

Ep #129: Changing the Way You Think with Gwen DeBruyn



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Tobi Fairley

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Tobi: You are listening to *The Design You Podcast* with Tobi Fairley, episode number 129.

Female Announcer: 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.

Tobi: Hey, friends. I really am excited about today's episode, in fact, the next three episodes because I'm bringing you a series of episodes with some of my incredible Design You members. So, they happen to all be ladies. We're mostly ladies, although we have a few gents in our group, but these next three weeks you're going to be hearing from some incredible women, and changes, and growth, and things they've done in their lives, in their businesses and we're starting that today with Gwen DeBruyn.

So, Gwen is an amazing mom and she owns three businesses as she'll tell you about in the episode. She takes care of her 91-year-old mother and her husband who has some health challenges, and she is doing all of that with so much success. She's going to tell you about how she weathered the storms with COVID and everything that's been happening in the world and really how she has used one of the number things we teach in Design You which is how to manage your mind, how to manage your thinking to really have success in all of these areas.

I'm so excited to have this conversation. It was such a moving one and I want you to hear it for yourself. So, sit back and enjoy this episode with Gwen DeBruyn.

Hey, Gwen, welcome to *The Design You Podcast*. I'm so glad you're here today.

Gwen: Thanks, Tobi. I am so excited to be here, to be able to talk to you.

Tobi: So much fun, so just to give everybody a little insight into our relationship, we've known each other for several years, but we've been

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working together pretty closely since I started the Design You coaching program. I think you were in the Beta Group, right? From the very beginning.

Gwen: I was, I was in Beta. I was so excited when I heard about it, when I got your emails about it and decided that yes, I'm going to do this and oh man, I am so glad I did. It's just been one of the best things I've done for my business. But really I think the surprising thing, one of the best things I've ever done for my life.

Tobi: I love that so much. What's so fun to talk about with you is that you did, you joined me from, literally before it was even open to the public. We did like a three- or four-month, yeah, probably three-month beta version to just even test the program and make sure it was going to be what I thought it was going to be – which it did change quite a bit from that. But just the fact that you were there from the beginning and here we two and a half or so years later and you're still highly involved and an active member of this community makes me so excited.

We're going to talk about all kinds of things today, but I think that is so important to say that something is happening in the work we're doing together because you're still here two and a half years later and I don't think you're going anywhere anytime soon, but we want to tell people about that work starting with what I think is maybe the most exciting thing, to me, which is the mindset component of this because I didn't even know everything I know now and I wasn't trained even at the level I am with life coach training when we started, but it has always been a component of the program to have this mindset piece.

But almost nobody comes to the program or to work with me because they're like, "Oh, I really need to go work on my mindset." It's like it's the – "Oh, yeah, that thing, too," or "That woo woo thing," or whatever. But almost every person that ever does this work says it's the number one thing that has changed their lives.

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So, I didn't even let you tell everybody about you or who you are, so tell everybody what you do and who you are. Then let's start talking about how this work of managing your mind and your thoughts has really changed not only your business but your life. So, tell them about you first so it'll all make sense to everybody.

Gwen: All right. I think we met back in 2014 I think, I came to a class and that's where I had followed you with design, but I actually came to one of your classes in High Point, so we met there and loved what I learned, took it back to my business which is Bayberry Cottage. I own, actually, two things. I own a boutique furniture and accessory store and an interior design business, but since that time I've also taken over – my husband and I also own a vacation rental management company.

My husband is retired. His health is not great and so he asked me to get involved and take the reins of SVR, it's called Shores Vacation Rentals, and to get involved in SVR which I have, and so now I've got these three businesses that I'm a part of and running. What's so cool about Design You is when I started, you're right, I didn't start for the mindset piece. I think you had kind of mentioned that when we were in Beta, or when I was first hearing about Design You, but it was really more – a little bit about business and there was also health and wellness involved and I thought, "This looks really, really cool," because all of that is so important in our lives and so I jumped.

But really the thing that surprised me that's come out of Design You is the mindset work. It's been amazing and you're right when you say I started in the beginning and I'm still here, yes, and the thing is that I'm still learning all the time. So, it's not as if – and I kind of assumed that I would get into Design You, that it would last a period of time, I would learn what I was going to learn and then I would move on and it is not like that at all.

As you grow we grow, and it has been an amazing journey and one that I never would have taken, I never would have found this path at all if I hadn't gotten involved with Design You, so I am really, really grateful.

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Tobi: I love that so much. So, you were telling before we started recording you were telling me that this whole concept, this whole practice of learning to be aware of your mindset and aware of your thoughts – and we teach a method in Design You of how to start to manage them and how, if you want to change them, to change the results you're getting and all of that, but you were saying it's literally showing up everywhere for you.

So, let's talk about that story you were starting to tell me because I think it's so cool about how you're reading a book, and even in reading a fiction, either a fiction book or is it a biography or something, you're like now I look at the world through this lens of people's thoughts and their mindset which I think is so fascinating. I'd love to start there because I think that it's really an important thing to think about.

