

Ep #90: Creating Businesses in the Online Space with Jenny Shih



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Tobi Fairley

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You are listening to the *Design You Podcast* with Tobi Fairley, episode number 90.

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, it's Episode 90. That's so exciting. Only 10 to go and I hit my 100th episode. So fun. Now today, I'm talking to all of you out there, creatives, small business owners, any kind of entrepreneur who is considering offering your services in the online space, but you haven't gone there yet. Or maybe you've started to dip your toe in the water, but it's not quite working for you.

Today, I have Jenny Shih, and Jenny is an expert for online businesses, and she helps you figure out how to make bite-sized offers to get started, and how to price your services, and how to deliver your services, and the way to be successful, the challenges you're going to encounter, all the things about an online business.

And, she works with people who do one-on-one online services, which is really interesting. I help people do that, but also create scalable products, the making money while you sleep. But what I've learned is before you can go to the making money while you sleep place, you really need to learn how to create a one-on-one offer, a lot of times.

And just get yourself comfortable hanging out in the online space, marketing in the online world, meeting customers where they are, figuring out what they're needing, what they're wanting, what their pain points are, all the things that we teach in Design You, and I think that Jenny just brings a really cool perspective of this, especially since she is helping with one-on-one offers, which most of you are more comfortable with, because you've been working one on one with people.

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

Ep #90: Creating Businesses in the Online Space with Jenny Shih

So, if this is you, if you are getting right here close to the end of the year, and you're thinking, my goal for 2020 is to start showing up and offering services in the online space, well, this is the exact episode to move you ahead, to light a fire under you, and get you moving in that direction for 2020.

So, enjoy the show, and I'll see you at the end of the show to remind you of a couple of key things you might want to think about as you move into the online world.

Tobi: Hey, Jenny, welcome to the *Design You Podcast*.

Jenny: Hey, thanks so much for having me. I'm really glad to be here.

Tobi: I'm so glad you're here. This is a really exciting topic to me. We're going to talk today about working in the online space, creating businesses in the online space. And it's something that's so new to a lot of my audience, so that's going to be so much fun, to really give them sort of the roadmap for that.

But before we do that, tell everybody a little bit about who you are and how you've kind of gotten into this way of working online and teaching others to work online, so that they can have just a little bit of sort of a background on who you are and what you do.

Jenny: Sure thing. So, it's been quite a journey, but I'll tell the short version of the story.

Tobi: Okay.

Jenny: About 12 years ago, I was working in a corporate, high-tech job, I was an engineering manager at a great high-tech company. As far as jobs go, it was a pretty great job.

Ep #90: Creating Businesses in the Online Space with Jenny Shih

But, I felt like a part of me was kind of dying, and I thought, I can't retire at age whatever, having only worked here and done this work. I have to go do something more important.

So it started a little bit of – no, a lot of bit of soul searching to figure out what was I here to do? What was my purpose? Those were answers I never had before, but I had been asking, but it just, they had never come. I thought, well, I've got to start putting some effort into figuring this out, because it's clearly just not showing up one day.

And so I started asking, kind of what do I want to be doing, and what do I have to bring to the world, and where are my strengths, and what does that look like? And, I ended up training to become a life coach with Martha Beck and Byron Katie, and I quit my corporate job, cold turkey, which is crazy, because I'm a pretty risk-averse person.

I quit my job cold turkey and said, I'm going to start this life coaching business, and I'm going to help women just like me who did all the quote-unquote right things, and now kind of feel lost in their corporate job and want to do something more meaningful, I'm going to help them figure that out.

So I started out as a career coach, helping women do just that. And within maybe a year-and-a-half, I thought, this isn't right. Like, something about this doesn't feel quite right. Like, I'm on a better track than I was before, but this is not exactly right for me.

So, I regrouped, did a little bit more digging, and realized that I wanted to not help people kind of unearth the things that were standing in their way, but I wanted to give them practical strategies to go after what they wanted. And I leveraged a lot of my corporate experience in project management and people management and all that kind of stuff, and restarted my business at jennyshih.com, doing virtual assistant services, project management and coaching to make your ideas happen.

Ep #90: Creating Businesses in the Online Space with Jenny Shih

This was in March of 2011, and I hit the ground running, and I was excited for the first time ever to talk about my business. So before, I was kind of embarrassed to talk about what I did and wasn't really excited, but now I was pumped. And with that energy came a desire to learn more about business and marketing and strategy and getting clients and all that kind of stuff.

And very quickly, I got clients and I filled my roster and people started asking me, "Can you help me do what you did? Can you teach me the business and the marketing that you implemented that filled your roster and got you all these clients?" And so I stopped doing the virtual assistant and project management work, and really just focused on coaching people to start online service-based businesses.

And I've been doing that ever since, just refining as we go. But teaching classic, timeless, not like hip, trendy principles, just stuff that works year after year after year, for people who want to get their work out to other people in the world.

Tobi: I love that.

Jenny: In a nutshell.

Tobi: Yeah, and I love what you just said about it not being hip and trendy, because I think that's one of the first mindsets that I tackle and have to help people overcome, especially people who have been working one on one in service-based business, like the people you work with, but they've never offered anything in the online space at all.

Especially people like interior designers and stagers and other people that are used to working in person, that can't even comprehend this whole option that we're going to be talking about today. And I love that you, right off the bat, are saying these are not weird, flaky, New Age, like techie, like this is literally tried and true stuff. We've just moved from one on one in person to one on one online, and that's really the main shift. Right?

Ep #90: Creating Businesses in the Online Space with Jenny Shih

Jenny: You got it, yeah, exactly. And the coolest thing about that is, you know, I'm not a trend chaser. If you knew me in person and saw like my home and how I act and how I drive and what I wear, I'm not super trendy. I like timeless, classic stuff. I don't want to have to chase what's hot today and gone tomorrow.

