

Ep #123: The Alter Ego Effect with Todd Herman



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Tobi Fairley

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You are listening to the *Design You* podcast with Tobi Fairley, episode number 123.

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.

Hi friends. Do you ever feel like you are having an out of body experience? Or like you have an alter ego, that there's a different version of you that shows up some days? Yeah, we all have that. Well, today's episode is with Todd Herman and he actually wrote a book called *The Alter Ego Effect*. And this is such a fascinating concept.

So, Todd is a high performance coach, he's been working with the highest achievers in sports and business for, gosh, two decades. He's got programs and I mean he's got so much stuff, I think I first heard of him several years ago when he had a program, and maybe still has that, called the 90 day year. But his book which I'm currently reading is so good. And it's *The Alter Ego Effect*, the subtitle is *The Power of Secret Identities to Transform Your Life*.

And I'm going to be honest, and I told Todd that in the show, I was like, "When I started reading the book, I'm not so sure about this, I'm a little skeptical." Which is very rare for me, I'm almost never skeptical of self-help gurus that I already sort of know, and love, and trust. But I started reading the book and I'm like I think this is just for dudes. I think this is like for super businessy people or athletes or something. And then it didn't take me very long, not long at all to really change my mind about that and I ended up loving this concept as you will hear in our interview today.

And I think it's so appropriate, we really tailored our conversation a lot to women, but it's not just for women. But I wanted to really bridge that gap for our audience who is primarily women, primarily creative women. And really put what I was learning in the book and Todd's expertise into context for the things we struggle with as women so much, like how we don't believe we're good salespeople, or saying no to people, people pleasing. All the

Ep #123: The Alter Ego Effect with Todd Herman

things that are so hard for us as women business owners, as women creatives, we talk about in today's episode.

So I think you're going to love this, I think this actually may show you that you have a super power, whether you thought you had one before, I don't know. But this really helps you see how to have a super power in any area of your life that you want to show up in a different way. So here we go, here's my conversation with Todd Herman all about the alter ego effect.

Tobi: Hey, Todd. Welcome to the *Design You* podcast. I can't wait for this conversation. It's going to be a good one.

Todd: Tobi, it's a pleasure to be here. And I have actually never met a Tobi that I haven't liked.

Tobi: That's good. Do you know other Tobis?

Todd: Tons of Tobis. Did I say that right? I haven't met a Tobi that I haven't disliked.

Tobi: Okay, yeah, I know what you meant. I didn't think you were saying you didn't like me.

Todd: People are listening and they're like, "Whoa, that's a pretty strong statement, Todd, telling Tobi that you don't like her."

Tobi: I don't know a ton of Tobis, so that's pretty cool, I'm glad you do.

Todd: Yeah, I've probably met at least 11.

Tobi: Wow, okay, it's like they're up in the northeast or something, I don't know. Is that where you hangout?

Todd: They're northern, they're northern folk.

Tobi: Perfect, okay. So we're going to talk about a lot of things today. Why don't you – if people by some means haven't heard of you, I mean I've known of you for years, but if they haven't, tell them just a little bit. And then we're going to get into a lot of your story today I think. But tell them kind of

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

Ep #123: The Alter Ego Effect with Todd Herman

the short version or as long as you want of what you do, who you are, what you do.

Todd: Yeah. So I started a peak performance and mental toughness training company in 1997. Coaching wasn't even a thing back when I started, there was no International Coach Federation and all that kind of stuff, so I started that when I was very young, 21. And have since grown several different coaching training type businesses, all wrapped around the idea of peak performance, one's in the corporate world that I ended up selling to Chevron way back in 2007.

But I've always primarily had a strong base of pro athletes, Olympic athletes, but leaders, public figures, people on Broadway, Hollywood and the like, everyone who's basically trying to truly achieve ambitious things. And along that process there's a lot of pitfalls and landmines that you could step on, typically between the six inches of your own ears. And that's where I know that, you know, that's where I focus all my attention is on that.

I'm fascinated by human dynamics. I'm fascinated by human behavior and kinesiology and all the other sort of topic categories that go around, helping someone truly get the most out of themselves. Have a lot of different programs around the world that we license to other organizations as well. And then yeah, I had a book that came out last year called The Alter Ego Effect. Which was actually the thing that blew me up in the kind of pro and Olympic world was being known as the guy who builds performance identities for top level people.

Tobi: I love it. Okay, so I've been reading the book, which is amazing, by the way. But I want to start by saying when I was just at the very beginning of it and you start talking about – you said a specific thing. I don't want to get it wrong, I'll kind of paraphrase it. But it was basically like, if you just show up as kind of the current version of you or the normal version of you, you'll never be happy. It was kind of this concept of like you've got to have these alter egos. And to really kind of get to this version of you that makes you happy.

Ep #123: The Alter Ego Effect with Todd Herman

And so at first I was like I don't know about that, which was funny because I'm not skeptical ever. I'm always an optimist. I buy into things easily. And I was like, I don't know. And I think it's because there's so much conversation around being authentic. And I changed my mind quickly into the book, which we'll talk about in a minute. But I think it's fascinating.

And then the other thing, I was like, well, this is a dude, and he's talking about – and I love sports and I've grown up in sports, you know what I mean? I didn't play a ton of them but we're big SEC football fans, all the things. But I was like, I think this is like a dude book, for muscle-y or sports dudes and business dudes. And then I got not much farther in and I was like, oh my gosh, this is incredible. And we'll talk about why in a minute.

But first let's just start with that conversation about authenticity, which I think gets overused, and really kind of setting the tone, because most of my audience are women. And let's set the tone for why this is really going to be an incredible mind shift for a lot of these women as they hear more of what we talk about.

Todd: Sure. So yeah, and to your point, there's a lot of very popular memes or ideas that are out there today that are wonderful ideas. It's a very nice sentiment, it would be lovely if it actually kind of bore the weight of reality. But on the field of play, again, I use that term all the time in the book, because people understand it. When I'm talking to people on Broadway I'm like on the stage, so it doesn't matter.

Where performance happens, and performance happens everywhere, performance happens when your son or daughter is screaming and throwing a tantrum, that's the stage of parenting. What are you going to do? How are you going to perform?

