

Ep #85: Building Connections and Gaining Visibility with Selena Soo



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Tobi Fairley

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You are listening to *The Design You Podcast* with Tobi Fairley, episode number 85.

Welcome to *The Design You Podcast*, a show where interior designers and creatives learn to say no to busy and say yes to more health, wealth, and joy. Here is your host, Tobi Fairley.

Hello, hello my creative friend and business owner. So, are you loving the powerhouse women that I've been bringing you in my interviews lately? Because it has just been a rock star lineup one after another after another, and I feel like it's really like a master class sort of, or like a whole education in your business that I've been stringing end to end. So I hope you feel that way too.

I'm definitely using all of these things in my own business and I know they work, so I know you're going to love putting them to work in your business as well. Now today, I have for you an interview that is with my own - my very own publicist. And I've never had a publicist before. I've always done this work myself, I've always done all of my pitching and PR, and I did have a great team member for a while that was a great PR person, and of course she helped with that too.

But I've never gone outside my business and hired someone to help with publicity. And so this has been a really fun relationship with Selena because I'm not just working in the design industry anymore. I've done that and I felt really comfortable doing that on my own, but we're talking about I'm going all in.

We're going big. We're going big stages, big magazines, big press because I want to get my message out in a much bigger way. I want to impact way more people. And in fact, Selena, my publicist, has a membership or a program called Impacting Millions. So that's the whole point and she is phenomenal.

So I work with her one-on-one. She only takes a handful of clients that way, but she does have all kinds of amazing things and ways that you can work

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with her, and you're going to want to check her out once you hear on this fabulous episode with so, so, so much insight about how you should be thinking about your own publicity.

She's going to change the way you think about being an influencer and working with other influencers, and she is just delightful, for one thing. She's an introvert, which I think is fascinating because she gets so much done.

And so many of us think, oh, you have to be a big outspoken extrovert to make stuff happen and she proves that wrong every day in her business. But there's just so much goodness in this episode, so enjoy my conversation with my publicist Selena Soo.

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Tobi: Hey Selena. Welcome to *The Design You Podcast*. I'm especially glad you're here because you're one of my guests that I actually have a really close relationship with, which we're going to tell people about. So you are my publicist and we're doing lots of great things together, but tell everybody kind of the bigger picture of who you are and what you do.

Selena: Sure. So hello everyone. I'm Selena Soo. I'm so happy to be here. I'm the creator of Impacting Millions, a company that is really focused on helping people get their message out into the world in a bigger way. So we work with entrepreneurs, experts, coaches, service providers who really want to reach more people with their work. And they're tired of feeling like this best kept secret, and they really want to become that admired leader in their industry.

Tobi: I know that's so amazing and we're having so much fun working together. And the reason I wanted to bring you on today is not because - well, not only because I think you're phenomenal and you're doing amazing things with me and for me, but I just think you have a different way of looking at publicity than I've ever looked at it before.

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And possibly, that's because I come from the interior design industry specifically and we've always been focused just on kind of the shelter home publications, but there's so much more to publicity and PR and getting noticed and even becoming an influencer or working with other influencers, all of which we're going to talk about today.

But before we really get into that, will you just kind of set the tone for us about how we should be thinking about publicity and why it's really important beyond sort of the obvious, of course, getting seen, but like, why is this important to businesses and entrepreneurs?

Selena: Yeah, absolutely. So first I want to define what publicity is because when people think of publicity, they often think of older forms of media. More traditional media like television and print magazines and newspapers, and that definitely is a part of publicity, and there are new forms of media like podcasts, like the one that you're listening to right now.

Influencers, people who have powerful online platforms, media lists, social media channels, I also see them as part of that new media. And for some people, the best kind of publicity might be being on physical stages or speaking to a membership group where their ideal clients are.

So it's really about rather than just sharing your message one on one with people but being on these media influencer platforms and getting that endorsement from these platforms and then your message being spread through that.

So the reason why I think publicity is so important is because it's one thing for you to tell the world that you're the best at what you do but that's only going to go so far. It really means a whole lot more. There's a third part and established media brand or a top influencer who is telling everyone, you've got to check out this person, they're amazing at what they do.

And when you get publicity, it elevates your brand and it establishes your credibility, and it's the way that you start reaching more people, and that's what we all need. As business owners, we need more people to know

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about our work, and not just know that we exist, but to be endorsed and to be recommended and to be seen as one of the top people at what we do.

