Ep #71: How to Stop Quitting on Yourself

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With Your Host

Tobi Fairley

Ep #71: How to Stop Quitting on Yourself

You are listening to *The Design You Podcast* with Tobi Fairley, episode number 71.

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 there friends. I've got a question for you today. So are you quitting on yourself in some area of your life today and this week and this month and right now in your life? And maybe have you been doing that for a long time? And is there a place that you say you want to follow through in your life, a place or an area, a thing you want to follow through on but you just never seem to do that?

Well, that's true for me in several areas and it's probably true for all of us, right? And if it's true for you, then this episode today is just for you. So today we're talking about that. Quitting on ourselves. And trust me, it does happen to all of us in at least one area or another, maybe in a whole bunch of areas.

And for me, it's a handful. I get a ton of stuff right and I follow through on a lot of stuff but there's just other areas where I feel like I'm always facing the same challenges and starting over again and negotiating with myself. It really can be agony and I want to talk about it today because I study this a lot for myself and for my clients and I really have used a lot of the mindset work, the life coaching work I've done to try to figure out the answer for how to stop quitting on myself, and I've got some really good ideas for you that are working well for me and I want to see if they work well for you.

So yeah, it's so frustrating. And we say we want something and we believe we really, really, really want it, and we probably do, but we continually self-sabotage or let a competing desire override following through on whatever those things are. So why do we do that and what can we do about it?

Well, there are several answers to both of those questions that I'm bringing you today on this episode, so let's dig in. Now first of all, we need to realize

that so often, we believe that we are at the effect of our circumstances and that our results that we're getting in our life are at the effect of things that we cannot control. And very, very, very rarely is that true.

Now, we think things are happening to us and we have no idea most of the time that we are creating those results that we're getting for ourselves and we're doing that with our thoughts. And we don't realize or remember that we're completely capable of making things happen in our lives because here's what I know. All results come from actions or inactions.

So either taking an action or failing to take an action. And all actions or inactions come from our feelings and all of our feelings come from our thoughts. So it is 100% guaranteed that whatever results you're currently having in your life, that those are results that you and only you are creating with your own thoughts.

And those are thoughts that you're choosing, whether you realize that you're choosing them or not. They're not just happening to you. Now, our brain can be out of control, especially if we haven't learned to manage it, if we're not paying attention to what it's thinking, if we haven't really trained ourselves to be a watcher of our thoughts. But what I want you to see is we can have plenty of thoughts and we can choose to replace them with another thought.

We can start to notice when those sort of autopilot thoughts that are running through our brain that we've been ignoring and thinking we were at the effect of, we can start to notice them and we can think, you know what, those aren't getting me the results I want, I'm going to choose something different. So it's absolutely within our control, including the thoughts around quitting.

So I want you first to start to just kind of marinade on that for a minute, that every place I'm quitting is because of the thoughts I'm allowing myself to continue to think, and boy, does that bring up a lot for me and it probably does you too. So another issue with quitting is that if we're quitting on

something, there's a really good chance that we aren't really committed to what we say we want.

And we often want the payoffs and the benefits, the result that we're thinking about, but we don't always want to put in the work to get that result. For example, many creative entrepreneurs that I work with in the design industry and other industries, they consistently tell me that they desperately want to make a six-figure salary because a lot of creative entrepreneurs aren't making this much money.

And it feels really hard to get there, so a lot of them are like, Tobi, that's all I want. I just want to make six figures. Let's just start there. That would be such a game-changer for me or my family or whatever. And so I always say cool, that's easy, and let's make this happen. And whether I'm coaching them privately or they're in my *Design You* program, I typically start to tell them what it will take to make that kind of a salary, at which point many, and I mean many of them - I would say probably more than half of the people that talk to me about this - really aren't willing to do the work.

Some even verbalize it. They might not instantly verbalize it. If they're an extrovert, they might. If they're an introvert, they might go back and chew on it, think about it for a little bit then come back to me. But some of them actually verbalize saying things like you know what Tobi, I really do want to make that money but I'm not sure I want to do all that stuff, which by the way, that stuff always involves a lot of deep personal development work.

It often involves money mindset work. There's definitely goal setting work, there's decision making on how they want to execute all the steps. There's figuring out all the steps and there's a whole lot to it. And so the hardest part too a lot of times is the work we have to do on ourselves. And we think oh, it's just if I do these three things, if I just follow through, if it's social media or if it's something else, if I just do those, then I'll make six figures.

