

Ep #94: Nourish Your Relationship with Yourself with Erin Aquin



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Tobi Fairley

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You are listening to the *Design You Podcast* with Tobi Fairley, episode number 94.

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 hey, friends, it's the new year! Yay. We're all the way into the first full week of January, so what are you doing with your goal-setting, peeps? Do you all have that dialed in? Are you still dreaming a little bit? Do you think you know what you want but you're not quite sure how you're going to get there? Or maybe you know what you want but you're afraid to go there. There's so much that comes up this time of year.

Today I have an awesome guest, Erin Aquin, and she's going to help us dig into what to do about all those thoughts, all that stuff, all that baggage. Because what we're talking about today is where goal setting intersects with our relationship with ourselves. This is a fabulous episode. There's so much goodness in it. Some of the ideas are super simple, which is really good, right, because we don't need just more stuff to do. But we really break down how you're likely holding yourself back from the life and the goals and the dreams you really want, and how many of us just keep recreating the same life or the same experience or condition over and over and over again, and we talk about why, okay.

So get ready. This episode's amazing, and I'll see you at the end of the show to wrap up and see what you think.

Tobi Fairley: Hey Erin, welcome to the Design You Podcast! I'm so glad you're here.

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Erin Aquin: Thank you so much for having me, it's such a pleasure to be here with you.

Tobi Fairley: So much fun. I'm going to let you tell everybody about you, but before you do that I want to tell them something about us. Because we are both currently training under the Life Coach School with our mentor Brooke Castillo to be master life coaches. As they're listening to this podcasts, we're in the Grand Caymans, but it's not near as glamorous as it's going to sound to people, because I'm sure we're probably both crying at the moment that this podcast is going live, right? We're both anticipating a lot of growth and a ton of discomfort.

Tobi Fairley: It's such a perfect time, because we're going to be doing that at the beginning of not only a new year, but a new decade. So we're both going to be working through our own mental blocks to get what we want, and ironically or not, that's what we're going to talk about today on the podcast, is how to help other people get what they want in their lives, right?

Tobi Fairley: Besides the fact that you're in Master Coach training, as am I, tell everybody a little bit more about you. What you do, who you help, all the things.

Erin Aquin: Great, yeah. Just picture me in the sand right now, crying my eyes out. I came to life coaching as a yoga teacher, actually. So probably very closely aligned with a lot of people that you work with, creative types. Yoga teachers are very much in that similar vein, and I became a life coach because I wanted to help yoga teachers, but when I really thought about what the most important and fundamental things that kind of coaching has helped me with, it's my personal relationships.

Erin Aquin: I actually work with people on their marriages, their partnerships with other people, and I think this is so important for everyone because it doesn't matter how much success you have, it doesn't matter how amazing other areas of your life are. If those core relationships are just

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falling apart, it's very hard to enjoy the success and all of the great stuff that's happening. That's what I'm up to right now, and that's who I help, and-

Tobi Fairley: I love it.

Erin Aquin: I still love yoga, but I don't teach it.

Tobi Fairley: Well, I love everything you're saying, and as we're recording this it's literally the day after my Forbes article went live. As you were saying that, I was picturing and almost even feeling myself back in some of those painful moments you were talking about, because I was doing everything I could to build my business and have outward business success, and literally my marriage was falling apart. I was not keeping up the way I wanted to, even though I was trying my best to be a good mom and Ellison was my main priority other than my work. My husband of course got the short end of the deal.

Tobi Fairley: But everybody was suffering, because I wasn't working on those relationships, exactly like you say. Thankfully, we did do all the work on them, and they're all wonderfully healthy and great these days. It still requires a lot of ongoing work, as do all relationships, so I love that you're saying that because I can totally relate to that. One of the things we're going to mainly talk about today is the relationship with self, because that's the one none of us want to work on, right?

Erin Aquin: Yeah, and it's the most important one.

Tobi Fairley: Yeah. It's so uncomfortable, though. But the reason I want to talk about it is here we are at the beginning again, as I said before, not only a new year but a new decade. There's so much potential in front of us, and if we're not willing to do the work on the relationship with ourselves, I just believe it's impossible to make any of the goals and the dreams that are currently either in your head or that you've put on paper, I think it's

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impossible to make them happen. That's what I want to talk about today, and let's just jump right in with that.

Erin Aquin: Yeah.