And so the great thing about building up for anybody who is that way themselves, you can build an online business without chasing the latest trend in online marketing. You can just stick to the classic, timeless principles, many of which are equally applicable offline, to build your online business. And it doesn't have to be this whole new scary era of online marketing, it can be really grounded and in alignment with however your folks are used to operating.

Tobi: That's awesome. So let's just dig right into that, because I think as we're saying this, what we're generally saying, and I want you to start to help people understand how to do this is, we're telling people how to think about an online business, right? So what is that? What do they have to do? Is it a mindset shift?

Like, how do you go from literally any of the things we talked about? I'm an event planner, I'm a photographer, and I'm an interior designer, I'm a VA, I'm a web designer. I'm all these – well, web designer is online, but I'm all these other things. Like, how do I go from that to working and showing up in the online space? Like, how do they make that first step?

Jenny: Awesome. So, the very first thing is to just recognize that you have this great gift and skill of service that you offer clients, and that doesn't change. The main things that are going to change are how you present your services, and how you market what you do. And you're going to have to do that really differently than you do in person.

So, you know, I know where I live, there's a lot of local chambers of commerce and business networking groups, and that is a way that a lot of people who work locally get their clients. Well, online, you have to then

Ep #90: Creating Businesses in the Online Space with Jenny Shih

translate that. Well, what's the online version of that? And there's a bunch of different ways to think about that.

But basically, the way you get clients in person, you're going to use similar ideas, but you're going to do it in a totally different way, because it's online. And so in the same way you need to translate how you work in person. Obviously, if you're an interior designer, you're not going to walk around somebody's house because you can't, but what's the online equivalent to that?

So, the first thing is to acknowledge that you have all of these skills, both in terms of serving your clients and also in terms of building a business. You then just need to translate them and do them differently in the online space. Once you sort of get that, like get that shift, then we can sort of get into some of the, what does that look like? Kind of in a nuts and bolts, practical way.

But that first mental reframe is really important.

Tobi: Okay, and then a lot of the things that immediately come up for people, especially the people that I'm working with, that you're talking about, people that are creatives, people that feel like that their work is so visual, and they just have a block that I couldn't possibly do that work without being in someone's home. I couldn't possibly suggest a paint color without standing in that room.

And I'm often saying, you absolutely can, because the person who's going to buy a paint color consult from you online has a completely different expectation than a person that wants you to come over to their house, right? So, there's kind of like two different customers or two different mindsets of the customer, not just the mindset of the service provider, right?

So talk us through kind of how that looks different, because I think that is, again, like you're saying, once you start to get into this space, you've got to

Ep #90: Creating Businesses in the Online Space with Jenny Shih

get over a few other mental hurdles, because you want to believe what I've always done couldn't possibly be successful.

And I think everybody's fears just come up immediately. They're like, what if it doesn't look right in their space? I didn't know about the lighting, or what if this happened, and it doesn't look like the same color?

And I remind them, not only do those mistakes and things still happen in person, but when you put sort of your online services hat on, you're already thinking of all of those obstacles and coming up with solutions, right? But is that how you start to approach that?

Like, help us kind of see how we get over those other mental hurdles there.

Jenny: Yeah, well I think the thing that you said that really nailed it on the head is it's not the exact same client. I think you make such a great point there. So I am design challenged. Like, extremely design challenged. I know what I like, but I cannot pick out colors and palettes. And when we redesigned our house about four years ago, like we remodeled the whole inside, I hired somebody and I needed somebody to come to my house because I am so inept.

But, there are plenty of people out there who would say like, "Oh my gosh, I don't want to have to coordinate with somebody coming to my house. The fact that I could do this online over email, or in Pinterest boards or whatever, that would be amazing." But that's a different person.

And so I think that point that you made is so important. You're not doing it in the same way for the same person. You're taking your same skills, in a new way, for a different kind of person. So you ask yourself, how do I want to take the skills I have that I'm doing in person, and how would I do that online, so it would be equally enjoyable and fun for me, and get great results for people?

Ep #90: Creating Businesses in the Online Space with Jenny Shih

Then you ask, who is the person who would want it done this way? Because they're all people, whether it's, I work with yoga teachers and doctors and interior designers and coaches, and there are always people in the world who want to work with a professional, in person. But there are all sorts of people who want to work with a professional virtually.

And so you just have to think about exactly like you said, which client wants to work this way? Who is that person who wants to work in this new way? And then start looking at it from that perspective. That then is a different client than you would, say, work with in person, most likely.

Tobi: Yeah, I absolutely love that. So, they might be after the same type of transformation, but the process they want to go through to get it, and even possibly their expectations for it, are going to be a little bit different.

So when people want to then start to kind of outline, like a lot of us do on websites and things, this is for you if, and this is not for you if. It's kind of like starting, and even if you don't put that out publicly, is that an exercise that the creative or the business owner can start to do, to help them see, if you're going to second-guess everything and you're going to need a lot of hand holding, this is probably not the service for you, right?

Jenny: Yeah. So I think that's exactly right. I'm pulling up this guide that we have right here. Let me just flip to the right page. It's called *Seven Steps To Make It Work Online*. And the very first step in the seven steps is, know what you do and who you help.

So the first thing is to get really clear on you. So, how do you want to work? How do you like to help people? What's that transformation, to use the word you used, that you help people create?

But then, turn it on your client. What does she want? What is she struggling with? What is she looking for? What kind of end result does she want? How would she like that problem solved? What would she like that to look like? And it's sort of an it's for them if, not again, like you said, not necessarily on

Ep #90: Creating Businesses in the Online Space with Jenny Shih

their website, but who is this? What is included in this group of people and what is not included?

And if, you know, extremely color challenged and need somebody to be in their house, is a different category.

Tobi: Right.

Jenny: That's not an online person.

Tobi: Yeah.

Jenny: You know, that's somebody that you would serve offline.

Tobi: Right, and you can absolutely serve both of those people in your business.