And the reality is that's not true. It's a whole bunch of digging in, figuring out what we're thinking, getting out of our own way, making a decision to take some scary leaps. And so when they think about all of that, which feels

Ep #71: How to Stop Quitting on Yourself

uncomfortable and vulnerable and just plain scary a lot of times, they're saying things like you know what, I don't think I want to do that.

And they say things like, seriously Tobi, isn't there another way? Can't we make this happen more quickly or can't I just hire you to figure out all those steps for me and to figure out my goals for me and to figure out what I should be thinking to get my results and all that stuff? And just tell me all the steps and then I won't have to figure it out on my own and I can just go do them and the money will come.

And the answer to all of those questions is no. I can't. I can't figure that out for you. And there are no shortcuts to a lot of that deep personal work that gets us to the level we want to go, whether it's some kind of achievement, whether it is money, whether it's building a closer relationship with our kids or our spouse, it's a lot of work

And one of my favorite recent comments that I heard dealing with this kind of thinking is from my own mentor and life coach Brooke, and I heard her say recently, you can't hire someone to solve your confusion. You have to get clarity on your plan all by yourself first but then you can hire people to help you execute your plan.

Now, I think that is such truth. I think that is so smart and so helpful because so often, we just avoid doing the hard work, which is why we quit. It's uncomfortable, it feels bad, it feels hard, we tell ourselves it's hard. Those are those thoughts. You tell yourself it's hard, you have a feeling that's really uncomfortable, and your action that you take is to quit.

And so I want us to understand that if we really want to go where we say we want to go in our lives, you can't hire someone to solve your confusion. You've got to figure that out. In other words, you can't hire someone to set your goals for you. You can't hire someone to do your mindset work for you. You can't hire someone to feel uncomfortable for you.

Growth and more money and more success is always going to bring with it discomfort and if every time we feel uncomfortable we quit, we're never

Ep #71: How to Stop Quitting on Yourself

going to get to where we want to go. So there is no other way than to do the work. And I really do think that this concept of doing it ourselves is the very reason that so many of us quit on ourselves because we're just not willing to do the hard work.

And that's true for me in certain areas. Now, I do a ton of hard work when it comes to a lot of my work goals. When it comes to some of my health and wellness goals, when it comes to some of my money goals, when it comes to maybe some of my relationship goals, not quite as committed, not always willing to do the hard as I am on some of the work things.

Now, relationships I'm usually pretty willing to do the hard because I know that it benefits the people that I love. Some of the stuff for myself, the health and wellness, harder than ever to get myself to do the hard, uncomfortable work. Now, I'm making a ton of progress and that's the very reason I'm talking to you about this today because I'm learning how to get beyond the wanting to quit when it feels hard.

And here's the thing, here's the truth bomb that I really want you to hear is the work itself is not really hard. I think that's the wrong word to call it. It's really kind of easy. You can find out what you need to be doing by reading tons of books and listening to mentors and getting training and all kinds of stuff. It's not hard. It's just very uncomfortable.

So I like to pay attention to what we use the word hard to describe in sort of our growth. And I think that that sometimes is a word that doesn't really serve us because we're like, life is hard and work is hard and losing weight is hard, and I really want you to think about maybe it's better to say it's uncomfortable. It's not hard. It's not hard to follow a diet.

We can know exactly what steps to take that would make us lose weight. We might not want to do it, we might not want to admit it, we might not want to give up cake or Mexican food or something else that tastes really good, but is it hard? No. It's uncomfortable.

Ep #71: How to Stop Quitting on Yourself

Start to become aware of where your self-talk, your thoughts about things being hard, your unwillingness to do the work may be the very reason why you're not getting the results that you want. And I just want to repeat this kind of again. I want you to really get clear on this. So no matter what it is that you're quitting on, it can be personal, it can be work, it can be relationships, it can be yourself and your wellness, it can be anything.

But no matter what it is that we're quitting on, it's always the fact that it makes us feel something that we don't like and it may not be uncomfortable that you're using the word in your head or hard. It might be insecure or stupid or confused or overwhelmed. It might be that you feel unsure or vulnerable. It might be a whole lot of other things, but it's a feeling and the whole reason you're quitting is because you don't want to feel that way.