Gwen: Yeah. As I've learned more and more about managing my thoughts, the difference that it makes when you do start to learn how to manage them, and I have a long way to go, but as I'm learning this I'm starting to recognize the importance of this and I'm seeing it everywhere, everywhere. In books that I read, in people that I'm talking to, I mean, it comes up in business books a lot, it's really so important.

The book that I was telling you about, it's a fiction book that I'm reading, and it's about World War II and there's two sisters, and it occurred to me, as I was reading it the other night that, wow, they've taken such different paths in life and I recognize that it was because of the mindset that each of them has.

Tobi: Yes.

Gwen: One of them has total confidence and she sees the world as a place to tackle and the other one is contracting and afraid and so her life is very, very different. It really brought home to me the difference of how we see the world, how we think, what those thoughts are and the kind of life that it creates for us. It's really incredible.

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Tobi: That is a beautiful story. I'm so glad you told that because one of the things – I think the most important thing that I learned going next level with my understanding of our thoughts and our brains through master group life coach training was when you first start to do this work I think you're prone to hurry and get out of the thoughts you don't like. It's like, how can I get rid of the icky ones and go to the – as I always say, rainbows and daisies or rainbows and unicorns, that lovely place with the lovely thoughts and we all want that because our thoughts create our feelings and that feels good.

But the interesting thing I learned in master coach training that the work and mastery is actually staying a current, maybe negative thought or one that's creating some kind of result you don't like in your life. Because if you can make that connection of, "Oh, when I think this way this is what I create," that's where all the power is. If you just hit the eject button and you go over to the bright shiny thought, and then it works sometimes and it doesn't sometimes because you don't really believe it, you don't really get that much leverage on yourself or your situation.

So, when you were saying that about the book, that's what I was thinking. I was thinking results because – and that's exactly what you're saying. You're like, whatever this one character was thinking created her results and the other one was thinking something that was totally different and confident and she went out and tackled the world. Her results were probably something that was inspirational and amazing, and that's exactly what we can do in our own lives when we're able to understand, "Oh when I go into fear, when I go into worry, when I create all these feelings what thoughts am I thinking? Because they lead me to showing up in a completely different way than the other thoughts might."

Where have you seen that? In any of your businesses, where have you seen this work really start to make a difference, to create a different result for you than before?

Gwen: Everywhere. So, in my businesses, but also in my personal life. There's a lot of stress that I've got in my personal life and instead of –

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before I was very reactive and then it would take a long time for me to pull back from that. So, it's in life, it's in business. In business, as I've walked into SVR and they see me really as someone new, they haven't had me there before, there's been lots of challenges and I think that probably before Design You I may have just said, "You know what? Not doing it. I don't need this. At this point in my life this – I've got enough on my platter. It's too hard. I've already got Bayberry." I would've just gone out, hired a manager and been done with it, but I didn't do that.

Instead, with your help as well through Accelerator which is a program that I did with you I really learned to manage those thoughts and to really think about what was happening. So, managing thoughts are not – what I was doing before is I would think about everything. I'm a thinker, and I would think through everything, but I wasn't capturing anything.

So, you taught me to not only – I've got those thoughts, but to capture them, to write them down. I journal a lot and that really organizes all of those crazy thoughts that are running through my head all the time and suddenly it starts to make sense.

I generally do it in the morning, although when I am tripped up and I run across a problem, even during the day at work I'll stop, I'll get the journal out, and I'll just sit down and start to write. It's amazing how it just kind of organizes all those thoughts and I can work right through it and go, "Oh, there it is." It has just been such a game changer for me, so instead of quitting, instead of being afraid, instead of telling myself all these stories that I always did before now I'm able to stop myself and say, "Okay, slow down. Sit down and write and work on this." It's really incredible to me how much that has changed everything.

Tobi: I feel the exact same way and I can relate in so many ways and I love what you're saying because right there, by ourselves, nobody else is involved, just us if we're able to get control of fear or these stories like you said that we fabricate, that we really kind of make up, it's really drama is what it is or any level of suffering that we're creating, if we can be the

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solution to that at any moment there is literally nothing we cannot do, right? I feel the same way.

I know you and I have had many conversations, I think we're a lot alike in this in that when we look back at the old version of ourselves, and sometimes the old version is yesterday, right? It doesn't mean it's like five years ago, we see that even though neither one of us envisioned ourselves or imagined ourselves to be super dramatic people because we're not out fussing and fighting with the world, I think we both discovered there was a whole lot of drama and complaining and self-pity and stories and stuff happening in our heads a lot of times that we're creating problems that didn't even have to be there or that could be avoided. Is that a good description of that? Can you speak to that a little bit?

I know I've been guilty of that. I look back in my 30s and every single day I would come home from work and hop on the phone with my mom and just have a complete complaining fest for an hour and the more I talked the bigger the problem got, the louder my voice got, and the higher my blood pressure got. We can actually create physical and biological and all these other types of responses because of our thinking that we weren't managing. I know I was way out of control, but I think you've said to me, you've noticed that both in business and personal relationships at times, right?

Gwen: Oh my gosh, yes. Both my daughters work for me. Amber has been with me for years. She's my oldest daughter and we share an office. That kid, thank goodness she's patient, she's a 9 on the Enneagram scale so she's very patient.

