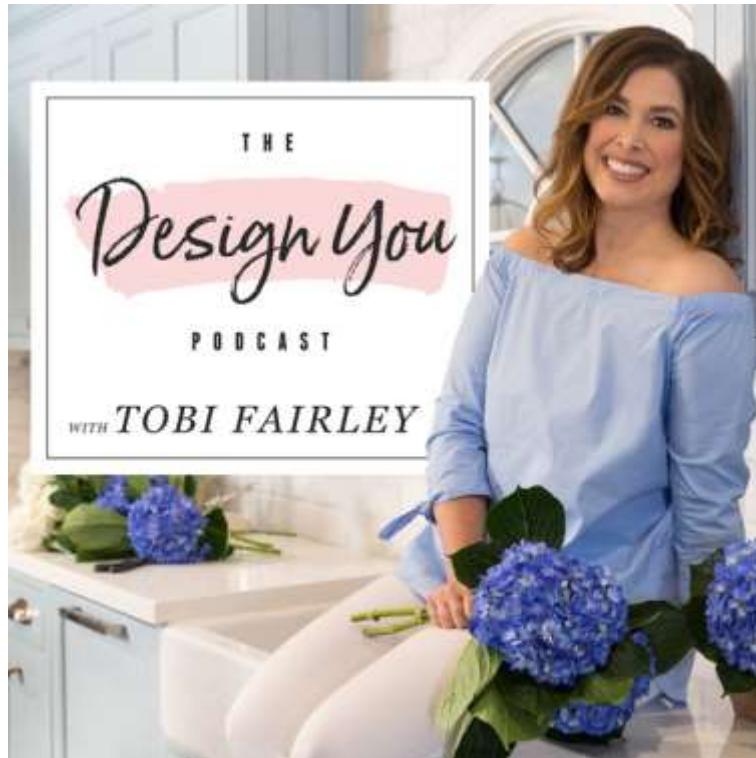


Ep #52: Why Labels, Identity, and Ego May Be Holding You Back



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Tobi Fairley

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You are listening to *The Design You Podcast* with Tobi Fairley, episode number 52.

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. Did you hear that? It's episode 52. One full year of *The Design You Podcast*. I cannot believe it. But it's been so much fun and it went so fast, and I thank you so much for listening. It's so fun to hear from all of you and how much you love the podcast. And I'm so excited to keep it up for another year, starting next week when we roll into year two.

But for now, let's talk about some goodness, some good stuff I got for you. So first of all, as we're heading into spring, this is a time when everything starts coming back to life and we start to see some results from all the hard work we've been putting in since the beginning of the year and we see things blooming outside and the days get longer and it's all super exciting.

But as we head into this second quarter, it's also a great time to take a step back and do a little reflection and see where we might be holding ourselves back, because you know me, I'm always opening up the hood, checking out the engine, how things are running is what I'm trying to say. I'm always digging in there and not letting us hide from anything that we might be doing to ourselves.

And that really leads me, that reflection, that kind of under the hood work leads me to today's topic because it is all about our egos, our labels that we put on ourselves, and our identity. And those things are definitely under the hood. They're not out for everyone to see and sometimes they're even kind of subconscious to us, but all three of these things play a huge role in our success and in how big we are willing to allow ourselves to become.

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And really, they can hold us back from stepping into being the best version of ourselves. So I want to tell you a little story about my life from a few years ago. Probably about three to four years ago. So when I decided to add life coaching and wellness coaching to my credentials, I was so excited in so many ways. I knew this was right for me, I knew they were going to make both of these things a huge impact on my own personal life and my own business, and I knew they were things that I could really use to help other people.

So I was really, really excited, but I was also secretly embarrassed at the same time. And that's the thing about growth. I knew these skills would definitely change my life, my health, my business, and all those other people's, but the idea of putting it out into the world like we talked about last week, the idea of putting ourselves out there, that was what really felt super scary.

And I immediately started thinking about what others would think of me and I could just envision them and imagining them thinking or saying, "Good grief, Tobi, first she was a designer, then a business coach, now a life coach and a health coach, make up your mind already." And I thought people would think I was a flake. Not stable. Always jumping around.

But I also knew that my thoughts are just that because I was in training for life coaching and I was understanding that my thoughts were just thoughts and they weren't the truth. So I was able to become really more focused on how many creative entrepreneurs and women I could help with this new information and expertise than I was focused on all those fears.

