

Ep #87: Embracing the Suck



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Tobi Fairley

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

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You are listening to the *Design You Podcast* with Tobi Fairley, episode number 87.

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.

Hi friends. Yes, it's really me. Yes, I sound sexy, or like a man, or maybe like I've been smoking for a long time, none of which is really true. And it's all courtesy of a lovely sinus infection. But guess what? The show has to go on. I'm not leaving you hanging. I'm here. So you're welcome for the sexy voice. It's a bonus, right? It's the silver lining.

So have you missed me? Well, if you have, today you get just me in a solo show with the sexy voice and all, and I'm so happy about it because I've really missed you. And yeah, we've had some incredible powerhouse guests lately, and I hope you've enjoyed them. I've really, really enjoyed them.

But today you get me, and here's what we're talking about; problems. Yeah, problems. We're going negative just in time for the holidays. Perfect timing, right? Well, sort of. Sort of perfect timing, sort of going negative, but not really because we're going to put a spin on it.

But here's what I want to talk about today. If you haven't noticed, life is full of problems. Well duh, Tobi. I get it. You're like, you think? But really, I want to talk about this because we all have them. And problems don't discriminate, right? They're often unavoidable. Most of them, the ones we think of like laryngitis are unavoidable.

And this is a perfect example because I have had this happening to my voice for over a week. Well guess what? I do a lot of stuff on video, on audio, I teach classes online, none of which is conducive to me being out of commission or my voice being out of commission.

But honestly, last week, it was worse than me just sounding scratchy on an episode of *The Design You Podcast* because I literally had a full-blown

Ep #87: Embracing the Suck

sinus infection and laryngitis, and had a video crew of three people from out of state and a creative director, also from out of state all at my house with me unable to shoot video for two days all because I couldn't even talk.

Talk about a problem. And the very next day, I was supposed to have a live call with my Design You coaching program so I could coach them, also with no voice. Also a problem, right? So none of that situation was ideal. And the reason I'm showing up for you here this week to talk about this - there's a couple of reasons.

One of the things we were working on for video is how I'm going to show up for you in a completely different way in 2020. And that is imperfect. And it was really sort of ironic that while trying to record videos about showing up in a more vulnerable and imperfect way, I literally had no voice.

So here I am this week, a little bit of a voice, enough to show up imperfectly, and we're going for it. We're going all in to talk about what do we do about the fact that we have problems? We all do and they don't discriminate. It's not about how much money we have or anything else. We all have problems. It's part of life.

And it's annoying, sure. And the reason I'm talking about it specifically on this podcast today is not to get sympathy for the fact that I haven't been feeling 100%. That's not it at all. Because in the grand scheme of things, having no voice for a few days is really not that big of a problem.

Now, I am an Enneagram eight, for those of you Enneagram lovers, and I'm actually going to do a podcast soon about the Enneagram because I'm crazy about it. But for those of you who know what I'm talking about, and if you don't, go Google the Enneagram and even take the test, but I'm an eight.

The eight is called the challenger, if that tells you anything. And I was cracking up last week because when my video crew was here from out of state and I couldn't really talk or record video, we enjoyed a lot of time sitting around getting to know each other better, and they are equally crazy about the Enneagram.

Ep #87: Embracing the Suck

So we were getting a really good laugh about a meme that we saw out on Instagram about the Enneagram, and my type, type eight, it was a meme about the flu. Enneagram types and the flu. And my type, type eight, it said, responds to the flu in this way: flu, I'm giving you three days tops.

And y'all, that is so me. And that was so me last week. Sinus infection, I'm giving you three days tops. Well, guess what? Nine days later, here we sit, barely a voice, still a problem, which brings us back to my point of this whole podcast.

There's not a whole lot I can do about this. If I could have fixed this, I certainly would. And it's not possible but it's something that we have to deal with. So here's what I want you to know about problems. It's really, really important.