And so that's a very useful sort of context and frame that I've given people. And I know this because I get hit up on Instagram DMs and Facebook messages and comments on Amazon, and audible and all that kind of stuff of people saying, "Just these frames that Todd gives you, allows you to really see your world in a very different way than how you're normally operating."

Ep #123: The Alter Ego Effect with Todd Herman

But my point is, is like, so authenticity, I love the idea of it. But people's application of it is off because the frame that people have is, they say, "You've just got to have your authentic self." Well, here's the reality, there is no such thing as an authentic self, because there is no one self. There's no one self.

And I'm not saying it out of opinion, this is straight out of for 80 years one of the core principle and pillars of the world of psychology and psychiatrics. Was that the people who saw themselves as having one single self, one identity, had the highest levels of mental health, meaning lowest rates of depression, lowest rates of stress and anxiety disorders.

And now me, again you've had this experience, I'm sure, watching your kids, they might be very different on the soccer field than they are when they're off the soccer field. Well, that makes sense to me. That's why single self, it just didn't track back. So to your point that you said earlier is you're an optimist, you don't question things. I would actually say to you, question things, totally question things because...

Tobi: Yeah. And I mean I do, I do question, but I just mean I'm not usually coming in immediate, like you don't have to prove yourself to me before I'm listening. I'm not a skeptic and a cynic by nature, I'm more of a...

Todd: No, you're not a party pooper.

Tobi: Yeah, exactly, yes. I definitely question, but I don't shoot things down from the beginning. I'm not a pessimist and I'm not a skeptic by nature.

Todd: Yeah. And so my point about that is, so here I am, I'm working with elite level athletes earlier on in my career. And I'm trying to develop myself as a coach, and a leader, and a trainer, and a mentor. And I'm reading as much stuff as I possibly can around the six inches of between people's ears, which comes down to psychology sometimes and behavioral science.

And every time I picked up a psychology book, a lot of the principles they talked about just they didn't make sense to me in the world that I was operating in. Because I'm like, well, single self theory, that doesn't make any sense because my athlete on the field when he comes off is very

Ep #123: The Alter Ego Effect with Todd Herman

different than, and he should be because out there he needs certain qualities to perform, or she needs certain qualities to perform.

So I'm saying all that because, going back to the authentic self, there is no one authentic self. But there is an authentic self to be bringing to each of the different roles and fields of play that you have.

Tobi: Yes, I love that.

Todd: And that's the distinction is when I think about how I need to show up to win in the context of my business, there's certain skills, attributes, qualities and abilities that I should have or I need to develop to win there. But those qualities are going to be different than when I shut down my computer for the day and go around my kids. My kids – I'm a challenger personality type in my business as a coach.

Tobi: Me too.

Todd: Because we have to break through the hard exterior of people's paradigms sometimes and their personalities. And I mean I'm working with people who are on ESPN's Highlights on the Night and public figures and leaders, and living in New York City, and working with pretty big personalities in finance that you work with too or just meet. I need to break through those things, so I need to come at them harder.

Plus the context that people come to me with is, "Hey, I want to perform." And I'm like, okay, "Well, you're going to be stepping into the octagon here in a second because we need to beat up the current version of you to get a new version of you to take you to that next level." But the last thing my kids want is a challenger personality type at the end of the day.

Tobi: I love this, yeah, I love this, because I was thinking the same thing. I was like, yeah, I am that type of personality too. And I mean whether you buy into or believe any of this stuff, I'm like Enneagram 8 and ENTJ and like the leader and the driven. And to be honest, I would say to my detriment in my relationships, when I bring too much of that into my relationships it's actually a problem. When I'm super aggressive all day long and then my family's like, "Would you stop thinking you know

Ep #123: The Alter Ego Effect with Todd Herman

everything, would you stop interrupting me, and can you stop working for a minute.”

And it's really to – so I even see it on the flipside, not just to kind of become this person that's more aggressive or more outgoing, to be successful. For me it's almost the opposite as I started reading this and saying, “You want to be a little softer, you want to be a little less aggressive, a little more – I don't know, chill.” And I love seeing both sides of that coin.

Todd: And Tobi, to your point, I talk about it in the book the one story of the really wealthy guy in Texas that I worked with. He was a finance guy and he was, you know, anyone who's an ambitious person, it's funny, like the funny line is that the people who actually typically pick up leadership self-help and personal help books are the top 1% and they're looking for another 1%. And yet the 99% who need it, don't pick up the book kind of thing.

Tobi: Yeah, interesting, yes.

Todd: So he was hiring me to come in and help him become even better in business. And the big win for him was we shifted all the focus on him becoming a far better father at home. Because again, he was trapping himself in the identity of being the hard charging, aggressive guy, and when he came home he didn't turn that off. He didn't recognize that he was stepping onto a new field for himself. He was stepping into a new role and he was just carrying the qualities forward.

And again, just when you understand human behavior, of course it's natural to act the way, that's why work permeates so many parts of our lives, because work takes up maybe 6 or 8 or 10 hours or 12 hours of your day depending on what your work schedule looks like. And so when you flex the muscle of the skills, and even your personality is a skill. Some people get it wrong with personality, the personality thing is like rubberstamp baked into you and it doesn't change. No, no, no, human beings aren't oak trees, an oak tree will always be an oak tree.

Ep #123: The Alter Ego Effect with Todd Herman

Human beings, we evolve, the Tobi from a decade ago would meet the Tobi now and go, “Oh wow, I didn’t think I would actually end up quite like this.”

Tobi: Totally, yeah, she was way more unbalanced and even more to your point, more, you know, too much work and never able to turn it off and so into proving and driven. And now I’m like I’m completely different in my 40s than I was in my 20s and 30s for sure, yeah.

Todd: Yeah. And so this gentleman in Texas, I mean he turned himself into the dad that he wanted. And now he had these two really powerful personas that he’d worked hard at developing and stuff. And so even with my own story, again, I’m the challenger personality type, I flex that muscle all day long. The last thing my kids want is that type of energy to come to them because they’re seven, five and three, Molly, Sophie and Charlie. And so when I go home my inspiration for how I like to show up around them.

