

Ep #41: 2019 Word of the Year



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Tobi Fairley

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You are listening to *The Design You Podcast* with Tobi Fairley, episode number 41.

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 and happy New Year friends. It is 2019. No more waiting for it. It is here, right? And I know you can tell I'm excited, and I think you're probably excited too if you're listening to this podcast.

So as I've told you on a recent episode, the new year is just about my favorite time of the entire year because I love a fresh start. And last week on the podcast, I told you about my ritual of closing out the year with a year-end review, a process I go through each year to see what worked, what didn't what I want to celebrate and be grateful for, what I want to bring into the new year with me, what I want to leave behind.

So if you did not listen to that episode, even though we've already turned the calendar into 2019, it's not too late to reflect on 2018 to get you ready to have the biggest and best or calmest and coolest or whatever you want it to be 2019 that you can possibly have. So go check out episode 40, get a copy of my Year-End Review workbook and go through that process and get ready for this year.

But if you are already ready to move into the shiny new year, then today I'm going to tell you about another ritual that I have for this time of year and that is selecting my word of the year. It's one word that will guide me through the next 12 months like a light or a beacon like, something that will inspire me and motivate me and keep me focused and energized and committed to my goal because I only pick one at a time now, or goals, if I do more than one thing in a year, they're end to end.

But this word will guide me all year through those goals and dreams so that I can create the type of year and the type of results that I really want. So that's a lot of pressure to put on one little word, isn't it? But I've been doing

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this since 2012 and believe me, words can be powerful. So this is a practice that has really worked for me, and I have picked those words now - what is that? for the last seven or eight or nine years? Something like that. And I'm doing it again this year because I love it so much.

So to give you a taste of what that has looked like for me, let me tell you some of my words, or all of my words actually, since 2012, and give you a little bit of insight on what these words have helped me do. So 2012 was discipline, 2013 was inspire, 2014 was action, 2015, my word was significance, 2016 was focus, 2017 was joy, and the last year in 2018, my word was thrive.

And I love thinking back to those words and what I accomplished in those years, like with 2012, the very first year I did this my word was discipline, and that is the year that I got my finances, especially my business finances in great shape and I was disciplined to get my spending in check, to get everything in order, and to meet with my accountant every single week that entire year, which I did, and it paid off in a big, big way.

Then I think about 2015 when I picked the word significance, and I remember my mom even leaving a comment on my blog about my word of the year that year and how much it meant to her because what I was doing in that year was I was really shifting for the first time to this path that I now really live on and believe in of essentialism. Like the book, Essentialism that I told you guys about that I love so much.

So it was really that idea of saying no to the trivial mini things that I had had on my list for years that were really running me ragged and beginning to make time for things that were significant. Truly significant like my family and my health and to really peel away the things that didn't matter. And it was that word, significance that really helped me commit to this change, commit to this mindset, and it really had a huge impact on that year in 2015.

Now, in 2017 I wanted to add more joy, which was so much fun. And so I had 52 weeks of joy and I actually did journal entries for that, and some of

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them I wrote blog posts on because I wanted more joy in my life with family and more fun and more doing what I wanted to do instead of what I kept telling myself I had to do.

And with that word of the year, my life really began to look like what I had wanted it to look like for a long time where I wasn't just working but I was too tired to enjoy any of the things I worked for. That was the year that I brought so much more balance into my life between hard work and actually enjoying the things I was working for.

And that was the year that so many of you that know me started saying things to me. People were like, "You look different and you look happier, and something has changed about you and you're glowing." And it was so much fun to see that it wasn't just inside but on the outside that I actually was showing more joy and people were noticing.

And you know what? That was the year that I also started creating and conceptualizing my *Design You* program and my podcast. Both of them. And it was so much fun leaning into doing what really lights me on fire. And so 2017 was huge with all of that joy.

And then last year I chose thrive and I think I got more comments about my blog posts and my social media posts around thrive at the beginning of last year than any other year that I've ever talked about my word of the year. I had people texting me, I had people stopping me in person locally in Little Rock and when I would travel and when I was at High Point Market.

Even in April, like four months later, people were saying - I remember my friend Barry Dixon, who many of you know as an amazing and very famous interior designer, stopping me on the bus, the transportation around High Point Market and putting his hand on my shoulder and saying, "I just want you to know how much your post on thrive really meant to me and really connected with me."

