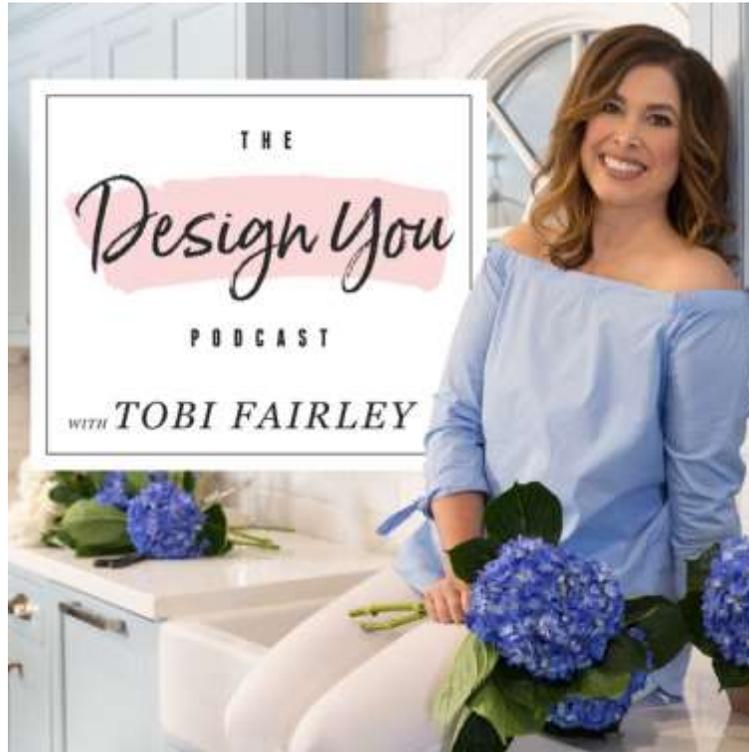


Ep #75: Are You Secretly Self-Sabotaging?



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 75.

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 friends. What is happening in your world today? I hope it's great, and if it's not great, I hope you're growing from it. For me, today is great. I mean, it's really great, and I'm also growing from it. But this morning, I was at the gym working out with my trainer Caleb – I have two trainers, Kim and Caleb, and today was Caleb's day.

And so Caleb is really awesome and young, I think he's like 30 years old, but he's really wise for his age, and he's great at listening to me talk through my challenges and my struggles with health and wellness. And today we were doing just that.

So I was telling Caleb about how all this week I have been wanting to eat crazy bad. So do you ever do stuff like this and you're like, what in the world is happening? And I've been wanting to eat things that aren't just bad things, I mean, whether you think things are good or bad, for me, things that don't make me feel very well, things that don't make me thrive.

And so I've literally been wanting to eat these things that don't make me feel good, but not just eat them. Overeat on them. And so I've literally been thinking things like I want to go to Baskin Robbins right now and get five scoops of chocolate chip ice cream. Not one scoop but five scoops, y'all.

And I didn't thankfully, but I was telling Caleb about this. And so I was saying to Caleb how weird it was and I didn't go get the ice cream, I did eat one scoop of ice cream this week with my daughter, full disclosure, but I didn't eat five. But anyway, I was telling Caleb about how I was watching my own thoughts.

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So this is something that I've gotten really good at as I've gone through life coach training and just been practicing managing my mindset for two years or three years, I've gotten really good at being the watcher of my own thoughts. And as I was watching my thoughts and becoming very aware of what I was thinking, I was noticing that I was actually thinking I want to overeat.

So really interesting. Essentially, I want to do destructive behavior that will make me feel bad, that will make my joints hurt, that will not get me closer to my goals. So it wasn't just like a sweet tooth, but rather a thought I wish I could overeat to the point that it would literally make me sick, and it was so bizarre. It was so weird. It felt really weird to me.

So there was that, and then another day it wasn't just ice cream. I was thinking I wish I could eat a Sonic hamburger and tater tots and a milkshake and a Coke. I never drink soft drinks. I don't even remember the last time I had a soft drink. So what in the world? Why would I be craving not only food but craving a behavior that is self-destructive? And a behavior that would make me feel horrible.

I mean, there's literally not enough Zantac in the world to keep me from being nauseous if I actually ate according to these cravings I was having. And it was just weird. It was almost an out of body experience, but I was noticing it and watching it happen like I was watching a movie.

So I was asking Caleb this morning at the gym if he ever had self-destructive thoughts like this around food or not wanting to work out or something else that would derail his life goals. And his answer was yes, he said of course he did, and honestly, I can't remember exactly what he said next but whatever it was, it was something about noticing patterns of behavior.