And again, this gets to the actual sort of idea of what an alter ego actually is. An alter ego is a model of someone or something for how you would like to show up in some context in your life. Because you know that it’s going to help you succeed in the way that you most want to. We talked earlier before we started about the ordinary world and the extraordinary world.

And most people end up feeling trapped in an ordinary world because you know you’re in an ordinary world when most of your motivations are coming from an outside in perspective. You’re doing things to impress other people, other people are enforcing their wants and their desires on you. And that causes you to act in a way that’s out of alignment or congruent with what you know you’re actually about.

And so what an alter ego did for me in the way that I was working with people is, because I kind of stumbled into this, I used it for myself. And then when I started working with more and more elite people, this common golden thread was weaving them all together. They would all say that they had this persona, this identity, that’s performance self, that they would take out onto the court of a field. And I would always be like, “That’s really fascinating, I did the exact same thing too, isn’t that cool.”

Ep #123: The Alter Ego Effect with Todd Herman

And then I'd move on to whatever my programming was that I'd be working with them on or coaching them on. And it wasn't until this one lady who was getting ready for the Athens games 2004, was a swimmer on the US national team. She said it the same way that other people did, but it just clicked with me that day. And I was like, "Wait a second." And I went back through all of my data, all my clientele that I'd had and looking for that similar, because I've got these spreadsheets.

And then I started mapping it towards like were they performing consistently at peak levels above other people? And they were.

And so that's when I doubled down on really unpacking this method of helping people develop this sort of altered self, so that they could custom build an identity built to win on a court or a field. And unshackle themselves from their own insecurities, their worries, their other challenges, because that's what an alter ego does. It helps you to disassociate from your own narrative, your own story, your own beliefs, your own personality that might not be custom built to help you win.

Tobi: Yeah, like I'm not a morning person, or I'm bad at tech, or I'm not a good public speaker, or all those things we tell ourselves. Well, the other thing that I like, when you're talking about that, it really resonates with me is when we're stuck with that kind of goal of the authentic self, like there is one. I think it puts us into conflict when we're changing roles because – and especially if somebody is like – like if your spouse is saying, "You should be more this."

And I think it kind of – when I'm thinking about – you're talking about that, I'm like, well, if I'm sticking to the authentic self then I sort of got defensive, this is just who I am.

But when I open up my mind to the fact that no, I can give myself permission to show up differently in different roles all as part of the authentic me. Then it almost just kind of melts away this resistance and it allows me to be – I don't know – more proactive towards, like you said, how I want to show up, not how they want me to.

Ep #123: The Alter Ego Effect with Todd Herman

I can drop that and be like, okay, changing gears, as you call it, changing field of play, changing roles, whatever hats, whatever you want to call it. I can just stop for a second and be like okay, reset button, how do I want to show up in this scenario? What's going to align more with what results I want to create?

And I love that because I can stop believing that I have to be this one true Tobi that's outspoken, and direct, and aggressive, and all that. I mean, no, that's only one part of me, that's only – and thankfully, it's only one part of this multidimensional human that gets to show up in all these beautiful ways, which I really love that.

Todd: And it's such a great distinction that you just made too, Tobi, because the really powerful part of that is – and that's one of the biggest pieces of feedback that I've gotten from people is. This is like such a powerful self-coaching philosophy that I can use with myself. Because again, we do this, we're like, "Well, that's not me, that's just who I am." And when you truly understand how we develop, you're going to catch yourself with those types of statements and go, "No, that's not true, Todd, that's not really."

Because when you think about we have this just warehouse of phenomenal attributes nested at the core of what a human being is all about, because truly one of our great gifts, one of the great superpowers of being a human being is our creative imagination. The biggest genre of movies right now is superhero movies, whether it's Marvel characters, or DC comic characters or whatever.

And we like to play the game of okay, well, Tobi, if you could have your own super power what would it be? And my answer to that has always been teleportation, because it would be lovely if Tobi would be having this little conversation with a mic between us on the beaches of Bali right now or Fiji. And then eight seconds after we're done we go and we have a quick little cappuccino on the streets of Venice and then we're back home again.

So we love to kind of play around with that idea. And I'm like, "No, but you're missing out on the fact that the creative imagination is the really,

Ep #123: The Alter Ego Effect with Todd Herman

really special thing that makes humans different than anything else on the planet. And what I consistently have said to people, and I've challenged people to even – around the world on this challenge, which is every single one of you in this audience, or every single one of you that's listening to this right now, has used an alter ego.

It is categorically impossible for you to not to because when we're in this phase of one to seven years of age, which is our most formative development years, this is where we learn and build the most skills out of any period in our entire lives.

We're actually caught in – there's these four sets of brainwaves, there's beta, which is at the top, that's the waking mind, that's the judgmental mind a lot of times, or in some cases the focusing mind. Then you get into alpha which is even deeper focus. And then you get into theta which is actually like flow state, deeply integrative, almost meditative like focus, or attention, that's where the creative imagination really sits is in there. And then you're in delta, which is typically like really deep sleep that you get into for a short amount of time in a day.

But children from the age of one to seven are actually operating in a theta brain wave state. It's the creative imagination is most switched on so that their brains can be making connections constantly, learning rapidly. And the creative imagination, one of its kind of hallmarks is that, you know, we've all done this where it's dinner time, and we've yelled at our kids four times and they're literally like 18 feet away. And none of them hear us and you're just getting annoyed at them and you think that they're ignoring you.

No, what's actually happening is cognitively they're in such a flow state that their sensory signals are actually just deadened, they literally cannot hear you.

Tobi: Interesting. Is this what my husband also does while he's watching TV and ignoring me?

Ep #123: The Alter Ego Effect with Todd Herman

Todd: Well, that's why TV is, because TV is so mesmerizing it actually does shut things down. So actually there is, many different studies have been done on people that have watched television.

Tobi: Yeah, I was just teasing. But I meant it too.

Todd: But with regards to children, what do kids do in that age? They play make believe, they pretend to be other people. And it's actually a mechanism built into human beings to help you build rapid skills, to play with different ideas. It's actually a rapid skill building type.

Tobi: I love that, yeah, what if I was this person today, what would happen, how would I show up as that?

Todd: Because it disassociates Tobi away from whatever you think you can and cannot do and it allows you to tap into someone else's abilities.

