

Ep #105: How to Dream Big Strategically with Jadah Sellner



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You are listening to *The Design You Podcast* with Tobi Fairley, episode number 105.

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's your host, Tobi Fairley.

Hey, friends, I have a beautiful gift for you today, and it is my interview with Jadah Sellner. When I recorded with Jadah last week, I knew I had to move some stuff out of the way that was on deck for you on the podcast and have her episode be the very next one. It is so, so important and timely for you right now as you go through all of the unknown and the chaos that we're dealing with the coronavirus.

Jadah is a beautiful spirit that helped me calm myself during the episode, and she just brought so much wisdom on what we should be doing right now in our businesses. She has ideas about homeschooling because she's done both things, built her business in a recession, and homeschooled her daughter for the last year and also worked from home. So, there's so much wisdom in this episode.

You may know of Jadah or heard of her because she was one of the cofounders of Simple Green Smoothies. She's been a serial entrepreneur actually, but with that particular company, she and her partner built a community of 355,000 email subscribers and 415,000 Instagram followers, so the real deal. So now, Jadah is the host of her own podcast, which is called Lead with Love. She's the creator of Love Over Metrics Incubator and a TEDx speaker refining the way we work and scale love in business.

So enjoy this episode. I know you will. I hope it just calms you, it brings a peace to you and about you like it did me, and really helps you get some perspective on where you can want to go next. Now, I'll see you at the end

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of the episode for a final wrap up, but enjoy this lovely interview with the kind Jadah Sellner.

Hey, Jadah. Welcome to *The Design You Podcast*. I'm really glad you're here right now in this moment because I just told you, I've got to chill the hell out from my busy day and meet you in your lovely energy that you're bringing to the table right now.

Jadah Sellner: Yeah, I think we all could use a deep pause and an exhale just during this current season. That this is an invitation for us that's a forced halt, and for us to just take that moment to just take a breath. Even with everyone here, we should all just pause and take a collective breath in this moment so that we can really arrive.

Tobi Fairley: That feels so much better.

Jadah Sellner: One of my favorite things that Oprah says, she talks about being full of yourself, and it's so good for us to be full of ourselves. So, when we explore pausing to take that deep inhale in is actually allowing us to call all of our energy back home because we're so swirly, and all over the place, and everyone needs everything from us.

So, just taking that moment to pause really just allows us to center, to connect to our heart, to calm our nervous systems and not be in fight or flight, but just to like, "Okay, I'm here. All of me is here." Just filling ourselves up with more of ourselves, I think, is so important right now.

Tobi Fairley: I love that, and I love the fact that I'm not panicked right now in this moment about the circumstance and what's going on. I think this will roll out in a couple of weeks, but when we're recording this, we're at the end of March. We're right in the middle of what's really just unfolding.

So, it's not like I need to chill out from my fear, it's that I think what you just said was so beautiful, and I am going to let you introduce yourself in a

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minute to our audience. We just jumped right in. But what I think is so beautiful about what you said is I think I jumped right in and almost came to the service in supportive of my community four or five days ago, and I feel like I've just been pouring myself out on everybody else, which has been beautiful, and it feels so good and so abundant, but I love what you just said.

In that very moment when I was feeling a little anxious and depleted, that big, deep breath of calling myself completely back in for a minute, those were the perfect words. So, thank you for that because I had a good visual of what that really looked like.

Jadah Sellner: Yeah. Yeah.

Tobi Fairley: Awesome. Okay. So, besides the fact that you're going to just make me feel amazing just because your soothing voice for the next little bit, which I love, and you're beautiful, and I'm getting to see just how calm, and smiling, and happy you are, which is so good.

Tell everybody with words, since they can't see you, who are you? In case they don't know you, they weren't watching the amazing business you built, and then sold, and all of the amazing things that are Jadah Sellner, tell them the version of what they need to know about you before we go to our chat.

Jadah Sellner: Yeah. So, I'm a business mentor and a community growth strategist. I'm a community builder at heart, so I've been an entrepreneur for over 11 years. Actually, my first business that I built was a brick and mortar business in the beginning of 2009, which was right when the economy crashed in 2008, and actually creating a business because nobody was hiring. Everyone was firing and letting go of people.

So, I think it's such an interesting place where we are right now. I'm super excited to dive in more of how we can be resilient, and resourceful, and innovative during these times when it feels like things are rapidly changing,

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and we have to create our own economy during this time. My husband and I, we had that business. We built it when my daughter was 18 months old. Really, just having a deep desire to build a business with my daughter by my side.