Tobi: Peacemaker.

Gwen: Yes, she's a peacemaker, thank goodness, because I would roll into this office having brought in all these thoughts and drama is the best way to describe it. All this drama and, Tobi, I would waste at least an hour,

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hour and a half of our time just going through all of it with her because, at the time, that was my way of working it out.

Tobi: Totally.

Gwen: By talking out loud and saying all of it I could – hearing myself say it I could work through it but it was a total time waster for both of us. So, instead of doing that now, instead of dragging Amber into my drama or anybody else for that matter, I am much better, I'm not there – I will still go to that sometimes.

Tobi: Yeah, me too.

Gwen: But I am so much better at recognizing that it's starting to come up, stop it, and sit down and just start to write. That way I'm figuring it out on my own without having to go through the drama and I'm also not necessarily getting input from anybody else which may change the way I would react in a certain situation.

Instead, I can go through, journal it, figure it out myself and then if I want to get a second I've got my own opinion settled and then if I want to bring Amber or anybody else in to talk about this and work through it a little bit more I'm coming at it from a much better place.

Tobi: Yeah. What I notice about that, because I can relate so much in every, when we're doing the – even though, like you, I try not to beat myself about it because it was our coping mechanism, it was the best we knew at the time, and we're extroverts, and we want to talk things out loud – or at least I'm an extrovert. I think you are.

But what I noticed about the shift in this behavior is when we're doing that kind of drama or complaining thing we're not really looking for a solution in that moment. We're really looking for agreement or piling on or to be right a lot of times or to be the victim or something. All of those at some point, or at

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least I was. I think, like you said, when we learn that so much of that is a waste of time, first of all, and it's not even really looking for the solution.

If we can do all the drama on a piece of paper I think that we're able to get so much more perspective and believe our own thoughts less. Because when we're saying it out loud, we're like, "Yep, that's right. They did that to me," or, "They were wrong," or, "They must've been thinking," or, "They're trying to manipulate me," or whatever story we're telling and when we're putting it on paper we're like, "Oh, that's kind of funny. I'm pretending like they're doing that to me," or, "I'm pretending like that was even intentional," or that they even knew I was there or whatever kind of story we've created.

You can do, what I call, kind of get to your own BS a lot faster when you're writing it on paper and you're looking at it. I find that, like you, not only do I come to solutions and better solutions faster, I also have a lot more compassion for the other people involved in the story or whatever when I start to check my ego a little bit. Just writing it on paper has done that for me. Do you kind of feel that same way?

Gwen: So true, so true, and one of the things that you have taught us is to really question our thoughts, "Really? Is that true?" Or if I don't know the answer to something to ask ourselves, "Well, what if I did know the answer?" Those little tricks are amazing in how they help and you're right. When there's someone else involved and in drama there always is, writing it down and talking about it and writing about it and the asking myself things like, "Really? Is that really true?" It really does bring a lot more compassion and understanding to be able to see the other side of a situation and to be able to work through it quickly, easily, and without the drama.

It's really when I do it, and like I said, I don't do it all the time –

Tobi: Yeah, no, we don't always. Sometimes an old habit sneaks up on us, right? That's okay because that's when we learn most, too, I think is when it rears its head again.

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Gwen: Exactly, exactly, which reminds me of meditation which is another practice I've started since I started in Design You. In Book Club you had –

Tobi: *Meditation for Fidgety Skeptics* by Dan Harris. Such a great book, yeah.

Gwen: Great book, and so I started working on that and meditation as much the same where I'll try to meditate and then all those thoughts come whipping in and I lose that, but they say the same thing in meditation that you just said which is, "That's really how we learn."

So, you go, "There it is again," and you go back to your focus and let those thoughts go and they'll come back again. It's really the same thing with – they really are the same thing, your mindset and training your brain goes hand-in-hand with meditation and it all works together.

Tobi: As you were saying what you were just saying, too, it was making me think not only do we have more compassion for other people, but I think who we end up having a ton more compassion for is ourselves. Because when we do that other drama thing most of us go into that big drama spiral or the complaining or whatever, and then typically what follows that is some level of a shame cycle or spiral.

Because then we're like – especially if we lose our temper with someone or we involve someone or we start feeling guilt or shame about it and I think as you were saying that about meditation my growth with managing my thoughts has such an exercise in self-compassion or self-love because when I see it come up again now I'm not like, "Ugh, why do I not have this fixed?"

I'm curious, I'm fascinated, "Oh, that's interesting. Why is that coming up again? I wonder which part of this I need to circle back to." So, did you used to have and sometimes still do maybe, is there like that shame piece or some other level of beating yourself up that used to come with your

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typical way of showing up and now that you're managing your mind you're also able to manage that more, too?

Gwen: Absolutely. So, I would react instead of thinking things through, I would react immediately and that really. I'm so much better at that than I was for really all of my life and I'm catching it much, much faster. When you talk about compassion, you're right, I have a lot more compassion for myself even when I forget and I get tripped up.

Now, I'm able to say, "It's okay. You've caught yourself. You've thought about it again, so you're one step closer to getting it right more often. I really give myself a break a lot where I never cut myself any slack before.