Tobi: Yes, I love that, yeah.

Todd: That's an alter ego in action and that's why the book is called The Alter Ego Effect. In the book I walk you through the method from chapters four and on. But the real powerful part is the effect, because going back to what we had said at the beginning of the show was people talk about your real self, or just be your real self or be your authentic self, all lovely ideas.

But then I tell people, "How do you do that? Tell me the method to make that happen." It's a nice platitude to say to people, but I think it's a lot of weight to throw on someone else's shoulders because you just made them feel bad because they're not actually...

Tobi: Right, then which one, is this one that's sitting on the couch doing nothing, is that my authentic self? And do I have no hope for being the person I know I can be? Yeah, there's so many things that come with that, it feels like a lot of baggage or weight, like you said.

Todd: A lot of baggage and weight. And so what I discovered through this process, even for me was the effect of using alter egos and using my imagination to play with a model in my mind for how I wanted to show up, allowed me to actually become more of who I was. It removed the traumas,

Ep #123: The Alter Ego Effect with Todd Herman

because I'm a child of trauma, I came from some pretty tough stuff that happened to me as a young kid, and it ruled a big part of my life. But I still had these drives and these ambitions.

And if I didn't stay – I think the gift that came out of that terrible experience was it allowed me to stay engaged with my creative imagination longer than most people do because their rational mind starts to take over. Their rational mind tells them not to do things, not to pursue things. And mine didn't because in some ways I was sort of running away from some of the challenges that I was going through internally. And I used the alter egos to sort of continue to develop myself and my athletes did the same thing, and then business people and leaders.

And it's funny you say, when you got into the book and you're like, "This is maybe a little, you've got some sports stories here and it sounds like this is for men." And yet the biggest group of readers of this book are – it's not even close, has been women.

Tobi: I love it, and there are a lot of women stories too, but that was just my, you know, kind of at first blush. Well, let's talk about women, because I talk, you know, a lot of my audience is women mostly. And one of the things that was most fascinating to me about this concept, and it's not just in the book, it's the work you do with people in general, because you were saying before we started recording, we were just kind of talking about how you love just mindset and performance in all of its facets.

And really creating fast action kind of tools for people, which I love, because so often we can talk around a topic but not really give people an actual solution. And so one of the things I noticed and that resonated with me so much, not just for myself, but especially for the people that I work with and coach, is this idea of overcoming resistance. And in particular there was one story, I think it was – it feels like it was Julia, I think that she was saying, "I'm always overpromising and I don't say no, and I end up negotiating instead of just being strong with my pricing or my boundaries."

And all of those are stories I hear all the time. And in addition to those, the other ones I hear so much are, "I plan all this stuff on my schedule and I

Ep #123: The Alter Ego Effect with Todd Herman

don't stick to it." Or I hear people say, "How can I sell? I'm a terrible salesperson, I hate selling, selling's just so uncomfortable to me." But all of these things are really the same thing when you look at just moving through resistance. And so tell us in one or a couple of those instances, I'd love especially to talk about the selling one because I think it's so clear for people, they believe they are or are not a salesperson.

How do we move through that resistance using this alter ego? Can you give us an example of that?

Todd: Yeah. So, well, I'll tell you the genesis of Super Richard. So when I started – so my first name's Richard, my middle name's Todd. I've always gone by Todd, all the parents out there, don't be a pain in the ass and call your kid by their middle name because it ends up screwing up a whole bunch of different documents.

Tobi: Yeah, that's my husband and my brother, same thing, yeah.

Todd: Yeah, as an immigrant coming into it, because I'm Canadian, farm and ranch kid from Western Canada, as an immigrant coming into the United States, it was – I got given the gears by the immigration officials, "Are you Todd or are you Richard, are you trying to fool people?" And I'm like, "I'm not, my frigging parents just called me Richard Todd Herman, okay?" So, not to go off on a tangent.

But when I started I was 21, I looked like I was 12 and my business started out of accident. I was a college football player, had a bunch of scholarships and then I was a nationally ranked badminton player. I was a good athlete, not because I'm physically gifted, but really is because of my mental game stuff. I had really trained myself on how to consistently get into the zone and the flow state where just all of your capability comes out of you, unshackling itself from you having the worries and the concerns of outcomes, or other people.

And so I was good at that. And when I got done playing football, I started volunteering at a high school teaching the defensive backs. And I would spend way more time with them on really just the mental and emotional

Ep #123: The Alter Ego Effect with Todd Herman

toolkit to become champions. And it would be like, “You need better routines. You need to actually set some goals for yourself. You need to prepare better. You don’t have a good preparation plan for yourself.” And all these things that I did, these kids started getting some really good results.

Because one thing I was – I was always fascinated with how the mind worked. And I would actually teach them how their mind worked. That was the key thing that I also clicked on, on early in my career was when you teach people how something’s actually working, why things end up leading towards where they do, the adoption rate of the stuff that I would give them to do just went way up. So these kids started getting really good results actually in school.

And so parents started asking me, “Hey, can you mentor my son or daughter?” And I’d say, “Yeah, sure.” And my next question wasn’t, “And how much are you willing to pay me?” It was just like, “Sure, yeah,” because I loved doing it, and I loved sport. And then the parents would be like, “Well, how much do you want to charge?” And I said, “\$75 for three sessions.” So, Tobi, that was from 97 to 2000, that was my rate, 75 bucks for three sessions.

Tobi: That was your keeping your head above – not keeping your head above water period.

Todd: Yeah. Well, when I did my Quicken taxes, I used Quicken back in the day, my average hourly rate for how much I was actually earning for myself was \$8.56 an hour.

Tobi: Oh my gosh, yeah.

Todd: For three years. Now, everyone can go, you know, and you see this nowadays, everyone’s like, “You’ve got to increase your rates,” or whatever. Here’s the thing it gave me though and this is what accelerated me past everybody else, a lot of reps, because I had a lot of clients. I had a lot of customers. And I had way more clients and customers in three years than many people had in 20 years. And again, there weren’t that many

Ep #123: The Alter Ego Effect with Todd Herman

other people that were out there because mental game coaching wasn't really a thing at the amateur level in 97, 98, 99.