Tobi Fairley: Because as we've talked before, you and I have coached each other as part of this whole Master Coach training thing. We've gotten to know each other really well, and one of the things we've talked about prior to this call is the whole idea and the conflict that comes up with your relationship with yourself, and with other people actually, as an extension of that. When you start to work on things in your own life, right? Tell everybody kind of what you think about that, and how they can start to reimagine or kind of retool their relationship with themselves, so in the process of achieving goals and going after dreams they don't have to literally train wreck every other relationship in their life.

Erin Aquin: Yeah, I think this is actually a big reason why most people hesitate on going after their dreams and their goals, is they think it's going to somehow take away from those other relationships. Even just working on your own relationship with yourself, there's this idea I think has been made very common, maybe even more so with women, that we're taking away time, we're taking away energy from the other people and the other things in our lives if we start to invest in our relationship with ourselves and our goals and those big purpose things.

Erin Aquin: I actually have a totally different opinion about that. I mean, I'm sure you probably are on the same page with me about this, but I think the relationship to yourself is the most important one. If you're not giving that relationship the attention that it deserves in the form of time every day, in the form of your energy and your attention and your love and the way that you even talk to yourself throughout the day, everybody else suffers. Because when you're not actively empowered to nourish yourself and go after your dreams and do that kind of work, what happens? Usually you're looking for other people to provide the nourishment you're not getting.

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Tobi Fairley: Yes. Oh, this is huge. This is the whole idea of, if you're not turning inward, right, and working on you, you spend all of your time and potentially all of your life looking for the joy, the validation, the feelings you want, whatever those feelings happen to be, outside of you, right? We can't control other people, so we're constantly going to be let down. We're constantly going to feel not warm and fuzzy all the time. Not that any of us feel warm and fuzzy all the time, but we have so much more power when we're taking responsibility for our own feelings, and that has to come with the relationship with self.

Tobi Fairley: I love what you're saying, because I see so many people consistently doing this thing where they're looking for the joy or the happiness from something. I think that's a big thing to watch for when we talk about goal setting. Because I think, and I know you probably feel the same way too. Goals are amazing, because they give you something to shoot for. But if you're thinking that when I reach X goal, when I make X amount of money, when I have X job, when I have X partner or spouse, when I have a kid. Whatever those things are, if you're thinking that goal and achieving it is going to make you happy from that point forward, you're absolutely wrong.

Erin Aquin: Yeah.

Tobi Fairley: Talk a little bit about that. Go deeper for us, in this whole idea of external validation and why people have to make that shift of validating themselves, taking responsibility for their own emotions. It's just a big, huge ... We could spend the whole rest of the podcast I'm sure talking about just that.

Erin Aquin: Yeah, I mean, I could kind of give you the silliest example, but this is what usually makes sense for people. If I'm hungry, then I'm going to make myself a sandwich.

Tobi Fairley: Right.

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Erin Aquin: I don't call my husband at work and say, "Honey, I'm starving. Please, can you go find a sandwich, or can you go get something for me to eat, and I'm not going to tell you exactly what that is. I'm not going to tell you precisely what I'd like. But when you come home and deliver it, I'm going to be mad about it."

Tobi Fairley: Yeah, I'll let you know if you hit the mark or not.

Erin Aquin: We have things that, I would even argue that some of us don't even know without ... I think goals are great, as you said. They're so good because it gives you something very specific to shoot for. But often, we are looking for a specific feeling, and we imagine that the partner's going to give us that feeling, reaching the goal is going to give us that feeling. As we approach it as coaches, we're thinking about generating the feelings you want to feel, the thoughts you want to have, and then doing all that stuff for fun.

Tobi Fairley: Yes. Yes!

Erin Aquin: This is my attitude about even relationships. It's like, they should just be something that's fun in your life, that you create because you enjoy it.

Tobi Fairley: Yes.

Erin Aquin: There's so much in life that's hard. There's so much discomfort around every corner, which is not always a bad thing. But I think we take things so seriously and we think that it's going to be a certain moment in time that's going to deliver us the way we want to feel, and we miss this whole experience where you can feel great right where you're at, working towards your goal.

Tobi Fairley: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Erin Aquin: I mean, why wouldn't you? Why wouldn't you work to generate that from right where you are?

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Tobi Fairley: There's so much goodness in what you just said. One of the first things I want to point out that I absolutely love, that I think is genius, and it revolutionizes goal setting altogether, is what if you separated the work on yourself, which is the work that actually feels hard, from the goal itself? Most people are combining those things, and they think the goal and reaching the goal is hard. No, working on yourself is hard.

Erin Aquin: Right.