There were so many people that said that. Your post on thrive just really touched me or moved me or motivated me. And I think that that's because

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so many people are in that place of burning the candle at both ends. We're tired, we're overworked, we're feeling like we're barely surviving and that we're not thriving in our lives.

And so all of last year my goal was to thrive and I'm so - well actually it was more my resolution kind of, my intention because my goal was to build my *Design You* coaching program, which I did, but my intention, that overarching theme or word of the year was to thrive. And I'm so happy to say that here, 12 months later, I'm thriving in so many more ways than I could have even imagined when I started the year in 2018.

And I'm especially thriving financially more than ever. When I look back at this last 12 months, wow, it blew my mind what I accomplished and what my team and I accomplished around what I said I would do. And I put my family and myself first because I really wanted to be intentional and thrive there and not just me alone but my family to thrive.

And when I look back at my year-end review for 2018, what I saw was for the first time, it wasn't full of just dozens of outward successes that I had done like getting published or at work. Yeah, there were some of those too, plenty of those to fulfill me, but what it was full of was thriving as a person and a family. I did not miss any of my daughter's volleyball games. I did not miss any of her palm squad performances. I did not miss any holidays or important moments, and we spent so many just ordinary amazing days as a family in 2018.

And that is one of the reasons that I'm thriving so much now because I said no to so many things that still sounded amazing. They sounded like fantastic opportunities, but I knew because I was so focused with this word that I wanted to thrive, that I knew that if I said yes to them, that they would spread me too thin and they would have created the opposite of thriving for me and my family.

So I think you can see how powerful this exercise is for me and I can see that where I'm really thriving now, if you listen to this podcast regularly, is in my mindset. One of the big things I transformed in the last 12 months was

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the way I think. And it has transformed every other single part of my life and transformed every single day of my existence because I changed the way I think, where I thrive and I choose to thrive every single day. Really cool, right?

So what about 2019? Well, I will tell you in a big what my 2019 word of the year is. You have to wait just a little bit longer for that, but first, I want to talk about this process of choosing your word so you can adopt this powerful process in your life if you want to too so you can be 12 months from now standing on the other side, like I am, of a year that I was so committed to achieving this one thing that was guided by my word thrive all year and you can do that too.

So picking your word isn't just as simple as picking one. To make it really, really work for you, it's a process where you have to be very mindful, very thoughtful, very introspective, really tuned into your wants and your dreams. And the podcast last week, the reflection piece from reflecting on what happened in the last year, that's going to get you ready for this process.

But if you are there and you're ready and you're tuned into what you want, let me show you then what you do to pick your word of the year. So first, this process is something that's really great to do when you are super relaxed. If you are not, if you're just trying to check it off your list, if you're trying to squeeze it in between 15 other things on your to-do list and you just pick something, it's not going to work for you at the same level of being very, very intentional about your selection.

So I don't want you to be rushed, I don't want you to be anxious because this process requires you to check into both your feelings and your thoughts. So it's a bunch of mindset stuff again, and that is most successful when you are feeling calm and you can be more self-aware but not frustrated, angry, rushed, mad, overwhelmed, confused, or anything else that could keep you from really hearing sort of that inner most part of you, your gut, your intuition help you and hearing that part of you and helping you figure out the right word.

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So the first step, once you're calm, is to find a comfy spot, maybe that favorite space in your house or maybe it's somewhere outside of your house, maybe you go somewhere, I don't know, it's up to you, but figure out that space that you're going to hang for a little while and I want you to grab your favorite journal or maybe you go buy a new pretty one before you start and get your favorite pen or Sharpie. I love Sharpies because I like to doodle with them.

Whatever it is that's going to help you be most creative, and I want you to start brainstorming on paper. Brainstorming and then connecting that to your hand and that Sharpie and writing it down on paper. Give yourself five to 10 minutes to write down and consider as many words that come to your mind.

And at this point of this process, I'll fill one or two or even three pages of words. And during this phase, I'm not getting too concerned with the perfect word right now. I'm not analyzing them yet, I'm not getting judgy about any of them. It's just almost stream of consciousness. Just brainstorm writing on paper, any and every word that comes to mind that might be a good fit for your word of the year.