So anyways, these people started asking me and it was all very much word of mouth. And then I was like, I have this little thriving practice here. But I wanted to grow it more, I wanted to actually validate that this was actually a business and people just didn't like Todd and they were giving me money to kind of take care of their kids, or not take care of their kids, but just like help them.

So I needed to book workshops. I needed to book speeches for myself because that was the way that I was going to grow my business. I'm a 4-H kid, and that's the only thing I knew how to do was to do a speech. So here I am, Monday night I got my plan for what I'm going to do on Tuesday. And then Tuesday ends and everything that had resistance or rejection, possibilities around, Todd didn't do them. Todd found something else to do inside of his business that he justified that made sense.

You know what, I'm going to write a letter, I'm going to write a better letter, because the letter can do the rejection handling for me and kind of thing. And I was reading direct marketing books on how to do. And then I would organize my office, because I need to have my files. If I do get a lot more clients I'm going to have to and all this.

Tobi: Yes, your email, if there was such a thing then, barely, you're like I've got to look at that, I've got to get organized, all the things, yeah.

Todd: My, the peakathlete@hotmail.com account, that was my email address because I was thinking my company was the Peak Athlete. And I was getting so, you know, you end your day and I call it the pillow effect. The pillow never lies, your pillow never lies to you because when your head hits the pillow at night you get confronted with the results that you had in your day and what you know you're capable of.

And if those two circles of a Venn diagram don't overlap very well you can beat yourself up, especially ambitious people who have got pursuits in them that are not being actualized, and so I did.

Ep #123: The Alter Ego Effect with Todd Herman

Tobi: Yeah, it's so defeating, you're like, how did I do it again? Why every day do I not do the same stuff? And you really mean it when you say you're going to do it. It's not like you're just putting stuff you're not really interested in on there. You actually are like, "Tomorrow, I'm for sure going to actually do this." And then you don't again, right?

Todd: Yeah. Well, I mean the greatest planner is your future self. Meaning I can plan a beautiful day today for tomorrow. Well, my tomorrow is like an amazing day, because it's my future self, my future self has to do it, my future self is the executor. My present self doesn't need to execute that. That's why we say, "You know what, I'm going to start my diet tomorrow. I'm going to start doing my 30 pushups tomorrow." Because you're pushing it off onto your future self and then your future self goes, "Thanks a lot."

And so then when you put your head on your pillow at night, my pillow was filled with my tears of anguish because I wasn't doing these things. And I had this epiphany when it was actually from watching an Oprah episode, and I talk about it in the book.

Tobi: I loved that, by the way, that bought in the woman in me, I'm like, "Okay, now I can trust him, he just said the word, Oprah."

Todd: Yeah, exactly. So there is this episode with this lady, Jonnie Jox, who Oprah had done this trunk sale for a lot of her clothing. And Jonnie had like a size eight foot and Oprah actually has big feet, she's like a size 12 or something like that. And the only thing that Jonnie could afford was a pair of Oprah's high heels. So she bought them and she's going through a really, really hard time, and she had her Oprah shoes sitting in the corner of her bedroom.

And any time she didn't feel like she had the strength to carry on or the strength to move through the day and pursue the things that she needed to pursue, she would go and stand in Oprah's shoes so that she could tap in her energy and power. And that's actually one of the principles of the alter ego effect is that. That's her using the model of Oprah as a source of inspiration to help her to see herself in a different way.

Ep #123: The Alter Ego Effect with Todd Herman

And in that moment I was like, wait a second, when I played football, I had my alter ego, Geronimo that I took on the field,” which was a composite of a bunch of my heroes. Why don’t I do the same thing in business, Geronimo doesn’t match because Geronimo was built for that field over there. But in business who could I use? And it was a composite of three people, Benjamin Franklin, one of my heroes, Joseph Campbell, one of my heroes, wrote The Hero’s Journey and the Power of Myth and everything, and then Superman, the old version of Superman.

And those three together, their attributes, confidence, being articulate and being decisive, taking action, all three qualities I didn’t have at the time. I was terribly indecisive, I lacked terrible confidence and I was very insecure. So that’s who I stepped into. So I went to LensCrafters in West Edmonton Mall and I bought a pair of non-prescription glasses so that I could do a reverse Superman.

I could put on the glasses to become Superman, Super Richard, he’d put on the glasses to become mild-mannered Clark Kent, that was his alter ego. And so that he could operate through the world and understand human beings better. But I’d put on those glasses to become Super Richard. And this is the really important distinction I want to make for the people that are listening, that are struggling with this idea of sales. Super Richard was custom built to do the things that I was resisting against the most, which was sales calls and marketing Todd.

Because this is the beautiful thing about the mind is I still had Todd as an identity. Todd was the coach guy, and Todd still shows up that way. Todd is – that was my natural inclination, I love helping people. I love coaching people. If I could do interviews like this or coaching people for 12 hours of my day, I have zero loss of energy whatsoever, it’s sort of the extraversion in me. But I just get so much out of it, I get filled up by this stuff. And so Todd had no resistance against that.

Todd had no resistance against speaking because I was a 4-H kid, I had already mastered – not mastered it, but I developed that skill, I didn’t have a fear of getting on stage. But I did have a big fear of getting rejection, I did

Ep #123: The Alter Ego Effect with Todd Herman

have a fear of being salesy, I did have all this. And there was all bad paradigms in my head.

Because mindset, just so you know, because we say this word, but mindset actually means three specific things and they all stack. So think of it like a pyramid, at the very base of mindset is your philosophy. The philosophy that you see life through, and who gave you those philosophies, who knows where you picked them up from, but it's philosophy. Philosophies create perspectives, and perspectives create opinions. And so when I hear someone say, "I can't be a good salesperson." That's an opinion, I know it's an opinion.

And now I want to figure out what's their philosophy? What's the way that they're looking at this idea of salesmanship or selling that's causing them the resistance? Because I can unshackle that, I don't need to say, "You just need better sales skills." Sometimes you just need better skills. But most of the time it's you need a paradigm shift inside.

Tobi: So what would be an example of a philosophy that can keep you from selling?

Todd: Selling is about being pushy. Selling is about being manipulative.

Tobi: Okay, pushy, greedy, something like that, okay, all that stuff, okay, got you.

