

## Ep #56: Tobi's Top 10 Biz Lessons



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**Tobi Fairley**

[The Design You Podcast](#) with Tobi Fairley

## Ep #56: Tobi's Top 10 Biz Lessons

You are listening to *The Design You Podcast* with Tobi Fairley, episode number 56.

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 guys, how are you? I didn't call you friends today. My daughter imitates me and she's always like, "Hey guys," and I go, "Ellison, I don't say guys. I say hey friends," and now all of a sudden I said hey guys, so I guess she's right. I guess sometimes I say hey guys. So hey guys, and how are you today?

It is three months until the middle of summer and it's also three months since January. What about that? I mean, in three months from now, I'll just be getting back from a summer vacation. Something we've been looking forward to for a long time, and it will be over and that'll be exciting and I hope that I'm really tanned.

But at this moment, I'm just thinking about the reality of that. The reality that it's 12 short weeks until we're to the halfway mark of 2019. So what are you doing to do with those 12 weeks? Do you have a plan? And do you realize that if you don't have a plan for them that they will just evaporate before your eyes? And are you thinking, "Yeah, I know Tobi, that's what happened to the last 12 weeks."

And I want you to think about that because you're going to be at that midpoint of the year and I want you to be able to be confident and proud and excited that you've accomplished what you wanted to by that time and a lot of times we've accomplished a lot but it's not necessarily the results that we were hoping for or that we were dreaming about.

So I want you to be accomplishing things that are sort of like shooting an arrow directly at your goals, and that takes planning. So today I'm going to talk to you about sort of some things to think about for getting the best

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results you want out of your life by summer or the end of 2019, and that is 10 of the best business ideas that I have ever learned.

And they're things that have really changed everything for me in the best sort of way, and I think they could greatly impact the way you show up for yourself these next 12 weeks and beyond, so that when you get to the middle or even the end of 2019, that you're going to have the results that you want.

So here we go. Lesson number one. If you don't like it, don't do it. That sounds simple, right? But it is so important. So, so many of you, and it was me too for a long time, found myself doing stuff because I thought I had to. And I told myself I have to, I have to do this part of the design business, I have to handle things this way for clients, I have to go to this event, I have to be seen there or people won't know who I am or I won't get published. I have to do everything, I have to say yes, yes, yes, I have to spread myself too thin, I don't have a choice.

And here's what I want you to know; you always have a choice. And when I started listening to really my gut and myself, and really understanding that if I didn't really like it, if it - not everything has to light you up. But if something is really draining you, draining your energy, dragging you down, if you find yourself resenting it, dreading it, then that is a time to really check into the decisions that you're making and the things you're saying yes to in your life.

Because here's the thing; I thought before I figured this out, that if you didn't like something, some part of your business, or the way that "other people" ran their design businesses or their entrepreneurial businesses or their creative businesses, if you didn't want to do that stuff, then I guess you just have to get out of the business, and that is not at all true.

I learned that I could create a business that really took the parts and pieces that I was really the best at and build it around that in a way that meets the needs of the clients and the people that I'm wanting to work with. So if you constantly feel yourself saying I have to, but it's not I want to or I get to,

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then I want you to check in. Because if you don't like it, why the heck are you continuing to do it? So that was lesson number one.

Lesson number two, which is sort of related but different and it is discomfort is the way to growth, or said another way, discomfort is the way to your goals. So basically, what I'm saying here is you have to start embracing discomfort, not avoiding it.

But I want to be very clear here. If you don't like something, that's not the same thing as being uncomfortable. That might be uncomfortable too, but what I'm talking about is the path to get to where you want to go is going to involve some discomfort.

So for example, there were things that I didn't like doing at all that I was continuing to do in my interior design business that were absolutely burning me out, and I hit burnout twice. Those were the things I needed to let go. But at the same time, growing my design business was uncomfortable at times.

It was uncomfortable to spend money hiring people, it was scary, it's uncomfortable to put myself out into the world and talk about what's authentic to me and being on Facebook Live or Instagram stories or giving a talk. But it's all stuff that I'm passionate about. So even in the discomfort, it's something that I really love, that I know will help a lot of people, and that is the discomfort that I want you to learn to embrace and not avoid.

So you got to check in with yourself and you're like, is this something I don't like? Is this something that when it comes time to do it I'm like, why did I say yes? And is that because I really should say no to it or is that that I'm just afraid? I'm afraid to go forward. So these two lessons are sort of related, they're sort of similar, but I don't want you to confuse the two.

