

Ep #143: 2020 Year in Review



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Tobi Fairley

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Ep #143: 2020 Year in Review

You are listening to the *Design You* podcast with Tobi Fairley, episode number 143.

Welcome to the *Design You* podcast. A show where interior designers and creatives learn to say no to busy and say yes to more health, wealth and joy. Here's your host, Tobi Fairley.

Hey, hey friends, welcome to my 2020 year end review, or the subtitle and the real topic is how I showed up during Covid. Yikes. Yikes, the real story comes out. Okay so yes, each year around this time I do a year end review, an year in or year end, whichever one of those you prefer, they both work. And for years this was a blog post and then it became a podcast after that. But it was for a long time a blog post, when I was just a blogger.

And the year end review was always a list with photos of all the amazing things I did over the last 12 months, lots of things like travel, and magazine spreads, and product launches, and product installations, and awards. And I mean let's be real; it was the highlight reel plain and simple. And that would serve me then to remind myself to stop and celebrate, and to be thankful and grateful for all that had happened, and all was given, and all the people that had helped me along the way. I think that maybe that version of it is an exercise that I've outgrown, at least in that format.

And I remember writing my year end review last year and feeling so bored. And it was pre Covid, but I had started shifting how I was showing up in the world so I still had plenty of things to talk about. And what I had noticed last year actually, that it was a lot less about all of these fancy highlight reel things from my job and a lot more – or my work, and a lot more about time with family, and connecting, and traveling and I liked that. That was more in alignment with my values. But I remember being bored still and trying to come up with these flashy things.

And in fact I remember thinking I was kind of comparing myself to years past. And I was like does this look as important? Does this look as exciting? Will people think that I'm old or irrelevant now, which is interesting, comparing myself to myself and wondering if it was good enough? But it was just a shift. It was a shift in priority and I almost felt

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

Ep #143: 2020 Year in Review

guilty for not being more thankful for a lot of the blessings and achievements that I was writing down last year. I was like yeah, that was great. Yeah, we were on that magazine, or we did that thing or whatever.

But I could just tell again that my priorities were shifting and that I was looking at life a lot differently. But even if I hadn't outgrown it already as of last year, only a few short months after I wrote that year end review at the last week of December of 2019, the bottom fell out for all of us. Then came Covid and the typical list of accomplishments wouldn't have been possible anyway for this year, even I had wanted them to be.

So I kind of love a little bit that even before Covid I was kind of over some things. I was kind of realizing that the things we think are going to make us happy or be fulfilling are not the things that really matter. So this year's review, thank you Covid and a lot of other things, is a whole lot different. And it's far less about the highlight reel and a whole lot more about getting real. So it's less about the r.e.e.l., isn't that how you spell the highlight reel? I think so. I'm not a great speller. But it's less about r.e.e.l. and a whole lot more about r.e.a.l. getting real.

So let me share with you today how I showed up in the year of Covid, the good, the bad and the ugly. And there was plenty of ugly you all, and we're going to talk about it. Okay, so don't get me wrong, there were tons of things that we did right and well in business this year in my company. We grew our Design You program, and the revenues, and the people in there a whole lot. We made a lot of great hires on my team. We made huge strides in our processes, in our systems which we're going to do more of next year.

And I just couldn't be more proud of my team in what we accomplished together this year because we really got some things together. And we had the space and time to do it which was awesome. And so it was a lot of building a lot of internal stuff in the business. So things that weren't quite as visible to the eye in years past and that's kind of interesting because I was kind of tired of all of that outward facing stuff. And there was a lot of internal work this year and that was a good thing.

Ep #143: 2020 Year in Review

Now, probably the most important work yet for creating a life and a business that I really, really want is the work we did this year. So there's that, that in and of itself kind of speaks volumes about this year. But what I want to talk to you about today is not just that because those are all wonderful things that I feel good about.

But I want to talk to you about how I personally showed up because I think it's what you need to know. Because while a lot of you are feeling down right now, or depressed, or disgusted with yourself or your progress in a lot of areas, or you're just so dang busy because business is thriving but it's too busy to keep up with and so it's not really fun right now. It's taking the joy out of life.

I want you to see the real picture or imagine it since you have to listen to it, not see it. But I want you to know the real, the real part of what happened in my life. So I think sharing what my year looked like may be the thing you need to hear today. So here goes.

So early on when Covid hit I was feeling really good. I had just returned from a dreamy photo shoot in Florida. I did do that this year with one of our amazing projects, a client we just love, we did a beach house for. It was the biggest photo shoot I had ever done. I took a whole huge team, a stylist, a video team, all of my team with me. We had wardrobe changes. We had all this fun stuff. It was all great and amazing.

