

## Ep #115: Becoming Anti-Racist and Building an Anti-Racist Business



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Tobi Fairley**

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You are listening to the *Design You* podcast with Tobi Fairley, episode number 115.

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'm so glad you are here. I have something really important to talk to you about today. I am taking the first steps of becoming antiracist and building an antiracist business. And like anything that is important to me, I typically share with you what I'm doing, how I'm feeling, why I think it's important. And I usually show you my process and my learning curve and how you can learn from my mistakes and my successes to do the work in your own life, and that will come, but not today.

So don't misunderstand me, this particular podcast episode is not me teaching you my mistakes and successes, or positioning myself as an expert. I am at the very beginning of this process. I am a student; I'm in no position personally to tell you what to do to become antiracist. And here is also something I am not doing in this episode.

If you haven't started this work yet yourself you may not be familiar with the term, White-Centering. And I wasn't either until just a few days ago, but that is when a white person uses a situation that is not about them and makes it about them. So let me be super clear, this is not about me. This is about Black Lives Matter and this is about antiracism work and the remarkable and life changing teachers, experts and resources that I have discovered or been led to by others, and I want you to have them available to you too.

I can for sure share with you the resources I am studying and learning from. And I can share just a few steps that I'm starting to put into my life and business in case you want to start this journey with me. And if you do, I welcome you, come on. Now, let me also be clear, I believe that I am late to this work, and I believe I am behind. I am a very intelligent and educated woman with two college degrees and a master's degree.

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I have been in business 21 years, I am 48 years old and now I have done a little bit of work and reading in the past couple of years to wake-up to my white privilege, I am just starting the work of becoming antiracist. And now I believe I am late to this work. The truth is I didn't know it was work I needed to do, which is evidence of the white supremacy culture that I live in. But now I know and now I'm doing it.

If you are a black person or another person of color and you are shaking your head right now, thinking how, Tobi, how in the world did you not know? Trust me, after about 7-10 days of complete immersion in this work, I am shaking my head too. There is no excuse, and even if there were, I wouldn't accept one or allow one because I believe that the moment I blame, it prevents growth. And I am committed to a whole lot of growth in antiracism starting last week and continuing for the rest of my life.

To my white friends or others of you considering this work, let me tell you, it is not easy. It is not just reading a couple of books and you're done. It is hard, it is uncomfortable and it will challenge you in ways that you can't yet imagine. And as Layla Saad, the antiracist expert and author says, we won't get cookies or gold stars for this work. It's work that we should have already been doing.

But I believe if I want a better world then I have no option. Like several other things in my life this is now a non-negotiable for me. I am starting to see this work as the equivalent of a major course of study, like getting a doctorate in antiracism. And in the real history of black people in America, and indigenous people in America, and in social justice, it is going to be a lifetime of work and a lifetime of taking action. But knowing it will be hard is not a reason to be intimidated or afraid. I know I can do hard things, and I know you can too, that's why you're here.

In doing this work we will get it wrong sometimes, and we will fail at times, and we may feel fear, and shame, and guilt, and that is all part of this process. But most importantly, we will learn. If you listen to my podcast on project fail, you know all about how I believe in failing my way to success.

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It's the only way actually to get there. And this process of becoming antiracist will for sure involve failing to success too. The point of failing at something is to get feedback, and feedback is information that moves you forward.

This is not something to win or something to complete, it will never be complete, but this lifelong work, including our failures at, it will teach us so much and change us for the better.

And one of the books I've learned from already, *White Fragility*, the author talks about how she is an expert on white privilege, and she still fails at it regularly because she is white, and so will we.

So why am I telling you all of this? Well, there's two reasons. Number one, to hold myself accountable, I want you to know what I'm doing now and in the future so that you, my listeners and my community can hold me accountable. If I did this work in silent, I am perpetuating the problem. It must be visible, especially to the black community so they can know I'm an ally, an advocate, and a safe place for them. So I'll tell you more about what I hope you will hold me accountable for in just a second.

The second reason I'm telling you this is because I have a platform that is visible to many people and that I can use to help stop systemic racism and white supremacy that our country was built on. I believe I have a responsibility to use that platform to amplify teachers, and leaders, and experts in the antiracism and social justice movement.

But I also want to help amplify the voices and the work of creatives, and designers, and coaches, and artists in the black community and of other indigenous people and non-black people of color. By using my platform, including my social media accounts and this podcast I can help reach tens of thousands of people to amplify those voices and talents and help create change.

Okay, so again, I'm not an expert, I am a brand new student, and here are the resources that I am learning from or have learned from so far. Number

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one, *White Fragility*, a book by Robin J. DiAngelo, get it immediately, it's sold out right now as a physical book. You can get it on Kindle or Nook or any of the eBook formats, run and get it right now.

Number two, another book you absolutely must read, in fact I think this one has really hit me at the gut level where I needed to hear it, and it is called *Me And White Supremacy* by Layla F. Saad. Layla also has a great podcast called *Good Ancestor*. So you've got to get these two books, start immediately.

