

Ep #92: How to Do a Decade in Review



Full Episode Transcript

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Tobi Fairley

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Ep #92: How to Do a Decade in Review

You are listening to the *Design You Podcast* with Tobi Fairley, episode number 92.

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

Hey, friends, what is up? It is the end of the year. What? How did that happen? Right? We have literally rolled through the holidays, and we only have a few days left in 2019. And, it's really hard to imagine that, but it's gone. It was here, and it's over. And whether we like it or not, it's over. But I, for one, really, really like it.

Now don't tell anybody my big secret, but I'm going to tell you. This is my very first favorite time of the year. More than Christmas, more than Thanksgiving, I mean, I love a holiday. And I love both of those holidays in particular, but there is nothing like a New Year to me, where I can have bright and shiny new goals. I can celebrate what I did the year before. It is absolutely my favorite.

So today, we're talking about doing a year in review. Because we're about to start not just a new year, but a new decade, in just a few days. And it can be so powerful to look back and see how far you've come.

Now, I've done these exercises in my own life just this week. Really, mostly today, and I am on a high because it's just mind boggling what you can create. What you can make happen in a period of time when you turn around and look backwards, right? They say, hindsight is 20/20. Well, we're at year 2020. And that is the perfect time to get your vision for your goals super, super clear.

Okay, so why the year in review? Well, I call it the year in review, some people call it the year-end, E-N-D, review. But whatever you call it, here are a few reasons that it can be really helpful.

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

Ep #92: How to Do a Decade in Review

For one, it's important to see what you accomplished, right? Most of us don't celebrate our accomplishments near enough. I am definitely guilty of that. Most of us don't even take time to remind ourselves what we did right over the last 12 months.

Most of us are too busy being overwhelmed with our to-do list or the coming week or the coming month. We're literally barely seeing past the end of our nose. And we're beating ourselves up over things we didn't get accomplished even in that week, much less in the whole year, right? So it's really important to celebrate and remind yourself what you did right.

Another reason is that it's important to see what we didn't accomplish. But this is not at all about beating ourselves up. And you may have heard me say this before, because I've told you last year about my year in review ritual, but I think it's worth talking about again, especially since we're turning into a new decade.

And I want you to see what you didn't accomplish and figure out why. Because that's going to be very important to your goals over the next 10 years. Now, this is not in beating ourselves up way, but just in a very curious way. Why didn't that happen?

And of course, things don't just happen most of the time. So, a bit of a hint here, is the reason why it didn't happen is because our thoughts didn't create a feeling, that created an action, that created that particular result. But we need to know what the thoughts were that we were thinking, that got us the result that we created, instead of the one we said we wanted, okay?

So we can figure that out, if we can figure out what we were thinking. And this is the time to do that, before you forget, before you move into the next year, okay? Because we really want to figure out how to get the results we actually want, instead of something else that we may accidentally be creating, okay?

Ep #92: How to Do a Decade in Review

So, digging into our results right now of what we did get, means considering what we were thinking and that created them. And also, it means considering whether we really just didn't actually want that thing that much. Maybe it was really something we thought we should do, or someone else thought we should do, but we didn't really want it.

And we have to get so honest with ourselves. We have to take responsibility for exactly where we are, if we ever want to land in a different spot in the future. So whether there were some big thoughts or beliefs that held us back from accomplishing those things, or whether we just really didn't want it, which could also be thoughts, right?

But I'm saying whether you wanted it and you really, really wanted it, but you didn't notice there were some thoughts lurking that were holding you back from it. Or, maybe a competing desire, or you actually didn't want it at all. It's really important to know. It's highly important, okay?

And then the third reason that we also need to consider our year in review, is because I want you to think about creating a stop, start and continue list. Okay, so what's that? That means things that we did in the last 12 months, or even the last decade, which we'll get to in a few minutes, that we want to stop doing and why we want to stop doing those.