Todd: Yeah, yeah. Selling is about trying to get someone to buy something that they don't want. Well, that's a terrible paradigm.

Tobi: Yes, taking something from people, a lot of people are like, I even don't see it as an exchange. They're like, "I'm taking something away from them." And yeah, I see, yeah, that's really interesting.

Todd: And so healthy ways of looking at selling is selling is the ultimate action starter, without someone truly buying something, they haven't exchanged any value with someone. They haven't made a commitment to themselves that they're about to change something with themselves, or for

Ep #123: The Alter Ego Effect with Todd Herman

themselves, or for their family. And I don't like that idea of people living in a purgatory of indecisiveness because I've lived there and that sucks.

And so if I have something that I know can dramatically change, or not even dramatically, but even just somewhat change someone for the better based on what they've told me. Not based on what I know, but based on what they've told me their goal is, or what their mission is, or what their aspiration is. If I have something I know can – I mean I'm going to be a pit bull with you, I flat out tell people.

I've been on say like – I don't have that many one-on-one clients anymore. There's a lot of hoops that people jump through to get to that because I'm very expensive one-on-one, that's why we have a lot of group training programming and licensing of stuff.

But if I'm on the phone with you and we're five minutes in, I'm like, "Tobi, there's no point whatsoever in us continuing this conversation down the normal pathway that we need to go through to unpack your needs and your wants and all those kind of things. Tobi, I am the perfect square peg to go into the square hole of your need right now."

Tobi: Interesting, I love it.

Todd: "So do you want to move forward?"

Tobi: Yes or no.

Todd: Yeah. And I mean maybe you do have a few more questions for me or something, and that's fine. But I'm like, "No, Tobi," because again this is the difference in mindset, I just want to qualify this for people. Elite people do buy very differently than average people. Because when average people sometimes hear what I say they're like, "That just sounds pushy." And I'm like, "No, no, but there is a different air that people operate inside of at this elite level and they love being spoken to this way, or communicated with this way." And so anyway...

Tobi: So that's Super Richard doing that conversation still?

Todd: Super Richard is doing that conversation.

Ep #123: The Alter Ego Effect with Todd Herman

Tobi: To this day it's still, like you go into that mindset and you embody that still 20 something years later when you want to...?

Todd: It's so natural. It's so natural now. So I, yeah, it became a part of me and it was actually six months later that I was just finished up doing a couple of calls that I booked, two important speeches and workshops for myself. And I got done, hung up the second call, made some good money that day and I noticed that my glasses were sitting on the table. I had actually evolved naturally into that person. And so that's why it's the alter ego effect, Super Richard brought me to the place where I didn't need to activate it intentionally anymore, it drew it out of me.

And that's been the experience for thousands and thousands of people, and I talk about Kobe Bryant and the Black Mamba, I talk about Beyoncé and Sasha Fierce, and I talk about Winston Churchill. I talk about Martin Luther King, who's, his glasses are actually the source of inspiration on the book, because he had an alter ego that wrote speeches, he called it His Distinguished Self. Most people don't know that, but he used just like me, fake glasses. I think there's a – I'm going to start the fake glasses club.

Tobi: Truly didn't need his glasses to see either?

Todd: No, no.

Tobi: Wow, interesting. So if we're thinking about this and we're like, "Okay, I need an alter ego for how I show up." How many do we need? Is it in each part? Do we just start with one? So when these people are like, "Yeah, I'm not a good seller, and I'm not a good speaker, and I overpromise, and I don't stick to my schedule, and I always negotiate my price down." And all these things, because we could come up with a list, we're usually pretty hard on ourselves, we could come up with a laundry list of all the places that we're not showing up.

Is it really just two or three problems that kind of show up in all these places or is it a work hat, and a home hat, and a – how do we start that process?

Todd: Yeah. Because I get that question a ton, "How many alter egos can I have?" And I'm like, "As many as you want." Because you have many,

Ep #123: The Alter Ego Effect with Todd Herman

many roles that you play in life, and one of the key things behind why this is also so powerful is we all take ourselves so seriously. You just said that. And what this truly draws out of us is a far greater attitude of playfulness, because what did we do when we were seven? We were playful.

And we engaged with this idea and we didn't think that we were bad because we played nurse, or teacher, or we were Superman or Wonder Woman jumping off of the sofa, or Blank Panther. Or we were Beyoncé on the – or not Beyoncé, but we were Serena Williams on the front driveway hitting tennis balls. Or we were Kobe Bryant or whoever it is for you, it draws this playfulness out.

And for me someone who has studied deeply, flow and zone, and it's been a big part of me, and the peak athlete is all about, I mean that's why it's called peak, because the peak isn't about the top of the mountain. The peak is about me constantly carving away and simplifying, and extracting all the barnacles that have attached themselves to the way that you work, so that we can get to the peak state inside of you.

Tobi: Interesting, yeah.

Todd: Yeah, so it's not an outside thing, it's actually peak is about the inside, inside experience.

Tobi: It's really, really good clarification. Yeah, and when you say playful the other thing that comes to my mind is when we're in a playful state, we're in an abundant state. And when we're taking ourself too seriously it always feels like scarcity to me. I'm not enough, there's not enough money, there's not enough time. And I love just that shift to be able to leave that scarcity and go into this place which is like the abundance, the world of possibility, anything is possible. I can be anybody, I can do anything.

That is such a beautiful shift because I think a lot of times we have a hard time kind of cracking into that abundance place and getting out of the scarcity that we think in so often.

Todd: Yeah. And you know what, that's why I think it's the great challenge of someone who is in pursuit of something new is you start exposing

Ep #123: The Alter Ego Effect with Todd Herman

yourself to authors, or writers, or speakers, or TEDx Talks, or TED Talks. And you're consuming this information. And most people don't have a very good and a highly developed filter yet of recognizing when people say real stuff rooted in practicality, or people that are just talking about an idea that sounds nice.

And if you don't have a good reasoning and judgment factor to really kind of isolate that thing that people say, it can end up becoming a philosophy for you. And it just slips past your reasoning zone. And that's why for me I think it's such a huge responsibility to become as excellent as you possibly can in whatever domain that you're in, so that you can really take very good care.