Tobi: No, I mean, that alone is life-changing because how many of us go through life with this extreme level of perfectionism which the flip side of that is so much judgment and negativity towards ourselves all the time and I agree with you. That's so beautiful.

I think the reason that we don't get mad at ourselves anymore is because we've learned to trust this tool that we used to manage our minds so even when you maybe don't get it right in a certain moment we know exactly how to get it right if we want to. I think prior to having this level of a practice of my management I would just be so frustrated and I would throw up my hands and I'd be like, "I guess this is just how I am," or, "I guess life is always going to be this way."

Now, I feel so in control to go, "No, it doesn't have to be this way at all. I actually know if I think certain and create certain feelings I'll show up in a different way and I can create a different result. That's available to me every day if I want it to be.

Gwen: Exactly. I can solve any problem.

Tobi: Yes.

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Gwen: With all these different businesses with my darling husband, my mom who I also take care of there's a lot of issues that come up and instead of just going into a cycle of despair sometimes or of fear or of frustration or whatever it may be in any one of the circumstances that I might find myself in in any given hour.

Instead, I can really kind of stop and pull it together, write it down and really solve problems rather than just reacting and escalating something that didn't need to be escalated at all. I just needed to handle it differently.

Tobi: Wow, I can just feel the peace that comes with that because I know it intimately myself and it is truly the difference from that chaos and drama to being able to have peace which we all say we want and doing this practice really gets us there which is so exciting.

Gwen: Okay, so first of all, when I think about all the stuff you're managing, because you're like, "My mother, my husband – my sweet, elderly mother, my sweet husband who has declining health, my three businesses, working with my two daughters," and then, of course, just being you which comes with – all of us, comes with its own set of requirements. Amazing that you are able to really have so much success.

I think in particular I want to talk about one of those areas next which is this new role you're playing in the new business because one of the things you're doing there is you're implementing a different leadership strategy that required you to show up in a different way.

So, you and I both, in our businesses, have used the book *Traction* which we love and the EOS, the Entrepreneurs Operation System, for running our businesses and our meetings and the way we deal with teams. I want to talk a little bit about that because it is a great book, but I think without the mindset management tool any strategy like that is only as successful as you are showing up every day, right?

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You and I have had a lot of conversations about that because I've really enjoying watching you even though I know it's hard for you at times to navigate this process because like you said you go in the first and you're like, "All these people, it's a whole new team. I'm new to them, they don't necessarily – they don't not want me to be here, but it definitely feels like a change to them," and the old version of you can start thinking all kinds of thoughts. I think at first maybe that was what came for you a little bit, right?

You're like, "I feel uncomfortable," or, "They don't like me," or, "I feel like I'm bossy," or, "I don't want to offend," or all of the stuff we do and then you and I had several conversations because you were implementing the system and I think that it's the two things together that are really starting to click for you. The same for me in my business and want to talk about that a little.

So, can you tell us what that looked like when you started, in a sense, inserting yourself for the first time into this business that you and your husband own, and what kind of success you've had? We can get into the whole management piece. There's a lot to talk about here, but I think this is going to be really helpful to people, not even that they're coming into a new business, but just in their own business. They're like, "I've been flying by the seat of my pants for years. I'm now ready to uplevel, I'm now ready to hire some people. I'm now ready to really put some stuff in place and yeah, we might send them over to read *Traction*, but they need this whole mindset component to come together with this process, right?

Gwen: Yes, the two have to go together. As a matter of fact I remember when we were talking about this one day about SVR and where I was and where my struggles were I think I said something to you like, "I feel like I'm on the outside looking in," and you said, "Really? Are you really?"

So, again, that was a thought I had, right? And I had carried that thought with me for months. As long as I carried that thought with me, "I'm on the outside looking in," and I really felt that way that's exactly where I stayed. I was on the outside looking in because I kept myself there.

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The mindset work and the EOS which is the operating system that we run SVR on, absolutely go hand-in-hand. This all started at the end of 2019, the manager who had run our organization for probably 15, 16 years left, took another position and the gentleman that I had he was kind of our number two guy that I had take her place when she left. He had said at the time, “This is very temporary for me.” He’s older, he’s ready to retire. “I will help you with this transition, but then I’m out.”

He actually suggested that we bring in a consultant that he had been working with and I said, “Great.” Brought her in and she introduced us to EOS and we talked about for probably about a month and decided to move forward and so in January we implemented EOS and we met offsite for three days, I believe, and came up with our vision for the company, we set goals for 1 year, 3 years, 10 years and it really was excellent.

The whole team, the leadership that was there with me, with really pulled together. I felt like I was part of the team at that time and we were just getting ready to hire an integrator which is really kind of a key piece in running your company this way so that I could become what I’m meant to be here which is the visionary and I don’t need to be in the weeds in either one of the companies.

I’ve got an awful lot going on in my life and I really wanted to get into that visionary position and let this company grow. Then COVID hit and that changed so much for us. I mean, just as COVID hit we had been starting the interview process for the integrator. Being in vacation rental management business and having the country shut down –

Tobi: Yeah, it puts a damper on your business and your profits when your whole business is renting a whole bunch of properties for summer yet no one can come to the properties for summer, right?