It can be because it's detrimental to you in some way, and maybe because you're tired of them. So, what do you want to stop? What do you want to continue, because it was getting you results? Like for me, on my continue list, would be to continue to go to the gym twice a week, every week, all of the New Year 2020, and even the whole new decade. So, what do you want to keep doing?

And then, what do you want to start doing for the new decade, that you didn't do over the last 12 months? Maybe you wanted to do it and didn't start, you didn't believe you had time. Or, maybe you've just now thought of it. But I want you to think about what you want to stop, start and continue.

Ep #92: How to Do a Decade in Review

Okay, so three great reasons to do a year-end review. And just to recap for you. One, to celebrate success, instead of perpetuating that negative self-talk, or just moving on to the next year in our to-do list. I want you to stop and celebrate what you did.

Number two, I want you to understand the why behind the goals you didn't accomplish, and what thoughts kept you from accomplishing them. And number three, I want you to create that start, stop and continue list.

Okay, so now, what about the decade in review? Because this is one we haven't talked about before. Why is that important? Well, I think the main reason is because humans typically underestimate what they can do in a decade, but overestimate what they can do in a year, right?

So they're like, "This year, I'm going to lose 50 pounds and make \$1 million." Neither of which are likely going to happen, right? But over a 10-year period, can both of them happen, and a whole lot more? Absolutely. So it's really important to see what we can do when it comes to looking at the whole decade, because this keeps us from quitting on ourselves.

When we're just looking at the year, we get very discouraged, a lot of times. We often struggle to make those things happen that we thought we could over 12 months, and we decide it's hopeless and we give up. And, many of us are impatient, right? We're looking for instant gratification. Yes, I'm talking to you.

And we get tired or bored with following through consistently on things, right? Or we get tired or bored or scared of spending money year after year on long-term goals, and strategies, and growth. We basically become emotional children.

I think of us like Veruca. Do you all remember Veruca on *Willy Wonka & The Chocolate Factory*? And she's really spoiled and she goes, "I want it now!" Well, that's what we usually want, especially in a year's time. But often, we need to be looking at two years, or five years, or maybe even 10 years. And we just can't really imagine sticking to things for that long, right?

Ep #92: How to Do a Decade in Review

We can't get perspective on how we can accomplish something, and how worth it it will be, when we get to the other side of it, if we stick with something over that bigger period of time. So, looking at a 10-year period, a decade in review, and how much you can accomplish in that amount of time, really shows us what's possible.

So, I want you to look at what you did over a decade. And you may say, "Well, Tobi, I didn't do that much. Because I've been sort of coasting, and I haven't been making goals a priority." Well, that's okay. Because I'm going to talk to you about what I did. Not to brag, not to overwhelm you, but to inspire you with the possibilities. Okay?

So, if you take a moment, I think you're going to be shocked at how much you actually did. And it might not have been on your business. It may have been on your relationships, or your home, or something else in your life. But I promise you, you absolutely did some amazing things in the last 10 years. But I'm going to also give you that glimpse into what I did.

And this will really help us imagine that in a few areas, if we had stuck to the plan of what we said we wanted to do, we could have made whatever that goal was, even a giant stretch goal, even an impossible goal, we likely could have made that one happen too, okay?

So, I want to share with you my year in review quickly, and then I want to share with you my decade in review, and then you can get to work on what those look like for you. And I'm just going to share at a high, high level. We're not going to get in the weeds, but I just want you to see what I can see that I did in those periods of time. Hoping it will inspire you to see what's possible for you, not only in 2020, but between 2020 and 2030.

That sounds crazy, right? Like, by 2030 we should all be only flying our cars by then. And heck, maybe we will be. We don't know what Elon Musk has on his decade plan, do we? Might happen, right?

Okay, so for 2019, my main goal was optimal health and wellness. And I ended up making a lot of progress in that area. But for a lot of the year, it

Ep #92: How to Do a Decade in Review

felt like I was off course for that goal. And this is really important that you hear. Because I think you think, "Well, Tobi has her goals dialed in. She's really on top of it, clearly, because she gets so much done." And I want you to see that it doesn't always look like I'm on track in the process of getting to a goal.

