

**Full Episode Transcript** 

With Your Host

**Tobi Fairley** 

You're listening to *The Design You Podcast* with Tobi Fairley, episode number 100.

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 is time to party. This is my 100<sup>th</sup> episode of *The Design You Podcast*. I can't really believe I've done almost two years of episodes, every single week. You've been here listening, I've been recording, it's been amazing, and I just am so grateful to you. Thank you so, so much.

This is a really big milestone and it's just been so much fun for me, so thank you, thank you. And, in celebration of our 100<sup>th</sup> episode, we're doing a fun giveaway. It's what we call the Mindset Box and it's a pretty box of a bunch of my favorite things, including some things like a book, and a journal, and my favorite coffee mug.

Just a bunch of Tobi's favorite things stuff that are going to keep you focused on managing your mind for your best results in life and business. We're giving away three of these, and if you want one, then there's a couple of ways you can figure out how to register.

We're going to give you the information on the show notes for this episode, which you can find at TobiFairley.com/podcast/100, because it's our 100<sup>th</sup> episode, or you can head over to Instagram and check out my Instagram feed and my stories, because we're going to be talking all about the giveaway and we want you to be able to register to be one of the three winners.

So, go do that, but only after you listen to this amazing episode. For today's episode, we're talking about failure. Yup, we're talking about failure right after I was talking about how big my success has been with 100 episodes.

This is so important. It's really about being willing to fail on your way to success.

Trust me, I've had many failures. I just had a failure this morning recording this episode, because the mic didn't work properly, and I had recorded half of it before I realized it and had to start over completely. No big deal though, because I came back and recorded again. I didn't quit. I didn't give up. I didn't just leave you hanging with 99 episodes, right?

And I believe an unwillingness to fail is the thing that holds most people back most of the time. Now, this episode is really part one of two parts. The other part doesn't come next week though, it comes in May. It's because I'm doing an experiment, an exercise that's part of my Master Coach training and certification.

I'm doing an exercise with my team of increasing our failure tolerance, meaning our willingness to fail. Now, there are two types of failures: A worthy fail and an unworthy fail. We're going to talk about what the difference is and why it's so important to be willing to do one when most of the time, most of us are doing the other.

So, let's start with the unworthy fail. This is a failure when you really don't even try. It's either when you give no effort at all, or you give what I would call half-assed effort. Basically, whether you do anything or nothing, you've already quit before you start. It's what I call quitting ahead of time, or failing ahead of time, or failing in advance.

The reason we do this is because we don't want to feel the feelings that come with failure, so we just don't really attempt the actions at all. For a lot of us, this is really what we could call perfectionism. I know there's a lot of perfectionists listening right now. It makes perfect sense that we would be afraid to fail, right?

It's really almost not even your fault, because we've been taught from a very, very young age that if you're going to do something, do it right or don't do it at all. And this is a terrible message, one that leads to fear and

paralysis instead of action. We've also been taught that A's are good, B's are okay, and by all means don't ever, ever, ever make a D or an F, right? Those are really bad.

But guess where failure is on the grading scale? Well, it's definitely not in the A area most of the time, unless you have ridiculously unrealistic expectations for yourself. It's really usually not even in the B area. Some of you can't do B- work because you only expect A's of yourself, but for most of us, A's and B's are pretty good, and anything beyond that is mediocre or bad, right?

But what we should have been taught from an early age was not make an A at all cost, which for me looked usually like memorizing something, acing a test, and then forgetting all of it, which taught me nothing. Instead, we should be taught to try hard, but to know that at first you won't be good at anything, and that's how it's supposed to be.

But with practice, and feedback, and learning, and trying again, you can become really, really good at something. I asked my Design You members and other people in my life, including my team, who aren't willing to fail, to imagine anything they're attempting in their life or business, like trying to ride a unicycle.

Are you going to be good at riding a unicycle the first time? I mean seriously, come on. We have two legs we're used to walking on and we will not be good at hopping on a wheel with a seat on it and two pedals without even any handlebars or a second wheel. Of course not. We're not even good at riding bikes the first time, but much less a unicycle, right?

