

## Ep #49: A Whole New Way to Self Care



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**Tobi Fairley**

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## Ep #49: A Whole New Way to Self Care

You are listening to *The Design You Podcast* with Tobi Fairley, episode number 49.

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 friends. How was your February? Has it been a good month for you? Does your scorecard look like you wanted it to so far for 2019? Well, if it doesn't, don't panic. There's no reason to quit.

Just because you haven't gotten started the way you wanted to, this is not a reason to give up. You still have 10 more months this year to get it right. Heck, you have as long as it takes. You have beyond 10 months from now. The most important thing is that every day you're at least a little closer to your goals than you were the day before.

You've totally got this. You really do. So this whole month, we've been talking about all things health and wellness and weight loss and all of that stuff and today's topic builds on that or really kind of wraps it up and ties it with a bow and it's one of my very favorite pieces of this wellness puzzle. Can you guess what it is?

It's self-care. Yay, right? But before we talk about self-care, I got to talk about my listener of the week because this lovely review is from Fenton Design and she says, "Thank you Tobi. This is just what I needed to start a new phase of my career and life. Every week that I listen, I feel the encouragement I need to move forward and be successful. All the better though, all the facts and advice are helping me make more informed decisions. Keep going."

Well don't worry, I do not intend to quit. I'm not quitting if you're not quitting, Fenton Design. So thank you for the lovely review. I'm so thankful to you and to all of you who listen and allow me to be part of your lives and your businesses and your success, so thank you, thank you so much.

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And now let's get to the good stuff. If you're listening to this podcast, I know you're someone who is seeking information and ideas to help you grow, to become a better version of yourself, and that's awesome. Hooray for you. This is so good. But on this journey to becoming the best possible you, you have to be taking care of you, and I mean truly taking care of you.

Because if you're not, you aren't becoming the best possible you, and I'm a big believer in self-care. For years I wrote a blog called Self-Care Saturday. Not the blog actually. The blog series was called that. The blog was called Tobi's blog. But this series I did on Saturdays for a long time was called Self-Care Saturday, and it was to get myself and other people, especially women like me to take better care of ourselves.

Because at the time, I was overworking to the point of exhaustion and I assumed, even kind of knew, that many other women were doing the same thing. And now yes, self-care has been a major buzzword for the last several years, maybe even the last decade, but especially the last few years. And maybe now more than ever as we women especially, some of you guys listening are this way too and you're getting on the self-care wagon with us.

But definitely as women, we try to have it all, right? We try to have it all, we try to be it all, we try to do it all. And what does that look like and where does self-care fit in? And what does really self-care mean anyway? Because I think that there's sometimes some misconceptions about it and many people think that self-care means getting a pedicure or a massage or taking a bath, right?

And those things, yeah, they're part of it if you want them to be. They can be part of self-care, but I want to introduce you to a new definition I learned last year from Heather K. Jones, and Heather is a dietician and a wellness coach, and we share a web designer. My web designer Natalie also works for her. So I don't know Heather but I know her course and I know her content and I loved what she taught me, and she doesn't even know she taught me this, about self-care.

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Because she's a dietician and a wellness coach and who before having her own business worked as part of the team for Oprah's trainer or at least her used to be trainer Bob Green. Everybody remembers Bob, right? And Heather was a part of his team. But here's what Heather taught me with her current content and course and program that she teaches.

She says that self-care is showing up for yourself with respect and kindness on a moment to moment basis. It's how you treat yourself, how you feed yourself, and how you talk to yourself. Is that not the best definition of self-care in the world?

Well, I definitely think so. And this goes to show us that self-care is not just getting your nails done or taking a bath occasionally. I hope you bathe more than occasionally but maybe you take showers, right? Like me. But it's not just about doing those things to relax or feel good every now and then or sometimes. Even though those could be part of the activities you do during self-care.

But self-care is showing up for yourself moment to moment. Caring for you, having your best interest at heart moment to moment. And Heather really helped me see that self-care is not an activity. It's a mindset. And if you know me at all, you absolutely know how I love a good mindset, right? I love talking about mindset.

And that's why this content, this definition resonated with me so very much. So think about that. How you show up for yourself on a moment to moment basis. How you treat yourself, how you feed yourself, and maybe the best part, how you talk to yourself is your self-care.