Jenny: Yes, absolutely.

Tobi: It doesn't have to be an either or, if you want to. The other thing I love to remind people is when our brain wants to say, "Well, I couldn't possibly help someone with paint without being there." I remind them, people go online every single day and they go on Sherwin-Williams or Benjamin Moore or someplace else, or Instagram or Pinterest, and they get paint color help from afar all the time, right?

Jenny: Yes, totally.

Tobi: So like you're saying, it depends on the person and how they think. I think that's really good. Okay, so you said, when we were starting to talk about this originally, you were saying, you know, there's some ways people can be successful online, and there's some ways they're going to be challenged online, and those are different than what they're used to with their traditional business model, their traditional in-person.

Ep #90: Creating Businesses in the Online Space with Jenny Shih

So, is there anything, I know we've started to talk about this a little bit, but what else do people need to keep in mind, as far as like both the successes and the challenges of running this type of a business?

Jenny: Sure thing. So, there is a that terminology that I made up called lowest common denominator, and this is really true in business. This idea of your lowest common denominator is something that I especially emphasize with folks who've been in business for a while and want to take it online.

So, let's talk a little bit about what that is, and then we'll kind of bring it into what the steps are that they follow. So, sometimes I'll see things like folks say, "Well, you know, I'm a real high-end interior designer, and I charge however many thousands of dollars for X, Y, or Z. And I want to go online." And they immediately assume they can charge the exact same prices online that they did in person.

And we say, okay, well, let's look at your lowest common denominator, because that's how you end up pricing yourself, is to your lowest common denominator. And what that looks like is, well, in business you need, say, the skills you have to deliver your service. So your interior design skills.

You need then marketing skills, and you have marketing skills in person, but you don't yet have marketing skills online. So you're now kind of a little bit lower in that category. You need then customer service skills, and you need all sorts of different things. I think there's seven that we have, I don't have that pulled up in front of me right now.

But, you look at all those things and say, "Oh, well, when I think about taking my business online, I now have skills that are lower than I had in person. Marketing, getting clients, serving clients online. So now, I might need to adjust my online prices quite a bit lower, just to get started.

So, a lot of times people kind of panic when I tell them that. You know, you have to go online and charge lower prices. Eventually, I think you can

Ep #90: Creating Businesses in the Online Space with Jenny Shih

charge a whole lot more. But to get started, keep in mind, your business, lowest common denominator is now lower if you go online than it was in your in-person business, because you've never done it before.

There's nothing wrong. It's just brand new to you. And so you want to start to look at, okay, where am I sort of weaker? What areas do I need to shore up and get better at, and what do I want to do to adjust my pricing as I start to get more competent?

So, what usually this looks like is people scaling back their offer. So instead of charging however many thousands of dollars they do for their services, they scale it back both in terms of the size of their offer, and in the price. Because it's a lot easier to market something that's cheaper than it is to market something high end, especially if you're kind of an unknown entity in the online world.

So back off your offer, back off your pricing to something smaller, and start looking at this online business as a little bit of your side hustle. Like, I sometimes tell clients to keep running you're in-person business that's working for you. That's bringing in money. That's like the job. That's like your job. There's new online thing is like that side hustle.

So, you know, think about somebody who's working a regular, standard job, and they're trying to build a business on the side. They commit to their job, they get their job, they earn income from their job, they do that fully, and then on the side, they're building this other thing that's eventually going to take over their job and their income.

Look at it the same way. Run your in-person business as you have been, as your job, and build this online thing on the side. So take the pressure off of it performing as well, and look, get practice marketing, get practice getting the word out on what you do. Get practice building your offers and selling people over the phone. It's a very different kind of experience in the process.

Ep #90: Creating Businesses in the Online Space with Jenny Shih

So we have to look at all of those pieces, and scale them back to where you really are in business, which is quite a bit more beginner than in the offline way. Does this make sense?

Tobi: Yeah, I love that. And so what you're saying, which I think makes, it's a little different than how I might have said it, just to clarify, but I think it makes a whole lot of sense. Because never ever, ever do I want people lowering their price for the same service, because you can just kill your business, and that's exactly what you're saying, in so many words.

So you don't take full service, soup to nuts, interior design that's luxury, hand holding, one on one, and then go try to charge for that online but slash the price. You'll kill your business.

You just take a little piece or a component or an idea, and you offer that one little thing, and then it is a more affordable price, is what you're saying. I mean, maybe it is just some level of paint consult or room arranging or, and I'm literally making this up, because we'd have to, you know, look at each thing.

That's the kind of stuff that I also do in my coaching program, is help people kind of see what makes sense for them, because if it's super labor-intensive, they're not going to want to do it for a low price.

But that's what you're saying, is essentially find the thing that is sustainable, that you can do and give people some high value, but for a lower price, and you can do it over and over again, and really start to get a foothold in the online spaces, while you're sort of figuring out all the rest of the stuff. Is that right?

Jenny: Exactly, yeah. And I think you highlighted something really important there is to get a foothold in the online space. The other thing is, you're not going to stay priced here forever. This is to get you going. It's to give you practice. You're getting paid as much in dollars as you are in experience of, what is it like to market? Where do I go and find my clients?

Ep #90: Creating Businesses in the Online Space with Jenny Shih

How do I have a sales conversation over the phone, when I'm used to doing them in person?

Tobi: Yes.

Jenny: How do I make people feel like I get them and I'm going to be able to translate their vision into their real home, in this way? And so it's about really getting that experience and figuring it out in this new context.

Tobi: Yeah, I love that. What I love about it is two things. For one thing, you don't really need, you're not learning your skills again, or refining them necessarily, because you're already good at that stuff. We're just saying take something, and that's kind of your lowest common denominator concept, like take something that's simple but that people still need, but it's simple for you, and use it as your pet project to figure out how to operate in the online space, is basically what you're saying.