So if you don't like it long term, ultimately, don't do it. But if it's just uncomfortable, you've got to know that the biggest growth you're ever going to have is in your discomfort. And so when you can learn to what I call get comfortable being uncomfortable, then you are going to get way

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closer to your goals and your dreams every single day. So that's lesson number two.

Lesson number three. If you don't have thinking time, you're not going to get the results you want. And that's true for your life, your business, anything that you want to grow, that you want to multiply, that you want to develop. You have got to have thinking time.

So a way that I put this in my life is partially in thinking about the idea of working on your business versus working in your business. And what do I mean? Well, working in your business is doing just the day-to-day stuff that you have to do to take care of clients, to deliver on what you promised them, to - for a designer, it would be making design selections, meeting with clients, meeting with contractors. All the stuff of working in your business.

But you've also got to work on your business. You've got to do marketing; you've got to plan where you want it to grow and what that's going to look like. You have to look at your financials. You have to plan what you want those to look like. And you have to get your ideas and your thoughts on paper.

And to do that really well, there's got to be some thinking time that's truly dedicated to mapping things out, getting clarity, not staying confused. And if you're just reacting and doing and working in your business all the time and you're not working on your business, you're not creating any thinking time in your schedule, then you're not likely going to get the kind of results you really want.

So here's some statistics or kind of framework for you to think about. I spend at least 50% of my work time working on my business. 50%. And of that 50% of the time, I try to spend at least a couple of dedicated hours every single week in just thinking time. Sitting with a notebook, sitting outside or sitting in my bed, which a lot of you have seen me on Instagram. I love to work and think from my bed. I feel real nurtured and cozy.

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But I like to create a situation where my thoughts and ideas are going to flow most easily and I create thinking time in my life and in my business every single week. So when I learned to do that, things really took a turn for the better, especially financially. So lesson number three is if you don't have thinking time, you won't get the results you want.

And then to build on that, lesson number four is you have to create your own unique ideas. And of course, you're thinking, "Well duh, Tobi," but here's what I want you to see. We get so much influence and it's totally fine to get influenced by other people, by books we read, by our mentors, by other people in our industries that inspire us.

Of course, I'm inspired by interior designers and life coaches and self-help gurus and people in the nutrition industry and all those things that are in my interest. And it's so easy to build my podcast, my coaching program, my Instagram stories and all of those things just on the ideas that I learn from other people. And they're really good ideas, and of course I give them credit for them.

And so if I'm telling you I learned this from Brendon Burchard or Brooke Castillo or whatever, there's nothing wrong with that. But the way to really build a great business and to really build a wonderful connection with followers and add value to their life is to make sure that at least some of the time, you are creating your own ideas that are just yours.

And again, that's one of the reasons you need that thinking time. Because if you cannot create your own unique ideas, if you're just regurgitating what everybody else is saying or doing, there comes a point that maybe you aren't adding the type of value to your audience that's really going to make you the kind of money or get you the kind of growth that you want.

And I would say this is one of the hardest things to do. It's intimidating and it's so easy to get in our heads and when we're looking at our thoughts and our ideas that we're like, well that's stupid or does that really help anybody, and so I want you to think about what that could look like. And of course, it

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doesn't have to be completely 100% original like nobody's ever thought of it before.

One of the things that comes to my mind about this is when I learned life coaching from Brooke Castillo, she created this thing called the Model, which you guys have heard me talk about because it is one of those ideas that is so important that I heard from someone else that I wanted to bring it to my audience.

In fact, if you haven't heard that, you can listen to podcast number four and hear all about the Model. But the thing about Brooke is she didn't come up with all of the ideas that she built the Model framework on. She has learned from many, many people before her and psychologists and intellectuals and all the people that had come before her that had figured out things about the mind and the brain and how we think and how our thoughts lead to our feelings and all of that stuff.

She didn't originate those ideas, but what she did do is she took a lot of those ideas and she created the Model framework, which is a concept that helps people be able to put their thoughts and feelings and actions into this Model, this framework so that they can better understand it.

So that was her own unique idea that added so much value and really reframed some ideas and concepts that we had been hearing for many, many years as a society, but maybe we weren't really able to use them in the same way, and I certainly wasn't, until I learned Brooke's Model and that framework. So that is the idea of creating your own unique idea, and that Model framework is completely unique to her.