And so she says, Heather says self-care is showing up for yourself and picking you, friends. Picking you and what's best for you every moment. I think this is one of the single biggest a-ha moments of my life so far. Speaking of Oprah, who loves a-ha moments, right? This was a huge a-ha moment for me.

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Self-care isn't doing something to make you feel better for 15 or 30 minutes or an hour a day, or a couple of times a week. It's literally showing up for yourself moment by moment by moment by moment by moment all day every day. And when we do that, we don't need fad diets or crazy unachievable wellness goals.

Really, we just show up, right? Because we make the right choices moment by moment every day and then the results take care of themselves. And I have really like, literally turned this definition of self-care into a new mantra for me this year. This is what I think every day all day. I tell myself, "Tobi, just make the next right decision."

That is my 2019 mantra. Make the next right decision. Don't worry about later this afternoon. Don't worry about tomorrow. Don't worry about an hour from now. Just make the next right decision. Whether it is the way you feed yourself, the way you talk to yourself, the way you show up for yourself. Just make the next right decision, Tobi.

And y'all, it has changed so much. So no matter how bad the previous decision was even, if five minutes ago or five seconds ago I made a decision that wasn't the best for me, it doesn't matter because in the next moment, I'm still back to my mantra of just make the next right decision, Tobi.

So it's not about the whole falling off the wagon thing or the starting over mentality that we talked about a few episodes ago. It's really just that simple. Don't fall off the wagon and have to get back on on Monday. No, you made a decision a minute ago, a second ago that maybe wasn't the one you wanted but just make the next right decision.

And if you focus on this enough, friends, you will be shocked at how all of your decisions get so much better and they're so much more focused on you and yourself and your wellbeing. Now, I think this new way of thinking about self-care is really what I call keeping our word to ourselves. And it sounds simple, but it's not always something that's super easy.

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Showing up for ourselves, keeping our word to ourselves takes commitment. It takes getting your mind right. It takes creating habits. And just because you may already show up for yourself in one area of your life doesn't mean that you show up for yourself in all areas of your life, right? So most of us aren't terrible at every single thing in our life as far as showing up for ourselves. There's some we do really well, it just comes naturally or we're already in the habit of it. And then there's other places we need improvement.

And self-care, showing up for yourself, the new definition of self-care, it's a process that needs to become a major priority for most of us, for all of us really that aren't already doing this as soon as possible. Like, it's really, really important.

Many of us will follow through all the time for other people. We have integrity and our word to everybody else is solid. It is written in stone, right? If I said I would do it, I would do it. It means everything to us to keep our word to other people. Not so much when it comes to keeping our word to ourselves and showing up for ourselves.

Why is that? Well, I think that it could be one of a few reasons. There's three in particular that come to mind that I think about when I don't show up for myself, when I don't keep my word to myself. So in other words, when I don't practice self-care.

And I want you to think about that for a minute before I tell you the reasons. Let that sink in of how self-care, caring for yourself. If you care for a baby or a child, you're going to make all the best decisions for them, right? Because their life depends on it. But we don't think about self-care in that same way for us. Caring for ourselves at the best possible level, highest possible level, moment to moment to moment.

So why do we not do that? What are those reasons? Well, I think it's probably one of these three reasons most of the time for most of us. Number one, we don't believe we have time to take care of ourselves, which when we're thinking that way, we're thinking of self-care as an

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activity because it takes the same amount of time to make a good decision for yourself as it does to make a bad decision for ourselves.

But we tell ourselves this really sort of lie that I don't have time for self-care, which maybe I don't have time to take a bath right now or get my nails done right now, but we absolutely have time to make the next right decision for us, right? And we're really not even telling the truth if we believe we don't have time for those other activities either, because if it's important to us, we can definitely make time.

Number two, the second reason I think we don't do this is we believe it's selfish to spend that much time on us. And maybe we don't verbalize it fully as being selfish, but it feels even indulgent. I started earlier this year working out in the middle of the day because that's what worked for my new trainer and it really is when I like to work out. It's a little hassle to have to shower and dress in the middle of the day but my energy is so much better in the middle of the day.