That was really the big reason for that. In 2011, we closed down that business, moved to California, from Hawaii to California. I still wanted to be an entrepreneur, but I wanted more flexibility in my work and where and when I worked. So, really building an online business, and in that time, I built a parenting blog that never made a single dollar. It actually just took all the money. It was negative profit. There was no profit. We were in the red.

But from that, it was a true playground to build something from something that changed my own life personally, which was drinking green smoothies. I had lost 27 pounds in three months from just drinking one green smoothie a day, getting my daughter to drink them, and it became a business without that being the intentional business to build.

My business partner and friend, Jen Hansard and I, we built Simple Green Smoothies where we grew our community to over 400,000 followers on Instagram, 300,000 fans on Facebook, and an email list of 355,000 email subscribers. We did that without any paid advertising. I was \$42,000 in credit card debt. My husband, we were just trying to build during nap times and bedtimes. I'm like, "You're home. Let me work on the business in the middle of the night."

In that, we were able to build a business, a successful business, where my husband was able to quit his 9:00 to 5:00 job and to build his own business on the side. I can share more numbers and metrics from that, but I think the biggest takeaway from building that company was focusing on building community first and focusing on loving up on our people, and my heart in that moment, I feel like I'm a walking billboard for good.

So, when I have something that works for me, whether it's drinking one green smoothie a day or building a business where my husband can leave

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his 9:00 to 5:00 and we can travel the world with our family, I want other people to learn how to do that too. So, my heart felt really called to go into mentoring other female founders and small business owners to do that. In 2016, it was the hardest decision of my life, but I actually sold my half of Simple Green Smoothies to my business partner, exited that while we were in the middle of a second book deal.

Money was on the table and everything, and I wrote the book proposal, and I walked away from it because I think it's really important to make decisions from our heart even if it doesn't make sense on paper. So, I've been building my consulting company and supporting other female business owners to really grow without compromising their health and relationships in the process.

Tobi Fairley: That is so incredible how aligned it is with what is happening right now. Of course, I don't think anything happens by accident. You and I were supposed to record this podcast back in November, and we would have still had an amazing podcast. Yet now, we can bring you the person who has built businesses through recessions, built businesses online, built businesses by loving on their audience, which gosh, do our audiences ever need love right now.

It gives me chills right now that you're here because you're supposed to be here right in this moment having this conversation with me, and every word, I know, that we're going to say today is going to give so much value to people who are finding themselves right in that same type of place right now. Not by choice, but still it's the same difference.

You chose that for your family. They may not be choosing this in a lot of ways, but a lot of people are going to lose their jobs and decide that they want to build a business right now. This is my opportunity, and there is so much opportunity still right now. So, I love that you're here to talk about that, and we're also going to talk about, we hope, if we have time because you do that too.

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We're going to talk about all that, but let's just go right to what you said, kind of the elephant in the room is because we started this conversation before we started recording going, well, you can't do a podcast in the middle of this pandemic and be business as usual. There is no going back from a week ago or two weeks ago knowing what we know now.

So, it is the elephant in the room, and I think everybody is so uncomfortable with what to do next, and everybody is trying to do the right thing, which there's no such thing really. There's only the right thing for them, but there is not one right answer. So, let's talk about that. I'm sure it involves so many of the same principles you were using back in the last recession when you were like, "How do I do this? How do I build a business in a recession?" So, where would you take us with this elephant in the room, calling it out? Where do we go?

Jadah Sellner: Yeah, I think a huge part is we're so hungry right now for connection, and it's going to double down even more and more, and getting really creative, and being able to lean into innovation, but I think the big piece around community and connection is actually going back to the basics of marketing 101.

So, whether you're building a business online for the first time, or you have a business and you're like, "Should I even be launching, or how do I pivot, or do I pause, or do I move forward? How do I not be insensitive?" It really comes back to connecting to your audience and serving your community. What are your biggest challenges when it comes to eating healthy right now? That would be an example if you're in the health space.

Or for the design community, interior decorating. What is your biggest struggle right now when it comes to your home and your environment? Everyone is decluttering and purging their homes. I just recently texted my mom who lives in Hawaii. We'll text back and forth just little interior decorating upgrades in the home, and I was just like, "I'm so thankful for all of the updates and upgrades that we've made in our home because I feel so cozy and warm, and I'm not looking at any eyesores in my home."

