle thoughts about that, you know what you're doing? You're quitting ahead of time. You're not even giving yourself a chance to succeed. You are choosing to quit before you even go through the process. So maybe it's hard, maybe it's not, but you've decided ahead of time that it is and so you've already quit before you've even got going.

And you know what that is? That's you doing what you've always done, and that is the reason you don't already have every single thing you want in

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your life because you quit. And I do it too. We do it because of these obstacle thoughts, and I don't want you to let yourself stop short of your dreams anymore, especially not because it's hard. Because everything's hard, right? But be prepared for the hard. Know it's going to be hard before you even start and make a plan for that.

You see, we get so excited about the thing, the something, whatever it is that we want to start, right? We do. We get so excited. Like, this is the best idea ever, and why didn't we think of this before? And this is the one, the idea, the one that's going to really, really work. And we pretend like it's going to be easy when we're thinking that. We're like, oh yes, this is it, it's going to be easy.

And we pretend like my own coach says, that it's all rainbows and daisies, all the way to the bank, right? And we act like we're not going to run into any issues, none, zero, zilch, nada, like it's just going to happen. It's going to fall into place and it's going to make us so much money for sure, right? It's going to be the one thing that really makes us money, or it's going to be the one relationship that really works, even though none of the others ever have. Or it's going to be the diet or health plan that will finally get us results.

And guess what? It may be. It probably is actually, but that doesn't mean it'll be easy. And that doesn't mean we don't have to work at it, and it definitely doesn't mean that we won't have any obstacles or obstacle thoughts. We always will. And it usually only takes one or two of them and we're derailed.

My mentor Brooke, says, "If you don't expect obstacles, you aren't really in touch with the thing you're working towards actually happening." Let me say that again. If you don't expect obstacles, you aren't really in touch with the thing you are working towards actually happening. I love that. It means if you aren't expecting obstacles, you've not really even thought through the reality of what all the steps of the process of the thing you're trying to do even really looks like, because some of those steps are for sure going to be obstacles, friends, every single time.

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If we start a business, a diet, a family, like, there's obstacles. And here's the other thing; our obstacles are habitual. When you start something new, if you think it's too hard, you've probably thought that thought a lot of times in your life. You've probably thought a lot of other things were too hard and here you are thinking that again and quitting again. It's so important to notice our habits around thoughts, especially obstacle thoughts.

A lot of times, these habitual obstacle thoughts are even unconscious, yet they continually keep us from our best selves for year after year after year for years, y'all. And there's something even to this that's a real thing, not that they're not, obstacle thoughts are real too, there's this other part of the equation called confirmation bias.

And what's confirmation bias? Well, it's really important to know what it is, especially when it comes to obstacle thoughts because confirmation bias is when you're thinking or believing something, and so your brain starts to look for evidence that it's true to confirm your belief, like you're biased towards believing that it's true, and then you see confirmation and you're like, "Yup, I knew it was true. I knew it was too hard."

So if we think it's too hard, would we see all the reasons everywhere around this why it's too hard? Of course. If we think something's too expensive, would we find all the reasons it is and what we should be doing with our money instead? Of course. If you think you can't find any clients or you can't make any money, will that also be true? Of course.

Your brain wants to be right. It pretty much makes sure that it's right all of the time. But it's important that you see what your brain is doing. I always say, "Brain, I'm onto you. Tobi, I'm onto you. I see what you're doing there. I see it," because we have to be able to see it and recognize it.

You cannot believe everything your brain thinks or you will keep getting the same results you've always gotten. That's what Wayne Dyer has said for years. Don't believe everything you think. So hear me out on this. Our thoughts determine what we see. And my mentor Brooke, says this - I love

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it - she says, "Our thoughts are like a Google search for why we can't do something." Isn't that the truth?

We're like - and it's so funny first of all because we're so excited about the thing. Like, it's going to be the thing of all things that have ever been, and then we start it and it gets a little bit hard and we have an obstacle thought and we're like, "I knew it, this was never going to work. This is the worst idea I've ever had."

We do this regularly, and you can't do it. Don't let your thoughts be a Google search for why you can't do something. When you think, "I don't know how to do it," you've got to shift your thinking to, "I'm learning how to do it." And when you think, "This is too hard," you've got to ask yourself, what if it were easy? What would that be like? What would that look like?