And I had lost 15 pounds from the November, October, November before. So was feeling really strong, really purposeful. And by the way I've found that 15 pounds thanks to Covid, which we'll talk about in a minute. But I went on that shoot, my mom and my daughter came with me on the trip. My daughter and I had just been on another fun trip to St. Louis a couple of weeks before that to see Post Malone because yes, I get the cool mom award or some of you may think the horrible mom award, if you're not into Post Malone. But either way she thinks I'm cool, we had a great time.

And I was getting ready to launch a new collection with Woodbridge Furniture at the April High Point Market right about the time Covid hit too. So life was feeling super great but pretty darned busy. And then came the

Ep #143: 2020 Year in Review

pandemic. And I remember talking about it in Florida. My client is a doctor. And we were talking about it. We were kind of laughing a little bit, what if something happens on the plane. We were all hand sanitizing the plane and our hands and not touching things but we had no idea what was coming. It had not hit.

So I think I landed home maybe around the 8th of March or so. And was back to work the next week three or four days later. And I remember being on a call with one of my clients when my daughter called me from school or texted me. And she was like, "Come and get me." And I was like what's happening? I had no idea it was pandemic related, who knows what I thought, maybe that she was sick. And she said, "Yeah, school has let out for exposure to the virus and so come and get me."

So I picked her and five girls up in my car, they were all like, "Can I come to your house, my mom's at work?" Put them all in the car, brought them over here, they were laughing, having a great time. And we thought they would be going back to school in probably a week. Well, they never went back to school or at least my child did not. She now goes to an online high school, not the one she used to, a totally different school. And she does all her work from home and she is with me daily 24/7.

But from March 11th in the afternoon, the next day was my husband's birthday. So from that moment life as we knew it was completely different. And so for those first few days and weeks of the pandemic when they started to unfold we didn't know what was happening. It was a little bit fun, it felt a little bit like a snow day, the kids were loving being out of school. And I started to shift a few things. And so what I shifted was my thinking and it wasn't necessarily a good thing, I'm going to tell you why.

So I felt in that moment as I was seeing the stuff happen, while I was seeing businesses shut down, we were all just in shock as the world was starting to shut down, as New York was having so much tragedy with illness, and hospitals, and all the things that we all saw happen. And all of a sudden I felt like it was my job to show up and really kind of – I don't think the word is save, it wasn't quite that arrogant. But it was like an obligation

Ep #143: 2020 Year in Review

to help my students save themselves, the people that we worked with, our members of our programs, our followers.

I felt this really strong obligation to show up in a huge way. And we are and we were and still are making a lot of changes and huge strides in my business this year. But in that moment I made a few what I would now kind of consider dangerous mindset choices that started to unravel some of the work that I was doing professionally and personally inside the business. Now, not necessarily anything you could see specifically and not unravel to the point that my business is in trouble. In fact we're kind of thriving more than we were before.

But personally I started showing up in a way that would kind of prove to be a problem this year. So first it came in the form of some thoughts that sounded really good but would prove to be a problem, thoughts like I have to keep these women and a few guys afloat in their businesses. It was my responsibility to keep everybody that was paying me any level of money to be their coach, or their leader, or whatever, to keep them in business as if that was even something that was possible.

And I felt like yeah, it was my job, it was my obligation. And I thought thoughts like I can believe in them. I can believe in them even when they don't believe in themselves and I'll do that. I'll do that by showing up constantly. I'll show up constantly on social. I'll make all these new courses, and programs, and bonus calls, and I'll literally be thinking day and night 24/7 about how to solve their problems. And I really thought that I could and I tried it.

And I thought I'm strong and we're good, we're in a good position financially in our business right now. And I can afford to do this. I can afford to step up. And yeah, I'm glad I did that for people and I think it did make a difference. But it also took a really big toll and at some points allowed me not to be as resilient as I needed.

So when I was there saying, "Let's add a ton of calls, and a ton of trainings, and a ton of support", mostly done by me personally to help people through this uncertain time. And yeah, we can squeeze these calls and this work in

Ep #143: 2020 Year in Review

around everything, this is only temporary so yes, I can go back to working nights and weekends and all the time to create those. It's totally fine, I'm willing to do it. I'm willing to sacrifice, whatever my current thoughts were, something around that. And those thoughts were problematic.

Those thoughts helped me believe that the schedule and the structure that I had put in place, that I had been working for years to put in place, that it suddenly had to change. Throw it out of the window, kind of throw out the baby with the bathwater, both of them. And so at least temporarily and in a lot of ways this kind of thinking, this exception thinking became my personal unraveling in a lot of ways.