So, we'll dig in a little deeper of what that looked like and when I was off track in a sec, but I do want to point out an analogy that I like, that I've heard before, about how airplanes are almost always off course, at any given moment in the flight. But because they have a plan, they end up landing right where they're supposed to.

So, sometimes they're off course because they took a detour on purpose, to go around a storm or a weather issue, right? Other times, they're just slightly off course, because it's impossible to stay perfect in a straight line, flying an airplane, full of hundreds of people, right, or even 10 people. But basically, they're moving in the right direction the whole time.

And they're constantly checking in and making adjustments, so that they do get to where all the passengers on those planes think they're going to land, which is very important, right? Because you don't want to take off from California, thinking you're going to Florida, and end up in Cleveland. And the pilot just saying, "Whoops, sorry about that." Right?

And you may be doing the very same thing with your goals. You may be thinking you're heading to Florida, and you're landing in Cleveland. So, we've got to figure out what this really looks like, so you can stay the course. So, with us and our goals, and with me in particular, that was absolutely true for me this year. Sometimes I looked like I was heading to Cleveland.

I knew there were some things that had to happen in my business though, for me to land where I wanted to, with optimal health and wellness. And they weren't distractions, they were part of the process. So, for a lot of the year, it felt like I was working on everything but my wellness. But that wasn't really true.

Ep #92: How to Do a Decade in Review

I knew that for long-term change to happen in my wellness, I needed to also change other things about my schedule that I hadn't gotten to yet, or I hadn't really mastered. And I knew I had to change things about my workload. I had to change things about how my days look and feel.

And this meant a lot of things. It meant me getting my team just right, which meant me letting some people go. It meant me adding new people, all very stressful, for sure. All didn't look like I was working on optimal health and wellness. It looked like I was working on my business and my team, which I was, but it was part of the process.

And besides just getting these people in place, it meant really refining and defining their roles. And it meant us, as a team, writing SOPs, standard operating procedures, for how they did their tasks and owned their jobs.

And thankfully, I didn't have to write all of those. The team did. But I had to help with them. I had to map out my vision for where I wanted the company to go, so they could figure out, with me, who was going to do what and how much that was going to cost in time and money, and what task it was going to take to get from where we were, to where we wanted to be.

All did not look like optimal health and wellness. It looked like business and team members and organizational structure. But I knew it was part of the process. I also had to get several of our workflows and processes dialed in, which also meant the team did a lot of that. But I had to get them dialed in for me, too, and really set up and working smoothly, including things like some of our sales funnels and marketing processes.

Because the more those things were running like clockwork, the less I had to do going forward to maintain them. So again, none of this sounds aligned with my goal of optimal health and wellness, right? But it was. Because I wasn't putting that on the back burner and going and doing these other things. I was looking at both, the whole time.

I was looking at my flight plan and I was saying, I've got to go through all these destinations, to land in the spot I want to land. So after working very

Ep #92: How to Do a Decade in Review

hard on the business from January through about July or August, and at the same time, I was making it to the gym twice a week. That was a priority.

And I was working very, very hard on my mindset around food and emotional eating. Even though the scale wasn't moving yet, or my labs weren't necessarily changing on some level of blood work, or something else that would be a marker for health. I was working hard on the mindset to get me there.

And then, everything finally started to click because I had done so much work on it, around September. So, September, y'all. It was seriously from January until September, for me to really start to see things come together with optimal health. That's nine months.

So many of you, like almost all of you, because that's how we work, right, would have given up a long time before September. You would have given up in February, or then May, or even July. But to get the results I got, I had to stay the course until September. And that's what I want you to see when you look back at your year in review. What could have happened?