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So, if you're hunkered down in home right now, people, they have different needs than they had a few months ago. So, tuning back into your audience and asking them what are they struggling with, how can you be of service and be the most helpful based on just what's going on right now because then we can start to learn what are those top things.

An example for one of my clients who's a food blogger. She surveyed her audience, and they said, "How do I make meals for my family with staple pantry items?" That wasn't top of mind before, but now it is. So, now she can put out content that is actually really valuable for her audience based on what is top of mind for them right now.

Number one thing I would do for your business right now is connect with your community, and survey them, and ask them, "What are the big challenges right now? How can I be of service?" In that, we can start to use that language. We can start to create resources. Not free. Everyone starts to go on a free spree.

Tobi Fairley: Free spree, I love it.

Jadah Sellner: That we can make stuff of value and still charge during this time because being an entrepreneur, we keep the economy circulating. We're the ones that kept things alive and breathing because if we're able to sustain ourselves when maybe other employees can't right now, this is a time for us that we can keep circulating that money so that we can buy gift cards for our massage therapist or our favorite local restaurant.

So, we can't freeze, and just stop, and not create anymore. We just have to get extra creative and innovative during this time to speak to what's top of mind right now. Just really deeply connecting to your audience. Don't ignore the elephant in the room that we keep talking about.

Tobi Fairley: Yeah, I agree with you completely. That's what I'm saying to my community too. I'm like, "Meet people where they are," and we always needed to meet them where they are, but where they are now is a different

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place than where they were two weeks ago, is what you're saying. I agree with you completely, and I think there's so much there.

It's funny because in a sense, we get ourselves so stuck with our thinking because we felt like we were moving away from maybe some of the hoping to maybe not do some of the little small things that may seem so insignificant to the value we can bring to the world right now, except the value of those things just went through the roof.

Before, we were like, "Oh, but I can do these amazing, beautiful designs for an entire home from the ground up," and we're like, "Yeah, but today, people just need to all be able to not leave their house, not kill each other, and actually get work done and come out of this alive, essentially." Not just alive from hopefully not getting the virus, but not having, oh, I don't know what you would you call it, like shrapnel like a warzone, even in your relationships, in your family, in your home, in your mind.

So, I think it's so interesting. We have to shift our beliefs because if we're like, "Ugh, now I have to dumb myself down to do this little thing." We're not going to be meeting people where they are. We've got to also believe that everything we can do is valuable, I think, at the highest level. Does that make sense?

Jadah Sellner: Absolutely. My husband, he has an early childhood music program that is completely in-person based with families five and under. The families aren't five and under. The children are five and under. He loves that energy and just being in the same shared space, and when that's not an opportunity, now we have these new constraints.

I believe that creativity is actually heightened when we have constraints. So, based on what we have right now, how do we pivot the model, or how do we continue to serve our audience? So, he's exploring Zoom for the first time. For me, I've built online businesses and have generated seven figures in revenue with creating online digital products, and he's been so

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resistant. But now, with this new challenge, or we can look at it as an obstacle, or we can look at it as an opportunity to try something differently.

Sometimes it's like, oh, well, this is just redirecting us to try something that we were afraid to try before, and now you really have no option but to lean into that discomfort of thinking, "This isn't going to work. It's not going to translate the same." But now we have to think from this place, "Well, how can we bring that magic and connection that we do have in person?" My friend Jen Ken says, "IRL, in real life, versus URL, like online."

So, how can we translate some of that stuff that we do in person and bring that magic online? Because right now, we're digitally communicating, and connecting, and having a conversation. There's such power in the technology that we have today that we didn't have before. So, really, looking at it as an opportunity versus an obstacle.

Tobi Fairley: Yes, I agree with you completely. I think it's the difference in some of us, we're willing to choose to run and jump off the cliff on our own. In the past, you did, I have, already working from home for three or four years now building an online business. I really feel, right now, I'm looking at you, it's almost like we're in the same room together. I feel connected to you as if I could reach out and touch you.

Yet people who haven't chosen to make those leaps all of a sudden feel like someone came and pushed them off the cliff. So, I think the difference is when you leap, you feel like you're in control of it, and when someone pushes you, you feel like you're forced.