Or it's not hard, I just don't know all the answers yet and that's okay, I'm figuring it out, but it's not hard. I'm just in the figuring out part. So we've got to ask better questions. But you want to know a few questions not to ask? Don't ask, "Why is this so hard?" Don't ask, "What am I doing wrong?" And don't ask, "Why can I never be successful at anything?" Don't ask those questions. We've got to ask better questions, and we've got to write all this obstacle work down and do this work on paper.

And it doesn't work if you just do it in your head. You cannot think the obstacle thought and figure out the strategy all in your head and keep it there and expect it to work. You've got to see the obstacle thought on paper. It's that important. You've got to see the thought and create the strategy in writing so it sticks, so you actually use it.

Here's the thing, the path of the obstacles is the path of most resistance, and that's the one we got to go through, friends. We got to go through it. We can't stop. Guess what the least resistance is? Doing what you've always done is the path of least resistance. That's why you keep doing it. It's easy to do what you've always done. It's not easy to do the new thing, or at least your brain doesn't think so.

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And so you got to have a strategy to get through that resistance. And think about it, your current weight, your current job, your current relationship, your current bank account balance, every single one of those are the result of your current thinking. You got yourself where you are today. We all did. And obstacle thoughts, guess what else? They're BFFs with scarcity. They are just like, thick as thieves with scarcity mindset.

And it doesn't matter if it's \$100 or \$1000 or \$10,000. If you believe something's too expensive, it will be. It will be for sure too expensive. But here's the good news; any book, any program, any free program, any diet, any business strategy, any one of them will work if you believe it will work. And if you plan for the obstacles, then it's going to work every single time.

Our number one job is to overcome our current thinking, which is mostly obstacle thoughts, by turning them into strategies. And if you're believing it's your client's fault that you can't charge enough, why are you believing that? What else could you believe instead that would change your results? Create a strategy for that.

Or if you think you can't find clients, then what is stopping you from taking three to five steps every single day and not stopping until you do find them? One or two weeks of that kind of thinking alone could be enough to get you several clients, right? But you're stopping short because you're telling yourself it's hard. It's not hard. It's just going to take a little bit of time. There's some steps. Just go do them. Just make it happen.

And just because you say you don't have time to work on your business doesn't make that true either. You have time for anything and everything that is truly valuable to you. I have time to work on my business. Are you that much busier than me? Probably not. Maybe, but probably not. I just make it happen with my thinking. I just decide that working on my business is a priority and I do it and I reap the benefits of it.

So the questions you should be asking if you want to work on your business and not just in it but you keep doing the same thing you've always done, here's what you got to ask; why am I not making working on my

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business a priority? Why do I not think this is important? Why am I acting like I don't have a choice in how I arrange my schedule? Why do I not believe I'm worth making me and my business a priority? What am I afraid of?

I mean, those are good questions to ask, and let yourself not be afraid of the real answers. Let me give you some examples of where I see this pop up. I'm just going to use the example of my current coaching program because I think it's real interesting how I experience this with people every single day.

So I recently had a member quit my program, which is fine. Some people don't stay and you expect that, right? No big deal. We have a cancellation policy that's just no questions asked, you know, totally fine. But when she sent me the email of I'm going to quit, she said that the reason she was quitting is because she had been waiting for us to make some worksheets for about a month or so for a new course that we released back in August to help her with the implementation of the course.

And since we hadn't gotten those worksheets finished yet, she was going to quit. And so I didn't even say anything, I was like, okay fine, no big deal, best of luck with your business, but what I wanted to say was, "Can you see? Can you see that that's an excuse? Can you see that's an obstacle thought?" Because we can see it, right?

And it was so interesting to me because not having the worksheets yet for the course didn't mean she couldn't do the work, of course. Dozens of other people in the program were doing it, they'd watched the videos, they had spent the two days live with me watching the course, they had watched the videos multiple other times, and they were doing all the work and they were getting the results, and it was amazing.

And what if I never made the worksheets? What if I never had even intended to make the worksheets or she never knew about the worksheets? Would that have made the course unusable? No, of course not. There's thousands of books and YouTube videos and other forms of

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information that have no worksheets, but are they less valuable or unusable because of it?