So what you're learning has almost nothing to do with your actual skills, you already know that part. But you don't want to take something super complex that would have to be super expensive and test the waters with that. You want to do something simpler, more sustainable, and start there. And I think that makes so, so much sense.

Okay, so once they start to figure out what that thing is that they're going to start with, and test the waters, and of course, you and I both know that sometimes you have to tweak and what you try first may not work and all of that stuff, so there are going to be challenges. So what are some of the challenges that they need to be aware of?

And also, either in this conversation about challenges or right after that, let's talk about the whole idea of offers. That can be the next thing we talk about, because I think, in general, we're not really used to talking about the word offers in sort of the one-on-one, in-person business model. That's sort of an online thing from the whole content marketing world. So, we'll talk about offers, either as part of this or in a moment.

Ep #90: Creating Businesses in the Online Space with Jenny Shih

But what are those other challenges that they're going to be looking at? Because what if they try something and nobody buys it? Or, you know, there's all the things that make people want to quit right off the bat. So, what should they be aware of and know, this isn't a reason to quit. Here's kind of how to think about that.

Jenny: Yeah, this is great. And I'm going to actually combine it with the offers. Let's just go all in.

Tobi: Okay, perfect.

Jenny: I know they can handle it.

Tobi: Okay.

Jenny: The very first thing, the very first thing you need to do is figure out what they're selling, what their offer is, that they're putting out there online. And I am a big proponent of using what I call and developed is called the bite-sized offer, which is really another way to call it is, some of my clients call it a no-brainer offer.

Basically, something really easy, that solves a problem that you know your client has, that you're excited to deliver, that's priced really low, and make it a no-brainer for somebody to say yes. When they look at the price, they think, "Oh, like, the worst thing that happens is I'm out 100 bucks, 200 bucks, no big deal. Like, I'm willing to take that risk." And that's how small the offer is. It's really small.

It lets people try you out without a really big risk on their end. And again, this is about getting paid in experience. But creating your bite-sized offer is really important. Some of the common mistakes people make when they do it is they use a lot of jargon.

So, I don't know interior design jargon, but I know a lot of coaching jargon. So, coaching jargon, life coaches might say, like I'm going to help you transform your limiting beliefs and create your soul's purpose. My question

Ep #90: Creating Businesses in the Online Space with Jenny Shih

always back to them is, is your target client walking around in the world saying, "I want to find somebody to help me transform my limiting beliefs?" And the answer is always no.

Tobi: Right.

Jenny: So whatever the interior design equivalent is of that, you ask yourself, is your client walking around in the world thinking to themselves, "I want somebody to help me do that?" And are they thinking in those exact words?

Tobi: Right.

Jenny: So that's the biggest mistake people make, is they put out an offer that's all full of jargon, that their current customer looks at and has no idea that it's exactly what they're looking for. So that's the very first thing that people need to check. So they put an offer together, and they put it out there. Am I using jargon? Or am I using the language of my customers?

The next thing they want to look at is, have you put it in front of enough people? I'll get people saying, "Oh, Jenny, I did an offer. Can you look at the copy?" "Oh, the copy looks amazing." "Great. Well, I'm not getting any clients." And we'll say fantastic. What have you done? And they say, "Well, I put it on my website." How many billions of websites are there in the world?

Tobi: Right.

Jenny: Nobody knows you exist. That is not me being mean, that is just a fact. Nobody knows that you exist.

Tobi: Exactly.

Jenny: You have to put yourself and your offer in front of far more people than you realize at the beginning. Like, we're talking 10, 20, 30 hours of you marketing yourself and figuring out where are your people, and how do

Ep #90: Creating Businesses in the Online Space with Jenny Shih

you talk to them, and how do you put your offer in front of them? It's a lot of work at the beginning.

Tobi: Yeah.

Jenny: Because you don't know where they are, and you don't know how to interact with them. Over time, that number drops dramatically. But, so that's the second thing is people – the first one, people use jargon. The second one is, they don't actually market their offer. So then they think, "Oh my gosh, there's something wrong with my offer." No, you just haven't marketed it yet. You have to go and put that offer out there.

And usually, if they solve those two problems, if they do enough marketing and they use the right copy, they will find clients. And they'll serve a couple clients, and this happens every time, I call this the serve-and-learn process. You're going to serve some clients, and then you're going to learn from the process of doing that.

At some point, between serving 3 and 10 clients with your first bite-sized offer, they're going to go "Oh, I know. If I just..." fill in the blank, "Then my clients would get such better results." And they have to wait for that aha moment, but it happens every single time. It's never not happened for a client of mine before.

So, let's just say they're helping with paint colors. I'm not great with interior design examples, so this might not work.

Tobi: And I don't just work for interior designers, I just happen to be one, so I work for all kinds of different creative entrepreneurs, so yeah.

Jenny: Okay, we've just picked this one to go with.

Tobi: Yeah, perfect. So, they've decided to pick paint colors, and they've had such great success picking paint colors, like, "Oh, the next thing I need to do is help them with window dressing." I don't actually know if that's the next thing you would do in sequence, but they see it. Like oh, wow, when I

Ep #90: Creating Businesses in the Online Space with Jenny Shih

serve this client, and I love working with them, we picked these, the next thing they all want is to know what to do with their windows.

And so then it becomes a slightly larger package at a slightly bigger offer, and now because you've had these one-on-one conversations with these clients, you have better language. You now know the words they're actually using to describe their problems.

So your offer gets bigger, your pricing gets bigger, your copy gets better, you know where you found them, so you can refine your marketing approach a little bit. So you're going to adjust your offer, and then you're going to go serve new clients.

You're going to market again, you're going to serve 3 to 10 more clients, you're going to have that aha moment, you're going to realize, "Oh, if I just..." And it could be that you end up building an entirely different package than what you've been working with people in person.

Tobi: Yeah.