And I had struggled with both wellness and weight loss and the whole nutrition and health coaching piece, and I had also struggled with the mindset stuff. And that's why I was drawn to both of these things and I knew that others that I was working with had struggled with that too.

And I'm the kind of person that - not everybody's like me. Not everybody that starts to get interested in something immediately signs up for a course or a class or a degree, but that is definitely me. I want all the information.

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I'm a learner. So that's why I was getting so excited about the content but I honestly had some real-life meltdowns.

I remember a couple with my mom and my husband and even just with myself. Just that intense pain and suffering that comes with the thought of actually putting all of the branding and the business and the services and the concepts I had created out into the world. It just can feel so scary.

But ultimately, I really just ignored those things. I wrote them in my journal any time they came up and I closed the book on those fears because I knew that if I spent time thinking about them, ruminating on them, hanging out in them, that they would really hold me back from where I wanted to go personally, professionally, as a service to other people.

And so I ignored them and I took a leap. And one of the first places I took that leap was here with the podcast and with my *Design You* coaching program. Those pretty much came out simultaneously, but the first place I put these thoughts and ideas out into the world was with the podcast, and both the podcast and the coaching program have been more successful more quickly than anything else I've ever done.

And really than I could have imagined, and if I had listened to my ego or kept telling myself those limiting thoughts about who I was, that label that I had put on myself that I am only an interior designer, or at that point, I was allowing myself to be an interior designer and a business coach. That wasn't too crazy out of the box for me. But I really couldn't imagine anything else.

And let me just be clear; when I first started that business coach part of my business 10 or 11 or 12 years ago, I felt the exact same amount of fear. I was like, what will my peers do? Will they be mad at me that I'm talking about all of this stuff and I'm bringing attention to it? And will they think I'm getting out of design and a lot of people did. They thought I couldn't be both, and it was so funny.

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Even when I started writing blogs years ago, around that time, that definitely had a life coaching sort of bend to them even though I hadn't trained in it yet. People would say to me, "Are you getting out of interior design?" And it was so fascinating to me because they wanted to label me too and they had. Even my grandmother one time, I remember her asking me, "Are you getting out of design?" And I think I wrote a blog post about it like I'm not allowed to be more than one thing in people's heads, including my own.

But had I let these thoughts, my ego, my identity that I had created for myself hold me back, I would have never gotten to experience the success of stepping out and creating a new, more multi-faceted identity that includes all of the things that I'm really interested in right now. And all of the things that I can offer to help other women like you.

And that's the thing about our egos and our labels. They often hold us back from stepping into the best version of ourselves because we've decided ahead of time who we are and what that looks like, what a designer does. Even what a good designer does. And I see this in all parts of our lives. Like, a designer would, a good daughter would, a good businessperson would, a good wife would, a good mom would. Whatever labels you've put on yourself.

We start to have this sort of identity, this checklist or roadmap of what those people are allowed to do, and if it's not on the list, we kind of don't really believe that it's allowed, which is so fascinating. So that's that thing about those egos and those labels. They will totally hold us back. And for a while I did let those very entrenched ideas and identity of me as an interior designer and what I believed an interior designer was hold me back from creating that brand that was farther reaching and those offerings that could bring together all of my interests in design and business coaching and health and wellness and more.

But I'm so, so happy that I was able to move beyond that. And I'm not saying that was easy. It took a lot of work. It took conscious decision-making. It took using the model and managing my own thoughts, my own

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mind on a regular basis. It required me to keep turning the focus off of myself every time I would get freaked out and turning it onto all of the people that I would be helping with this information.

It really, as I said, brought me to my greatest and quickest successes yet and it brought me to a place where I'm happier and healthier and more fulfilled than I've ever been and it's so interesting because when I started down that path, I was making so many changes in my life personally, in my marriage, in my relationships, in my money mindset and all of these parts of my life that I instantly started getting feedback.

Not just on the content I was putting out into the world but on me, on my presence, my energy, my photographs. People would say, "I've never seen you look happier. I've never seen you more relaxed." And then I have all these testimonials when I first started *Design You*, the coaching program, and people would say, "I knew you before. I've known you for a long time but I now kind of feel like I've never really known you because you're so different and you're so real and you're so relaxed and you're so yourself and it feels so authentic."