Because, like James Clear says in *Atomic Habits*, if you're wanting an ice cube to melt, and that ice cube is currently at 20 degrees, when does an ice cube melt? Well, the freezing point is 32. So obviously, it has to get to 32, and even just slightly over that, before it melts. So that's more than 12 degrees, right? From 20 to 32.1. That has to happen for the melting to start.

But every single degree matters. Because if you don't go through 21, and 28, and 30, and 31, you can't possibly get to 32. Right? So when you're going through all those very important degrees of change, guess what? You can't see any results yet. That ice cube is just as frozen as it was at 20 when it's 28.

We just don't know that change is happening. We can't see it. Nothing is melting. It looks like it's not working. It looks like it's a waste of time, which is why we all quit right? So I could have quit at any point during January and September. It was like me going from 20 degrees to 32 degrees.

Ep #92: How to Do a Decade in Review

The scale was up and down all those months. My stress was up and down. Some moments seemed incredible, others seemed horrible. But then, on September 16, I started being accountable, with two friends, to my actual food plan, with my health and wellness. And finally, after getting my team in place, and several work practices in place, and my mindset in place, and the gym in place, for nine, going on 10 months, guess what happened?

I lost 15 pounds in three months, y'all. I lost 15 pounds from September 16 to December 16. September, October, November, December, three months. I also watched as my team generated about \$100,000 in income over that period, with very little help from me. Talk about improving my health and wellness. Not only my personal health, but the health of our bank accounts and our business too. Which of course, also added to my wellness.

Because anytime someone else besides me is helping to create that amount of cash, it frees up my time. But it also gives us more funds to do more things to help us grow. Which reduces the workload and stress on me in particular, which helps my health and wellness. Holy cow. Woo hoo, happy dance, right?

So now, as I come into the end of this year, and the beginning of the new year, even though I may have been off course for a lot of the year, I'm landing the plane on target. Like a bulls eye, to the spot that I wanted to land, but really better.

Because there's some benefits and some perks that I didn't even know would come along with this process, including some incredible team members that are bringing so much to the table, that I didn't even know I needed, or that was possible. And it's putting us in an even better position to get great things accomplished in 2020. Incredible, right?

So, it's time for you to make space to do a year in review. Now, before you do it, we're going to talk about the decade in review quickly. But I want you to promise me that you'll do this exercise here in the next day or two. So, I

Ep #92: How to Do a Decade in Review

want you to see what you set out to do in 2019. And what you accomplished, and what you didn't, and why?

And there were some things I thought I would accomplish, and for whatever reason, I didn't, and I figured that out when I was doing my year in review. Some of them I had just decided I didn't really want it anymore. Okay? So they were part of the goal of optimal health and wellness, and I was like, you know, that part I'm just not interested in it anymore.

Like I was, at one point, thinking I was going to cut out all sugar and flour. And I decided I didn't want to. I could lose weight still having those things, sometimes, and so they're still in my life. So you get to do that too. But you get to look at what you thought you wanted, what you really wanted and what you accomplished.

So, asking yourself, if you're good with the results you got, yeah, we get to change our minds sometimes. So we might be good with where we are. Or, if you're not good with it. Now, don't just pretend like you're good with it and be like, "Well, yeah, obviously, I can't lose weight, so I'm just going to have to get happy with where I am." Or "Obviously, I can't make six figures. So I'm just going to have to resign myself to being happy at this point."

That's not what we're talking about. I mean, whether you really like where you landed or not. Because I promise you, there's things you can do about it, which we will be talking about all of January. But just decide. And how will you use this information of looking back over the last year to make next year exactly how you envision it? Write that out.

I'm telling you, it feels so good to be standing in a place right now, for me, where I'm not starting January wanting to lose the same 25 pounds that I put back on three or four years ago. That, for three or four years, it was my same goal, and I was starting at that same place every year. It felt overwhelming. I felt overworked, confused, every single year, for the last three or four, when that was still on my goals list.

Ep #92: How to Do a Decade in Review

And this year, it's not, because 15 pounds of it is gone. I only have a little bit to go and it feels so liberating. But I'm not even worried about the other 10 pounds. It's not even really on my goals list for 2020, because I've got my optimal health practices and habits so dialed in. I know it's going to take care of itself, right?