Tobi: Yeah, I love that. Some of the things that you said there that are so fascinating to me and that have been so helpful in the work we're doing together is I think you're right. I think people think of the big traditional media and they think well, there's no way I could be on TV, or my work is not good enough to be in a top print magazine or whatever.

And there's so many other steps, even including things like you said of showing up in someone else's online membership and teaching a course or doing a Q&A or some other level of supporting another business or entrepreneur, a peer, a brand. And we focused a lot on those connections, and that's really, I think, your biggest gift. You are so gifted at creating and building connections with people.

Selena: Thank you.

Tobi: You're so welcome. So anything in that realm, I want to talk in a second about for the interior design industry and related industries, specifically about shelter magazines, but before we get to that, what about just a different way of thinking about connections?

Because I think a lot of people dismiss some of the low hanging fruit that's right in front of them that they could be building connections and that all counts as publicity, right?

Selena: Yeah, absolutely. I love that you brought that up and I really feel like the media landscape is changing and that relationships are more important than ever. But I will say that a lot of times, people overlook the opportunities right in front of them.

A lot of times, people want to go from zero to Oprah Magazine, or zero to The Today Show. And that can definitely be part of someone's ultimate journey, but that's never the starting point. And so the best place to start is with a low hanging fruit.

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And what I actually recommend people do when they're getting started with publicity, well first, they need to get clear on what are the ideal publicity opportunities for them based on their goals, based on where their audiences hang out and so forth. But then start to actually reach out to people in your existing network, letting them know that you're looking for these opportunities.

So one thing that you could do is even post on social media, on Facebook and say - I mean, 2020 is around the corner so it could be, "I know for me, 2020 is the year of visibility and being seen. I'm looking to get my message out there in a bigger way. In particular, I'm looking to share my expertise around x, y, z. These are the types of things I can share. Is anybody looking for a guest for one of their programs or have a contact to any media outlets and things like that?"

I think a lot of times we just expect that oh, well people should just help me or know to help me, but unless we explicitly tell people I am looking for visibility opportunities or I am looking for clients or referrals, it's not going to be top of mind for them. And so many times, there are people in your world that actually want to help you but you need to be really clear that you're actually open to receiving help and clear on what are the kinds of opportunities you want.

Tobi: Yeah, I love that. And that brought up something else just to touch on quickly before we get into that whole magazine thing, and that is that I think also, a lot of times I notice that entrepreneurs that I've worked with, especially creative entrepreneurs think, well, my work will speak for itself and people will just have me come on and talk about that.

And what I've learned from you - I mean, I knew this to a degree because I've been a speaker, I've been on stages and other things, but you really have to clarify what your kind of core message is and your topics and things that you would want to bring to the table are, right?

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Because it's kind of like, well, how does anybody know how to help you get visibility if you don't have what you just said of I want to be known for or I love to talk about x, y, z. And I think a lot of people don't even have that sort of list of what x, y, and z is defined.

So anything around that before we jump into the magazine thing? Sorry, I keep coming up with other ideas but there's so much here that people haven't thought of.

Selena: Yeah, absolutely. So I think everybody should be clear on what their expert topics are because when you're being seen in the media, you're going to be speaking on a particular topic. And also, if you can niche down where it makes sense. So as an example, you may be an interior designer, but do you specialize in working with green homes or tiny spaces or whatever it is.

Get clear on what makes you a little bit different than everyone else. What are your specialties? Who are your favorite clients to work with? What's your personal story that led you to this point? So those are a couple ways that you can stand out.

Tobi: Yeah, I love it. And getting vulnerable with your personal story, like we're doing deep work on that right now, which is so exciting, but it also takes a lot of courage and it takes some mindset work, which we will also talk about today. So those are great points.

Well, let's just about this whole idea of the shelter magazine or other industries that are related to mine that are - architects and landscape architects and a lot of the people that are in related industries are kind of feeling the crunch of a lot of these magazines going away. There's fewer print opportunities.

And I think it just sort of, in some ways, it's scary. It feels like what we always banked on, which is in a sense to depend on those people to spread our message, now we kind of have to do this other work. And I want to hear you talk about this from someone outside of the design industry.