And if that wasn't evidence that this is exactly where I needed to be, I mean, gosh, it gives me chills honestly as I'm sitting here, the hair is standing up on my arms and my legs thinking about the outward appearance that kind of really shone, glowed from me as a person when I was in the place that I was supposed to be. It really kind of makes me emotional.

So I want you to think about this in your own life. I want you to think about how we let go of those preconceived notions of what we think we should be or what others might think and how they might judge us as we step into the unique version of you. Because last week we were talking about putting ourselves out there, and this is really kind of to piggyback on that because maybe you're stuck and you're struggling putting yourself out there and maybe you don't even realize that part of the problem is that you have an identity of who you are and that's not really in alignment with it.

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And so you may have to do some things to get those parts of your personality and your thoughts really in sync. So there are a few tips I want to share with you today about how I really did this. And the very first one, and probably the most important one is one of my favorite sayings that I've been saying for years but it has so much more meaning when we're talking about this specific thing. And that is what other people think of you is none of your business.

And I'm going to say that again. What other people think of you, it doesn't even matter. It's of no concern to you. We can't control other people. We have no control as we were talking about in the episode on putting yourself out there. And I want you to take a piece of paper and write that down right now and stick it everywhere so you can see it.

Stick it on your computer for sure, and any place that you're going to go put your podcast stand if you decide to do a podcast or whatever it is that you're going to use when you go to do the thing we talked about last week of putting yourself out in the world, remind yourself every single time that what people think of you is none of your business.

The number one thing to realize in our lives and with regard to other people is that we cannot control them. We've talked about that before. We can't control other people's opinion of us, period. And again, let me remind you, no matter how smart or pretty or generous or funny or loving we are, we cannot control what they think of us.

And there is that 50% chance or more that they're just not going to like us, and we're good with that, right? Well, maybe not, but you should be. We've got to let that go. But what about what we think of us? Because our own thoughts about us sometimes are more crippling than what other people think about us.

And so I want you to see that these go hand in hand, and if you haven't seen it before, if you haven't realized before that no matter what you do, it's never going to be enough for other people and maybe you're holding yourself to that same standard, that can be a huge problem. So maybe this

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needs to be what other people think of me is none of my business, and unless I'm going to think thoughts that serve me, what I think is none of my business.

It's so fascinating what we do to ourselves. So I want you to think about this with regard to ego, what we and others think of us hold us back because our ego says we have to be liked, everybody needs to like us. We have to be popular, we have to be included, all that stuff. And every bit of that is BS and every bit of those thoughts are just obstacle thoughts that are going to keep you from going where you want to go.

So this entire idea of people not liking you, totally okay. I like you. I like you because I know you're a high achiever and you're interested in improving yourself and you are interested in putting yourself out there. And so there are going to be so many people like me that if you are being authentic, that your message is going to resonate with them.

And who cares if those other people judge us? I don't, and I don't want you to care either. So our ego is very attached to those opinions of other people and it's very attached to the labels that we put on ourselves. So are you doing this to yourself? Are you letting other people's opinion like your mom or your family or your ex-husband or his new spouse, or your children, or the world in general, or your industry or anyone else keep you from really stepping into that version of you?

Because it's time that you decide not to let this worry of what other people think about you and what you are putting self-imposed parameters and restrictions on yourself, it's time to let that stuff go because as you've likely heard again, most people aren't thinking about you and most people are actually in awe of you if you can do this. If you can step into a unique version of you, if you can be brave like I have been, which again is hard.

Brave is not easy. Courage is not easy. But if you can step into the things that you know you love and that you're passionate about, whether anybody thinks they're hokey or not, and make them part of who you are and your

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brand out to the world, that is where you're going to have true connection. That is exactly where you're really going to start to make a difference.

Any time you're editing that part of your behavior because you or someone else isn't going to like it or feel comfortable with it, that is a huge problem. You have to be okay with other people being wrong. You have to be. You have to be okay with other people never getting you, but you also have to listen to that voice, yearning, pull inside you that says this is what I want to be doing. I know this is who I think I am, but this is where I want to go.

That is where we put the putting yourself out there and the being vulnerable, we marry it with this idea of letting go of the labels and letting go of all the preconceived notions, and that's when we really start to have these kind of crazy results that I've had, where people are stopping you and saying, "Oh my gosh, what are you doing?" It's so crazy.