Of course we're going to fail at that, and it's so easy for us to go, "Oh, well, of course we're going to fail." Yeah. We're not going to beat ourselves up when we fall over the first time. We know that success is not going to be automatic when trying to ride a unicycle. In fact, we're going to fall down, we're going to get bruises and skinned knees, and we're going to be bloody, we're going to be lucky if we don't have a black eye or a broken arm, right?

The Design You Podcast with Tobi Fairley

But with practice and trying, there is a possibility that we could become good at riding a unicycle, right? You at least believe it's possible, but it would take a lot of time. This really helps us see that when we look at the things we're doing in our lives, and we're not thinking about them in the same way we would be thinking about riding a unicycle, then we have a problem.

Most of us expect to be good at things on the first try. I work with people every day in my Design You community, and they're like, "Well, my Facebook ads failed," or, "My sales page didn't work," or, "I didn't get any new clients today," or, "I pitched a new fee that was worthy of my time and they said no."

They're just shocked and disappointed and discouraged and ready to give up immediately because they expected to be good at it on the first try. They expected to be good at blogging. The one I hear the most is social media. I've posted every day for an entire week or an entire month, and I only got 60 new followers.

The problem there is their expectations, right? If they're like, "Oh my gosh, I blogged for a month and I got 60 new followers. That's incredible!" But that's not what they're thinking because they expect something far greater than reality. This doesn't mean to have high expectations.

It means to be in check with how you use that against yourself, how you measure your success or your failure and let it lead you to quitting and make it mean something about you and why you can totally justify not taking this action again.

So, we know what an unworthy fail is, the one where we don't show up. Either don't show up at all or show up not all in, and when it doesn't work, we quit. What is a worthy fail? Well, it's the opposite of quitting ahead of time. A worthy fail is being willing to be bad at something until you are good, however long that takes.

A worthy fail is trying your best, but knowing that in some way, or many ways, your efforts will fall short of your expectations. And not only is that okay, but it is critical for getting to your goals and dreams. The feedback that we need is what we get when we fail.

It's that information that we must have to go to the next level or to whatever level we ultimately want to go to, to create the results in our life that we dream of. Most people are really confused on why they can't ever create the results they want in their life, and they keep creating the same results over and over, the ones that they don't want.

But what we really learn is they're just not willing to fail in order to get the all-important information and feedback that does take them to the next level. You can't go around failure and you can't avoid failure. You have to go through it to get the feedback to get to the place that you want to go. It's on the road that you're on, and there is no detour.

One of the most important perspectives to understand is that the issue so often is not even the results we're getting, not the results we're creating when on the 1<sup>st</sup> time, or the 5<sup>th</sup> time, or the 50<sup>th</sup> time it's not what we thought. The problem is not the results, the problem is the expectation that we set, typically arbitrarily.

We pulled it out the air, and then when we don't hit it, we make it a problem. We make it mean something about us or something about the effort, or something about our goals. We definitely let it define how we will move forward or if we will move forward at all.

I just coached a student this week in Design You who's incredible. She is so incredible. She is having so much success. We were talking about how she's really psyched herself out over the fact that when she ran a Black Friday sale, she only made \$7,500. Only. Only \$7,500 worth of scalable product.

She designed this product while working with us in Design You, and it's amazing, and she's already had more success than \$7,500. She was super

disappointed that she only made \$7,500 over a weekend without any effort for the most part, or very little, so she decided not to do it again in 2020.

She's like, "I'm not doing a Black Friday sale again." So I ask her, "Do you hate money?" And she says, "Of course not." But I wanted her to see that a lot of people would die for \$7,500 in sales over a weekend. Gosh, they'd die for \$7,500 of sales in a month.

Yet, she was willing to take zero sales next year on Black Friday weekend and completely forego the \$7,500 altogether, or likely a lot more that she would end up making the second go-round, because she didn't want to feel the feelings of failure and disappointment that she was creating with her thoughts about why \$7,500 was not as much as she thought she would make.

It's all because she had an expectation that she would make \$20,000 and she didn't. But what is \$20,000 other than an arbitrary expectation that she had somehow settled on? Something that she had just really come to in her mind based on no real concrete evidence, because she'd never done a Black Friday sale before.