Jenny: Or, it could be you end up building the exact same package, you just deliver it differently. But the process of serving is helping you learn where your clients are, how to price it, how to market it, all those kinds of things, and this just becomes an organic process.

You're always evolving your offers to serve your clients, your prices are always going up in a good, organic, authentic way. And you're slowly building this whole thing online.

Tobi: Yeah, I love that. Because I think so many people want to get everything perfect and create, like, this whole thing or program or concept, or have it all figured out before they start, and they waste months and months not having money coming in from the online space, and getting ready, still, to start.

Ep #90: Creating Businesses in the Online Space with Jenny Shih

And I'm like, all the learning comes in the doing, right? You just literally start, like write an offer in this afternoon, in 30 minutes, and just start telling people about it, right?

Jenny: Yes.

Tobi: So, the other thing I was thinking about, because I know what my advice would be, especially for people that are creatives like interior designers, is when we're talking about something like a bite-size offer that's \$100 or \$200, you know, for the whole thing, they've got to really break down what would be profitable, because we're still talking about one-on-one work here.

Now, I help people do scalable products and create those kind of make money while you sleep, but we're talking today about still a one-on-one bite-sized offer. So, what's coming to my mind is it has to be really constrained, right? Or it's not very effective or sustainable for you.

So, something that you can actually deliver in an hour, but what we don't want people doing is like three hours of pre-work and three hours of post-work and selling something for \$100, which makes zero sense, because they're losing money.

So, when they're thinking of, like, what to deliver, my mind comes to, you know, having some things already figured out, maybe having parts of the process sort of templated, or a certain process that you're going to take people through a few steps, but we're not promising the world here in a bite-sized offer.

We're not promising that they're going to have, you know, an entire room transformed for \$100, right?

Jenny: No, no, absolutely. You're totally right. So, the two the samples I love to give are, if you are somebody who does work on the phone, so like a coach who does the work on the phone with a client, a bite-sized offer

Ep #90: Creating Businesses in the Online Space with Jenny Shih

looks like a 90-minute session, with maybe some homework, and then a follow-up half-an-hour session.

And the goal of that follow-up half-an-hour session is because you need to see what you did with a client landed, and what transformation that they had, or what they didn't have. And as well as an update on their language.

So, the goal of the 30-minute follow-up is as much for you, the business owner, as it is for the client, so that you can keep doing the serve-and-learn process. So, if you do your work on the phone exclusively, then that would be it.

The other example I use is web designers or copywriters, yours would be, say, a half-an-hour phone call and maybe some pre-work from your client. This thing that you'll deliver, like an about page or a landing page design, and then a half-an-hour follow-up with the client if they have any questions or to make any tweaks.

So, it's a very contained, very bite-sized offer, and hopefully that gives, those two examples give everybody listening a chance to think about what their bite-sized offer size might be.

Tobi: Yeah, that's interesting. So I would still suggest my people charge way more than \$100 to \$200 an hour, but I'm all about charging your worth, and I know how much time and energy goes into things, especially how much detail they have.

But still, compared to, I always have people charge, you know, even \$350 or \$475, and that's still a very bite-sized offer, compared to the thousands and thousands of dollars it takes to do an interior design room. So, we're definitely not suggesting here that people start going backwards and they start working for \$50 or \$75 an hour, when they're making, you know, far, far more than that in the real world.

Ep #90: Creating Businesses in the Online Space with Jenny Shih

But it's more just the concept of, what would be the equivalent of not only a bite-sized kind of project or situation, but also a price that is appropriate for that work you're doing, but it's a no-brainer.

And what I've found is anything, really anything often under \$1,000 people don't have, in the luxury market, like the design market, people don't have to go ask their spouse for permission. But definitely when you're getting in the \$500 range or lower, that still can be something that people can easily say yes to.

So, I just want to make sure, especially for my audience who is so used to me, you know, preaching charging what you're worth, by no means are we saying you suddenly go out and charge \$100 an hour for something.

But, I hear what you're saying. If you're a coach and you're just getting started, you certainly could do something for \$100 or \$200. So, I get your whole point. Okay, that's great.

So, as far as, so we talked about what success looks like, what offers look like. I completely agree with you, it's a numbers game. And people will say, you know what? My offer didn't work, or they don't necessarily even call it an offer, but my service didn't work.

And I'll ask how many people they pitched it to, and it's the same as what you said. They're like, "Well, I put it on my website and I have 200 people following me on Instagram, and I posted it one day on there and said, if you're interested, let me know."

And I'm like, you know, that's not even close to really making an offer. It's a numbers game, for sure. And I agree with you. It's like 10 or 100 times potentially the number of people that they have to get in front of then what they're used to with the one-on-one service that might just come from a referral of a client, or something.

Ep #90: Creating Businesses in the Online Space with Jenny Shih

So, but the good news is, it's a lot easier to get in front of hundreds or thousands of people in the online space. So, what else about that whole offer process do they need to know? Like, they decide what it is, they get clear, they're not jargony, they're not industry speak, as you're saying. They put a price on it that's irresistible. And then what?

Like, besides just, you know, nobody's coming to your website and you have very few followers, like, are they just showing up online? Are they going on Facebook Live? Are they going on social media? Are they emailing people?

You know, and even a lot of the people that we're talking to, because they've never worked in the online space, they don't even have a list yet. So they're like, "Well, I'd love to email people, but I have like four people's emails." Like, you can do all the work on paper and have everything lined up, but then how do you get started actually getting in front of people, getting bites, getting buyers, getting sales, and that whole thing?

Jenny: Yes, well, if they already have an existing client base, best thing to do is start reaching out to happy customers and say, "I've got this new, small offer. Do you have any friends?" Like, if people loved your service, they're happy to tell other people about them, about what you do, and they likely know somebody who needs what you do.

So the first thing is to just, I say with love, get over yourself and email everybody you know. Like, email your friends, your family, your acquaintances, your colleagues, and all of your past customers, and it's done not as like a, just to sort of translate this energetically over a podcast like, oh, woe is me, I can't find my own clients. Like this is so hard. Will you please help?