So I literally go workout on Mondays from 10:30 to 11:30 and on Thursdays from 11 to 12. Like an hour, 12 or 12:30. Both days it's an hour to 90 minutes, right in the middle of the day. And in the past, I would have believed that wasn't an option and I would have told myself all the reasons why that was even indulgent.

Like, I can't afford to do that, I've got to be working, I've got to deal with clients during those hours. But it's just not true because I'm doing it now and I'm being more consistent than I've ever been and I have a whole lot of energy at that time of the day and I really like it. And guess what? There's not that many people in the gym at that time of day either, so that's even more fun. It's not crowded.

I get my trainer pretty much all to ourselves, which is great. But a lot of us don't make the next right decision for us and don't put ourselves first and don't carve out time to take care of ourselves in the way we need to because we believe it's selfish or indulgent to spend that much time on us, right?



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And then the third reason is we believe it's hard work, that self-care business, and it's uncomfortable. It's uncomfortable to focus on us and to improve ourselves and to make the next right decision. And a lot of times, we'd just rather take the easier route. So we may, again, not be verbalizing this but there's that thought that goes through our head that it's just too hard, it's just too hard to eat right. It's just too hard to make the next right decision about going to the gym.

It's just too hard to make the next right decision about stopping work for the day and putting your computer away. Wouldn't it just be easier to stay and answer all the people that are pulling your chain, right? All the other people that need you. So to just get them off our back, it'd just be easier to get it done.

But that's not the next right decision a lot of times because for me, that decision always led to exhaustion and overwhelm and it really made my family time and my personal time evaporate, but it was just easier to do it than to tell people no, right? So did you notice that all three of these reasons, time, selfishness, and it's hard, all of those are about beliefs.

Our minds are so powerful. They convince us that not showing up for ourselves and not caring for us is a good idea. But in the long run, it's so much harder and so much more painful to not show up for ourselves than just doing it in the short run because the consequences of not showing up for yourself over and over, they're so big. Both physical consequences and emotional consequences, right?

And it's not just that our nails look ragged and our jeans don't fit when we don't make the next right decision all the time, but not showing up for us makes us feel like a failure. So it's not just those physical symptoms but it's the emotional ones. We feel like a failure. Why is everything so hard? Why can I never get this right? Why can I never lose weight? Why am I always tired? I feel like such a failure, right? Why do I not do what I say I'm going to do? Why do I not go to the gym? I'm such a failure.



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And when we feel that way because it's the consequence of us not choosing ourselves moment to moment, then what happens? Then we lose faith in ourselves. When we don't show up for us, our confidence takes a hit and we feel like we're always lying to ourselves, and we feel like we're always letting ourselves down.

Not showing up for yourself over and over and over again leads really to you not liking yourself a whole lot. It definitely leads to you not having faith in yourself. It makes you not trust yourself, and it causes you not to believe in yourself.

So now when you think of those consequences, besides the fact that your nails look ragged and your jeans don't fit, are you starting to realize that self-care is way more important than you thought? Yeah, me too. So what if consistent self-care is the answer to all the things that ail us? Including our confidence issues, our self-esteem challenges.

What if self-care is the answer to that? Because I really think it might be. In fact, I think it is. But how do we make self-care or showing up for ourselves moment by moment a habit so that we can start to feel better, so that we can start to believe in ourselves and trust ourselves again, so we can be proud that we showed up and did what we said we were going to do?

Well first, it's back to that mindset game. All roads lead back to the mindset. All of them. We must become aware of our thoughts and our feelings and our actions because they're all dependent on each other. Our thoughts create our feelings, create our actions. We've got to become aware of all of those things to see where we aren't showing up because they're all connected.

And it's really important to see what choices you're making each time you're not choosing you. If you say you want a healthy body but you consistently choose watching TV on the couch and eating carbs over working out, you got to become aware of that and then make a plan to overcome it.

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And really even to see why you're doing it. Why do I keep choosing that? Because obviously if we're choosing something there's a reason. There's a benefit to laying on the couch and eating carbs instead of working out in that moment, right? But we got to connect all the dots. We got to see it feel better right now but it's going to feel really bad when the consequences pile up from this, and then I'm going to really be upset.

So I got to notice it in the moment when it's happening, when it seems harmless, when it seems like a good idea, and I've got to make a plan to overcome it the next time I think those same thoughts that create those same feelings, that then lead me to those same actions of skipping my workout, right?