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Because I've had plenty of people on this podcast that are in it and that are in magazines talk about it.

But I think it's so funny how we can be very short-sighted. Because from your perspective, yeah, it's a change, but it's only one tiny piece of what we can do to build our brand. So should we be panicking that these magazine opportunities have changed or have gone away? How should we think about that?

Selena: Sure. Yeah, I think it's really important for us to adapt to the times. And I really see it as there being more opportunities than ever. I mean, I think it's great that so much content is going online because it makes it easier to share. And so while there are certain opportunities that may have gone away, like there being less print opportunities, there's more digital opportunities, there's more podcast opportunities, there's more influencer opportunities.

And in the past, there were just fewer media channels, fewer TV shows. There was just less. There was less opportunity, but when you were on those shows, you would reach more people. Today, as entrepreneurs, we really need to be responsible for making sure that people will see the publicity we're getting.

So the way that I think about it is landing that media interview, that article. That's only 20% of it. I really see the other 80% as what you do with it. When you land a podcast interview, so much of the success is about how you show up, the stories that you tell. Whether you are driving people to a page to collect their email, how you're following up with the podcast host, how you're promoting your interview, how you're sharing it with your audience.

There's so many people that people overlook. So I think it's a mistake to think I've landed this piece of publicity and like, it's done. Or being like, oh, I did two interviews and nothing really happened to my business. I was speaking at my friend, Todd Herman's event recently and he was talking

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about with his book launch, he appeared on over 100 podcasts in a short span of time.

And that's what it takes. When we think about the people we admire or the people that we think are really out there in a big way with their message, like Gary Vaynerchuk or Rachel Hollis or whoever it is. They're not just putting out one or two pieces of content, doing one or two interviews.

They are prolific in their work. And so a part of being noticed is also being consistent. Consistently getting yourself out there and making sure that you're in a way, enduring long enough to get noticed, versus doing one or two things and then throwing your hands up in the air, thinking it doesn't work. Because you really need to maximize the opportunity and there is something about putting yourself out there consistently.

Tobi: I absolutely love that. And I think even just giving people that number that you did, of that 20%, 80%, which is kind of the Pareto's law. And noticing that they've got it backwards. They were banking on the 20% of the getting published or the getting on the thing to be what was the game-changer, and I think that that is really eye-opening.

Because for years, I've said and other people I know who have been in my industry and who have gotten published often say, well, getting in a national magazine does not equal hoards of clients calling and beating your door down and hiring you right that minute. And I think the fascinating piece is it could, but they're skipping the 80% of the follow-up part of it.

And they didn't have any digital marketing in place at all and they're not following up with people that saw it or were interested or closing the sale one-on-one or in their inboxes or with emails. So I love that because in a way, we're being almost flippant or irresponsible without knowing it, that just getting on The Today Show should suddenly make us famous. And you're saying that once you get on there, your work has just begun. That's just the tiniest piece of it.

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Selena: Yeah. It has just begun. And so to give people some specific examples of what they can do when they get a piece of media, let's say they get something that they're really proud of. They could update their email signature and they could include the media logo, or an image of the magazine and say check out my latest feature interview, whatever it is, in x, y, z magazine.

You should be creating custom graphics on social media, sharing your wins, and I encourage people - you do this really well, Tobi, is you create custom graphics with a great image of you and then the media logo really big, as well as the title. So creating those social media assets. Emailing your list and sharing your excitement with them and encouraging them to check it out.

If you have an email nurture sequence, you could consider putting some of your key media pieces as part of your email nurture sequence because the interviews, the articles you're writing, that's content that's going to be interesting to people. Also, updating your website, your about page on your website, your press page on your website with your media mentions, and also your bio in general.

When people are talking about you on stage, introducing you, that's something that they can share. I mean, the list goes on and on. When people are making a buying decision, having those media logos in prominent places by the buy now button or any button where they need to take an action.

So I mean, there's a whole list of things that people can do. A lot of times, people actually do none of that and that's why the media that they get doesn't fully take off.

Tobi: Yes, or take off at all. Yeah, that's so fascinating and really should be an a-ha moment I think for our listeners to think, well, no wonder that didn't really work. Okay, so let's move into the idea of some of those other

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opportunities out there, including - first let's talk about working with other influencers and then we'll transition over to even becoming one yourself.