I take it very seriously that I do have a platform, I do have authority in some people's minds and eyes. And I don't want to tell them things that are just categorically false or true, that could lead them down a pathway of resistance for five years, because it just runs counter to how we work as a human being. So yeah, it's the – going back to your question of how many alter egos, start with one, play with this, get used to it kind of thing, just do that.

But then you might have Tobi the athlete, because there's a physical self side of you. We've got some great wins from – I was at an event last year speaking in Canada, two separate women came up to me and one of them said that they had never worked out in their life. And they had built an alter ego that loved working out. And she had lost...

Tobi: That's so good.

Todd: She lost 38 pounds in just under four months. Another one came up to me, she lost 66 pounds in four months, looked phenomenal. And she actually sent the video to me on Facebook Messenger. And she's like, "The biggest win though is my speaking career has blown up. Because that athlete side of myself now, that fitness self side of me has permeated through all these other roles and identities that I have. And it's made me so much more confident, so much more dynamic. I show up in the world in a very different way."

Ep #123: The Alter Ego Effect with Todd Herman

I mean it's such an inspiring video for me to watch, because – not because I made some sort of an impact with her, but it was really just the energy that she was bringing. It was very much an authentic human being was what I was watching. I could just see that she was unapologetically her. And so there's so many different ways that you can apply this. Even in my business, think about what makes business so hard for everybody that's listening is there is no one role in business.

In corporate you have typically a role that makes it a simpler path for people to excel in, entrepreneurship, that's why it's the greatest personal program you could ever sign up for. Because you have many hats that you wear, each hat demands a specific set of attributes and skills. Like a financial person, doesn't a financial person look different than a salesperson?

Tobi: Totally.

Todd: So that should show people that there's no such thing as an authentic self.

Tobi: Yeah, and like the service provider, the support role, the coach, all those things, for sure looks different. I think about this in my own team, when people are helping me support in my membership, and then a member's up for renewal. You don't stay in that energy of like, okay, let's think about what's in your – I mean it's totally different. What are you struggling with today? It's like, "No, come over here, and let's go, "What are your goals? What do you want to make happen? Are we right for you?" It's a completely different energy.

And we even notice that amongst ourselves, does it need to be a different person, or does the person just need. And this is kind of fun to say, "You might not even need as many people on your team as you thought, if your team could embrace the alter ego too." Because you could at least say, "When I'm Tobi the salesperson, this is my check sheet, I can stop before I get on the sales call and remind myself that." When I'm going to be over here listening and really absorbing and helping people solve problems, that's a different kind of person. That's really interesting, yeah.

Ep #123: The Alter Ego Effect with Todd Herman

Todd: Hey, can I give people a strategy for them to use?

Tobi: Yeah.

Todd: This isn't even about alter egos, it's kind of a little alter ego, but it's not.

Tobi: Yeah, it's the same thing.

Todd: The biggest win I had in my business was the moment I hired this amazing lady, Jen. Now, I have the honor, I guess, of having a lot of extremely successful CEOs and business people as friends, and businesses as friends. And I love asking people this question of, "Who's the most important hire in your career?" And every single one with the exception of one CEO, and I've asked this probably 900+ times has said their Executive Assistant.

And it truly is because it's really your Chief of Staff, it's your trusted person, they kind of handle a lot of your business life but also it could be your personal life as well. They have access to a lot of your stuff. And so that match needs to be great. And so one of the challenges that I had, because my biggest weakness, as I was developing in my early 20s was, I was worried so much about having everyone like me. It being kind of it's one of those things of being an extrovert, I loved having lots of friends, I wanted everyone to like me.

And it's such a trap because you can't get everyone to like you, I mean I watched this A&E biography on six of the top spiritual leaders, it had Jesus and Buddha and Gandhi and Mother Teresa.

And I loved watching these A&E biographies. And after the third one I had this huge epiphany, I sat back, I was just about 25 and I was like, "Oh my God, Todd, if Jesus, Mother Teresa and Gandhi, and Martin Luther King couldn't get everyone to like them, some of them, millions of people wanted to murder them. Why the hell am I trying?" Because they seemed like they were pretty good people.

Tobi: Right, yeah. Yeah.

Ep #123: The Alter Ego Effect with Todd Herman

Todd: And so I was like, right then I was like, I have no concerns.

Tobi: That's awesome, yeah.

Todd: Now, that doesn't mean I'm going to go out there and actively try to piss people off. But I'm going to show up the way that I know that I am, because based on the traumatic experience that happened to me, one of the gifts that it gave me is I'm a highly compassionate person. I care deeply about other people. I know that some people come from challenging places and it's why they might be doing things that might be harmful to others, or they might hurt other people or whatever, but anyway, coming back to Jen.

Tobi: The Executive, yeah, Assistant.

Todd: There is this big difference that I want to give people, between being nice and being kind. Nice doesn't serve anybody, it doesn't. People use those words interchangeably. But they really are not the same thing, because I can be kind to you, Tobi, and kindness, being kind to you means that I care deeply enough for you, Tobi, to call you out on your bullshit.

Tobi: Yeah, tell you the truth.

Todd: And say, because that's truly being kind. Nice is me laying down as a mat and letting people walk all over me. Me saying, "Sure, I'll add that onto the project, yes, I'll add two more pages onto the website development for you and I'll do that." That's you being nice. Being kind to that person is saying, "Absolutely, we would love to do those two pages for you. Let me get a redraft of the proposal back over to you so that we can add that to the project scope."

Now, this is where Jen came in. Jen wasn't a real human being, I just created a new email address for Jen. Jen became my Executive Assistant that I responded back from. And even when people would reach out to even my email address, Jen would jump in and say, "Hey, this is Jen, Todd's Assistant, I just want to let you know he is busy with preparing for a speech, but he'll get back to you, anything that I can do for you in the meantime?"

Ep #123: The Alter Ego Effect with Todd Herman

Or the moment someone did sign up for a workshop, or a speech, or client work, me working with them, she would say, “Oh my God, you’re going to love working with Todd.” Because she could say all the thing, I couldn’t say those things.

Tobi: I love it. I love it.