Lesson number five. Hire up. What the heck does that mean? Hire the absolute best people you can afford if you're going to hire people on your team. Now, it doesn't have to be the most expensive human on the planet, but the absolute best people you can afford. If you're going to spend the money, the time, the energy to onboard a team member, train a team member, manage a team member, then why in the world would you hire

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someone that is not really the best for the position and put so much more energy, effort, time on your own plate?

What I've learned is that if I can hire experts, even if they're not a full-time employee, if they're a contract employee, which a lot of you have heard me talk about, the fact that I have a lot of virtual team members now. Hiring the best that I can afford in every area has absolutely transformed everything about my life and everything about my business.

Because they can own those parts of the job, they can really bring ideas and elevate the company in those areas. And I knew this a long time ago but really my money scarcity, my money mindset for years held me back and I believed I couldn't afford some of the people that I now afford and I have a lot of them.

So when I learned to go make the most money I could and then use that money to hire up, that was a major game changer in our output and our profitability. So lesson number five is hire up.

Lesson number six, also all about hiring is no jack of all trades. And I mean that including you. So what's a jack of all trades? Well, we know the concept, but when it comes to hiring, what I mean by this is when I first started hiring virtual assistants and people to help me implement digital marketing and copywriters and gosh, all the people that I hire, which I have a ton of people on my team.

I would encounter people who would want to say that they could do all of that work for me. I can do your email marketing and your graphic design and your social media management and plug everything into your CRM, which if you don't know what a CRM is, it's the thing that the system or the software you use to send out email campaigns and email blasts, if you've joined my mailing list, it's what gets you those emails from me.

And so at first you're like, that's a great idea, I can just hire this one person and they will do everything. And I want you to think about how good that



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works when you are that one person yourself in your business and you're trying to do everything. Not really great, right?

It becomes a lot of mediocre work because you're trying to do too much. You're not staying in your zone of genius, and what happens? If all of the jobs that are needing to be done have to wait until that one person finishes another job to start on the next one, it can take you forever to get things finished.

For example, if I have created something like a worksheet that I want to attach to our podcast and I'm like okay, well I need to write it, which I'm going to do an outline for, but then maybe I need my copywriter to flesh that out a little bit and then I need my graphic designer to design it, and then I need the person that works on our CRM to put it up on a landing page and connect it all, and then I need my email marketing person to write an email about it so that when the podcast launches everybody will know to go download the worksheet and they'll join my mailing list to get that worksheet.

If one person was doing all of that stuff, it can take a really long time. But if I have multiple people and that's their expertise, each individual part and piece, and they're working simultaneously, it takes no time to get these things created and out into the world.

Now, I get that everybody can't hire 13 team members or whatever I have now at once. And I didn't either. I did start with one person. But the difference is I didn't expect that one person who joined first, the virtual assistant I hired first to do all of that stuff.

I waited to include or to launch or to take on some of those other jobs until I could afford people to actually do those jobs. Because if I had just piled all of that stuff onto Macy, the first virtual assistant I hired, who knows if she would have even lasted. I mean, she was tired enough just helping me launch *Design You*, and run the - two things.

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She helped me run and design our community, *Design You*, on the platform Mighty Networks, and she helped me write all the email campaigns. But if I had needed her to do all that other stuff, that just really wouldn't have been a good use of her time and it wouldn't have been fair to her and it would have put too much pressure on her.

And besides the fact, who knows if we would have even still had *Design You* launched. It's been launched for a year now but like, there's just only so much that one person can do and do really, really well, including you. So when you can adopt the mindset of no Jack of all trades or no Jills of all trade, if you prefer that, if you want the female gender, then that could be something that really makes a difference in your business and also again, your bottom line.

So many of these things, these lessons impact us in multiple ways, and of course, changing our profitability is wonderful and huge, but it's not all money that we're looking to change. But that one definitely can impact both.

Speaking of hiring the best, because I said hire up, lesson number seven is hire the best business coach that you can afford. And here's the thing; this is not just a pitch for you to hire a business coach like me. You absolutely can join my *Design You* coaching program and I can be your coach and that would be spectacular.

But I'm talking about like me, I have an amazing spectacular coach, and I have just up-leveled the coach that I have and it was really scary. And I spent a whole lot of money for him and outside my comfort zone money. And yes, even business coaches need business coaches. Everyone, in my opinion, needs a business coach if you have a business and a life coach because you certainly have a life, right?