Tobi Fairley: Ceasing that whole looking for validation or joy outside of me is hard. First of all, what if we just said okay, I'm going to do two things this year. I'm going to work on myself and my feelings, and taking responsibility. And I'm going to pursue these things for fun. That turns everything about goal setting on its head, and I absolutely love it. Then another thing that you just said that is so important, and we do know this. We joke about how we feel like we have the secret, because we know the life coaching tools and not everybody knows them.

Tobi Fairley: But the secret really is that things, circumstances don't create your feelings. Your thoughts do. We both know that, but not everybody knows that. Some people know that, that have been listening to the podcast or that have been in my coaching program or one of your coaching experiences. But for everybody else, here's the thing. You can create the feeling that you think the goal is going to give you right now today, and even more importantly than that, what you and I also both know is the chances of you reaching the goal are way better if you create the feeling on the front end, and then tackle the goal, right?

Erin Aquin: Yeah.

Tobi Fairley: Because if you're just waiting for the goal to make you feel that way, not only is it only a 50% chance that it will, so many of us get to those points, and I did the same thing in my life multiple times. Where you think, when X happens then I will be happy, and you arrive at that spot

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and you're like, oh, this is not at all what I thought this was going to feel like. With arriving at that spot, whether it's a level of success or whether it's getting married or anything else, guess what? There's a whole ton of new problems that come at that level, right? It's not that we get there and then all the stuff goes away, and we live happily ever after.

Tobi Fairley: I think you're so smart, because I love these things. People, listen to this. Separate your goals from the self-work. They're two different things. Create the feeling first, and then pursue the goal, because your chances of getting there are so much greater. And your chances of feeling good when you get to the goal are great, because you've already created the feel-good feeling, right?

Erin Aquin: Right, and I mean what you just said about expecting that there's going to be things to deal with and problems and issues at the next level is so important. I actually teach people to just expect that. If you expect that there's going to be a good portion of your life, even when you make the money, even when you have the certain partner, you reach a certain goal, that there's going to be new issues to conquer, new things to figure out. That is really powerful. I think that, it's not only powerful because we're humans and we actually love to solve problems. Our brains are tuned to look for and solve problems all the time.

Tobi Fairley: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Erin Aquin: But it takes away kind of the fantasy land thing, where-

Tobi Fairley: Yes.

Erin Aquin: This whole, we're supposed to be blissful and happy and there should never be a blip or a dip in our mood. I think that that is really messing people up.

Tobi Fairley: I agree.

Erin Aquin: In every area of the world right now.

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Tobi Fairley: Well, yeah, and I want to get into this concept of discomfort. We have other things to talk about too, and we're going to get to all of them. But that leads us perfectly into this idea of discomfort, because when you set out on a path to reach a goal or to do anything, and you run into problems or pain or suffering ... Well, of course you're creating the suffering with your thoughts. But you hit those roadblocks. You and I have talked so many times about how we've been trained to think that means stop. Uh-oh, bad news, that's uncomfortable, go in the other direction. I think what you're saying is so powerful, because if hitting a roadblock means stop, then you're constantly quitting on yourself over and over and over, every time you hit discomfort.

Tobi Fairley: I see creatives that I coach doing this all the time. They get kind of almost even ... I mean, I don't know if addicted is the right word, but they get really kind of accustomed to this cycle, because it feels more fun and they feel more jazzed up to be on the front end of something, because it's more exciting before they've hit the problems. I watch us, I've done the same thing, I watch us recreating the same life over and over. Because we start something, it's going to be the best thing that's ever happened to us, this is really the time that we're going to, what, get rich, get thin, get married, have a baby, whatever the thing is. We're so excited, why didn't we think of this before?

Tobi Fairley: Then we start it, and it gets hard, and we're like, never mind, I knew that wouldn't work, and we stop. Then we look for the next thing to start again. We kind of get addicted to this joy that comes with starting. I love what you're saying about expecting the discomfort, because we don't want to be those people who start and stop all the time. That's never going to get us to where we think we want to go, and so as long as you know, okay, I'm choosing to go down this path. I want this thing. That path is full of discomfort, and I'm choosing it anyway. That gives you a completely different sort of point of reference, or framework to see the path that you're choosing.

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Tobi Fairley: I love what you're saying. So talk to us a little bit more about that. What about when we hit the roadblocks? When they don't feel right? When they feel hard? All that stuff, because I love what you're saying about expecting hard. We can expect it, but then what when we hit it? What do we do with our relationship with ourselves, with other people, that whole piece?

Erin Aquin: Oh, it's such a good question. The visual that I kind of use for this is when you start something new, it's sort of like you're running on the fumes of inspiration.