But you said to me before and I completely agree that really, influencers are new media. They are that new version of media that you were talking about. And so let's talk about influencers and how you start to connect with them, how you're memorable when you connect with them, how you build those relationships. There's so much that goes into that.

Selena: Yeah. I mean, there's absolutely so much I can say about that. First, I want to define what an influencer means to me because sometimes when people hear those words, they think oh, it's Richard Branson and Oprah Winfrey or someone on Instagram that has a million followers.

And my definition of an influencer is someone who can help you reach your goals faster. So they need to be connected to your goals, which means you need to be clear on what your goals actually are. And influencers, they can take many forms. They could be someone who is a mentor to you or someone with a big following, a top expert in your industry.

They could also be colleagues in your field that are a couple steps ahead of you, or they could even be your super fans and people that love to spread your message to more people. So a variety of different people could be influencers. And when I think about connecting with influencers, I always assume that every single person is extremely busy.

They have no time. They're probably on the verge of overwhelm, and they're juggling work life with family life and personal priorities. So whenever we are asking something of someone, the default answer is going to be no, unless we can find a way to make it really attractive to them.

So I never take any of this for granted. And one of the main things I recommend that people do is really make sure they're supporting and influencer with their goals. Getting on the same page. So if you think of an

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influencer like a train, or any busy person like a train, they're on a track and they're going full speed ahead to their end destination.

And what a lot of people do is when they see an influencer, they try to pull them off the tracks and get them to go where they're going. But that will never work. Really, you need to wait for the train to slow down, open up its doors, then jump on the train and basically work with the train to go to the end destination faster.

So when I think about some of the most influential people in my world I've gone to connect with over the years, the reason why we have a relationship is because I've jumped on the train and I made their goals my priority and that's how we're having the conversation. It's about me supporting them or aligning our interests, versus trying to pull someone in a different direction.

Tobi: I love that. And we often want to think well, we don't have time to do our own stuff, how could we do someone else's stuff? But we have to stop and go, but we're asking them for something, right? We're trying to use something that they have to help our business. And so of course, if we're just trying to take from them, they're going to be like, no thank you.

But if we're actually saying I want to support your book launch, I want to support your business, I want to support your message, that's the relationship building you're talking about that can come full circle then to opening up opportunities for them also to help you, right?

Selena: Right, exactly. And also knowing when certain types of people might be more receptive to connecting. So as an example, when someone has a book coming out, they're definitely more interested in media. And Tobi, is it okay for me to share an example?

Tobi: Yeah, absolutely.

Selena: Yeah, so Gabby Bernstein who is the author of the book Super Attractor, is a New York Times bestselling author. Her book is released in

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September, and I knew that she would be more open to opportunities, and I thought that she and Tobi would just be a really great fit to connect.

And so we reached out to her around her book launch and when I was presenting Tobi to her, I made sure to present the most important things that she would be interested in. Tobi's platform, the reach she has, the unique audience she has, it would be a new and different audience for Gabby to get in front of.

Tobi did a bulk book buy and so sharing that book with people in her community. Tobi also has a book club, so that was a great opportunity to really spread the message of Gabby's book and have people go deeper. So I wasn't just reaching out to Gabby being like hey, can you do this interview?

When we present the opportunity, we tie it into her goals and we also talked about how Tobi wouldn't just do the interview but Tobi would promote the interview in various ways. So that makes it a lot more attractive to know that when someone says yes to something, your goals are aligned. And I know that you had a really great conversation with Gabby. I don't know that there's anything you want to share around that, Tobi.

Tobi: Well, we just connected so much and I think it's because when I shifted my mindset to that approach where I'm thinking okay, she is doing something for me, but my whole role here is how do I serve her. Then I literally read her book cover to cover before the interview. I was very prepared. Of course, she loved all of my questions, the way we connected.

She kept complimenting me, which was not what I was trying to get out of it, but I truly poured myself into her book. I loved it. I wasn't making it up. I wasn't blowing smoke. It was authentically something that actually moved me. And I knew it would help my own community.

So like you said, we really got creative brainstorming like, what do I have? What kind of assets do I have that we could leverage for her? And so it's

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funny because she and I have communicated since several times. She wants me to look at a course she's created and see how it might be a fit for me or some of my audience.