She'd only done another launch, and she'd had a really good and successful one, but she didn't really have any information to base that \$20,000 on. So, had her expectation been \$3,500, how would she have felt about \$7,500? Ecstatic. She would've been like, "I'm doing this Black Friday thing until the day I die. I doubled my expectations. Really, more than."

But since she had pulled the random number out of the sky of \$20,000 as her target and then missed it, she was willing to forego the \$7,500 at all in the future to avoid the feelings that come with not hitting a target. In other words, a worthy fail, because that was a very worthy fail.

So, I ask her if she made profit on the \$7,500, and she's like, "Well, yeah. I think like \$4,000." So, then again, I'm like, "Do you hate money, my friend?" I ask her if the efforts to sell that weekend were hard, and she said no, and

I was like, "Okay, seriously, let's think about this for a moment. You're willing to forego 4K in profit that was super easy only because it didn't meet your expectations?"

And the answer was yes. And friends, I'm using this example because we do this all the time in our lives. All the time. And then we wonder why we don't ever hit our financial or other goals. And I showed her that the \$7,500 number was irrelevant, but her thinking was the problem.

She could've made \$40,000 and still been disappointed because she had expected \$80,000. Sit with this for a minute and think about where in your life you're already having success, but you're quitting because you have an expectation that is not in line with the worthy fail that you got on time number 1, or 5, or 10, but hadn't quite reached that number yet.

We do it all the time. So, hear me loud and clear here. If you can't fail, if you're not willing to feel the feelings that come into your body when your actions don't create the exact results that you want every single time, then you will never, ever, ever reach your goals, ever.

You will never create the dream job, or the salary, or the relationships, or anything else that you want, because you're like, "I lost 12 lbs. but I wanted to lose 20. I'm a failure." I'd be like, "Heck, 12 lbs.! And if you keep going, you're for sure going to hit 20, but you're going to quit because 12 wasn't 20 and you decided 20 was the number by a certain timeline."

"And so you're going to give up, and guess what that's going to look like. Putting all 12 back on. And you're going to keep creating the results you don't want because you're not willing to fail and learn from it and get back up and do it again."

The only way to success is through failure, friends. Let me say it again. You can't avoid it, you can't go around it, you still have to go through it many, many times over to get to your dreams. Why is so hard? Well, for one, we've trained ourselves to get our worthiness from getting the gold stars from somebody, the world, your boss, your family, yourself.

The Design You Podcast with Tobi Fairley

That is what you're basing your worthiness on, and anything outside of you, including a success or a failure, as the litmus test for your worthiness is a terrible idea. We've trained ourselves to beat ourselves up if we fail and make it mean something about us. We're stupid, we're incompetent, we should never have tried this to begin with. I knew I was bad at finances. I knew nobody wanted to hear from me. I knew this wouldn't work.

If we fail, we don't think, "That was amazing." Well, at least not until we train ourselves to think so, right? We could be thinking every single time, "I took action, and yeah, it didn't work out just the way I thought yet, but it will because now I know the first next steps to go further in the right direction to get to where I want to land, the destination."

The way to \$4,000 or \$40,000 or \$40 million from a client, and me, you, and everybody else, is through the \$7,500 result when she had wanted \$20,000. Do you see that? Because most importantly, we have to work on ourselves. The circumstance of \$7,500 is neutral. It's not good or bad until she makes it so.

As we said, had she wanted \$3,500, \$7,500 is amazing. When she wanted \$20,000, \$7,500 was disappointing, it was dismal, and it was not worth doing again for her. But when we do the work on ourselves, when we're willing to feel disappointment or fear or nervousness or anxiety without making it mean anything about us, without making it mean we're stupid or incapable or incompetent, or, here's a big one, without making it mean that you wasted time or money.

That time and money are neither one wasted. They are required to get to your goals and dreams. It doesn't mean anything except you're doing it right when you fail at a worthy fail. My mentor, Brooke, is working on making \$100 million a year within 10 years, and I think she's two or three years in.

I'm working on making \$10 million a year within the next three years. You better believe, both of us have to be willing to fail a lot at worthy fails, daily,

multiple times daily, to ever reach those goals. And success is not a straight line.