Like, no, no, no. You're coming at it like, oh, I'm so excited. I want to celebrate that I've got this new option of working with clients. People have asked me about this before. And I'm still, like it's this celebration of excitement, of this new way that you want to help new customers.

Ep #90: Creating Businesses in the Online Space with Jenny Shih

When you write the email from that place, people receive it and they're like, "Oh, wow, that does sound cool. Oh, I totally know people that I can send your way." So the first thing is like, let's just go easy. An email is easy. And so start with an excited, celebratory email where you're saying you've got this new service and ask if they know anybody, would they please pass it along, because you're, whatever.

Tobi: Yeah.

Jenny: And most people, if they are thrilled to do it, so that's always the number one thing I tell people to do. You know a lot of people. Start with the people that you know.

Tobi: Yeah.

Jenny: The second thing is, we teach in our Make It Work Online Coaching Program, 21 different ways to get clients, and there's a whole bunch of ways to do it from networking online, to showing up on Facebook Live or Instagram, or holding Meetup groups, or getting kind of connected with people in person, being of service in Facebook groups, or on Instagram, or on Twitter, or wherever you hang out. There's all these different options.

But the very first thing I ask people, after I tell them to just go email people they know, because that's just a no-brainer, is what do you like to do? How do you like to engage with people? How do you – do you like to offer free tips? Do you like to get social? Like, engage in conversations, or do you like to share information?

So think about what your strong suit is and how you like to serve people. And then look at what the online equivalent of that is. So it could be teaching things on Instagram or on Facebook, or it could be the interacting and having one-on-one conversations or one-to-many conversations on those same platforms, just as an example.

Ep #90: Creating Businesses in the Online Space with Jenny Shih

They also, the 21 ways we teach to get clients are across the board, and it all works just fine. People are saying, well just tell me, Jenny, which one works the most effectively? And I'll say, "The one you do."

Tobi: Right, yeah.

Jenny: Do you like to show up on Facebook? Do you like to show up on Instagram? Do you have one-on-one conversations? Do you like to teach? What way are you most excited to try? Do that.

That's the way to show up, because people will feel your excitement a whole lot more than if you're like "Oh, I have to go do this thing."

Tobi: Yes, yeah. Well, I agree. Yeah, people ask me that too, and if I'm like, well then just be on video and they're like, "Oh, I hate video." And I'm like, "Well, then don't be on video. Do something else." And I hear what you're saying.

So, it does have to be right for them. Now, they are still going to have some discomfort. So it's not going to be like, oh my gosh, it's the perfectly most cozy, wonderful thing ever the first time. It's still going to be uncomfortable, but they definitely want to pick the one that they're going to follow through with, is what you're saying, which I love that.

Jenny: Yes.

Tobi: Yeah, that's really good. Okay, so and here's the other thing that immediately most people think of when they think of going to the online space, because when I talked to my clients, their kind of first two objections are, one, so you want me to make this really, like dinky, crappy, DIY thing that's super cheap?

And I'm like, well, no, we don't want to make anything crappy. Just because it's smaller, bite sized, as you call it, doesn't mean it's not valuable. So we've already gotten over that objection, but the other objection is, oh, it feels so salesy. It feels salesy to promote.

Ep #90: Creating Businesses in the Online Space with Jenny Shih

And I think the funny thing is, because people don't know how to talk about things that they're excited about, they end up being more salesy, which is their greatest fear, because then they end up looking desperate. Because nobody really falls for the things like, "Hurry, we only have three spots left." Or, you know, that kind of false urgency and that kind of thing.

So, what's the answer to not feeling salesy, but really showing up with that level of excitement you're talking about, in a way that it would make people want to buy?

Jenny: Yeah, articulate your really clear value, in terms of what you're doing for that person. How are you changing that person's life? How are you making their life better? Be excited about that, genuinely excited. If you're genuinely excited about the service that you're doing and the transformation you're going to create for clients, no matter how small or how big or somewhere in between, people feel that. To just articulating clearly, this is what we're going to do. I am going to, whatever, help you do this thing, so that you then feel this way, so that then it creates this in your life, from that place.

People naturally are pulled in and want to know more.

Tobi: Yeah, I love that.

Jenny: You just have to be excited.

Tobi: Yeah, so you're basically just painting the picture for them, which I tell these people I work with all the time. Oh my gosh, you're so creative, like, just bring that to this conversation, and paint that picture.

And what I love about what you just said is, and the interesting thing again, it goes back to a mental block, is so many of us in whatever industry we're in, we equate good clients with the people spending the most money or the biggest lump sums of money.

Ep #90: Creating Businesses in the Online Space with Jenny Shih

You know, I try to make sure they understand, that's not always the absolute best client. Like, you want people who keep buying, you want people who have great results and are going to tell other people. And so when you were talking about that, I was thinking, you know, that's the beauty of the bite-sized offer.

Because even though, in our minds, we're like, well, how much is it really going to help people just to pick out one paint color? Or just to figure out, like where the sofa goes, or something like that. What we are forgetting is that's just a tiny piece of, we're going to keep – we're not stopping there. We're going to keep giving another offer, and then another offer, and another offer.

So we can see, behind the scenes, the whole kind of journey and customer experience, but we're just bringing them in a piece at a time and getting that part done, which is not overwhelming. They get real results. They're super excited. We did what we said we were going to do. They absolutely get those results every time, because we keep it simple. And then we go to the next thing, and then the next thing.

And I've never really put it in terms that way, but as you were talking about all of that, it was helping me see it. That just because the client doesn't know yet that the path or the journey we're going to take them on may end up in a completely finished room, and they may spend thousands of dollars over that process. We're just taking it one little piece at a time, per offer. Would you say that's correct?

Jenny: Exactly, exactly.

Tobi: I love it. Okay.