Now, don't worry because if you're like, I'm completely stuck and I can't even think of a single word, I'm going to tell you in a little bit a resource that I've created that can help give you some suggestions and will really walk you through this process, so don't panic yet. But right now we're just kind of outlining what the process is like.

So once you have sufficiently got a whole bunch of words, all the ones that come to mind on a piece of paper, the next step is to go back and look at the words one by one. And cross off the ones that you can easily tell don't feel right, don't feel like a fit. I even say them out loud. I kind of try them on for size and I'm like, nope, it's not that one, don't think it's that one, and I'm literally drawing a line through all the words that aren't a fit.

And any word that I come to that I'm like, yeah, maybe, then I circle that one. So circling the ones that most resonate with me. Now, from there, I

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spend time looking back at the words I've circled. It might be 10 words, it might be four words, it might be 12 words. If it's 20, do a little more culling. Go back and check in one more time and get it down to more of a handful of words.

Because from that step, from looking at that handful of words, I want you to pick your top three. So it's just a process of elimination and get your top three, but don't panic again if you're like, I don't know if any of these are right. Just pick the three best, and I want you to sit with those three words for a bit.

Again, try them on for size. Think about them. Say them out loud. Envision the things that you want to happen this year and make sure these are words that are going to really connect you with those goals, that they're going to be words that would motivate you when you're feeling down or when things get hard. That's the kind of word we want to pick.

And as a part of this process with these three words, your top three choices, I want you to ask yourself how do these words make me feel. Each one, one at a time, say the word out loud, think about it, kind of take it in and think how does this word make me feel? And also, I want you to be thinking, is that how you want your word of the year to make you feel?

So how do these three words make you feel and what is it that you want to feel or need to feel to be able to be your best this year? And your word might be the feeling. It could be my word is committed because I want to feel committed. But it doesn't have to be. There are other words like unstoppable, that might make you feel committed.

So you're really just kind of digging in, and don't get too bogged down in it and if they are the same or not as the feeling, it's no big deal. But just think through words like committed. I want to feel committed, or I want to feel energized, or I want to feel calm, or I want to feel strong. Maybe I want to feel unstoppable, and start to understand the feeling and maybe the feeling is the word you want to choose. But it doesn't have to be.

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Now from there, I then want you to take these three top choices and I want you to look up the definition of each one. I want you to make sure that you know what they mean and that what they mean connects with what you are trying to do or feel this year. Because sometimes I get to this step and I'm like, oh I think it's strong, and then I look at the definition and I'm like, that's not quite what I was going for.

So the definition can really help you. And to be sure that you've gotten the word exactly right, the right words, three words, and ultimately it'll be one word that you really are going to pick, then look at the thesaurus and see what other similar words you might want to consider.

Because you might have thought that you wanted it to be committed, but maybe one of the synonyms for committed actually feels like a better fit for you. Maybe it's driven or another word that feels like a little bit better fit. So just consider those similar words, those synonyms and see if any of those would be a better fit.

So if so, take that word and replace the other word you had because I don't want you to get more than three words because of this process. We don't want to go backwards. We want to have three or fewer. And then from there, once we've looked at how it makes us feel, how these three words are defined, make sure there's no substitutes in the thesaurus for them that would be better, I want you to then one more time review these three words and pick the one, the word that you think is going to help carry you through the next 12 months and really do, be, accomplish, live into what you want for the year.

So think about that one word. Write about that one word. Just really even meditate on that one word or if you want to pray about that one word and see what it is that's going to take you in the direction you want to go. Pretty fun, right? But it's also really powerful.

So again, I've been doing this since 2012. So I guess this will be my eighth year. I can't do the math. I'll have to count. I was right. Eighth year. So let

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me tell you about my word for 2019 because I went through this process myself.

And now that I do this so often, now that this is year number eight, I start getting some inklings of what I want my year to be way before the new year. Sometimes I'm even thinking of them by June or especially in the fall I'm already thinking, kind of assessing how my word of the current year has been working like I did with thrive, and then already thinking, you know, here's where I think I'm headed for new year, and that was true for this year.

But I still went through the whole process because I wanted to make sure it's exactly right, and let me tell you three of the other words. Not the one that I chose, but three of the other words, so I had four, that I had narrowed it down to that were on my shortlist. So one of those was fearless, and this was really in that idea or kind of mindset of going after my highest possible contribution to life from me.