Tobi Fairley: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Erin Aquin: You have the mystical kind of magical energy of a new idea, and it's like a new relationship. There's nothing that's been hard, you're kind of a little bit in fantasy land, you're just dreaming. It feels very good, it's-

Tobi Fairley: Honeymoon phase, right?

Erin Aquin: I think people do get addicted to that. Yeah!

Tobi Fairley: Yeah, honeymoon phase. I agree, I think in relationships we do that, that's why we get bored with our marriages, our relationships. Because the honeymoon phase is inevitably going to go away, pretty quick, right?

Erin Aquin: Yeah.

Tobi Fairley: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Erin Aquin: So I think about, discomfort is like the moment where you're kind of starting to go through the mud. You're going uphill on this bike, and you're starting to hit the mucky part of the path.

Tobi Fairley: Yeah.

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Erin Aquin: But it's also, I think the beautiful part, because the discomfort is where the growth is happening.

Tobi Fairley: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Erin Aquin: I've trained myself, and to a large degree my clients, I'm sure this is something that you do in your program too-

Tobi Fairley: Yes.

Erin Aquin: Is to be like, oh good. This is where it gets gritty. This is where it gets grounded.

Tobi Fairley: Yes!

Erin Aquin: You can actually start to see what your mindset really is. When things start to become uncomfortable and hard, you can see what your patterns are. Are you the person that hits that little patch and mud and says, "Oh, this isn't for me, it should be just totally easy and flowing all the time." Then you turn around and go back?

Tobi Fairley: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Erin Aquin: Or are you the person who's like, "This is when it becomes real. This is when I'm really putting my stake in the ground and I'm trudging forward, and I'm willing to go after this vision that I have." I think the discomfort is actually, I use it as, this is good news. It's real.

Tobi Fairley: I agree. I say that all the time to people, and they don't believe me. They're like, "Okay, seriously. Have you really trained yourself that when it gets uncomfortable you're literally going, yes! I'm onto something! This is where it really starts! This is the beginning?" And I'm like, "Yes," and I love that you said that, and I love the way you said, this is the part that gets gritty and salty and all the things.

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Tobi Fairley: But we anticipate it, and we desire it, and we've actually trained ourselves, which we have, to desire that feeling. It's really the truth, right? We're not making this up.

Erin Aquin: Yeah, no, it's ... I mean, I had this running joke in my marriage, because my husband is American, and we have both done a lot of paperwork to live in these two different countries, in Canada and the US. I was like, "Wow. This is when the relationship is real for us, is when we're going through our bank statements for seven years, and we're putting everything on the table, and we're spending hours doing paperwork and interviews and all of these things." And I was like, wow, every relationship ... I wish more people got to live through this discomfort of having to do this process.

Tobi Fairley: Yeah.

Erin Aquin: I don't actually mean that, but it was one of those-

Tobi Fairley: I know what you mean.

Erin Aquin: Yeah, it's one of those things. When you do a business plan for your dream business, and it's like, "Oh, I have to do projections and think about the finances and get a bank account and get a business license." Those things aren't fun, you know? They're not, I mean, maybe they're fun for you, but for most people they're not fun.

Tobi Fairley: Right.

Erin Aquin: You're not walking though the banks, floating on a cloud.

Tobi Fairley: No.

Erin Aquin: It's the real stuff, but it's making it real, and it's bringing it to life, and it's doing what is necessary for your dream. One of our mentor Brook always says, discomfort is the currency to your dreams.

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Tobi Fairley: Yes.

Erin Aquin: I believe that. I think it feels like a real victory when you've gone through the muck-

Tobi Fairley: Exactly.

Erin Aquin: When you've climbed the mountain.

Tobi Fairley: Yeah, and all the confidence and all the stuff you're looking for comes by going through it. I mean, I got chills when you said that, I love that. Discomfort is the currency of our dreams. The other thing she's recently been talking about, that we both are really into, is this concept that she says so many people have called how greed. Which she means, we think we're entitled to somebody else telling us how to do everything. We're all spoiled, right? We don't have a lot of real discomfort in our lives, most of us, and we have this entitlement and expectation of, well if you would just tell me how, then I could move forward.

Tobi Fairley: What she knows, and what we both completely buy into, is this concept that all of the magic, all of the growth, all of everything, happens in the figuring out how on your own, right? So many people stop on their goals and their dreams at that moment. Every day I'm coaching somebody on this. "Well, I don't know how to set up a Facebook ad. I don't know how to hire a virtual assistant. I don't know how to price my services. I don't know how to create a course. I don't know how to get a client." I mean, literally, it doesn't matter what it is. It could be anything, and people think that that's a legit excuse.