I think you have to recalibrate a little bit and say, "Well, yeah, I might not have chosen this, but actually, in a lot of ways, this could be the best thing that ever happened for me in my business because I was getting in my own way, but I just have to like recalibrate my thinking and say, 'Okay, well, I might not have done this on my own, but here's where we are.'"

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That's kind of what you were saying about your husband. Here's where we are. What are we going to do about it so that the options are not quit and quit, but it's like, "Okay, let's thrive." Let's make this not only good enough, but incredible because that's absolutely an option available to us if we want to go there with whatever we're creating. Right?

Jadah Sellner: Yeah, absolutely.

Tobi Fairley: I love that. Well, your husband is right where so many interior designers work because they're like, "You want me to pick a paint color and not be standing in someone's room next to their drapes in that exact lighting that comes in at 5:00 in the afternoon to make sure that it does match?" I'm like, "Yes, it will be fine. It still will work, I promise you. They can stand by the drapes at 5:00 and take a picture, and show you what it looks like at every time of day."

Jadah Sellner: And measurements, measuring the room and being able to sketch things out. I would even, for those who are concerned and hesitant that it won't work or it won't translate, is to gift X amount of people a free online consultation because sometimes if we don't believe in the value or the transformation on the other side, if we don't have the confidence, then we're not going to be able to market and sell in a way of integrity.

So, my invitation for you is go ahead and offer. Don't stay on the free spree train, but go ahead and do some free ones to build that confidence to be like, "Oh, same results, same feeling, transformation," to build that confidence from within. I told my husband like, "Okay, just do a test. Zoom, invite some of your family, friends who have kids that are under five, and just test it on Zoom so you can start to build that confidence and maybe not charge yet as you're figuring and navigating things out."

I think as women, we can tend to have that imposter syndrome. So, when we get caught in that, it can hold us back from serving our audience in a way that would actually get them the transformation and results that they desire. So, if you need to, pick three or five. I'm doing five free online

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consultations for the first time. My invitation for you is the tradeoff would be that I ask for a testimonial. I want you to take before photos, I want you to take after photos, and document. So, now you have this proof of concept and also, now you have testimonials.

Tobi Fairley: I love it. I think that it doesn't even mean going out onto your Instagram and say, "I'm doing these for free, which can devalue it potentially." You don't want to go, like you said, on the free spree. You could literally pick three people that you know will actually follow through, and do the whole thing, and do it correctly. Or maybe somebody you've worked with in the past in person, but now, they want to do their guest room, and you're like, "Let's do it this way."

I agree with you so much because of all the people that need to believe in our product, it's us. So often, we're the ones who don't. The client would believe, but we don't ever put it out there at the level that they can believe because we're not even convinced of it yet, and I think that's so important. I love what you're saying. So, take us to this place. You said that your superpowers are creativity, and is it connection and innovation?

Tell us about that because you said it's the perfect time to bring these super powers to life right now with what we're dealing with because it's all about not only understanding the short run and panic mode that we're all in right now, but we also want to go back up to the 40,000 foot view and get a perspective of where we're going to want to be six weeks from now, six months from now, 12 months from now. A lot of times, we can't really get perspective on that when we're in the midst of the fear, and the trauma, and the things we're feeling right now.

Jadah Sellner: Yes, and I think permission to respond when we have trauma, or shock, or surprise. We're going to react from that place of that fight or flight. So, no judgment or criticism. If you're hold up undercovers right now, that's totally fine. If you're a freezer, I'm actually a freezer. I pause and just observe what's going on without contributing, or saying, or making, or creating. Some people are more fight, keeping themselves

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busy. Well, what can I do? How can I serve. How can I help? Neither path is wrong.

I just want everyone to know wherever, however you've responded, that is completely okay. Having that compassion, and space, and grace for yourself, and then what I think is really important, something that I do with my own clients, is we do quarterly planning, like strategic, big picture thinking where we are dreaming, and ideating, and just coming up with new ideas based on what's the current reality right now.

That would be my invitation for anyone else right now who just feels a little bit frazzled, directionless, overwhelmed. The thing that you're needing the most right now is clarity and focus. Right now, our energy and our attention is very fragmented and all over the place. We're like, "There's this free thing over there. I could enroll in Harvard University for the next few weeks." Do I want to get improve my health? Do I want to be a cook now?