So noticing his own patterns of behavior that equaled self-sabotage and it was brilliant because it really led me to a major a-ha moment that I want to talk about on this podcast today. And it was not the first time I had had this realization or this a-ha moment, but clearly I had forgotten about it and

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when I realized it the first time, it came and went and this time I realized it again, and let me tell you what that is.

I realized that I have a pattern of self-sabotage in a few areas of my life because of an identity or a belief that I have about myself that I'm hanging on to. And I'll explain this to you as I go through the podcast today because it's a little difficult to think about your thinking and to notice things in the way I'm noticing them, but it's really powerful.

And when you can get to this level of managing your mindset and really noticing before you take an action what you're thinking, why you're thinking it, and you can change it, it's really, really helpful in getting the results you want in your life. So thinking about my thinking, I realized that I do have these patterns of self-sabotage, and I may have even talked about this in a previous episode, but it was so clear to me today that I want to make sure I talk about it right now so that you can see if this is happening in your own life.

So let me tell you more about what I mean. So I have an identity of being an achiever and a lot of times, that's a positive identity for me. Even my strength finders, the very first or second maybe strength is achiever. The first one is activator, which is taking action. A doer. So both of those really go hand in hand for me. I have this identity of being an achiever, a doer, a person who makes stuff happen, and I also thrive on solving problems.

I get super motivated when it's time for me to solve a problem for myself or someone else. And I love and really just crave that feeling of getting motivated to take action. So if it's that time of year again, which it is right now, it's back to school for me, which I call the second – for my daughter, but for us, which I call my second New Year.

It's the other time of the year besides January that I get really geared up to take action and solve problems, and I actually have some sort of rituals that I go through to get myself taking action again. Some vision boarding, goal setting, journaling, things to get myself in this hyped up mode.

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And by the way, I'm currently reading the book called *The Road Back to You*, which is about the enneagram. And I know a lot of you are super excited about the enneagram. It's sort of like a personality test but more and I'm a type eight, and a type eight means that I'm a major achiever. The commander. I get stuff done. That's the kind of girl I am.

And it also means, which is really interesting because in this book, *The Road Back to You*, he talks about sort of almost like our deadly sin, the thing that could derail us, the shadow side of our personality. And for an eight, that is lust, but not lust in a sexual sort of way, eight lusts for intensity.

So I have a really strong desire, which this is so true about me of what the book literally calls lusting for major intensity in life. So achieving at a super high level is exactly that intensity. This lust for intensity is really, I guess, what has fueled my workaholicism for years because I love intense work and building and growing and problem solving, whether it's for my own business or someone else's and so I was noticing this.

I happen to be reading this book right now and so I was noticing this as I was thinking about this conversation with Caleb and about my patterns. And so I've known that for a while about myself that I long for this motivation and I love to get pumped up and the hype, and the getting myself really – I mean, not worked into a frenzy but worked into a state that I can just really crush goals.

And what I realize is it's a bit tricky of an identity that I have, as an achiever, when I realize that I might be self-sabotaging and planting these sneaky little ideas and mindsets subconsciously in my brain, choosing those thoughts, even if it's subconsciously to keep me in this opportunity to get hyped up again, to tackle another challenge.

So does that make sense that I'm just really understanding, even if it's subconscious, even if these choices aren't something I'm fully aware of, they could be choices that are keeping me in this pattern of achieving. So achieve, self-sabotage, so I can achieve again. That makes sense.

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So we'll go into this a little bit further, but you may have heard me talk about how I have struggled with emotional eating, weight fluctuating, not super unhealthy fluctuation – well, define unhealthy, right? But unhealthy for me. I mean, I'm very healthy. Just had a wellness exam last week. My doc never tells me to lose weight. My blood pressure is 97 over 65. My pulse rate is 47. the only thing we can find wrong with me ever is basically a little vitamin D.

Sometimes we have to work on my thyroid a little bit, but basically I'm about as healthy as I can be and he's never concerned, but for me personally, I know my own awareness is I feel better when I don't have on this 10, 15, 20 pounds that I'm prone to gaining and losing and gaining and losing.

So anyway, I've dealt with the emotional eating, especially when I'm in that hyped up overworking mode. Not even at the beginning so much but when I'm right in the middle of tackling a giant goal. And so yeah, my joints would be so much happier if I wasn't doing this to myself. My body would feel better. I'd have more energy.