And the feelings may change depending on what it is you're working on and what it is you're quitting. But I want you to just get really, really clear on what the feelings are with each thing that you're quitting on and what thought you're thinking or what group of thoughts, list of thoughts, it might be a novel almost by the time you write them all out, but what thoughts you're thinking that are making you feel those feelings that you don't want to feel anymore, that are causing you to quit because awareness is going to be a huge piece of this puzzle to stop quitting on ourselves.

Now, here's the problem with quitting and you may have heard me say this before. Quitting slows us down. You may be like, well duh, Tobi. Quitting brings you to a complete halt. It doesn't just slow us down, but here's what I mean. When we quit, so often we're going to still want to do that thing later.

And we're quitting in the moment because that instant relief that happens by letting ourselves quit, that relief from the pain and those uncomfortable feelings, that relief from the pain of doing the hard work, that's instant in the moment and it feels really good. Like yay, I'm so glad I gave up on this diet. Now I can eat a whole bag of chips and that feels really, really good.

But the problem with quitting is we're going to still want to lose weight again later or we're still going to want to hit six figures later, or we're still going to

want to have a better relationship with our mom or our kid or our husband or somebody else later, and then we have to start all over. So yeah, in the moment we give in and we quit and we're like yeah, it's so good. We're honestly even a lot of times like hell yes. I don't know why I was attempting to do that anyway.

And if it's the six-figure example, we're like, there's more to life than money or whatever your goal is, there's more to life than being thing. And why can't I just be happy with what I have right now? But we're not going to be long term because there is a reason we wanted that thing in the first place.

So guess what? Whatever that original reason was, it's going to resurface, especially if it's money because life is hard without a lot of money. There we go with that hard description again, but it can feel really hard when you have to do a lot more work because really, most things in life either take time, money, or both. And the more money you have, the less of your time it takes because you can pay for other people to do things.

And no, money doesn't make you happy, but it sure does solve a whole lot of problems. I've heard that my whole life. Both of my parents have always said that. Several of my favorite mentors and coaches have said that to me, that it takes money, a lot of times, to solve problems. And if you've got money, you don't have a problem.

And so very often, not always is this true, but a lot of the time, it is very much true, especially in things with business. Like if you have a problem with not enough time or not enough customers or I mean, gosh, we could almost name anything. Not enough help, not enough support, not enough people doing other jobs you don't know how to do. Every single one of those problems can be solved with money.

And if we constantly quit on ourselves, especially in the money department and making money, then many of our problems that could be solved by hiring or outsourcing or buying some kind of tool or getting some kind of training, all of that is not possible if we don't have the money to pay for it. It's just not an option for us.

The Design You Podcast with Tobi Fairley

Ep #71: How to Stop Quitting on Yourself

So then we're back to the place of just having to figure it all out ourselves, and a lot of times that's where we quit again. So it's sort of the self-fulfilling prophecy but if you keep quitting on yourself, you're going to keep starting over because there's going to probably be a whole bunch of things that remind you why you wanted that goal, that thing in the first place.

Now, another issue with not getting results and with quitting is that we delegate our results often to someone else or something else instead of taking responsibility for it. Now, let me give you an example of this. So back to that example of trying to lose weight. We can use any of these because all of us have the same ones most of the time.

We're like I want to lose weight or I want to make more money or I want to have more time, I want to have better relationships. I mean like, there's a pretty short list of kind of the big categories of things we want to do. So we can plug any of those options in here, but let's just for this example talk about - because I think it's an easy one to see this idea of delegating the results to something else.

But if we're trying to lose weight, often we delegate the results to the diet that we've chosen. So we have a false belief that this magic diet, whichever one it is, and it can be any of them, and it doesn't matter that you've tried every other one. In that moment, the newest, latest thing that you're going to try is going to be the diet to end all diets. It's going to finally solve your entire problem with your weight.

And here's what happens. When it doesn't seem to be working, even if it is working but we want even faster results than it could possibly give us, we don't see any results and we quit. And because we've delegated responsibility for our weight loss to the diet, it's not our fault that it didn't work. It's the diet's fault.