Gwen: Exactly. Exactly. So, immediately when everything shut down and we all went into some fear but it changed so much in business and so what happened to us is we started to – normally we ramp up long before the

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season in early winter or in winter and then into early spring and we're taking reservations for all summer-long.

What had happened, by the time we hit March we were almost at our peak of reservations for the summer season and what happened is we started immediately going backwards. Everyone was cancelling their reservations. We this team together, we continued even though we were really losing a lot of money, we continued with EOS and we continued with what's called the L10 meetings which is what holds all of us accountable every week.

It allows us to bring issues to the front of things that need to be handled and boy do we have issues because of everything that was going on, but because we're in EOS, instead of just going into a blind panic and meltdown, we actually had the tools to operate the business well, stay organized, know the steps that we needed to take, stay on top of any and all issues, solve them every single week and that allowed us to stay forward facing and forward focusing.

So, when things started to turn around the team was really – even though we were down to a skeleton crew, the team was in such a good place to turn this around and the reservations started ramping back up as quickly as we'd lost them. It was a wild ride, but I think the two things together the way we started this conversation, both mindset and using this operating system really propelled to success in getting through what could've been a disastrous time for us.

Tobi: I completely agree. We had the same – I mean, we didn't have quite the situation which is unimaginable being a business that's dependent on people physically being somewhere, but for sure on the way we showed up as a team – and just so everybody, if you read *Traction* which is about EOS yet please read it. You're going to love it if you want your business to really have this kind of stability and growth, but just for those of who haven't read it, it is all the things Gwen said.

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It helps you pick your vision and your core values and you set up a certain meeting structure and you identify a leadership team and you bring this person in the company in the role of integrator, which is a COO, they're over operations and maybe that's you or if you're not an ops person, if you're like Gwen and me, we're visionaries, we can then stay out of the way.

Because the most fatiguing for a visionary which is what's happening all of the time in creative businesses is we feel like we're supposed to be, essentially, the integrator. We feel like we're supposed in ops, and we feel like we're supposed to be solving all those problems. It's so draining because a visionary lives at 40,000 feet and the COO or the integrator has to be at like the 1-foot level, maybe 15-foot level kind of seeing what's happening, but they're literally in the weeds.

So, anybody who's out there who's like, "Oh my gosh, I feel so fatigued all the time in my business." If you can imagine putting in structure to run your company and get clarity on what you want and what you're doing and who's in charge of things and what the org chart looks like and all of that and then combining that structure also with being able to manage your mind and solve problems yourself with your thinking and create peace or energy or motivation or whatever feeling you need to create at any given moment, confidence, that is, I agree with you. That's like the secret to running successful businesses. It's really this structure and this way of thinking, right?

Gwen: It is. It is. Again, bringing – I don't want to pound on the mindset thing, but it's so important. So, we had gotten – financially we got in trouble through COVID and put off hiring the integrator. I listened to – you did a couple of things on EOS and you had Karen Sergeant who is your professional COO.

Tobi: Yeah, as my integrator, fractional COO, and integrator. Yeah, I did a call – so, in Design You, those of you who aren't members, we do all kinds of things, but one of the things if you've either bought for a year or you've

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been in for more than six months you're what's called the "Insider's Level," and all insiders get these really cool trainings and conversations with – it's like me opening up my Rolodex, I guess. I'm literally taking whatever I'm doing in real-time and I'm bringing it to the program.

You're right, so not too terribly long ago I had my own COO, Karen, come on and we talked about what she does and now what I do and how we've gotten me out of so many things and put me back at that visionary level. That's the call you're talking about, right?

Gwen: Yes, there was Karen and then you did one on your own.

Tobi: Oh yeah.

Gwen: Both of them, excellent, excellent. Again, so much comes out of Design You, but those two calls or those two interviews really were helpful to me because we had not hired the integrator and we weren't really in a position. We had come back far enough financially that our accountant said we can hire, but we had been through so and we were down to a skeleton crew that I thought, "I don't think we're ready yet."

Yet, I needed to bring some kind of leadership and start moving forward on – to continue to move forward to go back to the growth part, but I wanted to take our time because it's such an important position to hire into. So, because of listening to you and Karen talk I started thinking about that and thought, "Well, could I do a fractional COO? What's that look like for us?"

We had decided originally that this would be a full-time, in-person position. After listening to you guys I really did a lot of thinking about it, a lot of journaling about it and I'd been working with this consultant for quite a while – actually, two different consultants that are within the same company, and I went to them and said, "I have a proposal for you."

I suggested because they are EOS implementors, I suggested to them that they might consider adding one more piece to their consulting firm and that

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is to offer fractional COOs to companies who are just getting started in EOS. The light bulb went off for everybody.

So, I have just hired them and it's awesome because they are just interim for us. But it gives us time to kind of build that runway that we can use when we really are ready to take off, and we can fill up – get the right people in the right seats, get all of the groundwork done, and then we'll be in, I think, a much better position to hire that full-time integrator into the company.

Tobi: I love what you're saying because I think – I try and it sounds like it's working, which is good, but I really try in Design You to be very transparent about not only what I'm doing in my own company, but my thought processes that helped me get to making some of those decisions.