Also watch a movie, a documentary by Ava DuVernay on Netflix called *13<sup>th</sup>*, *13<sup>th</sup>*, it's about the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment and about – you've just got to watch it, I can't even tell you, I will get it wrong, go watch it. Also while you're there watch the miniseries, it's not a documentary, it is so good, it's based on a true story and it's called *How They See Us*, it's also on Netflix and I highly recommend that you watch this.

Something else I did this week, so I've done all of these things this week, I'm still reading *Me And White Supremacy*. I've finished *White Fragility*. I've watched those two shows. I also watched an incredible training by Trudi Lebron – L.e.b.r.o.n. and of course we'll link all of this stuff for you in the show notes. But, Trudi is an antiracist and social justice expert. And she did a training called *Show Up and Serve*, it's for white entrepreneurs, and you definitely should go find it, and purchase it, and watch it.

For absolutely free you can listen to the 14 episode series called *Seeing White* on a podcast called *Scene on Radio - S.c.e.n.e. on Radio*. It is phenomenal, it will teach you a history of the black community in America that you probably, if you're white, had no idea was the truth of what really happened. Listen to it, soak it in, listen to it again, I'm on episode five, it is incredible, my mind has been blown, go listen immediately.

And then one other thing I'm doing is the *Great Unlearning*, and I'm just getting started in this, it's essentially a membership by Rachel Cargle, who is also one of the amazing incredible experts in this area, in antiracism and social justice. And it's on Patreon, which is a paid podcast type of

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subscription. And she has pay what you can. Now, listen, pay what you actually can, don't go pay the least amount. Rachel is incredible, so go pay what you can monthly and take in all of her learnings and guests and this content is so important, so, the Great Unlearning.

Okay, so that's what I've done this week and it is a lot, as you can tell, has been many, many hours, many worthy hours, it's so, so good. Here's what I'm going to do next, the next things I'm focusing on as far as the learning goes is there's a great book called How To Be Antiracist by Ibram X. Kendi. I'm going to read Just Mercy by Bryan Stevenson. Also going to read a book called The New Jim Crow by Michelle Alexander. Michelle is one of the people that is featured in the documentary, 13<sup>th</sup>, that I mentioned, on Netflix. So this is her book.

And then I'm starting on a couple of other podcasts, one is a podcast called Uncivil, so it's kind of the other true side of the civil war, Uncivil, and then 1619 Project, which is a New York Times audio series. So it's not an ongoing podcast, it's more like a miniseries in podcast form. And, listen, there are a huge, huge number of books and podcasts and trainings out there, and I will continue to share all of the ones that I find, and that I really learn from, here with you on the podcast or in my social media.

But here's the thing, just go Google away, Google is your friend in this and you will find so, so many resources.

Okay, so finally, here are the initiatives we are implementing in my business so far to become antiracist for you to hold me accountable to starting right now. And of course we're going to be doing a lot more, but right now this is where we're starting.

Number one, I'm hiring a diversity and inclusion coach, in fact I have an interview tonight as of the time I'm recording this. So a few days before you hear it I will have had my first interview, and hopefully made a decision by then. But I'm interviewing people to help us diversify our business, and moving forward, train and diversify our team.

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The second thing I have done and will continue to do, but right now what I've done, is I'm buying and requiring every team member that works for me to read *White Fragility* and also to read *Me And White Supremacy*. So those two books, I don't see how we can even move forward helping people until we have all collectively read, and even discussed these books. So that's another thing we're doing.

Number three, diversify my podcast guests, we should have always been more diverse here on the podcast. But we're still going to be learning the stuff we always learn about life, and business, and entrepreneurship, and creativity, and interior design, and from artists and all the stuff we love. It's just going to be from a more diverse group of people.

Number four, diversifying who I follow, learn from, and promote on social media. I have completely overhauled in just the last few days, who I follow on social media. And I've added so many other people to my feed and to my stream, which is so exciting. But I will continue to do that and promote a more diverse group moving forward.

And number five, working with our diversity consultant that we're going to hire, I am going to make sure that my Design You community is a safe space for black people and other people of color, and this will include bringing in more diverse guest experts, and team members in the future. And tailoring content as needed to help create equity for students of color. And there will be a whole lot more you all, there will be so much more and I will share all that in the future of the initiatives we're taking to create an antiracist business.

Once I have my diversity coach in place and onboard, I will bring that to you, so you know what we're doing, if you want to do something similar in your business, so stay tuned for that. And as always, as I've always done, I will share my path, and my learning curve, my blind spots and more with this work in the coming months.

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What I know for sure is that doing this work will make all my work, and all my content, and my community better for everyone, and that I am excited and grateful for.

Okay friends, that's what I have for you today, I'll see you back here next week with another great episode of the *Design You Podcast*. Bye for now.

Thank you so much for listening to the *Design You* podcast, and if you are ready to dig deep and do the important work we talk about here on the podcast of transforming your mindset and creating a scalable online business model, there has never been a more important time than right now. So join me and the incredible creative entrepreneurs in my *Design You* coaching program today. You can get all the details at [TobiFairley.com](http://TobiFairley.com).