

Ep #38: Is Your Home Supporting Your Goals and Dreams?



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Tobi Fairley

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You are listening to *The Design You Podcast* with Tobi Fairley, episode number 38.

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.

Hey yo, what up? Every time I say stuff like that, I just think about my daughter cringing. She's like, oh my, mom, no. But hey, we've got to have a little fun sometimes, don't we?

So most of you and me are in full holiday mode by now, right? And many of you have been for weeks and I hope you're loving every minute of this holiday season because you know what, life's short and to be stressed and then happy any time of year is an issue, but especially to me this time of year.

And since we get to choose how we want to feel by just picking the right thoughts, I choose to feel so much gratitude and joy every day and particularly this time of year when I have so much to be grateful for, including you. So thank you for listening and I hope you're feeling the same way this holiday season.

So one of the things I feel most grateful for is my home, and this month in my *Design You* coaching program, we're talking all about how to create a home that supports your goals and your dreams. And this topic hits close to home for many of us in the program because we're mostly a group of designers and realtors and other home-related professionals. Not everybody, but most of us.

And what I know all too well is that working in the industry, as we call it, doesn't mean we always have our own homes in shape or that they are designed and maintained in a way that really supports us as we lead busy lives as creative entrepreneurs, especially during the holidays and moving into the new year.

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So how many of us have said the cobbler's children have no shoes when we're referring to our own homes, right? Raising your hand. I'm raising mine too, because most of us at some point have said that and even it's still true today. And the problem with our homes is the problem with our lives, and what I mean is there's a concept or a saying, if you want to call it that, a quote, an idea that says the way we do one thing is the way we do everything.

So if we're flying by the seat of our pants at work and in our personal life, then there's a good chance our homes are not at their best either. They may even be a train wreck. So as we finish this last month of the year, I think it's the perfect time to devise a plan for living differently in the new year, especially when it comes to our homes.

Now, I do think the way your interiors look is important and I don't know about you, but I need to wake up inspired as often as possible, and beauty has a way of inspiring us for sure. But way more than aesthetics, way more than the way it looks, to me, is how your home is supporting you. That's so much more important.

And in the fengshui, *Decorating with the Five Elements*, Tisha Morris even says, "Our homes are second only to our bodies as a space we have control over and can positively affect and create harmony within." And unfortunately, with the busy lives and over-stimulated minds and bodies that most of us have, there's very little harmony to speak of a lot of times.

But the important part here in this quote by Tisha Morris is that we can control both our homes and our bodies if we want to change the way we feel and operate every single day, and I definitely want to control that. So Morris goes on to say in her book that by bringing more consciousness to creating a harmonious environment, the benefits will carry into all areas of our lives because our home is a mirror of our own energy.

Let's linger there for a moment there, friends. Our home is a mirror of our own energy. Does that scare you a little bit? Maybe it should. It sort of scares me on occasion to think wow, if I'm drained, if I'm not at my best, is

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my home the culprit? So how about you? Is your home currently energizing you or is it zapping your energy?

How your home feels will have a direct correlation with how your mind feels and how your body feels, and it may be time to do a little work on your home if you want to be your most effective self in business and in life. When we realize that just like we often cause our own health and wellness issues with our beliefs or our habits, we're also causing our own disease in our homes too.

And disease is defined as a particular quality, habit, or disposition regarded as adversely affecting a person or a group of people, and boy, can a dysfunctional home certainly adversely affect us and our families. I don't know about you again, but I don't want my home to stand in my way of my goals and my dreams.

So let me tell you five ways to get your home in shape in supporting your goals and dreams in the new year. So number one, the first one, the biggie, curb the clutter. Finally. Please, for the love of all things goal-oriented, do this for yourself and for anyone else who lives with you. Clutter. It seems pretty harmless, right? I get it.

And harmless or not, it definitely seems impossible to handle for many of us when life is moving as fast as it does. But a cluttered home equals a cluttered mind and Psychology Today magazine says that messy homes and workspaces leave us feeling anxious, helpless, and overwhelmed.

And guess what? Americans spend millions of dollars on medications and other solutions to not feel anxious, helpless, and overwhelmed, yet rarely is clutter recognized as a significant source of stress in our lives. Fortunately, unlike other commonly recognized sources of stress though, clutter is one of the easiest life stressors to fix.