What I could do at the highest level to change my life, to change other people's lives, to give my biggest and best and highest contribution that I was capable of delivering to the world in 2019 I thought fearless because that's going to be pretty scary. That means I'm going to have to get way out of my comfort zone. So I was thinking fearless.

Another word I was considering was bloom. So I was thinking really stepping into, fully becoming what I am meant to be at the highest level. So just envision this flower blooming and that for years I've been priming myself to step into this moment where I was kind of authentically and fully me, and I really like both of those. Saying this out loud again, those both really resonate with me.

And then the third word I was thinking about was shine. So I was thinking after a year of thriving, and a lot of that thriving was inside and with my family and at home, I considered shine, meaning how bright of a light could I be for myself and for other people. Could I really step into shining in a bigger way in 2019? Pretty cool, right? All of those feel really good. You

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might want one of those three for yourself. They're totally yours for the taking if you want them.

But here's the thing. I didn't pick any of those words because after digging deep, deep, deep into all of my favorite options and into my heart and my gut and my intuition and thinking about what I really wanted for this year and thinking of my one key goal for 2019, here's my word. Drum roll please.

Freedom. Freedom is my word for 2019 and I could not be more excited about this. And here is what I want. Here's why I want freedom. I want financial freedom and that's a big leap, y'all. So I make a lot of money and it's not just about money. In fact, I doubled my salary again in 2018, which I have done before, which was huge.

But this is not about money itself. It's about the freedom to be able to do and help other people, to do things I want to do, to help other people, to live at a level where money is not in any way preventing me from stepping into what I want to do in the world. So financial freedom. And thinking about this, just how much can I do financially in 2019 and what the heck can I do with that money.

And it's not about buying me stuff, and I'm not going to say I'm not going to spend any money if I get to that level, but that's not what it's about. It's not only just what I can do to help other people. It's also showing other women that I'm leading, that I'm teaching, that I'm pouring into what is possible. So super gutsy to go there, feels kind of scary, but I love this idea of absolute financial freedom. So that's one of the parts of the freedom that I want.

Also time freedom. So last year with thrive, I almost perfected my calendar and my schedule. So pretty much all the important stuff that I wanted to happen got done, and that's why I did have such huge financial gains, that's why I was thriving so much more than other years past, with my family and being present with them and with myself, and I was really getting good last year, and I guess still am, thankfully.

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That's one of the things I'm bringing into the new year with me is this ability so say no to things that don't really matter. But y'all, I want to go to a whole other level. I want to go to a level where time is not ever again my nemesis, that it is my best friend, and that I feel free to create every single one of my days the exact way that I want them to be.

I don't ever again want to hear myself say, I have to do something. I want it to be that I've chosen to do it and that my days look and feel the way I want them too, which is free. So really in a sense, this is really freedom from overworking, but also just freedom to lean into what my heart wants, lean into what I want to do to help other people, and spend my time in the way that I can make the most difference. So time freedom.

I recently learned in the book, High Performance Habits that I just read in December by Brendon Burchard that the top performers in the world are not the ones who are workaholics. They actually have more time freedom than everybody else. They take care of themselves, they fit that into their days, they make more time for socializing, for being with friends, for joy, for things that matter.

And this was so inspiring to me that at the highest level of performance is where you can really step into not doing more but doing what's important, and to me that is truly time freedom. So that's part of what I want with freedom. And we're going to talk about goal setting in the next episode but because my one key goal for 2019 is to get in the best health of my life, I am super excited about what freedom does to connect with that, with that goal.

Because here's what I want freedom besides financial freedom and besides time freedom, I want freedom from dieting, I want freedom from joint pain, I want freedom from any extra weight that I carry around, I want freedom from food and from emotional eating. I want freedom from having the goal of losing weight year after year after year.

I want absolute freedom from that and I want this to be the last time I ever have the goal to get in the best health of my life because I want to continue

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to remain there after this year. So that would be freedom. Think about all the time I would free up that I've spent for years thinking about how to be healthy, how to stay healthy, how to get healthy. All of that would go away and I would free up all of that time to do something else amazing.

So this time next year, I'm not having that goal. I'm not having the goal to get in shape because I will be in shape. I'm not having that goal to get in my best self because I will already be in my best self and I will be free from this forever, right? Super exciting.