How many of us have done that? I tried keto and it didn't work, or I tried HCG and it didn't work, or I tried Weight Watchers and it didn't work. And we're blaming whichever one of those. I mean literally, there's thousands of them. So think of how long - literally could go to the end of your life, even if

you live to be 100 years old and never run out of diets to try and blame for you not following through, for you quitting, and for you not getting to your goal.

So it's a problem when we delegate that responsibility to something else or someone else. And really, that's that whole idea of that thing becoming the villain. Guess where that always puts us if there's ever a villain, we're always the victim, every single time.

Same thing happens with our work. So maybe we're working on our business and we blame the tools or we blame the software, or we blame our coach or our consultant, or we blame an employee, or we blame our clients, or we blame the industry, or something else, and again, any time we're doing that, we're delegating our results to them instead of taking responsibility and taking charge.

And this can easily happen in any work situation. I even think about my *Design You* program and so many of our members are getting wildly successful results with my program. But there are other members who never make it. There are some who don't even make it a month, literally. There have been people who didn't even make it a week because they're delegating their results to me and the program.

And they're thinking things like, well, Tobi's magical program and they're all excited, there's so much hype on the frontend, this is going to be amazing, and it's suddenly going to make me more money than I've ever made and I'm going to be more balanced than I've ever been just by joining. And guess what? The only people who take my magical information, and yeah, it is pretty magical if you use it, but the only people who take that and actually use it, those are the only people who get the results.

So you can't just get the results by osmosis. You for sure can't get the results through passive action. And what does that mean? It means just listening. So you can't just come into my program, listen to all of my course content, which there's three signature courses alone by themselves that are hours of content. We do two live calls a month for two hours.

Ep #71: How to Stop Quitting on Yourself

You could literally show up to every single one of those things and a lot of people do, but you cannot just consume that information which is passive action, sort of an oxymoron there, but it's a good way to describe it. You're being passive, but it feels like you're being active and that kind of passive action doesn't get results. Only action action, as I call it, real action, taking steps, or even massive action, which is taking as many steps as it takes until you get the result, only that kind of action will get you the results.

So again, no matter how much of my stuff or anybody else's stuff you consume, no matter how many episodes of this podcast that you listen to, if you don't put any of the stuff I talk about into place, guess what, you're not going to get any results. Guess what, when you don't get results, you're often going to quit.

And I can assure you that I cannot be responsible for your results. I can be responsible enough to give you my best information, but what you do with it from there is on you. The same for me. It's true for me. I can listen to every coach, hire them, pay them tons of money, which I do, and if I don't use their stuff, I'm not going to get any results. And if I don't get any results consistently over time, I'm likely going to quit.

So I cannot be responsible for your outcomes because those outcomes, those results come from where? Remember, we already talked about this today. They come from - essentially, it's called the thought model but they come from your thoughts because you think a thought, makes you have a feeling, you take an action or you don't take an action, and then you get the result. So those results, which are outcomes are coming from your thoughts and I can't control your thoughts.

It would be really cool if I could. It'd be awesome if we could control other people's thoughts, but we can't. A lot of us have trouble controlling our own, but I want you to see that you may be delegating your results to someone else, so think about it right now. In what areas have you quit, or are you currently quitting on yourself right now as we speak and you not realize it's because you've delegated your results, your outcomes to a person or a

thing like a diet or your program or your industry, your something else, and that's why you're stuck.

Because that other thing can never get results for you. That other person can never get results for you. Only you can get results for you, and this should be a gigantic a-ha moment for you right now if you're experiencing this or if this is sounding and resonating with you, if you're like uh-oh, we have a problem, I'm doing this very thing. And I hope that you notice it because that's huge.

So only managing your mindset and ultimately your actions will get you the results you're looking for no matter what amazing coach, revolutionary diet, magic pill, or anything else that you have, only managing your mindset and taking action will get you those results. So the key to staying the course, to key to not quitting, the key to getting the results that we want consistently is doing the work.

And to do the work, you've got to manage your thoughts because thought leads to the actions. And before you start down that path to even do the work, you really have to be honest with yourself about what you really want and what you're really willing to do. And this is a conversation I've been having with myself on several occasions lately and several areas.

So how much do you really want something? What will you commit in the areas of time and money and energy to making that thing happen? And the way to decide if you're really committed is to ask yourself a very simple question but a very scary question, sort of, if you want to think of it that way. But I love this question, and here's the question. Am I so committed to making this happen that if it doesn't happen, I will pay someone $50,000?