There's so many things that are calling us forward that maybe we hadn't looked at before, or do I want to pour that time into building and growing my business during this time, and looking at the big picture of working on your business instead of in it? This is an opportunity to actually, it's a forced pause, and let's receive that forced pause as a moment to actually take a step back and reassess what's going on because now, we do have to be creative.

We have to find ways to connect with our audience and also innovate. Businesses need to be always innovating, but so many people get caught in the hamster wheel of just constantly creating content or constantly putting out fires, really, the urgent things, but right now, you have an opportunity to take a step back to take that breath, that deep inhale and that exhale, and get really clear on what do I really want right now, and how do I want to serve my audience moving forward based on the new circumstances that are here?

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So, that is my invitation. To lean into innovation of brainstorming. My friend Nikki Elledge Brown, she says brain sneeze. So, start to just actually pull out a blank piece of white paper and set a timer for 5 minutes, 10 minutes. Put some instrumental music on and just start thinking about, "Wouldn't it be cool if this existed?"

Start to think about ideas that maybe you hadn't thought about for your business before, and just allow all of those ideas to just come out of your head and onto paper, so they're just not swimming around. Then what I like to do after that with my clients when we're doing our strategic planning is looking at everything that's on that piece of paper. I would want you to put a three next to it if you want to do it in three years and beyond.

If you see something that you're like, "I want to do this in the next two years," and then things that you want to do in the next one year. So, like, "I would like to try this on over the next months," and just putting a three, a two, a one next to all of these ideas that are swimming in your head. Then you can start to look at those ones as possibilities of things that you can experiment and do projects on right now.

Maybe it's about focusing on building your email list right now, and really building up that community and that connection, and building your voice on how you want to connect with your audience. Or maybe it's creating an online product that didn't exist before, or being able to do those online consultations. So, start to give yourself space to dream big and see what's possible over the next couple of years for you to create, and then start to get more and more focused.

"Okay, great. What do I want to do in the next year?" Then, "Okay, great. What do I want to experiment with in the next 90 days?" But we need to dream big first and have all the ideas to look at in front of us, and then we can start to get more focused and clear on what it is that we want and why we want it.

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Tobi Fairley: I love that so much. I so agree with you. Definitely, I do this regularly, but as you're saying it, even though I may have just done this in January, we have a completely different situation right now. It's completely different circumstance. So, it's okay to sit down and just make sure that you don't want to change something, that you don't want to let some things go, that you don't want to move some things back.

I also think, as you're saying that, what was coming to my mind is that I think what I see stopping most people from being willing to do that right now would be two things. One, their fear of worst case scenario in the world. So, they're constantly refreshing their screen every 30 seconds because they're addicted to, "I got to know. I got to know. I got to know," with the news.

Then the other piece of it is they're so afraid of their current money situation, especially people who are small business owners. I know because you've built two or three businesses already, you have to have been there. I've been there where we're building business, and we're like, "I don't have any money right now, or I'm seeing that I have just a little bit of money, but not necessarily enough to get through the next two or three months."

What would you suggest people do either to generate some money in the short run, or at least for this moment to dream big, which might lead them to what's going to generate that money? How do we sit those fears aside for a second and get in touch with this? Because I think otherwise, they're blocking us from going to this level of dreaming and connecting.

It seems almost frivolous and irresponsible to go do that exercise when our brain is screaming that end times are here, and it feels like survival mode, and we're like, "And now you want me to drop into this serene place and dream about a possibility that what if we're not even here 12 months from now?" Of course, at any given moment, three weeks ago, we also might not have been here 12 months from now, but that wasn't top of mind at that moment. Right?

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Jadah Sellner: Yeah. So, there's a couple of things that come up around that. One is being able to take the attention off of ourselves even for just a moment can really, really shift that energy. Obviously, we need to be responsible when we have families to take care of. That's always been in my mind.

Every pivot I've ever made in my business is like, "I can't do what that other person can do and just leap, and the net will appear. I actually have to be really smart and strategic on how I pivot and transition because I still have a family that I need to make sure that they eat and have a roof over their heads."

So, I just want to share my compassion and deep understanding of those moments of needing to take care of needs, of being in that survival mode. But the invitation is really to think about a practice of gratitude right now. There's so much that might have been taken from under you right now, but what do you have? What can you be grateful for in this moment?

I remember this so clearly when we were rebuilding. We were in our living room. I was hugging my husband and just feeling really overwhelmed. I thought I was going to make six figures in six months. That didn't happen. We had to move out of an apartment that increased rent, all of these things. He was so frustrated with just money and all of these things, and I said, "I need more time."