Jenny: One little bit.

Tobi: Yeah, I love this. It's so good. It's so good to think, I mean, I always love having conversations with anybody that brings a different perspective.

Ep #90: Creating Businesses in the Online Space with Jenny Shih

But I think this is so good, because it just helps me start to see, you know, the things that you as the service provider worry about, and you're already kind of getting down, or not excited about it because you're like, ugh, I don't want to just do that one little thing, I want to be proud of a completely finished room that looks like a magazine.

Like, when you translate that to the online space, that might be 5 or 10 different offers that takes them all the way to that place. And maybe you get there, or maybe you just find you're so successful with part number one that you never leave that offer, right?

But they just have to be open to seeing that there are different needs. And honestly, when you think about the online consumer and budgets and things like that, a lot of people do just need those basic parts and pieces, and they may never go to the finished, you know, space or whatever some of our desires would look like.

Jenny: Yeah, or they may do your small offer, you may not even have a bigger offer on your website, and that small one built so much trust with them that they're like, "Okay, fine. I want you to do my whole house."

Tobi: Yes, I know. That's the –I love that you said that. That's one of the best parts. I used to have an online service, which I found there's something called e-design, and it's not super profitable if you do it custom, so I don't really recommend people do it anymore.

But even in the process of doing it in my own business, when it was sort of a test project, what it did lead to is two or three really big, full-service, new construction, from the ground up, like million-dollar projects. So, hey, what an amazing loss leader that was, even as a test experiment.

But I love that you're saying that. Like, you're literally just getting to know them, showing them that you do show up and you deliver on what you say, and you're easy to work with. And you keep it simple, and it's a way for people to dip their toe in and build that relationship with you, and maybe

Ep #90: Creating Businesses in the Online Space with Jenny Shih

then you don't even have to have a mid-range offer. You literally just go, "So, do you want to literally do your whole house?"

I think also, what about the thinking that only a small number of customers, because that's the whole idea of the funnel, and people forget that. It's not a cylinder, it's a funnel. So everybody that enters at the top is not going to trickle all the way down to the bottom, right?

And so I think we have to remember that too, that a whole bunch of people are going to enter at those less-expensive top levels, and only a handful of people are going to trickle all the way down to your most expensive offer. So is there anything else in that kind of funnel conversation or that, the numbers game, that they need to keep in mind?

Jenny: I would just say, don't make the goal of serving the client at the lower-price level to turn them into a higher-paying client. When you put that energetic expectation on someone, that I'm only doing this because I want you to turn into a higher-paying client, it never works.

They feel it. It doesn't create the energy that you want. Show up fully in your awesome self, deliver that product or that service for your client, at that lower price point. Really give them what they are paying for, in a way that they absolutely love and appreciate. That then will create the right customers that want to pay for your higher-end offers.

Tobi: I love that.

Jenny: it just works.

Tobi: Yeah.

Jenny: Show up fully and awesomely for each client, at the level they're doing it, without the expectation that it doesn't, they turn into anything else.

Tobi: That is so smart. Yeah, that's my favorite thing you've said in this whole interview, because it's really coming from a place of abundance.

Ep #90: Creating Businesses in the Online Space with Jenny Shih

And, if you're going to be in scarcity mindset all the time, and you're only doing this as a loss-leader type of thing, and you're begrudgingly doing it every single time, you're right, you're not going to have the kind of energy that is going to lead to next steps or a better relationship with people.

So, I think that's so, so smart. So when they're thinking about the bite-sized offer, if their mind, every single time is going to say, "Well, I'm only doing this so that a handful of these will become the other people." Then they've got the wrong offer, or they've got the wrong mindset, or both, right?

Jenny: Right. Yeah.

Tobi: Yeah, so good.

Jenny: You can know, so there's a difference between saying, okay, this is temporary. I'm doing this because I'm excited to learn how to do it online. Yes, I'm not getting paid as much as I would if I were to maybe do the same service or my high-end service that I do in person. But, I'm excited to try this out because I see the potential direction for my business.

And, as long as you find that kind of excitement, but it has to be genuine. If you're like, "Oh, I don't want to get on the phone with this client." You know?

Tobi: Yeah.

Jenny: Like, "I don't want to do this work, and they're not paying me enough."

Tobi: Yes.

Jenny: If you start to feel resentful or negative or have these expectations, or look at your calendar and get annoyed that they're on your books, like, then you made a wrong choice somewhere.

Tobi: That's good.

Ep #90: Creating Businesses in the Online Space with Jenny Shih

Jenny: And you need to fix that.

Tobi: Yeah, that's good. So, and I think from, from my experience, the answer is, like we said already, finding that sweet spot between something that is still simple, and simple for you to do, and you can do it in your sleep and you enjoy doing it, but it does have a huge result, payoff, you know, transformation for the client.

And those things do exist. Even though you might have to dig a little deeper to figure out, okay, what is – and to me, what that looks like is, what is everybody always asking me for? That I always say, "We don't do that." You know, especially something small.

Like, what is that thing that over and over and over and over again, people ask me for? And how can I create a version of it that I get really super excited about? I think that's so fun. Even if we don't know the answer yet. I love how it just starts kind of my wheels turning, and I hope it's doing the same for the audience to go, fascinating. Okay, I don't have to dumb myself down. It's not about, like, slashing my prices. It's not offering my top-level things on the cheap. It's coming up with something completely new, that I'm super excited about, that our clients are going to be raving fans of, and that is the offer that we create. That's so fun.

Jenny: Yes.

Tobi: Awesome, awesome, awesome. Okay, so any parting thoughts for people as they start to either shift and move into the online space, or maybe they're already there, but they've gotten some aha moments today about, maybe they're doing it wrong? Like, anything else they need to keep in mind, for sure, to go into this new world?