And I wanted to do that last year. I thought about it last year and I talked about it to myself last year but because I only pick one key goal at a time, I chose last year for my goal to be to build the *Design You* program, which I knew was going to really get me in a good place financially and get me way closer to financial freedom. And money isn't everything, friends, but money does offer a lot of freedom. The more money I have, the more I can pay people to help me with my goals, right?

The more people I can have on my team, the more I can have a personal trainer or a nutritionist or somebody else. So I put those goals in order and I picked last year's goal first and the whole year was dedicated to *Design You* and this year I don't know if it'll take the whole year or not to get me in my best self, but I'm taking as long as it needs.

So right now, it's a 12-month goal. If I get there in six months then I can do something else mid-year. But hey, I am fully committed because it is a huge part of this intention to have freedom. So I'm super excited and I will be talking about this more here on the podcast. I'm going to give you some check ins I'm sure throughout the year of how I'm doing and I just really like being able to talk to you about it here because it gives me a whole other layer of accountability.

So in the past, I would write blog posts about my word of the year but now here on the podcast, we're talking about it and I can continue to check in with you and let you know how I'm doing on this path to freedom for 2019. So freedom, there it is friends, my BFF for the next 12 months, and really

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hopefully for a lifetime after I just pour 2019 into this word, this concept, this intention of freedom.

So now it's your turn. It's your turn to pick your word of the year. What will it be? And if you join my new *Design You* podcast community that's absolutely free on Facebook, guess what, you can tell me your word of the year and you can use that community of other like-minded people to hold you accountable.

So join me in that group if you want because it's absolutely free. You just go to facebook.com/groups/designyoupodcastcommunity and you just click request to join. It's an open group. We let everybody in but we do make you request to join so it's technically closed on Facebook, but we're an open door policy. I'll say it that way.

So everybody gets in but once we get in there then we can talk about your word of the year. So if you join the community, just come in there, introduce yourself, and tell me what your word is. I can't wait to see it.

And then if you want help with your word of the year and really all your goals for 2019, even before we get to next week's goal setting podcast, then go download my *Design You* blueprint. It's a process that I went through really last year when I was creating my *Design You* coaching program. It's really me putting on paper the whole process that I take myself through to figure out what I want in every part of my life. In my home, in my wellness, in my business.

So there's a part in the blueprint about picking your word of the year. So we'll put it in the show notes for the podcast but you can also just get it by going to tobifairley.com/freebie and it'll take you to my free blueprint. So you can do both of those things. Join the free podcast community on Facebook and get the freebie *Design You* blueprint to help you with your word of the year.

And you know what else? On top of this stuff, on top of the Facebook community and the blueprint, if you want to really dig into creating your best

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life and if part of your goals - if your one key goal or kind of one of your two or three goals for 2019 is to also get in the best health ever, then you might want to join my *Design You* coaching program because guess what, it's not just about that. It's about business, but I'm running this cool - really almost like a beta program.

I'll call it a beta program. It's just a little test inside of *Design You*. It's not for everybody. It's only for the people who raise their hand at the very beginning of the year and say hey Tobi I want in, I want in the accountability group, the health and wellness group. But here's the thing, I'm going to take those handful of people along with me on this journey to get in optimal health for 2019.

So if that's one of your goals, if you want to lose weight, if you want to eat better, if you want to make it a habit to take care of you, then you may want to join us in the *Design You* coaching program because there's a million other reasons to join the program including the January content is all about goal setting, but again, if you want to get in optimal health, then you can get in there and be one of the first people ever and maybe the only people in case I never do this again, that come along with me on this journey of health, wellness, and weight loss in this private group.

So some cool stuff to think about. This year y'all is going to be spectacular. I'm already off to an amazing start. I've already upped my health and wellness game. I did that in 2018. I'm going to a whole 'nother level in 2019. I've already hit the gym today probably by the time you're listening to this and I hope it inspires you to create your best year and your best life ever no matter what word or what goal you're choosing.

So thank you so much for joining me today. Happy, happy, happy 2019 and I'll see you back next week when we dig deeper into goal setting and we can see exactly what thing you want to tackle first to get your year off to an amazing start. So I'll see you then friends, talk to you soon. Bye for now.

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.