Tobi Fairley: Well, I don't know, so then I guess I can't move forward, right? That's part of this conversation, and that goes right along with what you were just saying, because you all didn't know how to live in two different countries. You all didn't know how to be married to each other, not being from the same place, when it was all easy. You didn't know how to start a business. All of those things, but you figured it out, and that is one of

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the key pieces of getting to your goals and your dreams, is you have to be willing to figure it out yourself, and do whatever it takes to figure it out yourself, and not feel entitled to someone else telling you.

Tobi Fairley: The thing is, we both know, just somebody else telling you doesn't work anyway.

Erin Aquin: Right.

Tobi Fairley: Because if it's not your ideas, your thoughts, if you don't really believe in it, it's just like a diet or anything else. You go, "Well I'll try it for a minute, but I'm not really sure I buy into this," and it's never ever ever going to work.

Erin Aquin: Right.

Tobi Fairley: Yeah, so good. Anything else to add on how greed, or anything that you see that fits into that relationship with self? Of when you start ... Because I call it like a tantrum. We kind of go into, what, our emotional child self, and want to have a tantrum and go, "Why can't someone just figure this out for me?" Right? And we all do it, I do it too. But then I bootstrap it and go, "Well, guess the only person here is me, so I might as well do this."

Tobi Fairley: What do people have to do with their relationship with self to kind of kick that whole how greed, entitlement, emotional child self to the curb, so they can then to go the next level?

Erin Aquin: Yeah, I mean, I think this is such a good question. We have the internet, so we can, even the how greed, it's so lazy.

Tobi Fairley: Yeah. Yeah.

Erin Aquin: You literally can look up almost anything.

Tobi Fairley: Right.

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Erin Aquin: I remember reading something where, how do I learn to love myself was a really highly Googled question, and-

Tobi Fairley: Amazing.

Erin Aquin: I think that the relationship to yourself is not something you can find by asking other people.

Tobi Fairley: Right.

Erin Aquin: I think just like any good relationship, it's an investment of your time and your energy, and being willing to be a little vulnerable. Maybe put down the phone, put down the computer for a little while-

Tobi Fairley: Listen to yourself, right?

Erin Aquin: Yeah.

Tobi Fairley: You have a practice-

Erin Aquin: Half an hour every day.

Tobi Fairley: I was going to say, you have a practice that you teach your students. Tell us about that practice that you teach your students, that's so important for that relationship with self.

Erin Aquin: Yeah. I've been doing this with myself for a little while. I have two young kids, so this was something that I really had to carve out in a conscious way, but I have a little meditation room in my house where I do yoga and sit and think. I take my self-coaching books into that space, and I sit with myself for half an hour. I will do some self-coaching, I'll do some writing. Sometimes I'll just sit and think about my clients or my goals. Kind of whatever's coming up. Other days it's just sitting and doing a yoga practice, or just something that is purely for myself, for my own enjoyment, for my own growth.

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Erin Aquin: I mean, this is probably going to look different if you're wanting to take on some kind of a practice for yourself. It'll look different depending on what's closest to your heart.

Tobi Fairley: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Erin Aquin: But even just sitting with yourself, like for the month of January, and saying, "What do I really love to do? What do I really feel nourished by? What could I give myself? What's the gift that I can offer myself today?"

Tobi Fairley: I love that. Love. So good. When people hear that, they're like, "Okay, that sounds great, Erin. But I don't have 15 minutes a day." Which we know is a total lie. But nobody else seems to know that, right? We tell ourselves all of the time, I don't have time. I don't have time to work on my business, my relationships, myself, my weight loss, my exercise, go to the gym, eat right. There's the laundry list of I don't have time. How do you break through the I don't have time thought, and get to the other side of that? Because if you can't do that, then you're never going to get to where you want to go. It's going to be your excuse forever, because it looks like a very legit excuse. We do all have things we have to do, right?

Erin Aquin: Yeah, I mean, I kind of said it. At first when I had kids, I thought I had no time to myself. I was like, I don't have a minute alone. I barely have time to shower. That of course felt very true to me, and for new parents, that feels like a truth.

Tobi Fairley: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Erin Aquin: But what kind of happened was, I realized that I have to be purposeful about that, because if your relationship with yourself is not on really good terms, as we've been talking about this whole time, everything else suffers.

Tobi Fairley: Yes.

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Erin Aquin: It's just so much easier to fall into resentment, to go argue with your partner, to feel exhausted and angry and complain. Or you know, sit on Facebook or binge watch Netflix for hours.