I mean, the answer is what am I doing? I'm living my purpose and my passion and my dreams and I'm helping other people. And I love my job every single day, and it's so much fun and I'm not just waiting for Friday to get here. I'm not just waiting for the weekend, but I'm actually living the life as the person I want to be every single day and it's making a difference.

And what I call that is bringing your highest contribution to the world. So that can be one place that you can really check in and see if your fears and your labels and your identity is keeping you from your highest contribution to the world. Because if you're holding yourself small, if you're staying in the safe place that's acceptable, if you're an interior designer and you're thinking, "Well, I'm staying in the place, the realm of what interior designers are supposed to do," there's a really good chance that you're not bringing your highest contribution to the world.

And it works for any industry or any label. If you're trying to be a mom like all the other moms, if you're trying to be a businessperson like all the other businesspeople, if you're trying to be a designer or anything else, a creative like other people, then you're likely not stepping into your own personal power and making a difference at the level that you could be.

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So let's think about that. Let's think about how we marry this new version of who we want to be with putting ourselves out in the world because I teach marketing in my business courses and in my *Design You* community, and I practice all these things myself. And in that process, you want to either attract the people that are a fit for you or you want to repel them.

You've heard me say that before, and repel is a strong word. We literally want to turn everybody off that's not a fit for us. Not meaning like we can't be kind to them. It's not that we're getting in a fight, but when it comes to the marketing, you want to know who your people are. So if you're not stepping into that unique version of you, you are not standing out to your people. They have no idea who you are.

Straddling the fence like that is a really hard place to be. In fact, it's worse than the discomfort of stepping into who you're really meant to be because then you're sort of in indecision all the time. Because if you're like, well I'm a designer but I want to talk about this other thing, what happens?

It's just where I was, what I told you at the beginning of this podcast and that story. I was like, what are they going to think about me? They're going to think I'm a flake, they're going to think this is out of the blue, what does this have to do with anything? Why is Tobi now talking about life coaching or nutrition or exercise or working out? And what the heck does that have to do with interior design?

So then you're on the fence and you're like, do I sell them on these ideas? Do I sell them on my products? Do I give them free things on this topic so I can make a difference in their life? Or do I hold it back because it feels so bizarre that I have no connection to who I'm pretending to be for social media's sake or for my interior design brand or on my polished - as I call it - coffee table book of a website because it's not talking about me and who I authentically am.

It's sort of like in friendships and in life and it's really how I see my life now. I would rather attract my tribe of people and in a sense, really connect only with them in the same way that I'm at a point in my life where I really only

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want to hang out with people like in friendships that I'm really a true connection with. Now again, I'm not trying to be mean to anybody. I want to be nice to everybody.

But I choose how I spend my time and who I spend it with in my life, in those meaningful connections, and that's the same way that this works in marketing and in business and out in the world. And so if you get rid of those false identities that aren't a fit for you anymore and you start to attract those people that you really want to spend time with, that's when things really start to change.

And one way I know that I've got the right tribe, you know you've heard that saying, how successful you are depends on the five people you spend the most time with in your life, and I think about that a lot. Because I think in my own community where I live, it's sort of a small town and are there people who really think like me and who connect with me on a level that are interested in making the kind of money I'm making or doing the kind of big things that I'm interested in doing.

And a lot of times that answer is no. But now that I have stepped into who I am really supposed to be in my business and with my tribe, guess what? The people in my online coaching program, *Design You*, are literally my besties and they may not even know it that I think of them like that. So if you're listening and you're one of those people, you know I'm talking to you because we spend so much time together connecting.

And I feel so much pride for the people who are doing big things in there and who I can help support them and encourage them, and it's a real relationship and I know I've done the right thing in going the path that I've gone in my business and shed all those identities that were holding me back because I connect with these people on a level that I truly care about them. I think about them when I'm not with them. I think about their own businesses and how I can make them better or reach a goal that they want to.

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And that is who I want to spend my time with, and it's so much fun because they don't have to be here in Little Rock, Arkansas with me. They can be anywhere in the world and we can connect because I have taken the very scary leap to put the authentic version of me out into the world about myself and my business and I attract those other people to me.