And if stress and anxiety weren't bad enough, dealing with clutter, moving it around and looking for things that are lost in a disorganized home wastes so much time. Studies show that Americans spend an average of two and a

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half days a year looking for things. Two and a half days just lost, evaporated from our lives because we're looking for things. And studies also show that millennials are twice as big of losers, as they call it, than baby boomers.

So it's interesting that the younger generations are even worse at keeping up with their stuff. I find this to be true with the people in my life and the people that I know. So interesting. But what's more is we collectively, not just the days we lose, but we collectively spend 2.7 billion dollars every single year replacing items that we've lost and more than half of us are regularly late for work or school due to frustrating searches.

Have you been there? Raise your hand. Yup, it's me, Tobi, I've been there. And guess what? When we do finally arrive at work or school to start our day, our effectiveness is diminished for minutes or even hours due to that emotional state we are in after these searches, after these frantic search occurrences because things are lost.

Now, one way to decide if your home is too cluttered is to recognize how hard it is for you to keep your house tidy. If you spend so much time straightening your home every single day, then you've likely got way too much stuff. So clutter, it's a big deal. Get it taken care of.

Alright, second. Upgrade your sleep experience. That's right. Your home impacts your sleep, and your sleep is a huge factor in your success. When we aren't our best health-wise, how in the world can we expect to successfully reach our goals and dreams? And there are so many factors, including sleep, that play a role in our wellbeing and that are directly related to our environment.

So many busy entrepreneurs don't get a healthy amount of sleep like seven or eight hours is really what they recommend, right? Every single night. Not just occasionally. And some entrepreneurs even pride themselves on how little sleep they need. I know some of those people.

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But thankfully, we're trending back towards valuing sleep because of sleep champions like Arianna Huffington and Dr. Daniel Amen and some of these brilliant people and their studies that show that a lack of sleep is one of the biggest causes of heart disease, kidney disease, high blood pressure, diabetes and stroke, plus sleep deprivation plays a big role in stress, depression, weight gain, and obesity.

So a whole terrible list of things that can happen when you're not getting enough sleep. And it's not just overworking or our long to-do lists that are the problem when it comes to sleep. Our environments are a big culprit in the quality of our sleep also. So the comfort factor of your bedroom, of your sleep space is huge.

So what is that? How comfortable is your mattress, your sheets, your bedding, your pillows? It's all important. And how's your bed in general? Does it feel like you're in a luxury hotel every night when you slip into it? And if not, what do you need to change for it to feel that way so that you absolutely get your best night's sleep every night?

And what else about your room? Do you need blackout curtains? Do you keep the temperature cool enough? 68 degrees is supposed to be the optimal sleep temperature. And then there's all those electronics, the digital clocks and the cellphones and the televisions and the other glowing things in our sleep spaces that wreak havoc on our sleep and our Circadian rhythms.

Are you guilty of having electronics in your bedroom? Well, I am. Let me just go ahead. Hi, I'm Tobi and I have electronics in my bedroom. But will you and will I commit to changing this habit for the sake of our brain and our energy and our productivity? Don't discount the power of a good night's rest, friends. It really takes a toll if you don't get one on your productivity, your creativity, and your profitability. It's true. So get your sleep space figured out.

Okay, third. Learn to use all of your home in the best way you can to increase your effectiveness in life and work. So why do we use certain

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spaces in our homes in ways that really don't serve us? Creature of habit? Yeah. Just because that's the way they've always been used or that's how they're supposed to be used or that's how the people who owned the house before we bought it used it, I don't know. There's all these crazy reasons that we just don't think differently about our spaces.

And so many of us aren't using our square footage in ways that really maximize how our home supports us. We make life harder than it has to be by not being strategic in the way that we and our families maximize our home's square footage potential. So take a minute and assess your home. What spaces aren't working for you at their maximum level? What other activities do you need to be able to do that your home just isn't helping you with?

And now envision your home as a blank slate. Get creative. Throw out all preconceived notions about your home and yes, this is a mindset exercise. Always about mindset. So notice where you get stuck opening your mind and when limiting beliefs come up about your home and your square footage and the layout and the rooms you have.