So, also asking the people around you to support and having just a little bit more time to create. I was just like, "I need your bad juju out of the way." I was like, "We always have a roof over our head. Somehow, we're able to get groceries in the fridge. We have to focus on what we have. We are always provided for."

If you can remember like, "I am always provided for," and prove to yourself over times when there has been lack or scarcity in your life, that you were able to move through it. You might need to lean on a past experience of when things were hard and thinking about, "What am I grateful for? What is

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right here in front of me right now?” Because we cannot create or innovate from a place of lack and scarcity.

Tobi Fairley: Exactly. I think what I'm learning in this moment, because even though you may not find yourself in an actual place of actual financial lack at this moment, it's very easy to fall back into some of those old fears and patterns. For me, if I'm not careful, I can immediately conjure up the feelings of when I did feel like I literally don't know how we're going to pay the bills or whatever.

So, I think that for me, not only leaning on what I learned in those other times and that I survived, but also using them as a learning experience to not put myself through some of that suffering, and see, “You survived any way, but you created some extra pain and suffering with your thinking back then.” It's kind of like, what do they say, I can't remember the main line of it, but basically, the kind of punchline is, but the suffering is optional. It's kind of like we've got to move through this anyway. The actions have to happen, but the suffering is optional. I think that that's one of the lessons that's coming to my mind because I can look back during those other moments. I built my whole business right out of the recession too. I blew up my business 10 years after the recession in the best sort of way and really became the first version of my business was going to be later. But I think now, when those feelings of fear come up, you can acknowledge them and understand why they're there, but then decide that some of those things are optional because as long as, I think, we're staying in them, we shut down the creativity, the connection, and the innovation just like you said.

Jadah Sellner: There was a TED Talk that I watched. I can't remember the person's name. I'll have to look it up. She talked about the worry and the anxiety. If there was those fears that would come up, she would schedule a day and a time like, “Friday at 10:00 a.m., I can worry, I can do whatever. I'm going to park it over there so I have permission to feel all the feelings, to feel all the fear, the worry, the anxiety, stressing out, complaining. That's going to happen on Friday at 10:00 a.m. Until then, I'm just going to act as

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if I have an opportunity to revisit that later because fear and that anxious energy, we can't create from that place.” That's the thing that I think both of us are saying. We've got to pause it for a moment so we can lead from generosity and service. Right now, if you have more time than money, this is a great time to use that to learn and create something of value for your audience.

Tobi Fairley: So, so, so good. Oh, my gosh. Oh, homeschooling. That's what we have to talk about. I was about to say, “Anything else that you want to tell everybody before we go?” But we've got to talk about homeschooling because the beautiful thing is we've been talking about business, and we're like, “Okay, well, we both chose to leap off the cliff of online businesses and working from home prior to being forced to.”

So, we have a little bit of perspective on it, and we're telling you it's going to be okay, and it's going to actually be probably, if you lean into it, one of the most fun and exciting things that's ever happened to you in a lot of ways. Not that it won't be scary, but a lot of people are feeling that way about homeschooling right now, and I can't speak to it.

But you're like, “We've been homeschooling our daughter. I haven't just been running an online business at home, and I didn't just build one in the recession. I also have been homeschooling my daughter.” So, what do people need to know that are all equally freaking out? That's number three, right? They're like, “Am I going to live. Am I going to have any money? And what in the world do I do with my child that's now at home?”

Jadah Sellner: Yes. So, I've built all my businesses with my daughter by my side, and it's a huge gift, and also sometimes a distraction. I think we have to also embrace the reality of the situation, and being able to build in the blocks of time that you have. Coming up with agreements on schedules, and also stuff is going to not always follow plan. One day, your kids will follow the schedule. The next day, they might rebel. So, just being open to that.

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I remember if I was on a call, I'd be giving my daughter popcorn. Like, "Go get the popcorn," or Netflix, or whatever it is. You have to do whatever you can in those moments. So, in the beginning stages, we have to be willing for it to be messy and imperfect, and to be really compassionate with ourselves because moms who did not choose the path to have their kids at home learning are feeling like they have to be a professional expert teacher in the next 48 hours.