So, I talk to you all a lot about how I used to be maybe rigid in a certain way or believing something wasn't possible and then I – I used to be that way with employees. I thought everybody had to be an in-person with me in Little Rock and then I learned that I could literally have people all over the world and have the best people because I could get access to anybody anywhere and then have them work virtually.

I had been doing that before COVID hit for probably two years which was wonderful. I loved that I kind of had a headstart on that, but what happened back in October – so last October before COVID was what you were just talking about, I decided to bring on – I hadn't really heard of this either. I mean, I kind of knew there were people out in the world that could be like a fractional CFO or COO.

I didn't really know the term fractional so much which is like part-time or long-distance or virtual, but – so, I had this need back in October and actually Karen was a referral from my publicist Selena which is, you know, that's how the world works. If you're brave enough to ask people for things you find out all kinds of amazing information, but just that shift of knowing that I could have a fractional, a part-time, a 15 hours COO literally to be

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affordable, to be available to me only as much as I needed that was a life-changing shift.

Now, I just hired a fractional CFO which I'll be talking to you guys and bringing her to you soon, who is really knowledgeable in online business and Facebook advertising and investing in that side of it. It opened me to a whole new world and like you said, every bit of this still goes back to the mindset because when we're thinking, "Oh I could never afford that," or, "I could never work that way," or, "I wouldn't have the first clue where to find those people," or all these thoughts that we're constantly thinking and we do it in every day in our lives in all kinds of ways. We're constantly blocking ourselves from the solution we say we want, right?

That's a lot of what we do in Design You is just share and have people share because just these lightbulb moments, these ah-ha moments that come from seeing me or one of you do something and we think, "Oh, I never thought about that. I never dreamed that would be an option. I think that's exactly what you're saying, right? Not only with the COO. Has that shown up in other ways of how you work with anybody or flexible schedules with people or your team or your daughters?

How else have you open your minds with this mindset work of maybe how you work with someone or a consultant? Maybe even the fact that you've been in Design You for two and a half years and you've also been hiring all these consultants. That in itself probably is a shift for you, too, right? Investing in that level.

Gwen: Oh gosh, huge shift. But it was, again, it's just a matter of believing that if I do this and if I work hard and I stay with this we can make this work. That has proven true time and time and time again. If I can just – I want to just talk a little bit about Design You for a minute, too, because I want to tell you something that is so important.

I remember when I first joined Design You. One of my concerns was that I wouldn't have enough time for it. I'm busy, I'm running these companies,

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I've got lots on my platter like we all do and so I really worried about that. I just want to say that – first of all, I'm so grateful that I stuck with it because it really has changed my life. Really has changed my life. It changed my personal life, it changed my business life, it's changed my confidence levels tremendously, but my time hasn't changed all that much. It's changing, I'm getting better at that as well.

The cool thing about Design You is that it is always, always there and so I'm not able to always make all the awesome live calls that you do, they're incredible, but it is amazing to me – I always listen to them. I love to walk, so I'll take long, long, long walks and listen to the live calls. It is amazing to me, time and time and time again as I'm listening to those calls and listening to whoever you may be talking to or coaching in the call how our situations may be different but the solutions are very much the same.

I take something from almost everyone that you're working with and what I get out of Design You by not even necessarily always being there for the live things. It is this coaching and you, as a mentor, are with me 24/7 if I want you and when I need you. Sometimes I will find that I just need that confidence back again and it really, honestly, doesn't matter which one I pick, where I go, which call I pick. Immediately just listening I will hear things that I go, "Oh, right, exactly. That's exactly what I need to do," and it can get me back on track.

So, I think that Design You is really important to stay as involved as possible, but when you can't have a one-on-one or be on a live call it is every bit as valuable in listening to it and having it with me really wherever I go and it's really been great.

Tobi: That's amazing. Of course, that's why I do it, but you know what I'm thinking when you're saying which is so true, the only reason you can see it that way is because the way you're thinking about Design You which is so beautiful. That's proves the whole mindset thing, too, because somebody else can be in there and be, "Oh, I hadn't been in in a month and I guess I'm just wasting my money," and, "I never have time for the calls." We can

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literally talk ourselves out of something so valuable that's right in front of our face, that's available to us all the time.

You have been such a beautiful example of truly there are some times where you're like, I'll be like, "Hey, Gwen, I haven't heard from you in like six or eight weeks I'm thinking about you." You're like, "Oh yeah, we're knee-deep in," blah, blah, blah, whatever it is. At the store or with the – but I don't worry. I know you'll come back or whatever when you need me or whatever. But it just is so beautiful because you don't get wrapped up anymore – or maybe you never did for Design You, but a lot of people would have – weaving that story again of, "Gosh, I must be wasting my money."

Because you just to choose to think it is worth that less than \$300 if I just need to come on and get a boost or get an answer or connect with someone. I love watching you. You'll come in and sometimes I'll know. I'll think, "Oh Gwen had a minute," because I'll see you answer. I'll get notifications that you commented – and you're such an encourager for our other members. So many of our members are, you'll go encourage people and you'll write on their post and you'll give feedback, it's beautiful.