So what Caleb, my trainer, helped me realize or remember today was that I'll likely repeat self-sabotaging behavior with my eating and then weight loss because I think of myself as a person who is a problem solver, and one of the problems that I'm always solving year after year, month after month is losing weight.

It's part of my identity. I don't want it to be part of my identity now that I realize it, and I'm reminded of it again, but it absolutely it and has been for years. So when I lose weight, my pattern is to regain it so that I guess, and what I'm noticing about myself and thinking about my thinking is so that I will have another problem to solve. More weight to lose. It's really weird. Our brain is so tricky.

And I don't really know how to be without this particular problem of needing to or trying to or being in the process of losing weight because I'm always in it in my mind and I have been for years, so my mind is literally tethered to

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that idea and that identity of myself, of who I am. I am a person who is always on a diet, or always thinking she should be on a diet, or always saying she's giving up dieting, but whatever the case, there's always some form of losing weight, trying to be healthier, or gaining weight that is happening in my life. I'm rarely staying in one place. And it's something that I think about daily.

When I realize that, it's something I want to stop thinking about daily but it's definitely been a pattern. So I'm always achieving in the area of better health. Now, for years it was dieting, it was whatever extreme diet. These days, it's how can I be healthier, what can I eat that's healthy, how can I fuel my body, but it doesn't change the fact that it's still this same identity. It's just slightly tweaked.

And I can tell myself oh, that's so much better, and this is about health, and I get that, but I really need to understand this pattern and notice that I am self-sabotaging, likely so I can get to a place where I need to get all hyped up and motivated again to lose weight or make a change in this area of my life. And I lust for that intensity around getting healthy.

Can you see that? It's so annoying and so wonderful to have this awareness. So our minds really can be that tricky. And as long as I'm a person who constantly is working on losing weight or optimal health, then that means I have to have a weight or health problem to solve so that my behavior patterns constantly ensure that I have something to work on.

It's very mind-bending to understand this about myself, to get my head around this. And when I do comprehend it, which I did again today with this a-ha moment, this conversation, it reminds me that I also previously figured out that I had the same struggle, this self-sabotage struggle with a few other beliefs about myself and my life, and one other area is around money.

So this month in *Design You*, in my coaching program, our focus is money mindset, which is awesome content. It is brilliant content. I've been inspired by some amazing people who teach content on this. I've read books, I've

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done studies. I've applied it in my own life. I bring my own experiences to the table in this content. So I've really done a ton of work and I've made huge strides with my money mindset.

But when I thought about my food self-sabotage today, I also became acutely aware that I have a similar pattern around work and making money. So, with what I now know is called a lust for intensity, that deadly sin, if you want to think of it that way for my Enneagram type, number eight, when I know that about myself, I know that what that looks like with work is I tend to push, push, push really hard, get the hype, get things going, start a new project.

And I fall back into the hustle every few months, even though I don't want to, I try to work at not doing that. I try to really focus on essentialism as opposed to busyness. And again, I've made really great strides. But it is a really ingrained pattern and it's connected to my thinking and my identity. And so I accidentally often, at some point every few months, go overboard with my work hours and I get back in this pattern.

Okay, now, I catch it quicker. I break it sooner, but it still happens. And I crave that intensity with work, just like I do with anything else in my life where I'm solving a problem. So I get all hyped up again to start something like a new marketing push or launch a new course or go into extreme mode to clean up our systems or our finances or something.

And then I push so hard for two to three months to hit what feels like, really, it feels like a vicious cycle of burnout is what it feels like. But I push so hard to hit those goals and then I usually crash for a few weeks or pull back for a few weeks or hear myself saying I'm tired, even I'm burned out for a few weeks, or sometimes even a couple of months.

And so, when I'm in that burnout phase, I'm struggling to push through my days as a result and I start slacking on selling in those moments when I'm tired. I start slacking on making offers for my products or program. I start slacking on creating more money in my business until I hit a slump, really

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sort of a money slump, and I have to gear up all over again to go push really hard for another hit of money. Crazy. Crazy.

Crazy, self-sabotage, unconscious self-sabotage, subconscious self-sabotage, just something that I don't even realize is happening, except when I do and today is one of the times that I do. Again, I notice faster than I used to, but what's so profound to me here is I talk a lot about the feast and famine or feast or famine nature of the interior design business and other creative businesses.

But what if the truth is that, in my pattern, it's not the business that's so much feast or famine but me, me being all or nothing, me being hyped and then tired, me self-sabotaging. What if that is what's going on here? That is a gigantic light bulb moment for me and I hope it is for some of you, noticing your pattern.