Well, they're not unless you believe they are, right? So would worksheets be amazing? Of course, and we finished them just recently and now our members are so excited to get them and they're fabulous and we're all so excited, but are they required? Are they required to do the work? Well, not unless you think they are. So the question for this obstacle thought would be, why am I using Tobi and the worksheets as an excuse to not put these tools in place or to not put these systems in place?

Or why am I allowing my thinking to put me right back into feast or famine with my cash flow of my business instead of using these new tools that are right there in front of me? Or why am I not determined to figure it out no matter what, worksheets or not?

And I always still go back and ask, what am I afraid of? What am I afraid of with this situation? It's really important to understand that. Another obstacle thought I see a lot is money, with regard to my program. So some people drop out of the program or don't join because they feel stressed about the price. Now, we're talking about less than \$300 a month. So is that a lot of money?

Well, it is if you think it is, right? And if you don't think it is, then it's not. It is or it isn't depending on what you think. And here's what I know; you can create less than \$300 pretty much every day as a professional if you want to without a whole lot of work. I mean, most of us charge a price, even if we're charging not what we're worth, we charge a price that within even half a day, we could make that much money, right?

Heck, you could probably find that much money in loose change around my house and probably yours too, right? So when money comes up in obstacle thoughts, it's often not a money issue. It's a thinking issue. But we use money as the excuse, and that's exactly why I priced my course or my program this low because I think it's a really low price and I want it to be a

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price where really, money is not an issue. You could make that much money every single day relatively easily if you wanted to.

But it's still an obstacle for some people, which is interesting and fascinating and we have to look in and see why. So here's the questions you would ask. What is stopping me from easily creating this much money every month? Why do I think it's an either or to pay for this or another thing in my life? Because a lot of times that's what we think, right? Well, I can either pay for this or that. Why am I not just doing the work to pay for both?

Why am I spending so much time worrying about money, and in that same amount of time, I could have already made the money? Why am I acting like \$300 is expensive? I gladly choose to spend \$300 on other things all of the time. And why am I pretending it's the money when it's probably actually something else? Is it that I just don't want to do the work? Or is it that I'm scared?

You see, when we get to the real issues, that's when we can create a strategy, when we lean in to understanding the obstacle thoughts and we're like, I see what you're doing there, and we figure it out, and we create a strategy so that we don't fall victim to those thoughts, that's when change really happens.

So we've got to ask ourselves specifically, what has to change to get the new result that I want, and what do I need to believe or think to overcome this obstacle thought? And let me tell you, quitting is never the answer because remember, when you quit, you just have to start all over again, and you're going to keep yourself stuck in the same place you are right now way longer than necessary and you're going to create a whole lot of suffering in the process, so don't quit.

That's the last thing you want to do. But when you can identify the obstacles ahead of time, and then when they arise, overcome them, then that is the most magical place. That's the place you feel so empowered. That is way better than even reaching the goal. When you can see an

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obstacle came up, you recognize it and you overcame it, that's when you show yourself how much power you really have.

So no matter what is coming up for you as resistance in your life, please identify it. And in any goal you're getting ready to set for 2019, do not even consider letting yourself start the process until you have filled up pages and I mean multiple pages, at least front and back, with all the obstacle thoughts that are going to come up around that goal.

And then one by one, create a strategy for you to overcome every single one of them. So when they do arise, you get that paper out and you're like, "Ooh, I knew this was going to come up and here's what I decided to do," and you do it. This is the way to create the life or business that you have never been able to create in the past because you kept quitting. So don't let obstacle thoughts keep you from the life and business you want. Please. Expect them, be ready for them, know that you're coming and see them as your path to the goals.

In fact, invite them in. Hey, I see you, come on in, we're going to do this goal together, side by side. I'm going to work with you, not resist you. And in that process, if you show up for yourself in spite of the obstacles and in spite of the obstacle thoughts, you will get results like never before.

Okay friends, like I told you, this idea of obstacle thoughts is the thing you got to know before you set your goals for 2019 so get busy thinking about what you want to do next year and filling up page after page of obstacle thoughts and I'll see you back here with more exciting stuff on the podcast that's going to help us be our best for the rest of this year and into the new year too.

So happy Thanksgiving to all of you here again in America and I will talk to every single one of you next week. Bye friends.

Thank you so much for joining me for this episode of *The Design You Podcast*. And if you'd like even more support for designing a business and

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a life that you love, then check out my exclusive monthly coaching program Design You at tobifairley.com.