It's really everything is an experiment, and that's really how we leaned into homeschool because I felt like I've always been on call for homeschool, and my daughter is like, "No, I love my teacher." I'm like, "Are you sure?" Then finally, she's like, "I'm ready to try homeschooling." I felt like the boy who cried wolf. I was like, "Oh, wait. That is going to disrupt our entire flow." My husband runs his own business. I run my own business. I was like, "This is an experiment."

So, really embracing it as an experiment with your kids being home. I actually really incorporated an entrepreneurial approach to homeschooling. At the end of each week, no matter how off the wall that week was, I would ask what worked this week? I'd ask my daughter, I'd ask my husband, I'd ask myself what didn't work this week, and what might we do differently next week?

That's something that you do as a review when you're doing quarterly or annual planning in your business, but if we get to look at that even from how we are with our family and creating these new family rhythms. My husband could say like, "It didn't work to try to do P.E. at 10 o'clock in the morning. I actually need to do it at 2:00 p.m. because he's her P.E. teacher. So, really just making those adjustments.

I had my daughter write out what she would want her schedule to be. What I thought was fascinating is when she wrote out her ideal schedule, she was really just recreating her schedule from her school. So, I said, "I want you to not think about the schedule at school, and I want you to just if you could wave a magic wand, what would that be?"

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Sometimes we have to push ourselves to be a little bit more innovative and think outside the box because we don't need to recreate school at home. It's a completely different environment. Our kids could sleep a little longer, which boosts their immune system. They can work in their pajamas. They can snack while they're reading a book. So, being able to just also be open that we don't have to recreate how school is in the school system, but we can actually create something that's a little bit different at home, which actually makes it more fun and engaging for them. So, coming up with a base schedule based on that.

Then I was like, "Okay, but based on school and core curriculum or whatever those pieces," then we found a sweet spot, and then we made adjustments week by week because my daughter was literally every day, she wanted to go through all six subjects in a day because that's what you do at school. Then I was like, "Oh, what if we tried to just do two subjects a day and go deeper in those instead of trying to do piece, piece, piece, piece as quickly as possible?"

That's something that's really worked for us. There are amazing online resources for learning on homeschool. I'm happy to share those, but also, I didn't want my daughter to be online all the time. So, also finding ways of how can you have learning curriculum that works for them? I tried on different math things that worked for her.

There's this comic book that's called Beast Academy, and it's a comic book doing math. I'm like, "Oh, my gosh. My daughter is going to love this. She loves comics, and reading comics, and drawing," and she didn't like it. Then there was this other one that's called Life of Fred, and it's about this little kid who's a genius, and it goes from adding up apples and oranges all the way to trigonometry, and it's story-based, and she loved the story. So, also just being willing to not get it right from the beginning.

We have to experiment, introduce things, see if it works, and if it doesn't, remove it and find something else to replace with it. I think really finding that schedule and rhythm, it's not going to be perfect. I know people have

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shared example schedules, but that might not work for your child or your family rhythm.

So, you actually really do use that as a base for inspiration, and then build on it, and improve it, and iterate each week of what actually works for our family, and how the kids are going to stay focused, and engaged, and not like, “Mommy, mommy,” every two seconds.

Tobi Fairley: I love it. There's so much about what you said that I loved. It's definitely the way I like to work. That was the thing. I love school. I have three degrees after high school. I have two bachelors and a masters, and then I've had other trainings. I love to learn, but there was so much when I was in school that I didn't like about the institutional feel and some of the structure. I mean, I like structure, but it just felt a lot of times forced upon me.

So, just you talking about the fact that we could be creative, and how we design our days essentially, and that that's possible for kids, and we can understand that, of course, there has to be a lot of structure when you've got 50 or several hundred people that you're trying to have. Fifty people in a class or hundreds of people at a school, of course you can't have as much freedom, but we have one, or two, or three children at home. Maybe some people have more. We can reinsert that freedom and that creativity to design it the way we want to. I love that.

I also love that when you were saying allow it to be messy and imperfect at first, that's the exact same advice I would also give about what we talked about before, which was the business. I was just talking to one of my private clients about this this morning, and I said, “It's so interesting how we're not willing to be bad at something until we're good at it so often.” I'm like, “But none of us are like, ‘Oh, I can just hop on a unicycle and write it down the street, or I could just pick up a violin and be Yo-Yo Ma or whatever.’”

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We don't expect on the first day in some things that we've decided are hard, but there's so many things like homeschooling our kids, or something about a business, or getting on Instagram, or whatever that we're like, "Oh, but I'm supposed to be really good at this the very first day."