As I told my client, that her path would most likely look something like this: Make 20K on her original launch, then make \$7,500 on Black Friday, then maybe go back up to \$22,000 or \$18,000 the next time. And then probably back to \$15,000, and then maybe even back down to \$4,000 one time. And then maybe \$30,000 the next time.

And then some other number in between for the next one, all the way up to when she makes \$60,000. And then when she makes \$100,000. And then when she makes whatever number she decides to be willing to make by going through worthy fail, after worthy fail, after worthy fail.

The goal is not to have a straight line to success. The goal is to have a willingness every single time to learn something that ultimately has your success trending up over a period of time. You have to learn something major every time, whether it's a success or a failure. We're going to learn way more in the "failures" that are going to catapult us to the next level.

And over time, over a year, or 2 years, or 3 years, or 10 years, our numbers should trend up on average, across a lot of launches or a lot of actions. Then, we can see we're going in the right direction, but it is going to be the squiggliest line with highs and lows. It is not straight. It is never straight. It never will be straight.

And you can't measure your worthiness based on every launch or every month, or every day, but rather taking a snapshot over that year, or 24 months, or 10 years, and seeing did we keep growing, did we keep going in the right direction.

Friends, if we are trying worthy fails, we are for sure going to come up short sometimes, and most likely a lot of times. We're going to have months where we sell nothing. We're going to have months where we sign no new clients. We're going to have months when we host webinars that not a single person shows up to.

We're going to fall short of our desired expectations that we pulled out of the air, or even that we didn't, even that we based on information that we learned from, we're still going to fall short at times, a lot of the time. And then what are we going to do about it?

The important part is that we gave it our all and that we didn't quit ahead of time by not even trying. But we also didn't quit afterwards because we didn't meet an arbitrary, or even not arbitrary, number that we had hoped for in our heads, or that we had hoped for as a team.

You are not your successes and failures. Do you hear that? You are neither of them. In fact, I heard years ago to throw out the biggest raving compliments and successes and throw out the worst criticisms and failures because neither of them are the truth and they don't serve you.

If you're getting your worth from gold stars, you're trying to avoid failures, most likely, in the process. And you're also avoiding taking risks, so you don't have to feel bad when you do fail. And if you're doing that, you're going to stay stuck right where you are for the rest of your life, if you're lucky, because, most likely you'll actually go backwards.

Right now at my company we're doing what is called the impossible goal approach to reaching a new failure tolerance as a team. It's actually, as I mentioned earlier, my required project to complete my Master Coach training through the Life Coach School. I'm super glad that this is my project.

In fact, I tried two or three ways myself to get around this project because I didn't want to do it, because I knew it would feel uncomfortable. Just like you guys, I didn't want to fail either. But my instructors were onto me, and they knew that I was already pretty good at failing myself. I had built up my failure tolerance pretty well.

How did they know that? Well, because they could look at the results I had created in my life. I have a pretty high level of financial success. I've built two seven-figure businesses, meaning million-dollar businesses or more,

and my design business and my consulting business have both hit seven figures.

They could see that clearly I at least had a certain level of failure tolerance or I wouldn't have been able to get there. That level of achievement meant that I had been willing to fail, at least to the extent required to hit those particular results. But what they also knew, because I shared it with them, was that I seem to max out at a certain level, which is typically between \$1.2 million and \$2 million a year in revenues.

There was one year back in, I don't know, '09 or something, that I hit \$2.6 million or \$2.8 million, but I think that's an outlier. There's some other years that I hit \$1 million or \$1.2 million, a little bit outlier, but I typically range between that \$1.5 million or \$2 million a year with my companies.

So, what we determined about me, thankfully -- trust me, I'm super thankful for this, is that I'm pretty willing to fail myself at something, and I'm willing to take risks. The reason why is because I trust myself to be willing to get the feedback and learn from it, and put it into immediate action to go the next step.

In fact, I love this work. I'm really good at it. Bring on a failure, I don't think of it as a failure, I think of it as a success or a learning opportunity. I get just giddy sometimes about learning from things that happen and using it to go to the next level. The work wasn't all on me.

Now, there is still work to be done, because if there wasn't, I would already be at \$10 million, so I do have some failure tolerance myself to work on. But what we determined about me is that I'm less likely to let my team fail. So for me, I'm a learner, I'm a student of my own business and its successes and failures when I'm depending on myself, which, unfortunately, look a lot like hustle energy.