And I highly recommend you hiring the best that you can afford. So I have grown over the years and I've had multiple business coaches and I'll stay with them for a good while a lot of them, until we've sort of run our course through what their expertise is and I've outgrown them at times or I've

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shifted my focus and gone in a different direction and I've needed other coaches.

And each time I try to hire the absolute best coach that I can afford. And a lot of times, again, this goes back to money mindset and money scarcity because if you are afraid to hire people to help you and you're trying to pinch pennies on this, I mean, of course, you have to have money to hire anyone, and if you don't, that's a whole other episode on creating money.

In fact, I've actually recorded that episode. We'll link it in the show notes of how to create more money. But considering spending the money that you do have, so many people are afraid to spend money on coaches and they just don't really see the value in them, and that's why I say hire the best one you can afford.

Because there's a lot of business coaches that aren't going to help you that much, but if you get the right one, they can cut years and years and years off of your learning curve. You can learn from the things they've tried, the things they've experienced, what's worked for them, what hasn't worked for them. And this has served me so well and I'm super excited because I just hired my latest coach this year and took that gigantic scary, scary leap to hire even someone at a higher level and I am so excited.

And here's the thing; when you put a lot of skin in the game, as I call it, when you pay out a lot of money to invest in someone helping you, guess what? It makes you show up at your highest level because if you're like oh my word, I am paying a fortune for that person to help me, I better make room to do everything he says, to be prepared for all of our sessions, to follow all of his or her advice, and that's when you get a lot of leverage on yourself.

So your number doesn't have to be as super scary as mine. It doesn't mean that every great coach is expensive. I'm just saying, hire the best coach you can afford, whatever number that is, and really lean in and stretch yourself to do what they teach you to do because my biggest growth throughout my entire career of 20 years in both interior design and

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business coaching has been when I'm working with a coach that is really helping stretch me, push me, get me way uncomfortable as we talked about in one of the earlier lessons. That is when I've had my biggest growth.

Lesson number eight. Leap fast. This is really around the idea of taking action. So I coach a lot of designers and entrepreneurs, and I have just lots of conversations with people in my podcast community, on social media, out in public, and we talk a lot about usually, the results they're not getting.

People are saying I need to make more money, I need to get better clients, I need to be more visible, I need to get published, I need to - all these things. I need an audience, I need a tribe, I need buyers. And it's a laundry list of the things that you think you need. And what I find more often than not is that the people who aren't getting results aren't taking action.

And I talk to my *Design You* coaching program about this a lot because I see people consuming tons of my information and they love the information and they think it's so brilliant, and then they find themselves in procrastination land, perfectionist land, fear of leaping and putting themselves out.

And what I've learned is when I get a really good idea or I decide I have a new goal; I leap with it as fast as I can. So for example, when I decided I wanted a podcast, I found the best person I could find to help me create and edit and launch a podcast, and we did it fast. We didn't wait around, we didn't take nine months and get a whole bunch of episodes recorded.

He suggested three episodes, I got them ready, we got them recorded and we launched pretty dang quickly. That's the same thing I do when I decide I'm going to do a new type of marketing or a new type of social media or test the market in some way, or I want to partner with someone. I pick up the phone almost instantly and call them because I've learned that if I allow myself to get in my head, to start thinking about it a lot and I don't leap, I am the person who holds myself back.

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And the longer you wait, the scarier it gets. So it's kind of like just hold your nose or put your hand over your eyes as you would think about jumping in a pool off a really high diving board and just leap in and leap fast. And it's interesting, I was just talking to one of my friends and clients who is an introvert, and I know sometimes when I say I'm an extrovert - well actually, I think I'm an ambivert. I'm kind of half and half.

But when I say things like leap fast, I know that she just cringes. It's like oh my god, the introvert in me is not capable of leaping fast. But what I want you to see is leap fast for you, and you know what that means. Because there's a difference in being an introvert who really wants to take the information and then think about it for a long time, or take it in and think about it and still leap more quickly than you've ever leapt before.

So it's not a comparison game. Your leaping doesn't have to be as fast as mine, but I just want you to realize that the more you sit on something and think about something, the less chance there is that you're actually going to do it.