I am still feast or famine in my food and health, literally going from overeating to restricting, feast or famine, at least on some levels, and I've been doing that for years. And I'm guilty of the same pattern at times in business; push, push, push, make big sums of money, followed by periods when I'm tired and tend to slack until it's time to push again. And I definitely say that creates financial feast or famine for me. Okay, huge awareness here.

Now, because I've created a lot of cash, cashflow, in the last few years and really changed my business, I do have a financial cushion now. And so, because of that, I wasn't noticing quite the urgency for cashflow that I used to feel for years in my business where I would literally go down to no money in our bank account and then have to get hyped up and push again and that's where really that pattern of workaholicism came in.

It's harder to see it now because I'm healthier financially, way healthier, just like it was harder to see these patterns in my weight loss and in my health because I'm healthier physically now. I'm more about wellness. But it doesn't mean that the pattern is not still there.

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So either way, cash in the bank or not, my pattern still exists. I still push, push, push, then get too tired, then everything bottoms out and I have to get frustrated, angry, scared, nervous, even if it's just slightly aware and I think, oops, we better put some money back in that account. I have to go from starting and stopping a lot.

And I'm telling you this because I am so hopeful that if you have similar patterns in any area of your life that are sabotaging your results, and let's be clear, we're sabotaging our own results in life or business, if you can become aware of them, you can do the work to change them.

So, for me, I had these a-ha moments at the gym today, but it's much bigger than just changing my behavior, because it always is, right? I've really got to do some major belief work, some major identity work. Because if you believe in the life coaching approach that I teach here on the podcast and on my programs for managing your thoughts, the ones I learned in Life Coach School, then you know that behavior or our actions are not really the things that are driving the problem.

Our behaviors or actions come from our feelings that come from our thoughts, so our thoughts are the problem. So it's not our actions that are the problem. It's always our thoughts. And in this case, my thoughts, and it runs super deep because it's not even just a thought anymore but a belief of mine that's the issue because a belief is a thought that you've thought over and over and over and it really becomes entrenched in there.

It becomes a part of who you believe you are. And so in this case, I thought these thoughts so often that they weren't even really conscious thoughts anymore. I wasn't even clued into why I was doing this pattern of behavior, this lose weight, gain weight thing, this get on track and then fall off track thing.

So it's really like being on autopilot. But here's what I am super clear on now right this minute. As long as I believe I am a super achiever and major problem solver then I may accidentally or subconsciously have a pattern of creating problems in my life so I always have something to solve.

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Wow, and since I'm a doer and an achiever, I often get my validation from myself and from other people for my achievements. So of course, I'm going to keep creating problems in my life, even if I don't realize it, even if they're small ones, even if they're subconscious, so I always have something to solve or achieve.

It's like job security for my identity. It's my ego keeping me in that place where it feels cozy and like I have a purpose, right? But it's so crazy. And the other thing I am super clear on right now is this; my identity of myself as a person who is always working on my weight or health and who is always striving to make more money.

Those two pieces of my identity are keeping me stuck in these patterns. And I'm noticing now, it's time to move onto bigger and more exciting goals. I've been working on these two, losing weight and making money, for years. And the only way to move on is to do the work on my identity, to become a person who is not always losing weight and a person who is not always striving to make money.

Now, that doesn't mean I have to stop making money, it just means I untether that identity. I have to shift my thinking to being the person who has money or who is healthy, not a person who's trying to become healthy or trying to become wealthy because the trying, the striving, is the problem for me because both of those identities keep me in the patterns of making sure I always have weight to lose or always have money that I need and this perpetuates the problems.

So the solution for me – and if you recognize patterns in yourself, it would be the same for you – is to dig into my beliefs, become a person who chooses to follow through on healthy habits with food and money both for different reasons; not because I need them, not because I'm always striving for them, but for some other reason I have to rewrite the belief.

Maybe I rewrite it to say, I do this because I'm a person who values consistently following through on the process, not because I need to achieve, not because I need to lose weight, not because I need more

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money, but because I consistently am a person, it is my identity, my belief, I am the person who follows through on the processes that I know make me my best self, so that's different, I'm just following through, not outcome-based, as James Clear says in Atomic Habits, just following the process. That could be a healthy mindset, a healthy identity for me.