Tobi Fairley: When we have no time, we can watch an entire series, like *Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*, for three days straight, right? And barely, quote, take a shower, that we don't have time to take. Yeah. We suddenly have time to do anything that feels good and warm and fuzzy, and makes us forget all of those other things, right?

Erin Aquin: Yeah, and I think people kind of classify that stuff sometimes as self-care, because they're doing something that's fun for them, and they can kind of check out. I don't think there's anything necessarily wrong with it, but if you're telling yourself you don't have 15 minutes to spend with your own brain-

Tobi Fairley: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Erin Aquin: If you're telling yourself you don't have 20 minutes to read a book or work on a course or do something that you're deeply passionate and feel very purposeful about, your dream project-

Tobi Fairley: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Erin Aquin: It doesn't make sense.

Tobi Fairley: Right!

Erin Aquin: We are so willing to devote time to things that don't really matter in the grand scheme of our lives and our purpose. I think it's sometimes helpful, that's why I suggest doing those kinds of practices first thing in the morning. But you know, I've done that same practice with my two-year-old napping beside me. It doesn't have to be in a perfect scenario. You can spend 15 minutes self-coaching yourself in the parking lot while you're picking up your kids from school.

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Tobi Fairley: Right. I think that's so important, because yes, mornings are the time that people aren't up yet, or nobody's calling us or whatever. But then we hit a period where we're like, "Oh, but I have to go on a vacation this week," or, "I have this one week that I have to get up really early for a client," or "I'm on jury duty," or, "My kid is sick." Something happens, and if we're so rigid on, well I only do that first thing in the morning because that's the only time that I can, we're really setting ourselves up for failure too, right?

Tobi Fairley: We have to sort of ... I love in the book, what's it called? Meditation for Fidgety Skeptics, which is that Dan Harris book, which is so hilarious by the way? He says practice daily-ish, and it's so helpful. What he's saying is, yeah, do it every day, except for the days that you can't do it. Then do it every other, or whatever. I think that's kind of what you're saying, of do this every morning, but if something happens that you can't, then be mindful enough to notice those little pockets or moments throughout your day that you could put this into and not feel like it's a chore, or like oh, I've got to do my 15 minutes with myself. But more like, I get to, and oh yay, there's a little moment, look at what I could do for myself while I sit in carpool line, like you said. Or at the doctor's office or somewhere else.

Tobi Fairley: Because we totally can do that. It changes everything when we think about it that way.

Erin Aquin: Yeah, and I mean you touched on something that I think is also really important, is when you can't do it for some reason, the practice can be just simply not beating yourself up for that. Or making it feel like an obligation. Maybe the practice that is maybe a little more advanced, and something that happens in the background, is just watch how you talk about yourself to yourself.

Tobi Fairley: Yes. I want to go into that, that's the perfect timing, because that was really one of the final things that I wanted to make sure we talked about, was negative self-talk. I think that I am so pained by seeing so many capable, beautiful, amazing human beings, especially

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women but not only women, just brutalize themselves every day, all the time. It's so fascinating to me, now that I have been trained as a life coach, to watch this, because there's nothing I can really do about it. I can offer some tips, but they have to be willing to do it.

Tobi Fairley: But it makes me think thoughts that make me feel very heavy feelings, sad feelings, when I watch other people do this because I know it's completely optional. I know they don't have to. But it doesn't feel optional to them. It feels all like the truth, and they're in such a habit of this. So talk to us about that part of ... Which may be the most important part of the relationship with self, is really how you talk to yourself, and so many people do horrible things to themselves every single day.

Erin Aquin: Yeah, this is something ... Even just personally that I've been working on. I had a coach when I was doing my first training with the school point out to me, she was like, "You know, you're not very nice to yourself."

Tobi Fairley: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Erin Aquin: And I was like, I couldn't even see it. I didn't even know it was optional, because I didn't know it was happening.

Tobi Fairley: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Erin Aquin: The ways that we are self-deprecating, that we undermine ourselves. Something that was very helpful for me personally, and I use it with my clients, is this idea of if you're doing some ... Even just a simple self-coaching practice like writing all your thoughts down. Like, "How do I feel about myself today?" Would be a great question to ask.

Tobi Fairley: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Erin Aquin: Then actually honestly write down exactly what you think.

Tobi Fairley: Yes.

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Erin Aquin: If you look at that, and then ask yourself, "Would I ever say these things about my best friend?" Then you're going to kind of have a barometer of where you're at with your relationship with yourself.

Tobi Fairley: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Erin Aquin: Because I have listened to people, and I have done this myself, say horrific things. Then I'm like, "What if someone said that about your best friend?" And they were like, "No one would ever say that about my best friend, she's amazing."