And so just a few weeks into the pandemic I started giving in to old bad habits. I started buffering with food so I didn't have to feel my emotions of anxiety, and nervousness, and fear for the uncertainty and what was going to happen. Was I going to help keep these people in business? And was I going to be able to afford to stay in business myself and keep all my team working, which thankfully we did. But I didn't know and none of us did.

And so I started turning to some old unhealthy habits, particularly with food. I'm not a big drinker. A little bit I drink alcohol occasionally. But food is my go to comfort.

And so the other thing I started doing which was crazy for me was I began staying up really late, which was really out of character for me. Because for years I've said, "The one thing that I just don't skimp on is sleep." And that I need my eight, or even, nine hours to thrive. But that started looking like six or seven hours, sometimes even five hours. And instead of my normal 10:30 bedtime it shifted back to 12:30 or 1:00 on a regular basis. I was staying up with my family and watching TV.

And my daughter was sleeping in my room while my husband would go fall asleep in hers because he's like, "You all are crazy and I've got to go to work." But then he started working from home so he was staying up later. And there were moments of it that were really fun.

Ep #143: 2020 Year in Review

It also was creating a lot of results, or it did later, a few months later, create some results that I didn't like at all. But I had great excuses to do this because it was a lot of wonderful time and connection with my team, with my husband. We were watching TV, things that I never typically make time for. And believe me I really did enjoy and I'm still enjoying some of that. And I needed more of that connection in my schedule and in my life, and I had been making time for. So that part felt really good.

But the eating bags of gummy bears while I watch TV at one in the morning, not such a good idea. So the connecting was great, it was really good for my soul but I pretended connecting with my people couldn't happen on my structured schedule. I believed it only could happen if I threw out the rules like I was a teenager or a college student, or something without the wisdom that I should have known and been tapping into for my 48 year old self. But I didn't do that, I was a little spontaneous and it was a little bit in some ways kind of reckless for me.

And so the lack of sleep and the unhealthy bedtime meant that my morning routines were off, in fact kind of not even an option, 5:30 sure wasn't happening, which is not my favorite time to get up. I do like it, I like to get up early and squeeze in those quiet mornings. But even my normal favorite wake time which is about 6:30 wasn't happening. Most days 7:00 wasn't even happening because I would need to catch up on my sleep at least a little bit.

And so instead of noticing and getting myself back on track what did my brain tell me in those moments back in April, and May and June, when I was behaving this way? It was like this is so much fun. You forgot how much you love not having rules, and not having structure. Tobi, you forgot you love this more free and creative version of yourself. And gosh, did that ever sound like the truth? And during this pandemic I've watched myself stop some of my most important habits.

I've watched myself question what I really want in my life and pretend, I've watched myself pretend that I didn't want some of the things that were best for me. And yes, friend, our brains will totally go along with this ride. They'll

Ep #143: 2020 Year in Review

tell us these things that aren't true because our brains don't have our backs and we think they do. And we are believing our own thoughts all the while. Well, I was believing, yes, this is fun.

And so our brains don't want to create the best versions of us, they want the path of least resistance. They want to create more problems in a lot of ways so that they can feel purposeful and have something to solve. And that's exactly what I did for months. So here's what I know now. That kind of behavior, those choices, they led to results that I didn't really like in my life. They led to fatigue, weight gain, exhaustion and some suffering. And yeah, they led to some connection and some other wonderful things too. And I can keep those things. It's not all or nothing.

But they did lead to some choices I didn't like and these are the types of choices that make us hate ourselves, berate ourselves, that bring up that old mean girl behavior that we're so skilled at. But here's the good news, here's the absolute good news. For the first time ever when watching myself make conscious choices that were directly in opposition to my dreams, I showed up in a new way. So this is the silver lining piece of the acting like a teenager or a college student which was fun for a minute. I mean it was. It was fun.

But what I didn't do for the first time in my entire life was I did not beat myself up incessantly. There were moments when it would creep in but I really shifted. And instead of a barrage of why can't you ever get this right and you'll never be thin, and you'll never truly be healthy, and you'll never be able to balance work and life or the wellness you want. Instead of all that stuff that was like an old broken record, I chose to think differently on purpose in response to this little hiatus I took from the life that I had been living and the habits that had been serving me.

And so instead of mean girl and beating myself up I focused on love, what I call radical self-love. And I intentionally say radical because compared to the way I would have felt about myself in the past for making these choices, this was extreme and nothing I had ever felt or ever practiced before. And I am choosing to believe this entire shift, this whole result of radical self-love

Ep #143: 2020 Year in Review

is the entire reason that I had this period of showing up in a way that was the opposite of what I said I would.