So if I'm focused on eating whole foods because they make my body thrive and going to the gym for the same reason and the goal is not any kind of results but literally just checking the box that I went, checking the box that I ate that way, then I don't have to think about losing weight. I don't have to get hyped up again. I don't have to fall off the wagon, which I've told you there is no wagon, but in my mind sometimes there is, and in yours too. I don't have to fall off to get praise for getting back on. My praise would come from consistently staying on. That would become my new identity, but I have to do some major work to get there, some major mindset, some practicing.

So the goal is to undo the need to achieve in either of these areas for me. And the other goal, or the flipside of that coin, is to focus on being the type of person who is healthy, not the type of person who is becoming healthy, the type of person who is at a weight that I'm comfortable with, not the type of person who is always losing weight.

So, to achieve this, I really have to lay down that losing weight or I don't have enough money identity right now. Now, might I lose more weight than I ever have if I'm consistent with my habits? Of course. Might I make more money than ever if I'm consistent with my habits? Of course. But it won't be part of my identity as the person who's always losing weight, as the person who is getting her validation from losing a bunch of weight or making a bunch of money.

So it goes with both of those issues for me. I need to focus on being the person who meets my monthly sales goals as far as money goes in a doable way, not an extreme way. And so I've got to figure out other ways to get that intensity that my personality needs, to hit that craving without self-sabotage because it really creates a healthy sustainable business when I

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don't start and stop all the time, when it's not extreme high and extreme low.

And that's really what I want. That creates balance in every way for my team and me. So following through weekly, not because I need money but it's because who I am, I'm the person who does these tasks in my business weekly, who leads my team this way weekly, that allows me to stop trying all the time to make money, to get hyped up, to launch the new biggest latest thing. So even subconsciously, if I'm giving myself a reason to need more money, that can go away. That can change.

So wow, this episode is just really pulling back the curtains of what's happening in my own brain, in my own life, but I know sometimes those are the most profound for other people and that's why I wanted to share this in real time. And I hope it makes sense to you.

It's really, really tricky when we get to the level of being able to think about our thinking this way. It's complex, but it is so important. And our hidden identities, our beliefs about our self can be the thing that's keeping us repeating self-sabotaging behavior, even though we don't understand that we're the ones choosing this behavior. We think it's happening to us or we just feel out of control a lot of the time, like we're at the effect of this

We feel like, why does this keep happening? Why did I keep losing and gaining the same weight? And what I want you to see is that if something is happening in your life, no matter what it is, you're the reason it's happening, even if it's subconscious, you're choosing those thoughts, you're staying in those patterns. And if we don't understand we're keeping ourselves in these patterns that we're so desperately trying to get rid of, even though they're subconscious, they'll keep happening because our brain believes there's a legit reason to keep doing them.

So it's sort of like a naughty child who keeps doing something that the parents don't want him to to get attention from their parents. Our brains keep self-sabotaging to get an alignment with who we believe we are. So I keep self-sabotaging my health or my money so I will have something to

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work on, that I'm really, really good at. I mean seriously, here's part of the problem; I'm so good at losing weight and getting healthy. I'm so good at making a ton of money and I can give myself a lot of praise for doing either of those things and other people can give me praise for it too. But it's time I stopped those patterns.

So I'm actually in the comfort zone when I'm in this pattern because again, I'm so good at solving these same two problems. I'm an expert at solving them. I've solved them so many times and I'm good at it and it's really as painful as the results and the health issues, I guess, if you want to call it that, and the money issues.

As painful as those are that come with it. It's so fascinating to see there is a benefit to me of doing these behaviors, of keeping these patterns, the benefit of feeling accomplished, the benefit of doing something I know how to do really, really well.

So it's time I move onto new problems and let those two old tired problems that are attached to my identity go right now. It's time I get a new identity today. And it doesn't happen that fast. I'll have to work on it, but it can start right now. And I hope that whatever identity you're hanging onto that you may now realize is holding you back, it's keeping you in a pattern that you didn't really understand but now you do, I hope today's episode helps you see it so you can do the work, the mindset work, to untether yourself from that identity and the behavior patterns that go with it in your mind.

Okay, so that's all I have for you now today, friends. It's a biggy, It's a huge one for me. It's something I'll be working on. I'll keep you posted on the progress and how it goes, but it's such a gift and a blessing, so thank you, thank you to Caleb for helping me remember this again, to see this pattern again. But it's such a gift to be able to manage our minds in a way that we can get the results that we want in our lives. So that's what I'll be working on.

I hope you'll work on it in your life and I hope you have a great week and I'll see you again really, really soon right here next week. Bye for now, y'all.

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