And it's very tiring. I get fatigued carrying the weight of that all by myself.

And the only way to grow and scale to the type and size of business that I

dream about is to be willing to let other people fail. Yeah, I'm willing to, but however, there's a but there, but I'm not so willing to let other people fail.

I'm really good at letting them try some things, and then when I see it's not working, I swoop in like Wonder Woman, save the day, and then go back to my work. But that is a problem. It takes me away from my own zone of genius and it never lets my team learn and grow to the level that they could really help me scale this business.

Plus, get all their own benefits and growth and rewards from increasing their own failure tolerance. So, when we realized I was not good at letting my team fail, which is precisely the reason that I haven't consistently made multiple seven figures or eight figures, meaning \$10 million in my business, and since \$10 million is where I want to go next, we knew the work that I had to do.

So, the work for me is to be willing to have worthy fails myself and be willing for all of my team members to have worthy fails in an effort to scale this business to \$3 million a year this year, and to \$10 million in the next three years. Not \$10 million total, but within three years be making \$10 million a year.

Yikes, right? Not just let me fail, but let them fail too. And so, my team right now is each working on this as a project. And the way we're approaching it is each team member had to come up with 25 worthy fails that they were willing to do in this next quarter, in this next 90 days, on the way to our collective goal of \$3 million a year in revenues, which is terrifying for a lot of them.

Talk about being scared, they're like, "I haven't ever even made six figures," a lot of them personally, or at least not multiple six figures personally. I sure haven't created a \$3 million business." But they're not doing it alone, right? We're doing it as a team, so they're terrified but they're also very excited.

The shift that I see in them already, in just the past two weeks that we've been doing this work, is remarkable. They are taking ownership like never before. They're shifting out of just being a lot of taskmasters that are drawing a line through the items on their to-do list, and moving into ownership of getting these results that we're collectively trying to get of \$3 million as a company.

They're getting very specific on where they can affect change in our company, and affect our revenues, and how they need to show up to do that. Where they need to dial in their efficiencies and their schedule like never before. And what they need to stop doing. And a lot of them know now that what they have to stop doing is being people-pleasers, being yeswomen.

It's mostly women on my team. I think we're all women right now. And that they have to stop getting their worthiness from me. One of the requirements of this project is that I can't swoop in and save them. When one of their worthy actions becomes a worthy fail, they have to feel the failure.

They have to admit to the team the failure, we have to go through that process. We all have to do it. Trust me, it's not like this one person is going to fail and everybody else is going to not. If they're not failing, I know they're doing it wrong. If they're not failing, I know they didn't have worthy actions, 25 worthy actions that were big enough, right?

You've heard if your dreams aren't big enough. And the way we know if they're not is if everything is going perfectly all the time. And I'm not allowed to tell them what to do even. I can come up with the big vision for the company and where we want to go, and even what roles they play.

But in the day to day, they have to come up with the plan, and put it together, and ask me questions, and then present to me what they will do to help us collectively reach our company goal. They have to dig deep and do the hard work, and they have to be willing for me not to be pleased with them at times or even all the time.

It doesn't mean I'm mad at them, because I have way more compassion now that we're going through this, but there will also be uncomfortable times when they're admitting they tried something and it didn't work, and it cost money, or it cost time, or it cost us some level of embarrassment. We did something wrong with a client or something else. It's going to happen.

But they have to disconnect their worthiness from Tobi gold stars, and instead know that one, they're already worthy just for being alive. Number two, the way to be worthy in this company is to be willing to try and fail. And what that looks like is on the path to success, they're willing to try, then fail, then learn, then get up immediately and try again.

And it hasn't all been pretty, y'all. There have been tears and fears. A team member said she was so mad at me for making her post her list and all of her information about her fails in front of the whole team. That feels vulnerable. It feels like you could be judged.

She was kind of okay with me seeing parts of it, but seriously, you want me to put all the parts, and all my thoughts, and answer all the questions you asked me, and post it for everyone to see? And that's what's going to happen. She's supposed to be mad at me until she works through her feelings of being mad and sees what she's afraid of.