And when you hear yourself think there's only one way I can use this space, or my family would never go for this change, or I am certain this home just won't work for me at the level I need it to, I guess I got to get a new house, or any other limiting thoughts, any time any of those come up, ask yourself, but what if it could support me? Or what if they would go for this change? What would that look like? Or what if any of these thoughts I'm thinking weren't true? What could we do with this home?

Now, I'm not giving you this exercise for the sake of being hokey or odd or what I call different for different sake. That doesn't help you. If you're thinking, oh yeah, now I'm going to make my dining room the master bedroom, even though it's right in the middle of the house and has no doors on either end of it, that'll be really great, right? No. That is not what we're talking about.

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Different for different sake doesn't help you at all. But to put on your problem-solving hat and see if you can improve some of the spaces and how they work for you, or that you can rethink spaces that you never even go into, or if you can just get more efficient and effective with the furnishings and the lighting and all the things in those rooms and spaces that could help increase your profits, creativity, and productivity, that's exactly what we're talking about. So just spend a little time thinking about how your home and the spaces in it really support you and those that live there with you.

Fourth, create zones in your home. Now that you're really seeing whether your home is working for you and noticing if it's your biggest ally or your biggest obstacle, I want you to consider the different zones in your home and what zones you may need to be your best.

Now, there's a couple that I really want you to consider, and the first one is if you work from home, then you need a work zone or even a few work zones so that you have spaces where you can be really productive and maybe not just spreading that out all over the house. I tend to want to get in the bed with my laptop and let that be a work zone and that's not really that healthy.

So where are you going to work? And here's what I want you to know; in a recent Inc magazine online article about this debate between working from home and whether it's a productivity boost or a major productivity drain, the answer from today's workforce may actually surprise you. And Stanford professor Nicholas Bloom was in on some studies about this, a big robust study actually, and he has definitive data that paints a really different picture than he expected.

And his results from this study indicate that it's time for us to really embrace the benefits of working from home, and also Inc magazine contributor who helped write this article, Scott Mautz, decided that he would do the experiment himself too and guess what, he found the same thing.

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And here's what he said. He said, "I feel I'm constantly at the most productive I've ever been in my entire life when working from home. My morning commute is a seven second walk to my study and I actually start working far earlier than I did in the corporate world. And while I make it a point to not work any later than I did at the corporate office, I'm working more deeply, with far fewer breaks in concentration and I quite often "get on a roll" that lasts four plus hours at a time and I can't remember the last such streak working from an office."

Outside office, he means, and guess what friends, I find these to be the basically exact results, almost identical results that I've gotten in my own productivity since I moved out of my large design office and into my home office over two years ago. My productivity has more than doubled and as a result, I doubled my personal salary in a short time period thanks to reduced expenses, increased revenues, and more creative business solutions, and also this ability to focus more deeply with fewer interruptions.

So a work zone. You want to consider that possibly in your house. Another important zone is all about making sure your home supports connection with those people you love. Those friends and family members that you love, that you're going to spend time with in your house.

Now, this zone, the connection zone should definitely be one of your top priorities. It doesn't have to be just one. You can have multiple connection zones, but you want to have these places that you really promote not just everybody sitting around on their cellphones looking down and not speaking to each other, which is so easy to happen these days, right?

So why do we need this? Well, people feel isolated in life in general, according to several recent studies, and even when surrounded by others they feel this way because they aren't in the habit, or they're not savvy about true connection, and your home can help support this kind of connection.

Now, here's another reason why this is important. Here's some evidence for us. There are places in the world where people live longer and healthier

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than anywhere else on Earth and these places are called the blue zones. And several of these exist, it's like five or seven of them, and they've been studied extensively by a lot of people, including this guy named Dan Buettner.

And in each of these places, people are living to be 90 or even 100 years old or more. Not just occasionally people, not just some outliers, but the whole population is living to be centenarians, as they call them. 100 years old. And they're not just living a long time, but they're living healthy lives, quality lives without medication and without disability. Wow, sounds amazing, right?

But why? Well, the secret to longevity and health underlying these fascinating communities is that they have kind of a secret that's not really a secret. So is it that they possess modern technology? No. Do they take massive amounts of supplements? No. Do they run on treadmills every day? No. Do they have special genes? No.