The strategy is not that difficult. It might be as simple as combining watching TV with your working out. It's totally possible to do both of those things, right? Both the things you desire at the same time. Maybe you're not going to eat carbs on the treadmill. I hope not. But you absolutely can watch your favorite TV show while you're working out. It's not necessarily an either or.

But the biggest piece is to just see what you're doing and why you're doing it so you can make a plan to change it. And it's really about taking baby steps. Those baby steps to create a habit of showing up for yourself. One of the things I've taught you in the past if you've listened to the podcast before is worth talking about again for this reason.

It's called minimum baseline, and I learned this concept at The Life Coach School when I did life coach training on Brooke Castillo's podcast, and I loved this. It really resonated with me because a minimum baseline is that minimum amount, a baseline, the lowest point, the most minimum, smallest, tiniest increment of what you will do every single day to get you moving towards your goal.

And what a minimum baseline does is it stops all or nothing behavior because so many of us, and my gosh, I was so good at this for so many years, are all or nothing. All in working out until we quit and then we're all in

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laying on the sofa or the couch as a lot of us call it. And so a minimum baseline is if nothing else, even if I'm going to go lay on the couch, I'm at least going to walk on the treadmill for five minutes before I let myself walk over there and sit down and take my shoes off.

And why is it important? Well, there's so much of a mind game there that that five minutes can interrupt. The person who wants to quit is no longer a quitter when we at least get on the treadmill for five minutes. And how many of us are that all or nothing? Raise your hand. I know so many of you are and this is the way to break that cycle.

I mean, good grief, all or nothing behavior is rampant but we've got to have these little tools and these techniques that are easy to break the cycle. And I think that so many of us creatives, because I'm a creative, we are especially like this. We get all excited about the new latest thing but it's in the day to day, it's in the consistently showing up and doing what you're supposed to that we get super bored and that's when we fall off of that habit, of that practice. We stop doing it regularly.

So a minimum baseline, setting one means that you're going to decide ahead of time the minimum number of days or minutes that you're going to do something per week, per month, per year, you get to decide the timeframe, so that at the very least, you will show up and do that.

And it's not hard. It has to be easy. It can't be at a minimum I will run for an hour six times a week because how are you going to go from on the couch to running for an hour six times a week? You're not. You're going to give up on day two or day three, or even if you make it to day two, right?

So a minimum baseline is that little bitty increment that doesn't create an either-or situation. You can go workout for five minutes on the treadmill or 10, but I say start with five, because five, you can do literally during a commercial break, y'all. And just that one little increment, that one little five minutes of showing up for yourself starts to change everything about your mindset and it starts to create a habit.

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So a minimum baseline is the stepping-stone to showing up for ourselves at this level of self-care. And if we can learn to keep our word to ourselves, at a minimum, until a habit is formed, then we start to show ourselves what we're capable of, right?

So I know it sounds silly and by day two you're going to be like, I'm done with five minutes today, I'm going to go to 30 minutes a day. And I want you to see how that's really dangerous because if you can't commit to five minutes a day for 30 or 60 days until it's a habit and you go to 30 and then you go to 45, guess what happens on day five?

You don't do anything because on day five your schedule is so jam-packed that 30 or 45 minutes isn't an option. But here's what I want you to know; five minutes would have been. So it's really, really important that we start with the minimum until we prove to ourselves that we will show up for ourselves every single day.

That's the first step in the new definition of self-care of showing up for yourself moment to moment. We're never going to create a habit by starting at our goal. Meaning we'll never keep exercising if we start so gung-ho that we wear ourselves out after three days and quit. Minimum baseline is the difference between a marathon and a sprint and our lives are marathons, y'all. They're long, thankfully, for most of us, and we want to practice self-care for the rest of our lives. We don't want to quit again.

So do not talk yourself out of baby steps until something is a habit because I get it. I get what you're thinking. That's so stupid, Tobi, why would I walk for five minutes three times a week or why would I eat one good meal a day for a month and eat whatever I want the rest of the time? Well, it's because you're going to start to form a habit.

And five minutes turns into a lot more than five minutes later, and one healthy meal turns into a lot more. Exactly. That's exactly why to bother. Five minutes three times a week and one healthy meal a day, it's not about the health benefits from those yet. That's not going to get you healthy all by itself.