We have to become aware of the fact that we all, most of us at least, seem to have an expectation or a belief that we shouldn't have any problems. And we get so annoyed with problems. And we feel like victims when we have problems, and we complain, and we moan, and we create so much drama, and we blame people, and all the stuff that goes with this belief or this expectation that we shouldn't have any problems.

Because we're choosing to believe that this should not be happening to us. And no matter what it is, we don't think it should be happening to us. We don't think we should get sick, we shouldn't get fat, we shouldn't get a speeding ticket. Our show shouldn't stop working. Our internet should always work. We shouldn't lose anything, ever. Nothing should ever break.

No one should cancel things on us, no employee or client should ever get sick or postpone a project or not want to pay their bill, no prices, when we're the ones paying them, should ever increase. No tire should go flat. No matter what it is, if it's not in alignment with the perfect scenario we had in our own mind about our day or our life, then we're upset and even often surprised that we have problems.

And we say things about what a disaster or a cluster or a hot mess the situation was or the day was, right? We label it because we just don't think

Ep #87: Embracing the Suck

we should have it and it's like, this thing we want to get rid of. And when we say those kinds of words, which are coming from our thoughts, that this shouldn't be happening, guess what?

Our necks get tense and our blood pressure rises, and we go into the blame game of all the other people and places and things that we can shift the responsibility to because we absolutely can't accept the fact that we all just have problems and they're a part of our life.

And when we behave that way, we add so much more drama to the situation. So we work ourselves into an emotional frenzy often, which creates another problem on top of our problem. So I want you to see that we do this, that we have an expectation, that we should have no problems.

And I also want you to see that another piece of this is that we also have a belief that there is a version of our lives, we just haven't gotten to that version yet, but in our minds, it's out there. It exists. It's possible that there is a version of us in our lives where these problems don't exist, where they're optional, or at least where there's a lot fewer of them.

So let me tell you what I mean. We believe that at some future point in our lives, if we work hard enough, or make enough money, or have enough success, or get the right job, or the right spouse, or have the right kids, or the right team members, or the right clients, or some other criteria, that at some point, we will arrive in the place where we don't have any problems.

Or at least very, very few of them, and far fewer of them than we believe we have right now. Well, I'm sorry to tell you first of all, that that is simply not true. That place is a lie. It's a figment of your imagination. It does not exist. And here's why.

Because life is 50/50. Now, at any given day, it might be 80/20 or 90/10 or 70/30, but in general, across the span of our lives, no matter who we are, it's pretty much 50/50, right? There will always be problems. There will always be amazing things.

Ep #87: Embracing the Suck

But you will never arrive at that place where it is always and forevermore 90% amazing and only 10% problem. It doesn't work that way. But for a long, long, long time, I absolutely believed that it did.

And even though I may not have verbalized it, even to myself, in that exact way, I was working my butt off every day to arrive at that fictitious place where problems didn't exist. And I was literally killing myself and creating problems along the way to get to the problem-free zone.

And even if I wasn't verbalizing it, even if it was subconscious, I was striving and proving and doing all the things in some effort to arrive at the location where marriage was easy and parenting was easy and business was easy and making money was easy, and growing and stretching, and becoming a better version of myself was easy and not uncomfortable at all.

And in my mind, I'd get to that place where charging what I was worth was easy, and social media was easy. And heck, staying my ideal weight while still eating cheese dip and not working out was easy. In my mind, I must be doing something wrong right now, or not know the secret, or not have the right people in my life, or something because surely, there was the place where everything was easy and there were no problems.

Where employees were easy and clients were easy, and finding clients was easy, and kids were easy. Heck, in my mind, there was that place. And these problems that I was having in the moment at the time, they weren't supposed to be my problems. I wasn't supposed to be having them. Why were they happening to me?

You can probably relate. So of course, when you peel all that stuff back, what I ultimately was saying to myself and my ultimate goal, even if it wasn't totally conscious was to arrive at the place where everyone, including me, was happy all the time.