So it starts this whole relationship. Like you said, I got on the train. I got on the Gabby train, which I was already on because I'd read all of her books. And so that's, when you suggested her, it wasn't like it was a random person I didn't know. I knew her. I'd read all of her books, it was a fit for me, it was a fit for my thinking, my philosophies.

So when we were already aligned, then I was able to think differently about building this connection with her, and it's just so much fun. And it kind of changes, I don't know, your whole attitude, which we can talk about right now too because we're going to talk about mindset. But it really changes your whole mindset about this whole approach.

And I think one of the mindsets that I see come up the most when people start thinking about this, and maybe they don't have quite the following I have yet, or they're kind of even complaining about how hard it is to build a following and why do they have to have a social media, these are the very reasons to start, not only to open your mind to building your own assets so you have them to sort of help other people, but I think also, you're giving permission for people to not literally go straight to Gabby Bernstein, or like you said, to Oprah or Tony Robbins or someone else, but to start to create these sort of micro versions of this all the way up until they get to where they want to go.

So what are some of those mindsets? Because part of it's going to be - well, a couple of things. To me, there's kind of the imposter syndrome thing of why would they want to connect with me? I think there's also the scarcity around time. Like I don't have time or I don't have the money to buy all these books if that's part of what we're going to offer.

So besides scarcity and imposter syndrome, which are two huge ones that I talk about a lot, and you can speak to either of those also if you want to,

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but what else? What fits into this whole mindset shift that we have to make if we're going to get great publicity, if we're going to build influencer relationships? And then ultimately at some point, become possibly an influencer ourselves.

Selena: Yeah, absolutely. I mean, I love to go deeper on just the fear around getting publicity. Because truthfully, the stats are not that difficult. Once you get a basic publicity education, but a lot of times, people are never getting opportunities because they're never pitching themselves in the first place.

So just to share a story, I remember back when I started my businesses seven years ago, I actually did my first ever media interview. It was a client of mine and she was such a huge supporter of me. And she was like, I want to do an interview with you and share your message with my audience.

And I remember feeling really uncomfortable because I love shining the spotlight on other people but I wasn't really looking to have this attention on me, being on video was something that was completely terrifying. I was not comfortable.

But then at the same time, there was this wise part of me that was like, you should say yes to this, Selena. This is someone that wants to help you get your message, put you in front of more people. Obviously, I know how important that is. So I went ahead and I did this interview. Nervous the whole time. It was my very first interview.

And I remember watching the recording later and I could not maintain proper eye contact, my eyes were shifting, I was talking too fast. I was using a lot of "umms" and "you knows." And I had a bunch of interns working with me at the time, and they were actually tallying up the number of filler words I was using.

And there were literally 137 and at some point I was like, you can just stop. I'm like, oh my god, this is a disaster. I don't look very confident. I just had

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the worst things to say about myself. I was like, there's no way I can share this with people. I remember one of my interns was like, honestly, I don't think it was that bad. I think it was really good. The substance, what you shared was great. I think people would like it.

And I thought, you know what, let me just send it to my list and just see what happens. And I sent the interview to my list, and within a couple hours, people wrote back and they were like, this interview was great. Thank you so much, I was really moved by it. I didn't know that about you.

And so I kind of got three lessons from that that really do connect to mindset. So number one is that it's never as bad as you think. I know that for myself, for many of the people that I work with, we are our own worst critic and we are overanalyzing every umm and you know, and just our appearance. And most people are not paying as close attention.

So usually we're criticizing ourselves unnecessarily. And the second thing is I realized I was comparing myself to people that were much further ahead than me. Maybe 10 years or 20 years in business. They seemed perfectly polished on stage, but the thing is those people have worked with media coaches and trainers and have gotten better and better over time.

So I think it's an important remind that it's not fair to compare ourselves to people who are five, 10 years, or 20 years ahead of us, and that the only way for us to actually get better is to do the work. And it's hard because we may be perfectionists, but literally, there's no way that we're going to get better until we do the work to get better.

So we can have this vision of where we want to be. We also have to accept where we are. And if there are things - I realized that I was being kind of selfish and focused on myself, like how do I look, how do I sound, and just thinking I look like a fool, when I was really disconnected from the substance of what I was actually sharing.

And the ideas that I was sharing were really going to help people get their message out there, improve their lives, make a bigger impact. And so it

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actually brings me back to when I think about building relationships and networking, I have so much fun with it.