Tobi Fairley: Or your child.

Erin Aquin: Or your child.

Tobi Fairley: I love to use my daughter, my teenage daughter. I'm like, if anybody said that I would whip their ass. But I'm like, no, I don't whip my own ass when I'm saying that about myself.

Erin Aquin: I think it's true.

Tobi Fairley: Yeah.

Erin Aquin: We think it's just us telling the truth about ourselves.

Tobi Fairley: Yes, yes.

Erin Aquin: I know what goes on in my head. I know how many times I've failed.

Tobi Fairley: Yes. I think that even as an extension of this conversation, even if you're not really bad about self-loathing or some of those really detrimental and kind of extreme thoughts about yourself, if we want to call them that. There are so many other thoughts that are so sneaky and so tricky, especially when you're getting into goal-setting, that

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look something more like, "Well, I need to completely overhaul my financials and make more money, but I'm really bad at financials."

Erin Aquin: Right.

Tobi Fairley: Or, "I am just terrible with technology, but I need to take my business online." I mean, there's these tricky tricky things we tell ourselves, that we absolutely believe them to be true. I mean, because a lot of us go, "Oh, well I'm not that mean to myself. I don't beat myself up, I don't abuse myself about my weight or my appearance or not being perfect at my marriage or at home," or whatever. But there's still a lot of other sneaky thoughts that we have to really be mindful of. Do they get those out also in that journaling exercise? Is there something else we can do to start becoming aware of those sort of quote, "truths" or beliefs we have about ourselves that can absolutely keep us from going where we want to go in our lives?

Erin Aquin: Yeah. I think the logical sounding ones are actually the most harmful, because they don't seem like anything but the truth.

Tobi Fairley: Yes.

Erin Aquin: You know, I'm just bad with technology, it's just the truth.

Tobi Fairley: Right.

Erin Aquin: I think looking at those thoughts, it may ... This is where I'm like, you should all just hire coaches, you should all hire Tobi.

Tobi Fairley: For sure.

Erin Aquin: Hire her now.

Tobi Fairley: Any coach, yeah. Especially a Life Coach School coach, because we love that thinking that comes out of the Life Coach School.

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Erin Aquin: Yeah. But I mean, any time you have a thought like that, and it leads to a roadblock on the way to your goals.

Tobi Fairley: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Erin Aquin: A thought like, I have to overhaul my financials completely, or I'm not good with technology. If that thought leads to you stopping, then it's an unhelpful thought, and it's totally not true.

Tobi Fairley: Yes!

Erin Aquin: It's a story that you're telling yourself. Some of those are going to be harder to excavate than others, which is why we are coaches, why we do this work with people. Because sometimes you need another brain on that project with you to see where you're stopping yourself.

Tobi Fairley: Right.

Erin Aquin: Being aware of those subtle sneaky ones, it's tricky business, and this is why I think everybody needs to have some kind of a practice of really looking at how your brain works and what the patterns are, and making sure that every day you're taking productive action towards ... Not only your relationship with yourself, but those bigger goals. Because that will always reveal the things that are holding you back.

Erin Aquin: Working on a goal for no other reason than just showing you where your mental patterns are helpful and where they're harmful to you is just beautiful work.

Tobi Fairley: I love that. So if for no other reasons, friends, if you've never set goals, if you didn't really believe in them, I love what you just said, Erin. Just pick a goal that you actually really want to achieve, just to see what you're doing. Because as we know, the way we do one thing is the way we do everything, and if it's holding us back in that area, it's likely holding us back in a lot of other areas too. One other thing you said that I love, that you essentially said, but you didn't use these words and I want to

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put these words out there because you used them to me previously before our call is, taking baby steps with that practice.

Tobi Fairley: Because as you were saying, repeating what I had said about, I have to completely overhaul my finances, and you said that's not true. Someone might argue and say, "No, it is." Then we can say, "Okay, well maybe it's true over a three-year period that they have to be overhauled, but they don't have to be overhauled this month." As long as you're thinking of that big gigantic leap that you have to make, you're going to stay stuck. If you're like okay, well, I see that, I'm going to write it on a piece of paper, I'm going to close the book on it, and I'm just going to go, "Okay, what small changes could I make this week or this month that move me in the direction I want to go in my finances?"

Tobi Fairley: It could literally be one thing. Like okay, I'm just going to start looking at two financial reports every week, because I've never even looked at them. I have no idea how this works, and I'm just going to start to get familiar with my finances so I can be less afraid of them. That might be the most important step of all, and we're thinking, oh, that's nothing. Just kind of even with the 15 minutes a day by yourself, that's not going to do anything. Who can do anything in 15 minutes? Who can do anything by looking at two reports a week?