Todd: And what people did was they would go, “Oh my God, this gets so my excited, oh my God, you sound so nice.” Because Jen was just a super cheery, bubbly person in email, and so she actually was a bit of an alter ego, she could say the things that I couldn’t say, but did actually develop the relationship. Now, here’s the funny thing. I’ve said that to people on stage and I’m sure someone listening will go, “I could never say that because it sounds like you’re lying,” or whatever. That’s your story, not mine.

The number of phenomenally successful human beings that have said when they started their music career, I’m talking singers and songwriters, or actresses and actors, or public figures and leaders that said, “Oh yeah, I’ve got a Jen too. I still have a Jen to this day,” that people would say. And then it’s so funny because I was at this one speech, Sara Blakely, the founder of Spanx brought me in and her husband, Jesse Itzler, and there was myself and there was only four of us that were really speaking, all kind of big named people with the exception of me.

Tobi: Richard.

Todd: And so I said that on stage and it was so funny because there was a lot of high level people in the audience, and there were some people who were just starting out. And it was almost like they were divided into two sides of the room, all the high level people were all shaking their heads, like, “Oh yeah, I had a Jen too.” And then everyone on the other side of the room was like, “You mean I can do that?” And it was amazing. It was the biggest win from that event because they just got permission to see into how other people have operated, thinking that it was a bad thing.

Tobi: I love it.

Ep #123: The Alter Ego Effect with Todd Herman

Todd: Anyways, I just want to give that to some of the people who are listening, just hire a Jen.

Tobi: It's so good, yeah.

Todd: Hire a Jen.

Tobi: The only other person I've ever heard do that was an interior designer friend of mine. And I've laughed about it for years because she has Carla. And she's like, "Especially when a client's mad." She said I'm like, "Damn it Carla, did you forget to book them on my calendar?" And so she'd be like, "Let me have a talk with her." And then Carla would be like, "Oh, I'm so sorry that Karen didn't know that she was supposed to be there."

But it's so funny. And not to just use it as a scapegoat, but I used to think that was the best, most brilliant story ever. And yeah, it's such a great example of an alter ego, yeah.

Todd: Listen, business is hard. Business is hard, why make it harder on yourself? Why beat yourself up psychologically because we are spinning a lot of plates early on. I truly do think that most people are attempting to do their best. I don't give that to people as a crutch though, because some people do say that, they're like, "Oh, they're doing their best." Well, they didn't need to hit their kid, that's not you doing your best.

Tobi: Well, right, totally, yes, yeah.

Todd: So yeah, I came from some pretty tough trauma. I haven't done anything like that to my kids, so no excuses. But I do believe that in business we're trying to spin so many plates, some of them fall. But to not be able to take it with you to the pillow at night and beat yourself up and have someone else that can shoulder some of this weight with you, even if they are imaginary, but they're real to other people. It's just a really, it's just a powerful strategy.

Tobi: It's so good. Thank you. Well, thank you so much. And this is so beautiful for a creative audience. My audience ought to be able to dream

Ep #123: The Alter Ego Effect with Todd Herman

up the best alter egos ever, because they're a bunch of creatives. This can be a fun exercise is kind of what I'm trying to say. We don't have to make a big deal of it, just have fun going, "If I was going to that place of dreaming and creating, who would I create to be the salesperson version of me, or the person who takes care of my health and wellness, or the person who actually shows up for what she wrote on her calendar?"

And that's really fun. Well, I loved this conversation, it sounds like we could talk forever.

Todd: Forever.

Tobi: But I know you're a busy guy and so you have lots to do. But I just, I really appreciate you for being here today. And if people want to connect with you, what's the best place? I see you sometimes on social, on Instagram, are you over there or should they go to your website, where should they find you?

Todd: Yeah, the home base on the interweb is toddherman.me and you can get links to Instagram. And I publish behind the scene stuff, a lot of mindset stuff on Instagram or Facebook, and LinkedIn as well. And then Alter Ego Effect for the book itself, and if you want it, because we've got more resources there, videos that people can kind of watch, yeah.

Tobi: It's really good, really, really good, I highly recommend it.

Todd: And just one more thing too I want to get to people is, I actually came out with – on the one year anniversary of my book, I always knew that I wanted to write a children's version of the book. Take the concept of the alter ego and put it in kid's form for three to eight year olds, and so I came out with a book called My Super Me.

Tobi: It's so cute. They can't see it, but I can see it, and I love it, yeah.

Todd: Yeah, Finding the Courage for Tough Stuff, and it just kind of walks through this little story of a little boy who has this stuffed animal called Captain Storm and he helps him kind of navigate some of the life's challenges of, you know, because as a little kid you're told that, "No, you

Ep #123: The Alter Ego Effect with Todd Herman

can't get that. You can't reach the high things on the shelf," or whatever. Everything just seems made for people who are bigger than you, then yeah, so it's been a lot of fun having that book out there.

Tobi: That's so good, okay, I love it. Well, thank you again, and everybody go find all these amazing resources of Todd's, but especially get the book. And if they want to tell you how they're doing, they just reach out on social, like these other ladies did?

Todd: Totally, yeah.

Tobi: And say, "Hey, here's what happened," and you would love to hear from them, I'm sure.

Todd: Please do, yeah.

Tobi: Okay, awesome, thank you so much, such a fun conversation.

Todd: Thanks, Tobi.

Tobi: Bye.

Okay, do you feel like Superwoman now? Are you ready to step into and design those parts of your lives where you want to show up – well, lives, one life, but different parts of you, where you want to show up differently? Because I am so inspired by this, I think I've told my mom and several friends, and maybe my daughter about how cool this is, that we absolutely in any moment can show up exactly the way we want to just because the way we're thinking about ourselves.

Or even that version of us that's afraid to. We can just park her over to the side and become the very person who would show up in exactly the way we want to. So if you want to hear more from Todd, check him out, get his book, check out his website, find him on Instagram. I like his stuff on Instagram, it's really good. I mean it's such a great place to be reminded of some of these people that we love their concepts. And we can just follow

Ep #123: The Alter Ego Effect with Todd Herman

them and see them in our feed over on Instagram. So, check Todd out all over social media.

And I can't wait to hear what you think about the book. And I know he will love to hear from you too. So, thanks for listening today. And I will see you back really soon, one week from now actually, with another great episode of *The Design You Podcast*. Bye for now.

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