I think that that causes so much problem for us, and so much anxiety, and angst, and suffering because it's like, "No, I'm supposed to be bad at it, and I will get good at it if I keep doing it." So, that's what you're saying. Be willing to fail your way to the success, whether it's homeschooling, or the business, or anything else.

Jadah Sellner: Yeah, there's these phases that I look at of when we learn. So, there's the education part where we're actually taking information in and consuming as much content as we can. Then we move into experimentation where we actually go out, and try it, and be super messy. Then we go out again. Now, we have the education and the experience together, and now, we can start to move from a place of embodied learning because we really don't know until we actually physically do it ourselves.

I'll share a quick story, an example, with you. My husband and I, we took our daughter and her friend to laser tag where you're shooting people with the lasers, and there were two sides. You're divided into two teams. So, one side where all the boys and 5th grade, and they do laser tag all the time. Then on the other side, our team, was all of the parents with the kids who are four years old. We were just like, what is it, the bad news bear side of the team, or the lady bugs from soccer.

So, we were being informed on how to play the game. They tell you the rules, there's a screen, it explains it to you. You put on your pack. We were all just so confused, even though we just learned everything. So, we go in, we do the laser tag. It's dark, our home base is getting shot up. We're getting shot up. We're like, "What do we do?" We're just scrambling all over the place.

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So, we go out, and we lost. Our team lost, and then we stepped outside to take a little breather before we went back in for our next round, and we started to strategize. We're like, "Okay. So, some of us have to get hit, but we have to protect someone who can shoot the other home base."

It was because we were in there. We were experimenting with that and actually in it. Now, we could start to strategize because we had played the game even though we played it awfully. So, the next time we go back in, same teams, same side, looks exactly the same, but this time, we had a strategy because we had experienced it.

So, we go back in, people are protecting each other, we're shooting up the home base. We know how to get points now, where before we didn't. We come out, we look at the score, and our team, the bad news bears team, we won, and it was because we experimented. We knew how to play the game even though we were terrible when we played it that first time.

We have to look at business. We have to look at homeschooling. All of those pieces is first, we're just taking information to learn it. Then we're going to experiment, and it's going to be so bad, and then when we can combine those two together, that's when we can come from that really embodied place of deep understanding of what works and what doesn't.

Tobi Fairley: That's so good. I think that's a perfect place for us to wrap up. Man, that's the perfect advice. The homeschooling, no matter what we're doing right now, we just have to be willing to be messy and imperfect knowing we're in the experiment phase or the learning phase, either one of them, but we're certainly not in the embodiment or the mastery phase. We're not there yet. We'll know when we're there, but until then, we can just release a lot of the pressure and just be in the moment, I think. That's such good advice.

Thank you. Thank you for joining us. I feel so much better. You changed my entire demeanor just in a 46-minute conversation. So, personally grateful to you, and I know that all of my listeners are going to be sending

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both you and I, and please do everyone, messages out on Instagram. So, if they want to do that and tell us how much this helped them and changed them, how do they reach you on Instagram or anywhere else, really? Where can they find you?

Jadah Sellner: Yeah, so I'm @jadahsellner, and that's on Instagram and Facebook. Those are my dance floors. Also finding anything that I'm up to online at jadahsellner.com, and if you love listening to podcasts, I have a podcast called *Lead With Love*, which we need you on.

Tobi Fairley: Yeah, I would love to. Yes, I'm there. Can't wait. Thank you, and thanks for being such a leader with love here for us because we definitely need it right now. Such a gift, and I'm just super grateful you were here. Thanks so much.

Jadah Sellner: Thank you.

Tobi Fairley: Right? A big breath of fresh air in every way, and just an excuse to pause for a minute. We've all been running so fast, whether physically like me helping lots of people, or in your mind running all the time, it's felt very frantic. I hope this is your excuse to just calm things down a bit because you absolutely have that as a choice.

So, if you want to know more about Jadah, check out our show notes, but especially reach out to her as she said, @jadahsellner on Instagram for sure. Her other social media spots too. Just let her know what you thought about this episode and how much it meant to you because it meant a whole heck of a lot to me. Thank you for being here, and I'll see you again with another episode next week of *The Design You Podcast*. Bye, for now.

Thank you so much for joining me for this episode of *The Design You Podcast*. 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, designyou@tobifairley.com.