And people are sometimes surprised because I identify as an introvert and someone who's naturally shy, but I am a huge go-getter. I am very driven and one of the reasons why it's so easy for me to build relationships with people who are like, shouldn't you be freaking out talking to this person is because I'm coming from a place of service.

And I just know that I'm the kind of person, when I connect with someone, I'm going to make sure their life is better because I'm going to be focused on how I can help them, how I can add value, how I can make connections. And I'm not thinking about myself and how I sound, but how I can make a difference in their life, and so that takes the pressure off of me.

And so nowadays when I do interviews, even if I trip up on my words, I'm not perfect, I just ask myself at the end of the interview, did I really show up and give it my all? Was I generous? Was I open? Did I add value? If the answer is yes and I did an amazing job and I can move on, there's no need to like, overanalyze how I sounded and how I looked if I showed up to serve and was generous, I did a good job. End of story.

Tobi: Yeah, I love every bit of that. There's so much goodness there. And I think I've noticed people even in my own membership community just recently feeling exactly like you're talking about. And I always remind them that when they're in that space, they are just thinking about themselves.

I even heard - I was at a talk last year that Marie Forleo spoke in, somebody even asked that question of how do you not feel insecure. And she said similar to what you said. She's kind of like, if you're freaking out about you, you've got the flashlight shining on you. You need to take your hand and turn it around and shine it out on your audience and how you're serving them.

And I think you're saying the same thing, and it's such good advice. The other thing I was going to bring up myself and I'm so glad you did is this

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idea of being an introvert. Because people look at me and they're like, oh Tobi's comfortable out on a stage, or she's comfortable in this role because she's an extrovert. And I loved when I learned about you.

You even did a whole thing with one of your recent launches a few months ago talking about that very thing. Because I think a lot of people want to say well, I'm shy or I'm an introvert - and not all introverts are shy necessarily, but you regularly, including just at Todd Herman's event, but you regularly take the stage with thousands of people listening and go on major big interviews.

And you are able to do that even though you're an introvert, so is there any other little piece of the mindset stuff to add if people are telling themselves the story of well, I'm not the type of person who can do that sort of thing?

Selena: Yeah, absolutely. I mean, one of the things that I think is really big is that we need to do things that we're uncomfortable with. We have to stretch ourselves out of our comfort zone. And for me, from the day I started my business, I mean, so many fears, but I really think the formula for success is starting before you're ready and doing that scary thing.

So I'm just like, even reflecting on the Todd Herman event that I spoke at recently. And even though I've been in business for seven years, I've had that personal brand business where I've had to put myself out there, it's still not totally comfortable for me. It's getting more comfortable. Certain things are easier, but for me, being on a physical stage with hundreds of people in the audience definitely leaves me feeling vulnerable and exposed.

But at the same time, I do it anyway because I'm not going to let that hold me back. And I used to host this mastermind at my home, it's called The Influencer Mastermind, and Geneen Roth was one of our speakers and she wrote a famous book, Women, Food, and God.

Tobi: Exactly. It is, and I love Geneen. She's phenomenal. Yes.

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Selena: And so she sold over a million books and she leads workshops all the time and she confided to our group that she still gets really scared. She's still not comfortable with public speaking. I don't know if she's in her 60s or 70s or what age she is. And so a lot of times, people think I need to wait until I'm comfortable and then I'm going to do it. I need to wait until I feel confident.

And I really love this saying that I heard, that confidence is something that you earn. And you earn that confidence by taking risk and taking action and doing the uncomfortable thing. And so there are so many people out there and we can be like, oh, well it's easy for them and they seem so confident but it's totally different for me.

But for a lot of people - I was talking to a bunch of my friends at the Todd Herman event, and some of them are just so eloquent and polished and I'm always so impressed with them. And they're also a lot more extroverted than me, and a number of them were like, I'm freaking out, I'm a nervous wreck. I'm like wow, even them. So I think people would be surprised that it's not easy for most of us. We just choose to do it anyway.

Tobi: Right. And I was going to say the same thing. I am an extrovert, I've gotten very comfortable with speaking in my own arenas. I can go in front of 500 interior designers and be pretty confident because my message is so strong.