Aren't we all supposed to be happy all the time? Well, no, but we believe that we are. And we're ticked off when we're not, or when our people aren't, or anyone we're dealing with is not happy. So we're in that kind of mindset where we're thinking, my dear child, or my dear client, or my dear husband

Ep #87: Embracing the Suck

or mom or employee or friend or whomever you are, if you could just be happy, then my life would be so much easier.

And we just can't comprehend or accept the fact that life is 50/50. 50% of the time we're going to have problems, and everybody's not supposed to be happy all the time. And it was a crazy huge epiphany for me when I realized that no matter how much you grow or how much money or you make or how old you get, or what place you arrive to, life is still on average, 50/50.

50% great, 50% crap. And no amount of working or anything else is going to change that permanently. In fact, what I really found is that the bigger your business gets, and the more money you make, and the more team members you have, and the bigger your goals are, sometimes the bigger the problems are and the bigger the discomfort is that comes with them.

So not only do we not outgrow problems, sometimes the more we grow, the bigger the problems get. So yeah, it does get easier in some ways. As we grow, some things get easier. We perfect or master parts or pieces of our life and the process, and that's a huge relief. But it doesn't get easier as a whole indefinitely.

Because even though we may not have those old problems, we have new problems, new issues, new obstacles, new fears, new risks, new everything, and life is still 50/50. It never goes away. And that's exactly how it's supposed to be.

And 50% crap, as I call it, 50% negative, 50% problems in our lives does not mean we're doing something wrong. It means we are humans and it's part of the human experience. And the only problem with this entire scenario is that we think we aren't supposed to have any problems, in other words, we're humans who think we shouldn't be human, right?

And I've been so guilty of this. So we think if we have problems, we're doing something wrong. We think if our lives aren't perfect, we're doing something wrong. And that one belief is the very reason that so many of us feel so chronically unhappy all the time.

Ep #87: Embracing the Suck

But here's what I want you to know; the solution to that very problem is not having fewer problems. The solution is choosing the way you think about the problems. Because it's not the problems in and of themselves that make you feel bad. It's the thoughts that you have about the problems that make you feel bad.

So let me give you an example. Your stove can go out. Does that intensely and immediately make you feel bad just because it went out? No. You might not even be home and you might not even know it's broken. If you don't cook that often, you might not know for months.

But the moment you think a thought about the broken stove that is somehow negative, that somehow leads you to a feeling of discomfort or anger or frustration or anything else, that is when you feel bad. So the problems, which are the circumstances, don't make you feel bad or sad or anything else.

It's the way you think about them. And I want you to see that you can absolutely choose to know that your stove is broken and not be upset about it at all. In fact, you could celebrate it. You could be like, sweet, we're going out to eat for a year. I'm not cooking ever again.

But I'm just wanting you to see that you have a choice on whether you think something's a problem and the thoughts that you're choosing to hold onto, to believe, to think, about that particular problem. So what does that look like in our lives?

Well, there's a lot of resisting the fact that the problem occurred, there's a lot of getting or staying angry or upset or depressed or sad about the problem, which by the way, the thoughts you're thinking are what's creating all those feelings. But we keep thinking the thoughts over and over and over again, right?

And then there's a lot of dramatizing the problems to ourselves and other people. So we do that by thinking the thoughts in our head and somehow they get even worse and more dramatic when we start to speak the thoughts to other people, out loud, that's where all the drama comes in.

Ep #87: Embracing the Suck

And then we also spend a lot of time wanting them not to happen ever, or wishing they hadn't happened. So all of these activities that we give energy to around the problem is really the problem. And it's what makes everything far harder than it has to be and it really makes us feel miserable in the process.

But all of that, all of those feelings, the stress or the pain or the sadness or the fear or whatever feelings you're feeling when problems come up are not from those problems. Not from those circumstances. Because the only thing that can ever cause a feeling in you ever is your own thoughts. All feelings, every single one of them never ever ever come from a circumstance. They only come from our thoughts.

But here's the beautiful thing. We get to choose our thoughts. We get to choose how we think about everything. We are in complete control of our thinking if we know we can be and we choose to be.