And the same thing is going to happen to you when you get over caring about what other people think of you and you let go of all the drama around that and you step into who you're truly meant to be. And I can think of several of you that are in my coaching program right now that this is going to work beautifully for you because a lot of you are working on these fantastic business ideas and concepts and courses and tribes that are so authentic to you and it is so clear to me now that the people you're going to attract are going to have the same kind of relationship with you and it's so exciting.

One of the things people want in their life is more meaning in their life and their business, and I didn't realize for years that I was holding myself back from that level of meaning, that level of connection any time that I let my ego or a label or an identity keep me from putting something out in the world that might be perceived in a way that felt scary to me.

So I just want you to realize that this perfect façade that we create that fits right in line with the labels and the identities of who we decided we are or were, maybe even a long time ago, those need to be shed. And just because you were one thing five years ago, 15 years ago, five days ago, if that's not who you want to be right now, then let go of those entrenched identities and step into what lights you up today.

Because that is what's going to make your life everything you want it to be. That is what's going to bring you the financial freedom. If you're in that sweet spot changing people's lives, that is exactly where the money comes. And you don't even have to worry about the money. You just worry about serving and connecting and delivering and inspiring and all the stuff that comes with being authentically you, and the money part really starts to take care of itself.

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So I really want you to see that you are probably holding yourself back with a label and an ego and an identity that is likely very outdated or that you didn't even design yourself. You matched it and modeled it after what you thought you should be, or somebody you admired, so you modeled it after them, instead of designing it in a way that is right for you.

So to wrap up, I just really want you to see that if you can loosen that grip, that grip that your ego or your identity has on you and you can stop worrying about what other people think of you and you can stop those thoughts in your brain of, "A good designer would, a good mom would, a good..." whatever your labels are would, and let yourself expand beyond those labels that you currently identify with to see what the possibilities can be, that is when it gets really, really fun.

And for me, that meant adopting a "both and" attitude. Not an either-or mindset. So I can be both and... I can be an interior designer and a life coach and a health coach and a business coach and a mom. I can be all of those things. It's not either or. And I can make the biggest difference when I am that unique multi-faceted combination of my strengths and my gifts and my talents.

So I want you to get comfortable with that way of thinking. That inclusive, both and mindset. And I want you to see that it's not black and white. It's really about being what you love, who are you authentically, bringing in the things that light you on fire and just give yourself permission for all of those things to be okay.

So that's what I hope we're done here today. I hope we've given you permission to be exactly who you want to be, however unique and multi-faceted that is. So go make that happen and I'll see you back here next week as we start year two of *The Design You Podcast* with episode number 53.

I'm just super pumped about some cool things that I'm going to do in year two of *The Design You Podcast*. More guests, more exciting topics, I'm listening to the things you're asking me about and I can't wait to deliver that

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content to you really soon. And please, if you haven't before, even if you have because you may feel differently now or have something else to add to, please go over to iTunes and leave me a rating and a review for *The Design You Podcast*.

Because what that does is it helps other people just like you find our podcast so they can love it as much as you do. It helps bring people into our tribe, and we want to surround ourselves with those people who think like us and encourage like us and dream like us and grow like us. Because the more of us that we can get together, the bigger we can all grow.

And if you want to connect with people specifically that are like you, be sure to go on Facebook and request to join *The Design You Podcast* community because that's a space where we are connecting in sort of virtual real life. It's not necessarily real, real life, but Facebook real life and we're connecting and we're having conversations and I have just as many plans for that community in year two of *The Design You Podcast* as I do for the podcast itself.

So go over there and join us in the community and leave me a rating and review. And you know what else? Now that I'm asking you to do stuff, let's just have a third thing. I'm sorry, I don't ask you for stuff a whole lot, but I'm asking you today and this will be fun. If you are willing after you write a review, go make a post on Instagram about *The Design You Podcast* and share it and tag me so I can see that you tagged me and so I can connect with you.

And so we can talk and chat and have direct messages and celebrate each other and grow together because that's one of my favorite things about putting myself out there in this way is that I get to then be surrounded and really know so many of you. So go do all that stuff. Hopefully it'll only take four and a half minutes total. Maybe six.

And then I'll see you back again here next week on the first episode of year two of *The Design You Podcast*. So thanks for listening friends, bye for now, and I'll see you really soon.

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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.