So, my goals for 2020 get to be all new, which hasn't happened in a while. Because I kept wanting to lose the same weight and making a same amount of money for years in a row. And I decided a while back, I wasn't going to do that again. I was going to make a difference in both of those areas, so that was not the same two goals for 2020 that I had in the last several years. Okay?

So, by the way, if you want to listen to that process of how I figured out I was secretly self-sabotaging, so I didn't have to have the same goals again in 2020, I nipped that self-sabotage in the bud, then head back to Episode 75. Because that's where I talk about that exact practice, and it might help you with this process. But I want you to be able to get those goals that you really want, at least one or two of them, accomplished in the new year.

Okay, so now let's look back quickly at the decade in review for me. And I just want to take a moment, and these are not an order. It's a random list. And I think that's even better, because you can see that that necessarily doesn't move from point A to point B, there was a lot of things that happened over that decade.

And I just want to list out to you. They blow my mind when I read them. I hope they blow yours, because I want us to be able to blow our own minds in what's possible in a year's time. Okay? When we really focus on things. And what we can't tackle in just 12 months, if you stay the course, you can tackle over a bigger period of time, especially over a 10-year period.

And yeah, you might only be accomplishing one or two big goals a year, because it may take the whole year to get to those. Some years, I get one or two. Some years, I get six, or maybe even 10. But that's very, very rare. They would have to be 10 small goals that don't take very much time at all

Ep #92: How to Do a Decade in Review

to accomplish or achieve, because I can't do 10 at a time. I have to do them one at a time, to really make sure they happen, okay?

But whatever the case, over a 10-year period, you can definitely accomplish 10 or 20 big goals, or maybe even way more than that. So here are some Tobi highlights from 2009 to 2019.

The cover of *House Beautiful*. Two covers of *Traditional Home*. Making the *Traditional Home* New Trads List, their 20th anniversary, in 2009, when they brought their list back. I was one of those first members. I launched four product lines. One was CR Lane. Well, actually three or four years' worth of new products with CR Lane, in a row. Two full lines with Soicher Marin. A fabric collection Duralee, and I'm now on my, I think, third big launch with Woodbridge in 2020. So more than two with Woodbridge.

I moved into a 6,000 square foot office. I moved out of a 6,000 square foot office eight years later, and moved into a home studio. I started designing *Design You* at one point in this decade, and I grew it to a half-a-million and growing. I started a podcast. I traveled with the Design Leadership Network to Copenhagen and Berlin and Marrakech and New York.

And while in Marrakech, I was even one of the Moments of Inspiration speakers, and Bill Clinton made me a personal video about knowing me, and how he was a part of one of the people who had come from Arkansas, my own home state, when I was showing everyone there in Marrakech, all of the other designers and landscape designers and architects, what inspired me. Which was a whole list of amazing humans and individuals who have come out of my home state, including Bill Clinton, who y'all, made me a personal video as part of my presentation. That one kind of blows my mind, for sure.

What else did I do? I got invited to travel in Scotland for free with *Traditional Home* as their guest. I got invited complimentary to go to Parma, Italy and be a guest of the Antiques Diva and go to the market there, the Mercateinfiera.

Ep #92: How to Do a Decade in Review

In the last decade, I've been featured in all kinds of design magazines, including *Coastal Living*, *Southern Living*, *HGTV*, *Better Homes and Gardens*. I've had, oh gosh, total I've had 15 covers of *At Home in Arkansas* in my lifetime. So, probably at least half of those came in the last decade. I was also in *Real Simple* and *Wall Street Journal* and *Fast Company*. And now, I've just been in *Forbes*, y'all.

I was also a columnist for an entire year with *Traditional Home*. Every single issue, following, chronicling my home renovation and having the big reveal. I spoke at the Design Bloggers Conference twice, including the very first year, and I won the Blogger of the Year Award at the Design Bloggers Conference.