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But when you show up for yourself, you will ultimately get your healthiest because it's not hard to show up for yourself five minutes three times a week and it's not hard for yourself to just pick one of your three meals a day to eat clean.

But when you do it consistently, even if it's squeezed in between appointments or commercials on your Netflix show, or right before you start to binge on a whole new series all weekend long, you can still get on for five minutes and you can still eat clean once a day without trying that hard. I know it's not an either or because I've done it.

And here's what I mean by it's not an either-or situation. It's not going to create a conflict where you're thinking to yourself, well, I can either workout or I can work or I can watch TV or I can go out to dinner or I can go to bed. Because here's the thing; you can do five minutes of exercise and still do all the rest of that stuff following it, right? It's not that it's going to take up a whole bunch of time. It's not going to cause you to have to choose.

And that's what I want you to see. If you don't have to choose and it's just a no-brainer and you just get on there five minutes a day, either every day or three times a week, whatever you choose until it's a habit, the next thing you know, that habit can become seven minutes a day. Then you do that for a little while and then it becomes 10 minutes a day, and then it becomes 30 minutes a day.

And then you're so used to doing it it's still not an either-or situation because you start to see that you had time all along. So the baby steps are the path to the long-term self-care. And it's not just with food or with exercise. It's with anything. It's going to bed five minutes earlier and before you know it, if you do that for a month, then you can go to bed 10 minutes earlier and then it's 30, and within a few months you have gotten a whole other hour of sleep added to your day.

And these small wins, they do so much for our confidence. They do so much for us trusting ourselves again. They do so much for our self-worth and we can learn to believe in ourselves again just because of this one little

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practice. Because we're doing what we say we're going to do and maybe, for a lot of us, it's the first time ever in our lifetime that we've consistently shown up for ourselves and done what we said and not second guessed it and not decided it was stupid and not decided we didn't have time but actually just did it consistently for a period of time, maybe for the first time in our entire lives.

And when we can believe in ourselves again and we can trust ourselves again, then we can begin to show up for ourselves not just three times a week for five minutes, but moment to moment. Moment to moment to moment to moment in every decision, in every situation. And when we can do that, that is when we create the life and the body and the business and the relationships that we truly want.

So how about you? Will you show up for yourself? Will you practice this new version of self-care by just making the next right decision? Will you make that your mantra like I did? And do you need to start with the baby steps to make this happen? Because friends, most of us do.

As silly as it sounds, as much of a waste of time as it seems, most of us need that practice. And remember, there's not a single thing wimpy about baby steps. I mean, you've probably heard this analogy before and I love it, but for a baby to go from crawling to walking is a gigantic leap in their development.

And for you to show yourself that you will show up consistently for you, no exceptions, no excuses, no cancelling no matter what, even if it's just for a few minutes a day a few times a week, then there is no limit to what you are capable of. It is a huge, huge step.

So I want you to start today and whether that starting today means showing up for yourself already moment by moment or it means creating a minimum baseline in just one little area of your life that you seem to never show up for yourself in, whatever it needs to be for you, start right now because five minutes honestly is all it takes to get started.

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Create a plan for one meal a day until you work up to three, or add 15 minutes extra to your sleep routine until you're sleeping a full eight hours a night, if that's your goal. When we believe in ourselves and we trust ourselves, then we can begin to show up for yourself. Not just three times a week for five minutes but literally - you know what I'm going to say, right? Literally moment to moment to moment in every decision in every situation.

And that again, is when we create all of those things that we truly want. So, my friend, let's do this. Let's start today. Let's create a minimum baseline, let's create a baby step in just one little bitty area of your life that you don't show up for yourself consistently and do it starting now.

It's the ultimate in self-care and it will be a baby step that could change your life in the biggest possible way. So I'll see you back here next week for another podcast. We're going to move onto a different topic. As much as I love talked about health, wellness, and weight loss, and don't worry, I'll revisit this topic again soon I'm sure. But I got some other stuff up my sleeve for us for the next few weeks so I'll see you next week with an exciting new topic. 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 a life that you love, then check out my exclusive monthly coaching program Design You at [tobifairley.com](http://tobifairley.com).