But I think that's the perfect way to use a coach or to use a program or to use a mentor and you always remember me saying, "Take what you need and leave the rest," and you do that so well. You're like, "When I need you I will be there," and sometimes I might not be there for a little while and that just means I'm good in those moments or I'm busy or I'm something else and then I'll come back when I need it. I just love that so much because I operate that way as well with some of my coaches and things that I do, but I think it's in managing – which of course comes from scarcity mindset. It's managing that story we start to tell ourselves if we're not careful of, "I'm behind on that monthly workbook" or, "I'm behind on listening to calls."

Or, "I haven't gotten my money's worth out of something," and then all of a sudden we're doing that quitting behavior, we're giving up and then months later we'd have to start again, but we cut off that source of information and I

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just watch it happen, not just in my program, but in people all over the world. We're constantly really almost like self-sabotaging and you have not done that.

You have allowed yourself to stay in a place of – it's like insurance, right? You're like, I pay for it, insurance, because I know it's going to be there if I need it.

Gwen: I am never behind in Design You, ever. I never am, and, Tobi, I think you're in my ears almost every day at some point of my day, so I'm never behind. I have never missed any of the calls.

Tobi: I love that.

Gwen: As a matter of fact, I probably have listened to most of them more than once, some of them multiple times depending on what it is that I want to hear, and every single time that I listen to it again for a second time or even a third time, I hear new things or I have a different take on it or I've encountered a problem that I may not have had the first time I listened to it, but suddenly I'm like, "Oh my gosh, there it is. There's the answer, it's great."

I want to tell you one other that I haven't shared with you and I haven't told you, but you and I talked on Zoom one day just as COVID hit and I was talking to you about my store and that I was really nervous about what was going to happen and I have a different model for my store where I sell out everything at the end of the year and then in spring as we're opening back up I bring in all new products so we're fresh and new and inspiring and it's been an interesting model for us. But I was really nervous because I had between \$80,000 and \$100,000 worth of product that I ordered at high point in October that was going to be shipping in late-March, early-April.

You and I were talking really fairly early March to mid-March and I said, "I'm really nervous about it," and we talk back and forth. You're thinking and finally you said, "You know, if I were you Gwen, I might consider cancelling

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those orders.” And I thought, “Wow, I don’t know. I don’t know if I can do that,” but we ended our talk and I thought about it for a couple of days and I thought, “That is exactly the right thing.”

Tobi, it saved me. It saved everything. That little bit of advice changed everything. So, when we finally got word from our governor that we could open in like two days, I didn’t have any product, but I had some things in my warehouse and I remember you saying, “You can just take things from your if you need to. You’ll figure this out. If you need to do this, you’ll figure it out,” and we did.

I had something in the warehouse. We cobbled it together. It looked adorable and we have had the best year we have ever had –

Tobi: Ah, that gives me chills, thank you. Yeah, and just to give a little context or rather I was thinking about the fear and the worry and the burden because we didn’t know what was going to happen and imaging you owing or owning \$100,000 worth of furniture and I just thought, “Why would you put yourself in that position of that much worry and free.”

So, I said, do you have any product anywhere. And you’re like, “Oh, I’ve got some stragglings things and I’m like, “What if you just did a little area in the front and you said, ‘None of this is for sale. We can take special orders off of it, but make it look darling and make it look amazing. Because you said everybody always want to special order a lot of things anyway and we just came up with a solution.

That’s exactly back to our point or being to think differently because I’ve watched so money people, “Oh, well I feel horrible canceling those.” What if I need that stuff? I’m like, I would rather learn how to go find it or – I said, “I guarantee you if things open back up those vendors are going to, for sure, want your business.

Gwen: Yes.

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Tobi: But I could just imagine you because I care so much about you and our other members, and I could just imagine the worry and the pressure that you would be feel, because I've been there myself of having the burden of all of that furniture and scrambling to know what to do with it.

That's the kind of money decisions we should be making in our businesses of really taking out the emotion and taking out the drama and the taking out, "I'm going to be embarrassed. What if my vendors get mad at me?" And going to that place of what's a smart, non-drama, reasonable, managed mind version of making the right decision for COVID or any other time.

So, that just gives me – thank you for telling me that. That gives me chills, but I think that is the difference because had you still been in that place of your mind just being all over the board, more than it already was with COVID, because I've done it so many times we would have just really made this big, dramatic story and we likely would make a bad decision, too, right? A poor decision.

Gwen: I would have made a horrible decision and I'd be in a very, very, very different position financially if I hadn't taken your really wonderful advice. Thank you so much for that.

Tobi: You're so welcome. So, what would your thoughts have been? Would it have been being embarrassed about the vendors or would it have been like what if I need it? What was the difference? I'd love to understand the different perspective you would have made the decision from otherwise?

Gwen: Well, when you first said that to me my mind went right to, "Oh my gosh, that would be like giving up, not opening the store." I am saying, "Cancel everything, we're done, we can't do this," but that wasn't true. It wasn't.