Tobi Fairley: The thing is, it's those steps that matter the most, I think, those baby steps.

Erin Aquin: Completely. The example I have on this is I had a student, a client a few years ago, she just did a free challenge. We weren't even working together one on one or anything. I issued a challenge to my community where everyone was going to work on a dream project that they'd been putting off, and they were going to give it 15 minutes a day for a month. Her project was this one-woman play that she had always wanted to write, and she had two kids, and she had the story, and she was an entrepreneur. She just had all of these reasons that seemed very logical and like very good excuses for not doing it.

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Erin Aquin: But I issued the challenge, she took me up on it, and last year she performed her one-woman show that she had begun to write during that month. She won all of these awards for it, she's taking it on tour. It became a real thing.

Tobi Fairley: That's-

Erin Aquin: But it started with 15 minutes a day. It was not going away for two weeks to write at some luxurious resort.

Tobi Fairley: That's incredible. I love that story. Not that she finished the whole play in one month-

Erin Aquin: No.

Tobi Fairley: ... in 15 minutes a day, but she got into the habit and she got over those initial roadblocks by just booking in those 15 minutes a day, every day, consistently. I think that's what's so important, because we just have to prove to ourselves sometimes that we were wrong. We have to be willing and okay with being wrong too, right? The, oh wait, I do have at least 15 minutes a day. Oh wait, only 15 minutes a day can actually make a difference. That is the coolest story every, I love that. Thank you so much.

Tobi Fairley: Well, thank you in every way for being here today. I think this is an amazing way for people to start thinking so differently about their goals than they ever have before. I love it, I love how we've talked about separating the relationship with yourself from your goals, so goals can literally just be this fun thing you get to do. Almost even like a hobby, right?

Erin Aquin: Yeah.

Tobi Fairley: Like this challenge, like I'm going to learn to rock climb or whatever. Any goal, even in your business, even with your finances, you could start to look at it as something exciting or fun that you get to do. I think that could be the biggest game changer for goal-setting that really anybody could ever imagine or experience. So thank you so much for

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shining a light on all those ideas, and is there any last thing that you want to remind people as they go off and set to work on what 2020 and the next decade could look like in their life?

Erin Aquin: I think it's just working on your goals, and doing things that are really important to you. Even if we take it from this position of it being like a, we could do this just for fun.

Tobi Fairley: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Erin Aquin: That alone will enhance the relationship you have with yourself. Because doing something that's just purely for your desire, for fun, or for a dream that you have, is going to provide you with so much more validation, self-worth, confidence. Going through that discomfort is just ... There's a river of confidence that will flood through you.

Tobi Fairley: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Erin Aquin: Just for doing that work. It's just such a beautiful way to live, knowing that you can really create things that were maybe just a dream.

Tobi Fairley: Yeah, just showing yourself what's possible, right? Showing yourself what is possible for you.

Erin Aquin: And it shows everyone else around you what's possible, too. I mean, I think sometimes we get into this place where we think it's going to be selfish if we go after our dreams and our goals, but I like to believe that when I do that, the people around me who are maybe hiding out a little bit, or too scared to go for it, my children, my husband, all those people around me have the potential to be inspired by what I'm creating.

Erin Aquin: I just want to say before we go, I mean, I'm so inspired Tobi by what you have created, and what you're doing with all of these people. I just think, yeah, I just love you and I think you're incredible.

Tobi Fairley: Oh, thank you.

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Erin Aquin: Thank you for being a light on the path for all of us.

Tobi Fairley: That's so kind. Well, I love you too, and you're amazing. Even though we're at this moment crying together in the sand, and our lives will never be the same after a week with Brook and her amazing Master Coaches in the Cayman Islands, I know you're doing amazing things, and I feel the same way about you. I just cannot thank you enough for being here today. It was so fun, thank you, thank you.

Erin Aquin: Thank you.

Tobi Fairley: Okay. I wasn't lying, friends. That is such goodness, right? Now you're prepared to dig into that relationship with yourself, and you're also prepared to make your goals so much fun this year. So Erin and I are off in Grand Caymans, we're going to come back absolutely changed women in just a few days, and I'll see you back here on the podcast with a whole new Tobi. But in the meantime, go out, take these ideas, and put some of them into practice in your life, so you can create exactly the 2020 you want, the decade you want. So when you stand on the other side of it, you can look back and see the amazing things you accomplished, all by working on your relationship with you.

I'll see you next time, friends. 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.