Jenny: Yes, it's a lot more simple than most people are telling you. Most people out there want to sell you that you have to have all these complicated, fancy, high-tech systems in place, and you have to use this

Ep #90: Creating Businesses in the Online Space with Jenny Shih

software, and you have to do all these, you know, fancy, high end, whatever, social media stuff.

Like, all of that stuff is just like noise and distraction. What you need to do can be really simple. Having a website, creating an offer, finding a couple of places where you go and serve and show up for your potential clients, and let them know what you do.

It can be really, really simple, but it's also hard. So, I'm not here to say that you just put your offer up, and we've kind of hit on this, but I want to just drive it home. It's a lot simpler than people are saying, but it's a lot harder than people are saying. It's going to take some work at the beginning.

It's, you know, there are some people who have instant traction. They just hit the right thing at the right time, they write the right emails to the right person, and things take off. And those can certainly happen. But for most people, it's going to take a little bit of legwork.

It doesn't mean you're doing anything wrong. But in the end, the payoff is unbelievable. I had no idea when I got started in the online world, how incredible it would be to create this online business with a flexible schedule where I earn a great income. I still have to work for it. It's not like it just shows up for free, but it's just in this whole fun, new way.

And so it's simpler, but harder, and totally, totally worth it.

Tobi: And by harder you mean, like, it takes time, it takes energy, you have to show up consistently. So it's not like what you're doing is, in itself is not hard, it's just kind of even like the mental toughness of literally committing for a period of time and showing up until it works, right?

That kind of tenacity until it takes off. It might take a month, it might take six months, it might take 18 months, it might take 24 months, but however long it takes, once you get it going, it can really make a huge difference in your life and your business.

Ep #90: Creating Businesses in the Online Space with Jenny Shih

Jenny: Yeah.

Tobi: Yeah.

Jenny: It's kind of like, you know, if you wanted to lose 50 pounds or 100 pounds, if you had a lot of weight to lose, you're aren't going to just change your diet and start exercising for one week and all of a sudden lose your 50 pounds.

Tobi: Right.

Jenny: Like, it takes time. Like it just takes time. But in the end, like if you stick at it slow and steady, you make it happen, the same thing is going to happen in the online business.

Tobi: Yeah, and then it's sustainable forever.

Jenny: Yes.

Tobi: And then you've learned so much. My favorite part about that is you learn so much in the process, which is what you were saying. Like, what – they have no idea what they don't know, and it's just starting the process and learning that whole, even just the language, the vernacular, the things you need.

And yeah, they don't have to be expensive. They don't have to be expensive software, but you still do need a lot of different things to operate in the online space to meet your customers, from lists to email campaigns to social media strategies, and all that. You need it, but it just takes time to figure them out.

And I love, like you said, just getting in there and just starting the process with the expectation of, this is going to take some time. In fact, that's why I tell people to start now. Because you can't just wait. They're like, "Oh, I'll do that, like, you know, I'll do that when I have zero money. And when I've finished all the clients that I currently have." And I'm like, "Well, that's the

Ep #90: Creating Businesses in the Online Space with Jenny Shih

worst idea ever, because it's going to take 6, 12, 18, 24 months to do this. And you're going to go broke in the process."

So the time to start is now, and be building it when you actually have other clients, right?

Jenny: Absolutely. Absolutely.

Tobi: Yeah.

Jenny: Like I said, like the side hustle example we were talking about before, this is your side hustle. You want it to eventually take over your job, or at least build it up to some sustainable point. You don't want to just wait until the job is gone.

Tobi: Yeah, awesome. Okay, well, thank you so much for sharing these ideas today. I've gotten some really good perspective and different ways of thinking about this. And I just, I love to learn from other people. So I like that you have presented these ideas in a completely different way.

So, thank you so much. I think it's been so helpful. And if people want to find out where you are, it's jennyshih.com, is that right?

Jenny: You got it.

Tobi: Okay, perfect, so they can find you there. And thank you guys so much for listening today. I can't wait to hear what you think about this episode. So, are you also on Instagram or on social if they want to ping you, or ping both of us and just like, tell us what their thoughts were today?

Jenny: Yeah, that'd be great. I just started taking Instagram seriously about a month or two ago, so my following doesn't represent my business expertise, but it also makes me really accessible. So, if folks have questions or want to learn more about what we did, if they want to grab *The Seven Steps To Make It Work Online* guide or our how-to guide for bite-

Ep #90: Creating Businesses in the Online Space with Jenny Shih

sized offers, come on over and find me on Instagram, or just head over to jennyshih.com.

Tobi: Yeah, and we'll put all of that in the show notes, so they can find all of those places to get all of that information and your downloads. And I hear you on Instagram, we just kind of are early adopters as creative, because we have all those visual, pretty things to post on Instagram.

We're always looking at, you know, pretty rooms and pretty flowers and pretty tables. And so we kind of had a leg up on some of the rest of the world. But I hear you and that's awesome, and we will come find you on Instagram. And for everybody listening, I'll post all of that in the show notes, so you can find Jenny and all her guides and tips and how-tos that I know you're going to want to download.

So, thanks again so much for being here today. And thanks, everybody for listening, and I'll see you again on another episode of the *Design You Podcast*. Bye for now.

Okay, so I hope you enjoyed the show with Jenny as much as I did. I think she had some really simple ideas, and simple are the best, a lot of times. We try to overcomplicate this stuff, and I love how she just breaks it down, and basically just helps you get started, because getting started is the hardest part.

So, to find any of this stuff Jenny talked about, or find out where Jenny is, check out the show notes for the podcast, and if you want help moving into the online world and creating a scalable product at some point in the future, then you want to check out Design You, my coaching program for creative entrepreneurs.

So, to learn more about all of those things, go to tobifairley.com/podcastepisode90, or just go to tobifairley.com/designyou. I can't wait to work with so many of you in 2020, and thanks for listening. I will see you again here really soon.

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

Ep #90: Creating Businesses in the Online Space with Jenny Shih

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.