And for some of you that might be an a-ha moment right there. You may have had no idea that problems can be happening to you often, every day, and you can choose to not think thoughts that create negative feelings because of those problems.

So I want you to think about this in your life. Are you expecting things to go perfectly? And when they don't, are you creating stress and anxiety and worry, which are your feelings, as a result of the thoughts you're thinking about that problem?

And are you willing to consider or even lean into the idea that at least 50% of the time, things are not going to go as planned and things won't feel easy and things may even be catastrophic, and that's exactly what the human experience looks like? And in spite of all of that, you still get to choose how you think about every part of it, which means you're also choosing how you feel.

Are you willing to do that? Because when I embraced the suck as my mentor, Brooke Castillo calls it. I mean, it's there, the 50%, it's going to be there, it's going to suck, just embrace the suck. When I did that, it changed

Ep #87: Embracing the Suck

absolutely everything in my life. Because when I stopped believing that I could avoid all these problems - and yeah, we can avoid some problems because definitely we make choices that make problems worse as we're talking about.

But there are things that can't be avoided. We can't avoid getting sick or laryngitis, necessarily. We can't avoid necessarily getting a disease or having a car wreck or someone dying or things that happen in the economy.

There's so much stuff we can't control, so when I just embraced the suck that it's 50% of my human experience and I started practicing my thoughts about those crappy moments, I was able to get the exact feeling I would have hoped for without changing anything about the problems themselves.

And when I realized that that was a possibility, I no longer was going through life white-knuckling and trying to control everything in my life, hoping I could avoid any sort of problem from ever happening in order to avoid the feeling bad or the feeling unhappy that I thought came with the circumstance.

When I just chose the right thoughts in spite of the problems, I could absolutely be in charge of my feelings every single day. Now, does this mean I made myself happy every single day? No. Because it's just not realistic. Some things are sad.

Sometimes you need to feel sad. Sometimes you need to feel grief. Sometimes you need to feel anger. But we don't have to feel it for prolonged periods of time outside of what would be helpful or normal or would serve us because so often, those prolonged periods of time are just coming from the drama we're creating with our own thoughts.

So I opened myself to the possibility that yeah, things are going to happen every single day that are problems. And that's okay. And when I embraced that, I was better able to then decide how I wanted to choose to think about those problems. I could stop trying to avoid them, trying to avoid the unavoidable, and instead, put that energy into choosing the way I wanted to

Ep #87: Embracing the Suck

think about those problems, look at those problems, feel because of those problems.

And that served me so well. And for me personally, one of my favorite ways to embrace the suck is to simultaneously embrace abundance thinking when it comes to the problems. For example, when my video team was here last week and I had zero voice, and when I mean zero, like, this is night and day different in a good way.

This version of me that sounds like I've literally been smoking for 75 years, that version of me is a 2000% improvement than the literal no voice I had for the videos. So the way I got through those few days with the team here that I was paying to what seemed like, do nothing, was to go to a place of abundance.

And here's what that looked like. I could have gone straight to scarcity thinking, which would have been me focusing on the money I was paying for people to be here from two different states for two days, none of which were inexpensive. I could have focused just on that money and the money I was losing and the misery of it all.

And I really could have gone to scrambling about what to do or trying to send them home or get them a flight, or could I have gotten a refund for a day or two or whatever those thoughts would have been in scarcity. And those thoughts I guarantee you, would have made me feel far worse than the sinus infection was making me feel.

So I didn't go there because going to abundance meant thinking something like this. "Oh well, I've already paid for them to be here. And it's not their fault I'm sick. And I can't ask them to not get paid. They came all the way here. I'm canceling on them. So I'm just going to choose to believe that it's all going to work out the way that it should be.

And I'm not going to create additional suffering for me or them, trying to get out of this money or scramble to do something different. I'm just going to enjoy them while they're here. I'm going to be open to something else coming out of our time together, and I'm going to see what happens."