We even had one team member quit already, which is exactly what it should look like. Each person has to decide if they are willing to feel their feelings through this growth, and to raise their failure tolerance. And if they aren't, then they won't make it. They will quit.

I told them, the only way to get fired from this company is to not try. And many of them then said, "That's so refreshing. It feels like a relief." In so many ways it's a relief because they're not expected to be perfect. They're now allowed to be imperfect by me and them. We're both allowing them to be imperfect while attempting worthy fails.

They're allowed to try things now and see what happens. And that is the culture that I want to create because it's also the culture that will equal \$10

million, and if I want it to, \$50 million and \$100 million one day. So, I want you to ask yourself today, where are you on the scale with failure tolerance?

Are you willing to fail? And I want you to look at all areas because some of you are willing to fail in some parts, but not in others. And how many times are you willing to fail? As many as it takes? Or will one failed attempt at meeting your arbitrary expectations stop you in your tracks?

Do you understand that the only thing that failure gives you is a feeling? And a feeling is just a vibration or a sensation in your body. It's just tense shoulders or butterflies or a tightness in your chest, but it's nothing else than that. It will not kill you.

And the only way it becomes more than that feeling in your body is when you make it mean something with your thoughts, and those are all optional. You can manage all your thoughts if you want to, if you're willing to fail. And you're going to have to if you want to increase your failure tolerance.

I have a mantra right now that I write down every day and I repeat it to myself multiple times a day, and it says this: The only way to an eight-figure business is allowing daily worthy fails by me and my team. And I say it multiple times a day, and I believe it. It is true for me. So, will you commit to worthy fails in your life? Because your dreams absolutely depend on it, my friend.

And I mean a lot of worthy fails. Not one or two. A lot. You can't try something once or twice and then think, "Surely by the third time we'll meet our goals and expectations." You may or you may not. And even more importantly, if you exceed your expectations early on, if you blow them out of the water, be careful not to expect that to mean that it will trend up all the time.

I remember years ago, I got on the cover of House Beautiful Magazine. It was now, actually, 10 years ago about right now. Somehow, I just expected that once I was in with House Beautiful that all my amazing projects would

be a yes. And the next one I submitted that was incredible was a no, and I was really shocked and irritated and sort of appalled.

Did those people not have taste? What the hell is wrong them? But there's so many things that go into whether something is a fit for a magazine, what else is in the issue. It wasn't that they said the project was bad or ugly, but who cares if they thought so, right? It was a worthy fail because I didn't let that stop me.

And I pitched it to another magazine, and it took me a year and a half or two years, but that project ended up on the cover of Traditional Home. Worthy fail, feedback, learn, try again, success. And there was another point in the middle where it was even a failure for Traditional Home because it was supposed to be in a certain issue and then it wasn't.

They pulled it, so I thought it wasn't going to go at all. But they came back and ran it later and I got the cover. So, an ultimate success, but so many painful failures in the middle. There were tears, there were anger, there were frustration, but I didn't stop, and that's exactly what I'm talking about. How many times are you really willing to fail?

The only way to a dream life is to be willing to take worthy action every day, forever, knowing that all of them might fail, and if they do you can absolutely handle the feelings that come with that, and you can learn from them. Some of those fails might be big and giant and might feel totally embarrassing.

You can survive all of that too because it's all part of the path to the ultimate success that you dream of. Are you in? Are you going to do it? Let's do this, friends. I hope you loved this 100<sup>th</sup> episode. It's a really important one to me. This is really the most important work, I believe, right now, that I've ever done for myself and my company.

I just am so excited to have brought you into this process with me. Okay? So, get ready for some worthy fails, tell me out on the internet what you think, if you're going to try, if you're terrified, let's do this together. And also

head over for another worthy action and enter to win our giveaway for one of our amazing Mindset gift boxes, because we're giving away three of them in celebration of this, our 100<sup>th</sup> episode.

You can do that by going to my Instagram and looking at my Instagram stories or my Instagram feed, and also you can do it by going to TobiFairley.com/podcast/100 because this is the 100<sup>th</sup> episode. Scroll down into the show notes and see the information on how to register. Okay?

Go out into the world and make some worthy, worthy actions and fails this week, friends. It is the way to your dreams. And I'll see you back right here next week with episode 101. 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.