As you might have guessed, the answer is not a single one of these but the answer is their lifestyle. And these people live a lifestyle that includes a healthy diet and daily exercise. Not the treadmill, but more just like, exercise as a part of their daily living and life. They do things with their body, they walk, they lift, they move. They're not sedentary like those of us sitting at computers all the time, and they have a low-stress life that incorporates family, purpose, religion, and meaning.

So it's in these blue zones and their blue zone lifestyle that true connection and very little, if any, loneliness exists, and that's why this is important. True connection. That's where we said they have family and purpose and meaning and that's where that true connection comes in.

And here's also a very astounding finding that's pretty much the opposite of the blue zone, all about loneliness that we need to be aware of. "Loneliness and weak social connections are associated with a reduction in lifespan similar to that caused by smoking 15 cigarettes a day and even greater than that associated with obesity," according to surgeon general Vivek

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Murthy, who wrote this and did this study in 2017 and wrote about it in the Harvard Business Review.

So loneliness is worse, y'all, than obesity and smoking 15 cigarettes a day on your lifespan. Wow. And guess what the three areas that were found to best combat loneliness were? Physical activity, family time and togetherness, hello connection zone, and sleep. And we've already talked about how your home can support your sleep.

So every single one of these, including physical activity can be supported with the right home environment and zones. So think about that. Do you need a work zone? Do you need connection zones? Do you need physical activity and workout zones? What kind of spaces do you need in your house?

And then finally, the fifth idea that I want to bring to you is really this idea of letting your kitchen do the work. So there's one specific room in our homes that plays a very direct, not indirect, not loosely related, but a direct role in our health and our wellness and therefore has a direct impact on our results both at home and at work, and that's the kitchen.

So the kitchen is likely the hardest working room in your home. It definitely is for me, and it's instrumental in creating vibrant health that supports the brain and sleeping habits and gives us stamina for super focused periods of work if we use it in the right ways.

In the book, High Performance Habits, top performance coach, Brendon Burchard says the top performers in the world, those executives and entrepreneurs who are most successful consistently manage their wellbeing, including sleep, workouts, and nutrition and general health in every way. They're just all about their health so that they can maintain success long-term instead of dropping off or hitting plateaus.

And I find this so interesting because I definitely have spurts of productivity and spurts of success in my life but sometimes when I'm dropping off or

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hitting a plateau, my nutrition, my food, all the things my kitchen supports are playing a role in that and I can see that now.

And yeah, we all know that we should closely manage our sleep and our workouts and our nutrition and our health, but we forget that if we don't, not only will it be harder to achieve our goals, but we won't feel like enjoying our success when we actually reach it.

And here's one of the big things that gets in the way of that; eating out. Eating out is a major cause of less than healthy meals, especially when you live in a place like I do in Arkansas, where there's not a healthy space on every corner to get takeout. It's pretty hard to find healthy takeout, and even if it seems healthy, you don't really know what's in the food that you're eating.

And it can have major impacts, major detriments and it can be a major cause of health issues. So having a kitchen that you love and one that encourages cooking even for those of you who say you don't like to cook, if you get the right space with the right appliances and the right organization and all the right features in your kitchen, and it can be both beautiful but also easy to use, this is a great way for your home to play a vital role in your optimal health, wellness, and ultimately that goal achievement.

So your kitchen is huge and I really designed mine a few years ago when we did our remodel to support my health in the most optimal way, including with my cool steam oven and all the gadgets I put in and the great refrigerators that have plenty of room for vegetables and fruits and all the things that I need every day.

So think about your kitchen. Is it the hardest working room in your home in a good way? Not just because that's where everybody hangs out at a party but because daily it's supporting your health and wellness? Well, I sure hope so and if it's not, think about how you can get it whipped into shape.

Now, doing just one of these five things to help your home support you can get you big results. And if you embrace all five and implement all five in the

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coming months, you will have a lot fewer things standing between you and your dreams in the new year.

So I hope you loved this episode. I love talking about all things home, and I hope you get busy on your home and create the home, the spaces, that infrastructure really, that supports you daily to reach your goals and your dreams and I'll see you next time on *The Design You Podcast* where we'll take on another very exciting year-end sort of topic. So thanks for listening today and I'll see you again really soon.

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.