Ep #87: Embracing the Suck

And guess what? A whole bunch of amazing stuff actually really happened. So one of those things that happened, and I firmly believe, yeah, it's a little woo-woo and maybe you think it's a god thing or it's a universe thing or whatever your beliefs are, and I kind of believe all of those things.

But one of the things that happened is by the afternoon of the first day that I couldn't really function or work with them that well, I opened up my email and I had two notifications of sales for a private coaching day with me and a new member for my Design You membership that bought for a year.

So guess what? Private coaching day with me, \$7500. Yearly membership for Design You, almost \$3000. That's over \$10,000 that just appeared in my bank account on the day that I chose to have an abundance mindset about the problem that had shown up that I could do nothing about.

And so does \$10,000 magically appear every single time I just choose abundance? Of course not. But I loved that it was a sign to remind me to stay in this place of choosing abundance thoughts as opposed to scarcity ones when problems arise, as they are going to for us humans.

And besides having that bonus 10K in my bank account, we also got a whole bunch of other stuff done that would not have happened had I been able to shoot video. So the fact that I wasn't creating additional worry and pain and suffering and anger and gnashing of teeth as part of this process, allowed me to stay open and we got to know each other better, we bantered and brainstormed as best I could.

And yeah, they were doing a lot of it. I was interjecting as I could talk. We were laughing about it. I was like, I may have to go to writing on notepads. But at the end of the day, we came up with some amazing ideas for 2020 that are going to generate far more than \$10,000 even over the next year and could literally create 10 times \$10,000.

And had we been so busy just shooting video, we would not have taken the time to generate those big ideas. So because of the way I chose to deal with this particular problem, I got a completely different result than choosing negative thoughts and scarcity would have brought me.

Ep #87: Embracing the Suck

So I want you to think about this whole situation and scenario in your own life. And especially right now, as we roll into the holiday season and as we wrap up the fourth quarter of 2019, and as you're looking at your business finances and whether or not you met your goals. And as you're thinking about the next year, New Year in 2020 and what you want to do there and your fears are coming up and all the stuff.

I want you to think about what thoughts you will choose when problems arise. And I also want you to realize that problems play a role, and a very important one in our lives. First of all, if there were no bad, the good wouldn't feel nearly as sweet.

And if you were never challenged, you would never really grow. And if there wasn't a big challenge or inconvenience, how would you come up with your best solutions? And even if you could avoid all problems, I'm basically telling you you wouldn't want to because they're there for a reason.

But since you can't avoid them, you absolutely can make them far less painful if you allow them, if you expect them, and if you remember that you are 100% in charge of how you will think about them. So in the rest of this year and all of next year and every year beyond that, you can let problems derail you or you can let them empower you and you get to decide.

Okay friends, so that's what I have for you today in my super scratchy voice. That's what I have for you today as I show up imperfectly, problems and all. And I'm wishing you an amazing start to this holiday season that we're not embarking upon and I want you to expect problems.

Pies are going to flop. In-laws are going to offend you. Horrible presents are going to be gifted to you. Family members are going to be stressed out and short with you and grumpy and disappointed and overwhelmed. Flights are going to be cancelled. Money is going to run out. Time is going to run out.

All the things are going to happen and it's all absolutely okay and you don't have to try to fix any of it and in many ways, you can't, even if you tried. But you absolutely can still choose to feel exactly the way you want to this

Ep #87: Embracing the Suck

holiday season just by managing your thoughts about the 50/50 of the human experience.

So you can do this and I'm here for you. And reach out to me if you need help or get stuck because you know where I am on social media. So just holler and say, Tobi, I'm in the 50% crap, help me, because y'all, we're in this together. We're fellow humans.

And I'm so happy and honored to be able to show up imperfectly with you and for you and I just am so happy that you're here and I'm going to see you again next week, hopefully with my normal voice. I know you'll miss the sexy, but I'm not going to bring sexy back again next week if I can avoid it. But I'll see you right here, so bye for now, friends.

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