Now, when you and I are going to have me on other big stages, I'll feel very nervous at times, but even with my own audience and my own industry, every single time it's time to get up in front of people, whether it's 20 people or 200 people or 500 people, I still get the same butterflies. I still get the thoughts of what if you forget everything you're supposed to say? What if your slides don't work? What if you sound like an idiot?

And then I notice those thoughts coming through my head and I know there's no truth to them. It's just fear showing up, and I just literally - like you said, I start always thinking about the audience instead. I'm like, you

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know this stuff, you've got this, look at all those people out there. They're going to be smiling at you, they're so receptive, you're going to change their lives.

And I literally like, exactly like you said, just shift my focus to them. But are those butterflies there? Sure. Now, for me, they go away a little bit into the talk once I get in the groove or they at least calm down a lot, but right before, you're like, oh my gosh, why did I say yes to this?

And that's even coming from an extrovert. So everybody has it and I think you're right. If you say well, because I'm an introvert I'm different, I think you're really going to hold yourself back in a big way, which is super fascinating. Well, let's talk about then not only using and connecting with other influencers, which you've done such a great job of sharing with us what that looks like. How do you start to become an influencer?

Because I think that's kind of - a lot of people think, well I want to be the person. And whether they're thinking an influencer has 10,000 followers on Instagram or 10 million or somewhere in between, there's some tactics and even mindsets that go with kind of stepping into that role.

So what do people need to know if they want to start to influence other people? And like you said, they can influence somebody if they only have a very small audience. They can still influence 20 people, 200 people, whatever that number is.

Selena: Yeah. So when I think of influencers, I think of them doing really two main things. One is they're adding value to people. And value can come in a lot of different forms. It could be creating beautiful photos and content that just takes people's breath away, or maybe they're an expert in a particular topic and they help people save money, start a business, whatever it is.

But whatever value that you're creating, you have to put that out there in the world. So there is something about being prolific. Whether it is being consistent on Instagram, doing interviews, writing online, and just creating

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that body of work. So you need to be adding value to the people that are following you.

And then the other thing I would say is really creating that emotional connection because the truth is there are many people who do things that are similar to us. But people are going to latch onto the people that they just feel more emotionally drawn to.

So part of that is opening up and sharing your personal story. People love it when you take people behind the scenes of your life. For me, I double down on talking about the introvert piece because I know that it's really refreshing to people. And I also talk a lot about the things that make me uncomfortable.

As you become more established in your career, you're going to become less relatable. People are going to be like wow, she's extraordinary but she can't relate to me. So it's even more important as you rise in your industry to really ground yourself and open up. So that's something I encourage people to focus on.

And then also being someone who stands for something. That is important. People want to follow other people who have strong beliefs, who are looking to make a difference. Nowadays, something that I just value more and more in the influencers that I follow is personal character.

I think that sometimes, people are like, wow, this person's such a big deal because they've got so many followers. They look at the numbers and the size and all of that. But the reason why I care about the work... But the reason why, like, I care about the work that I do and I love to promote experts and entrepreneurs is because these are people that want to make a difference in other people's lives. And I really see them as role models and leaders. So personally, I am definitely drawn to people who I feel like care a lot about becoming the best version of themselves who have really strong personal character and, you know, this is all stuff that you need to put out there, you know. In order to have followers, you need to be a leader, and part of being a leader is sharing your ideas, your content, your personality

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into the world. So yeah, those are some of the key things that you can do to really stand out as an influencer.

Tobi: I love that. And I talk about, to my audience and my membership, about having a point of view, like you said, and taking a stand. Like, you've got to decide. You've got to spend some time thinking, what do I care about? What do I want to talk about? And I love that you said being prolific, because then we run up against the, you know, having time to create stuff. But if you want to get to this level, you've got to have a point of view, then you've got to talk about it. You've got to create content around it.

And I also want to just say to your point about a body of work, I think in an industry like interior design or architecture or something that you're going to photograph a finished product of a room, that's not your only body of work. And I see so many people waiting until they get a certain level of clients, so they would be proud to photograph or put work out there. And they're missing a huge opportunity to be creating content in other ways along the way, right? So I think the difference in some of the people that we see rise quickly on Instagram or in some other way, and we'll think, oh they're so young or how did they do that or they seem like an overnight success. What I notice and I'm sure you do too is they're just not afraid to go ahead wherever they are and start talking about things that matter to them, creating content. They're not sitting back until they get to a certain level and then saying, okay, now I've earned the right to share my content or my point of view or create something, is that right?