I did the Hamptons Designer Show House twice, up in the Hamptons with *Traditional Home*. I did the Holiday House Show House in New York City. I did the Richmond, Virginia Show House. I bought a new home. I renovated a new home. I did a room at Pandora's Manor, with all other, list of, I mean, like wow, A-list designers like Barclay Butera and Madcap Cottage and Alexa Hampton. And Gosh, I'm forgetting people, Celerie Kemble. Like, it was so amazing.

I was inducted into the Sheridan High School Hall of Fame. I won the Entrepreneur of the Year Award, at the University of Arkansas Sam Walton College of Business. I got certified by the Institute for Integrative Nutrition as a health coach. I got certified by the Life Coach School as a life coach.

I had my product line for Soicher Marin in Restoration Hardware, twice, about 10 pieces or 15 pieces. And also, at Anthropologie. I was a brand ambassador for Thermador. I did four One Kings Lane tag sales, which were way super fun. I had dozens of ASID awards, mostly gold awards.

I opened an office in Dallas. I closed an office in Dallas. I had my work published internationally, in magazines in Canada and China. On the cover of Turkey's *House Beautiful*, in Russia, in Poland, in *British House and Gardens*. I created InBox Interiors. I closed InBox Interiors. I had three full, creative live courses in conjunction with *House Beautiful*. I was the high

Ep #92: How to Do a Decade in Review

profile on the cover of the Style section for the *Arkansas Democratic Gazette*. I designed a hotel, their suites.

I launched my Mastermind, and had a lot of live events. I've been blogging since 2009. That's when I started my blog, way back then, so going on 11 years later. I might have actually started it in 2008, so it was really heating up in 2009, and really just getting started. And it was read in, gosh, I feel like it's over 125 countries, or 165 countries, or some crazy number of countries.

I was on Salonniere's Best Entertainers in the Country list. I had projects in Michigan and Florida and Dallas and Arkansas. And y'all, I had an amazing decade. And those are just the highlights. I know there's a million things I'm forgetting. How many employees came and went from my company, some of them by choice, some by my choice. I mean, I did so much stuff.

Those are the highlights. They blow my mind. I hope they blow your mind. Because friends, that crazy amount of stuff can absolutely happen in a decade. Things that I didn't even dream would ever happen, or I thought were just a little dream or a seed.

All of those things I listed or accomplished in that 10-year period, thanks to consistent goal setting and action plans. Me taking consistent, focused action, staying on course, for the most part, like the airplanes, landing where I said I would primarily, year after year after year, for 10 years. And that's what it looks like.

When you take action in that way, when you plan that way, the momentum builds, and a lot of things you only thought were a dream can absolutely come true.

So now, it's your turn. Set aside some time. Do it today, if you can, and go over what the last year looked like and what the last decade looked like. And remember, go back to those things I want you to do. I want you to celebrate your successes. I want you to look at the thoughts that kept you

Ep #92: How to Do a Decade in Review

from getting some of the results that you did want. And I want you to make a start, stop and continue list, okay? Both for the year and for the decade.

So, don't just look at your year in review. You have to promise me, you'll look at the whole decade. It's really important, so you don't quit on your dreams and your goals. And I want to see a plan. Of course, I'm not going to really see it. I want you to see a plan at the end of this exercise, just like I did, of where you will be at the end of 2020. And even though it feels like a stretch, where you will be rolling into 2030.

Okay, friends, have fun. This is not supposed to be a torturous exercise. In no part of this exercise did I say judge yourself, beat yourself up, hate on yourself, loathe yourself. None of that is part of this. It's fun. It's to reveal things to you. It should be exciting. And it's a problem-solving exercise, so you can figure out what kept you from some of your goals in the past. So we can work through those things, so they never stop you from your goals again.

So, I'll see you here again next week. And on that episode, I'm revealing my 2020 word of the year, friends. Okay, 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.