Yes, that's what I said. So for example, if I said to myself, Tobi, are you so committed to losing 20 pounds by December of this year that if you don't lose it, you will pay your coach Suzy $50,000? And if I'm so committed and I mean completely committed - if you're committed, it's complete. You can't be partially committed because that means you're uncommitted. But if you

are committed, then there is nothing that's going to stop you and that would be the case in this example.

If I'm on a mission, I'm totally committed, it's a done deal that I'm going to lose that weight by the end of the year than of course I would say 100% yes. But if not, if I can't say for sure that I'd be willing to write her a check and mean it, or even sign a contract that says I would, then of course I'm not going to but of course, I'm also not committed and there's work to do.

And to see the flipside of this, maybe to help you understand a little bit more, I want you to see this. So there are things that we absolutely would agree to take that deal on instantly. So for me personally, I would absolutely agree to take that deal and pay someone $50,000 because I am so absolutely sure that I will not smoke a cigarette between now and the end of December.

So if that was what I was trying to commit to, Tobi, will you sign an agreement to pay your coach Suzy $50,000 if you smoke a cigarette between now and December, I would absolutely say yes. But guess what, I'm not a smoker. I don't intend to smoke. There's nothing that could happen to make me smoke. I'm completely committed to not smoking, so I would take that agreement or that bet all day long.

Now, losing 20 pounds, not so committed. I want to, I need to, I'm working on trying to, which there's a problem right there, right? But definitely not at this moment right now while I'm recording this podcast today am I willing to sign an agreement that says if I don't lose 20 pounds by December, that I'll pay Suzy $50,000.

Now, I'm sure she would love that. If you're listening, Suzy, you're like please, come on Tobi, let's make that deal. But here's the thing; it's so powerful to ask that question because the minute I think I'm really committed and I'm like absolutely, I'm going to do this this time, I'm going to follow through, if I ask myself that question, I know right then and there if I'm telling myself the truth or not.

Ep #71: How to Stop Quitting on Yourself

And in this moment today right now, I'm not committed to that. Wow. So there's that, which we've covered a lot already about quitting. That one's pretty big. They're all kind of big truth bombs, but what else? What else do we need to know about quitting? Well, I think there's two more things.

First, I love the explanation in the book Atomic Habits by James Clear where he talks about the theory or latent disappointment. And this is a concept that when we base our goals on an outcome instead of having our goal be that we're committing to a certain process, any time we're outcome based, we have a really high chance of going through something called the valley of disappointment.

So it's this theory of latent disappointment I think is what he calls it. So let me explain to you what I mean. So if we're focused on the result, maybe that would be losing the 20 pounds I was just talking about, so often we give up and we quit way before we hit those results because we don't think we're making progress.

Now, it's not that something isn't happening. There's all kinds of things happening in our body when we start, say, eating healthier or exercising or whatever. But we might not be able to see it yet. And guess what, we all want a whole lot of instant gratification, don't we? So at first, when you first start something new like we were talking about earlier in this podcast, you get a new diet or plan or workout buddy or personal trainer or whatever, there's all the hype.

You're so excited. This time I'm really going to do it. It's going to be the one. This diet's really going to work for me. This is the plan that will finally solve my problems and I'm so committed. I'm never going to have to be in this place of losing weight again. I absolutely am there, I'm so excited, I can't even sleep I'm so excited. You know what I'm talking about. It's called the hype. And we all have the hype when we get a new idea.

But then the hype wears off at some point. And for a lot of us, the hype can wear off really soon, when it gets hard or as we like to say, when it gets uncomfortable. And so for some people, you start eating clean and the

hype has worn off by day three. You're like, I was going to eat the Whole30 for 30 days and it's day three and the hype's already worn off. What am I thinking? I want to quit. I don't like this.

So when the hype wears off, we're not having fun anymore. We're feeling all kinds of stuff because of our thoughts. We're feeling deprived, we're feeling uncomfortable, some other negative feeling because we're thinking all these thoughts that are making us feel that way and it's not real fun. And even though in those three days or the first week or the first two weeks we can't really tell that we're making progress, there's a good chance we've made progress.