Selena: Yeah, absolutely. And the people that are most successful are the people that are just go-getters, are going for those opportunities.

Tobi: Yeah, I love that. I love that idea of creating. So all of you listening, like, you've got something right now you can be talking about creating. You don't have to wait for your dream client or you don't have to wait – you could literally be five minutes in business and already have a point of view and be creating content and be prolific, which I love. Well, anything else, Selena, that they need to know if they're going to really uplevel and kind of stop playing small and step into this taking ownership of and responsibility for their publicity and possibly working with or becoming an influencer?

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Selena: Gosh, I mean, there is so much there, but I think the first thing is, one is getting clear on what you want, you know, because not all opportunities are created equal, you know, so getting clear, are you looking to write more, or are you looking to share more on social media or are you looking to be interviewed? So just, you know, once you know exactly what you want, then it's easier to go for it and attract it.

Another step I would recommend is creating that influencer list of people that can help you with your goals and looking at that list, whether it's once a week or once a month. You can create a calendar entry to focus on your influencer list and review it. The other thing is, you know, with the people that you want to develop deeper relationships with, really think about how you can jump on that train, how you can support that influencer in reaching their goals faster. How can you build relationships?

And then, you know, when you're pitching yourself – this is kind of like a recap of what we discussed, like getting really clear on what makes you different. What is your expertise? What is your niche? How are you different than the average person who does what you do? Like Tobi was saying, what's your point of view?

And then there's also that consistency. I mean, there's consistency in terms of like publishing and building that body of work, but also consistency in putting yourself out there for opportunities. But yeah, I mean, great opportunities come to those people who are brave and bold and consistently put themselves out there. So yeah, that's what I would say about being an influencer.

Tobi: Yeah, those are huge. And I love that you just recapped a lot of what we talked about. And I think, at the end of the day, it also makes us have to get super serious about how we're using our time because so many people, I find, are busy doing things that, as we might say, don't move the needle in their business or don't move them towards their goals. And if you want this level of success, if you want this level of influencing other people, it is a job.

It takes time and you're going to have to clear time for it in your schedule. It doesn't just happen because you've been in business X number of years or

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you got published somewhere or somebody discovered you. Like, you truly have to take the bull by the horns and make this stuff happen.

Selena: 100%. And, Tobi, I wanted to share – actually, I have a special gift for your audience.

Tobi: Awesome, okay, what is it?

Selena: Yeah, so I have a free publicity calendar, month by month publicity calendar that has 179 different story ideas, dates, and hooks to take the guesswork out of pitching. Because a big part of getting in the media is understanding what the journalists', the media professional's goals are. And tying what you're doing to something that, you know, themes, special dates, things that are happening that month.

So I have, yeah, an amazing media calendar. People always print it and shoe me because they love it, they're obsessed with it. If they want to get it, they can go to impactingmillions.com/calendar.

Tobi: Awesome. And we'll put that in the show notes so in case you forget or you need to go back and look it up, we'll have that in the show notes for everybody. Well, Selena, I knew you would be amazing. I mean, we've built such a wonderful relationship and friendship working together and I knew we would have a fun time talking about this. But wow, you just, as always, blew me away with the way that you can really, you know, simplify and take some of the fear out of this whole idea of getting this level of publicity for your business, so thank you so much for being here today.

Selena: Yeah, thanks for having me. This was fun.

Tobi: I loved it.

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Okay, did that blow your mind at all? Are you thinking completely differently about how to define influencers and what it is like to influence other people and how you could really put some emphasis on this in a whole new way in your business? Because, as Selena and I talked about, it's not just something that happens to you. You won't just be discovered if you're talented enough or if you are really putting a lot of work out in the world.

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You have to take the publicity bull by the horn and make this stuff happen. And if you've listened to some of my other episodes, which you might want to go back to about how to really focus on your zone of genius and make room for the stuff that really matters, you're going to have to make room for this if you want this level of exposure.

So I hope that you loved Selena's ideas as much as I love working with her and implementing them in my business. And let Selena and I know what you think about it. You can find us on social media and shoot us a message and let us know what you think.

So, thanks for listening today, everyone, and I'll be back again really soon 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.