Lesson number nine, do B- work. What does that mean? Well, that also is in the realm of perfectionism. Saying no to perfectionism. So B-work. For all of us out there who are perfectionists, we cannot imagine putting anything out into the world that's not A+++ work, right? And so again, in the leaping fast, I had to learn that good enough is good enough.

And a lot of times, what I think is good enough everyone else thinks is magnificent. I think about the book Essentialism, which is one of my favorite books, and in that book, Greg McKeown says essentially, why create a finished proposal for any client if the draft of the proposal would be enough to get them to say yes, sign on the dotted line, and write you a check.

And I think that is so profound because again, we spend so much time doing things that really don't make a difference at the end of the day. They don't get us closer to our goals. If the draft version of the proposal and the final 50th draft and polished up version of the proposal makes you the

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same amount of money, which typically it does, then why in the world would you spend all of that extra time making it perfect just basically for your own ego and for yourself?

So when you can learn to do B- work and put it out into the world, then you will learn to leap way faster, and I know a lot of you perfectionists are thinking, oh my gosh no, could never happen. I have sometimes people who will see something of mine or something of someone else's and they're like, oh my gosh, that blog post or that product had typos in it and I would just rather die than have a typo.

But here's what I want you to see; a lot of those people with typos in their stuff, and I'm not saying try to have a typo. Of course, if you catch it, catch it. But a typo can still make people a ton of money because most people, if the content is really, really good are going to flow right past that typo. They might see it, they might note it, but for the most part they're going to be like, this is some good stuff and I'm buying this lady's product or idea or course or program right now, press the buy button, done.

So for those of us who hold ourselves back from putting things out because it has to be perfect, guess what? We're making zero money while the non-perfectionist with the B- work is kicking our butt when it comes to their bank account and their bottom line. So learn to put out B- work.

And then finally, lesson number 10, and I just learned this one recently and I absolutely love it. It's from Gary Vaynerchuk. Gary V, a lot of you know Gary V. love him or hate him, he can be super obnoxious, I get it. But he said this recently on a video and he's probably said it a million times but I loved it so much that I've taken it to be my mantra.

And it kind of goes hand in hand with where we started today. Lesson number one if you recall was if you don't like it, don't do it, and here's what Gary V says. He says, "If you are always waiting for the weekend to get here, your life sucks." And Gary can be a little off-color and he used a few bad words, which I try not to do. My mom listens to my podcast so I try to be a good girl and keep the curse words out of here.

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But you know what, he is so right. If every single week you start the beginning of the week and you're like oh my gosh, it's Monday, I hate Mondays, I have so much stuff to do that I don't want to do this week, I just can't wait for the weekend to get here, if I can just focus on the weekend it'll help me get through this stuff. Guys, that is no way to live.

You should not be living every single weekday waiting for the weekend, and like Gary V says, if that's what you're always thinking, if you're always waiting for the weekend, then your life sucks, and I tend to agree with him and I really love this and I've taken it to heart as my own mantra.

What it really means to me is I make sure that the work I do every single day is something that I love and that really brings me joy and that I don't just constantly create an existence where I'm always waiting for something in the future for myself to have fun, for me to enjoy life, for me to make money, for me to see friends, for me to take a break, for me to do something that I really want to or buy myself something.

Because if you're always just waiting for the weekend, your life sucks. Okay, so there are 10 of my top lessons. They're not the only 10. I'm sure I'll bring you some more soon because I have so many lessons, both for business and life, but here's 10 of my top business lessons that if you put these things into work in your life, you will have some mega results by the middle of summer, after this next quarter and beyond.

So I hope you enjoyed today's episode. It was kind of super short snippets and sometimes that's fun to have actionable steps like I've been giving you on the podcast interviews, so I hope you take these to heart. Let me know what you think about them, let me know out on social media if you heard this episode and you loved it or you have questions, I want to hear from you.

So find me on Instagram, or if you would like, go over to iTunes and leave me a rating and a review because I sure like other people to know if you're loving *The Design You Podcast*, if it's making a difference for you, because for every one of those ratings and reviews that I get, iTunes will serve up

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my podcast to more and more people just like you so they can benefit from it too.

So thanks so much for doing that, thanks for being here today, and I can't wait to see you again really, really soon. Bye for now, friends.

Thank you so much for joining me for this episode of *The Design You Podcast*. And if you'd like even more support for designing a business and a life that you love, then check out my exclusive monthly coaching program Design You at [tobifairley.com](http://tobifairley.com).