And I mean, define progress, right? But just going three days without drinking a soda for some of you is huge progress and your body is healthier because of it. But we can't fit into a smaller size pant yet, we haven't reduced the bumps on the back of our legs yet or on our seat, our arms aren't thinner, we don't want to go with a sleeveless shirt on. Whatever that stuff is, it's not fast enough. We can't see it.

And maybe we even are a little bit smaller but the scale hasn't moved yet. Or maybe it's moved but it's moved a pound, which would be a ton in that amount of time but we have some real unrealistic expectation that we should have lost three by now. But whatever the case, so often we feel disappointed before we start to see big results.

And that area between the hype and the big results or even moderate results that we start to get excited about, that space between the two is the valley of disappointment. And the valley of disappointment is where everybody quits. The valley of disappointment is what happens by around February the 1st or the 15th when the gyms were full in January with the hype and by the middle of February and you literally don't even have to wait in line for any piece of equipment in the entire gym.

It's like total ghost town. That's the valley of disappointment that caused people to quit. And so the problem is that results are on their way. And if we stayed the course, they're soon going to start to show up. Sometimes

you're just a couple of days from them when you quit. But you don't know that and so we think all these thoughts that lead us to quitting and we don't stay the course.

We give up because the result, the outcome never comes fast enough in weight loss or business or relationship-building or social media marketing or anything else, it's never as fast as we want it. And that's why James Clear says it's so much better to commit to a process over an outcome. So when you commit to showing up for yourself every single day and just doing the steps and you decide ahead of time that the results and the outcome will take care of itself if you just consistently keep doing the steps, that is a totally different scenario and I think he's spot on.

But almost none of us do this. 99% of us are only focused on the outcome and we never see instant progress and so those goals are an absolute goner. They're done. They're dead. They're over before we even get started very good. So until we come back around later and decide to start all over again, whether that's a few days afterward or a few months afterward or a few years later, we just keep repeating the same behaviors the next time we set a goal based on an outcome.

And again, whether it's weight, health, business, relationships, or something else, it's the same cycle. And that cycle is so exhausting, and it's a continual cycle of start, quit, start, quit, start, quit. Never getting us to our results. It's exhausting. It burns us out. It makes us never want to try again. But I want you to be onto yourself if you're practicing results-oriented goalsetting.

Because if you are, that might be the very thing that's making you quit and I want you to check in and see if any of these reasons that we've talked about today are the cause of your quitting on yourself and your goals again and again and again. Because once you figure out your habits, once you figure out what's ailing you in your goal achievement, once you figure out your mindset and the things that are making you quit and you get those mindset and habits cleaned up, then you can start to make real progress on the process, on the following through, on the showing up for yourselves

every time without results and being patient until the results show up for you.

And by the way, to do this work, I do highly recommend the book Atomic Habits, and I also highly recommend my episode number four of this podcast. Even if you've listened to it before, it's worth listening again, which is the one about - it's called How to Solve Any Problem, but it really should be called how to manage any thought. But it's about how to manage your thoughts more effectively, how to use the mindset model that I learned at The Life Coach School to really become the watcher of your thoughts and be able to start choosing thoughts that serve you so much better than the ones that you're thinking right now.

So check out those resources and think about how you could start to reverse engineer the results you want once your mindset's cleaned up, once those bad habits are cleaned up. You can do that. You can reverse engineer what you want, the thing that you're actually now committed to, and turn it into a specific process just like James Clear talks about. You can figure it out step-by-step.

Meaning you can pick the result you want, decide and know all the steps or deliverables or actions that have to happen to get you from where you are right now to where you want to be. And as I said earlier, that's not the hard part. That's actually kind of easy to write down all the steps. We don't want to pretend like we know how to do stuff, but we do.

And so if you just write them all down, you put each and every one of those steps into your calendar and you literally just follow through on them consistently, that's the process, the system, and you let checking them off that you did them be your outcome essentially for the day, instead of the result you're looking for, and you let those results take care of themselves. When you do that, I think this may be the shift that you need to stop quitting on yourself because it's definitely the shift I needed and I'm making huge headway by using this practice in my own life.

Ep #71: How to Stop Quitting on Yourself

And if you do that, you may finally get the body and the bank account and the marriage and the life that you have been saying for a long time that you really want. So that's what I've got for you today, friends. I hope you love this episode. I think it's a super important one and I'll see you back here next week with another episode of *The Design You Podcast*. 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.

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