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It was just a matter of thinking outside of the box, taking the skills that we've got and the creativity that we've got taking your advice first, but then taking those skills and creativity and reimagining what a store could actually look like and as it turned out, apparently, they liked it better than the way we had been doing it for years because it's been an amazing year, really amazing.

Tobi: So good. Thank you for sharing that. Gosh, that's such a blessing to me, personally, for you to share that but I'm so happy to hear that.

Gwen: What's in a name?

Tobi: And so exciting, so exciting. Okay, so if people want to know about you, know about your shop, know about – and even, I also thought – I wanted you to, if you want to, share the name of the consulting company you use because there may be people that are interested or did you just go through?

You found the consulting company before EOS, right?

Gwen: I did but they specialize in vacation management.

Tobi: Oh okay, so they wouldn't be right for everybody, but I think in the book, *EOS*, they talk about how they have certified consultants that are with their program. So, if people are wanting to look for that, they can just check out that book. Or if they happen to be in the vacation rental business then they could contact with you and talk with your –

Gwen: Absolutely. Our website is bayberrycottage.com and I'm also on Instagram and it's @bayberrycottagestyle and Facebook as Bayberry Cottage, and if anybody does have any questions about our consultants or what we've done or how we've done that please DM me or if you're Design You reach out to me there and I'm happy to share who they are, what we've done, why we did, and how it's been going and keep sharing

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because the group that we're in in Design You is full of people who just support each other and lift each other up.

Tobi: That's one of my favorite parts. Somebody told me not too long ago – which, I also, now the way we are – I didn't make any drama for myself about it, but they were like, "I was in this other group and a bunch of people were bashing you, Tobi." It really upset me. I was like, "Oh, that doesn't accept me and she was like, "What?"

I mean, I'm not for everybody, but in that conversation we were talking and I said, "This is my favorite thing about Design You," Because she said, "I'm not surprised" because it's a really kind of negative group. And she's like, "Your group is nothing like that."

We don't even have time to be negative about – I mean, we might share our own negative thoughts like, "Hey, I'm stuck in a funk or a thought spiral." But it is so loving and supportive and that's the thing that I'm most proud of, that we attract – like attracts like and we have a group of people that are just so giving and supportive and it means so much to me that we have that kind of group.

I think, guess what, that's back to the mindset because anything comes from a lot of negativity or feeling competitive is all coming from scarcity and we consciously are all deciding every time we show up in Design You that we don't want that kind of thinking right? So, it manifests in this group that it's mind-boggling to me, how support, yeah.

Gwen: Yeah, they're wonderful and although there are mostly creatives in there, it's still a pretty diverse group which is really awesome as well. It's great. I'm in a lot of different Facebook groups and they're great, but there is some negativity in those that can run through and I have never seen it in Design You.

Tobi: I love that so much.

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Gwen: I don't know why it never shows up, except for maybe mindset, but it doesn't. It's really, just a very positive group.

Tobi: I love that so much, and you're right it isn't that we've had – some people come and go and we've had pet groomers, we have real estate agents, we have stagers, we have designers, we have caterers, we have product designers –

Gwen: Landscapers.

Tobi: Landscapers, we have all kinds of people. I mean it speaks to two things. It speaks to the character of the people, but it also just speaks to, I think, the work that we do. I feel really confident that that is a lot of the reason why. Probably the negativity doesn't show up. Probably we're all conscience doing our own personal development work, all the time. It's so cool.

Well thank you so much. So many little blessings and gifts from this conversation. Thank you for being so open and sharing. I think people learn so much from open and honest conversations like you've had today. When you're saying, "We were getting in trouble at one point with you with our money, with the vacation rental or we would have been with the short and Show people that it's not just the highlight. Real stuff happens to all of us, but we also can have resolutions for those things and come out on the other side of them.

Gwen: Absolutely. Absolutely, and you know, don't do it alone. Get a coach, get a mentor, be part of a group because it's there. It's that together we are greater or smaller or better and we can help solve each other's problems. It's just really the way we should go as business owners.

Tobi: I agree so much. Thank you. Thank you, you've been such a blessing to me and I know you're going to be a blessing to everybody that listens so just big, giant hugs to you.

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Gwen: You, too, Tobi. Thank you so much. This was fun.

Tobi: Okay, don't you just want to hug Gwen? I just want to hug her, I wish you could see her. In fact, some of you I think maybe can. We did this episode on Zoom which we've never done before, so maybe you'll see some of the videos soon with Gwen and I. But she is just the most kind and lovely person and soul, but just so inspiring, too. I mean, wow, she is a powerhouse making so many things happen and she just inspires me every time I talk to her and I just – I loved having her on today.

I hope you loved hearing her story and her successes, and as she said, go find her on Instagram. We'll link it all in the show notes, too, and of course, we'll be promoting like we always do on Instagram so you'll know where to find her. But if you want to know more from her to carry on this conversation some more, have any questions, she's so generous and has offered for you to reach out to her on Instagram. Then, let me know, too.

Let me know what you thought about this episode. I can't wait for you to hear from two other of our incredible members in these next two weeks that have completely different stories and have done completely different things which is really fun.

So, I'll be back here really soon with one of those two amazing ladies and another great episode of *The Design You Podcast*. Bye for now.

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