Because without that hiatus from my rules and my structure, without those choices I wouldn't have had the reason, the impetus, the need to choose radical love for myself. I wouldn't have needed to do this work. And so it's only in moments that we do things to create feelings of disappointment, or frustration, or anger, that such radical love for ourself is critical.

And if I hadn't created the situation in several of these results that I didn't love, yeah, the fatigue, the weight gain, the other physical symptoms. The inflammation, the joint pain, the – I don't know, skin breakouts that I've never had in my life, all the things, all the results I created.

If I hadn't have had those symptoms I wouldn't have been more convinced than ever about what choices really do work best for me and what I really want, and why it's important to show up in a certain way. Because before that I was always resisting, I was like, "Well, I'll have to go to the gym. Well, I'll have to eat healthy. Yeah, I really want this." But I wasn't convinced of it, I was resistant to it. And now there is no resistance because I see exactly perfectly clear. I see that 2020 vision that when you do this behavior you get these results.

And I needed to see that so that I know exactly how I want to show up in the future. So I reminded myself that not planning my food in advance makes for so much wasted time. Just eating whatever, eating in the middle of the night, eating junk, it's such a waste of time. Just the time we spend as a family discussing what's for dinner is miserable. And somehow even when we discuss what's for dinner for two hours, the decision always goes back to being my problem because no one else will assume that leadership role in my family. They're like, "Whatever mom, you decide."

And so instead of thinking about meal planning as some form of restriction or punishment now, or something that's hard, I was reminded that planning ahead on Sundays what we're having for the whole week is the most loving gift I can give to myself ever. Because not only can I have more control over what I'm eating that fills my body better, I can just know exactly what's

Ep #143: 2020 Year in Review

for dinner. And at the end of every busy day there's not this senseless discussion for hours on end of what the heck we're going to eat.

That's just one of the many examples of the things that I learned from the pandemic. Then there's the sleep thing, I wouldn't have been reminded had I not started staying up so late that I don't thrive without sleep. And that many of my best hours are early in the morning and that being tired all day doesn't make for creating my best content or being the best teacher, or leader, or making the best food choices, or heck, being in a good mood. It doesn't make me a good mom or a good wife, or a good person for that matter, when I don't have any sleep.

And I wouldn't have missed my quiet mornings for reading and thinking time that fill my cup, and start my days with joy, and set the tone for an amazing day ahead. I wouldn't have been reminded that the point is not to require some rigid morning routine, but rather making choices that make me feel my absolute best every day. And when I give myself that quiet time and space for meditation and prayer, and a cup of coffee or two all by myself in the mornings, that those days are my best days. And I was sleeping right through that with this other choice.

So had I not started living this way I wouldn't have known, and had I not started consuming a ton of news again, my gosh, I had given up news over a year before, maybe longer than that for the most part. I mean I would stay in touch of what's happening as a responsible citizen. But you can do that literally looking at your phone for five minutes once a day and getting the headlines. But I had stopped consuming all the negativity of news.

And had I not started listening to it all again I wouldn't have been reminded that focusing on and worrying about what was happening in the world and what the president, and the economy, and politics, and Covid. I wouldn't have remembered how much negativity, and fear, and anger, and hate that creates for me and that it's truly mental garbage for me, and such a low vibration for me that leads to depression, or apathy, or lethargy, or all of the above because I felt it. And I was like what is happening? And why do I feel so much anxiety? And why am I miserable?

Ep #143: 2020 Year in Review

And when I realized that I was just putting a lot of this negativity into my brain on a daily basis, not controlled but having it running in the background, having the TV on, listening to all the kinds of podcasts, all kinds of political stuff. I didn't remember what that did to me.

And so I'm not saying that I'm so privileged, I mean I am privileged, let's be clear, privileged, white privileged, financial privilege, I'm privileged. But I'm not saying that I'm so privileged that I can just ignore the news because it doesn't impact me. That's not what I'm saying at all. But what I am saying is that I now remember that I can control how much of it comes in and when it comes in. When I hear it I can pay attention to what it's doing to me mentally and physically.

And I can notice when it's taking a toll so I can go take care of me with some self-care, and some nature walks, and some breathing, and some things that counteract all of that kind of assault we put into our body when we're listening to the news. And not just news but a lot of opinion, it can really take a toll.

And had I not stopped lifting weights and moving my body, going to the gym, I didn't have a choice, the gym was shut down. But had I not stopped doing that for six months or so, I wouldn't have been reminded how my joints feel, and how my hips hurt, and my feet ache. And my body does not like it when I sit for too long as in hours, and hours, and hours at the computer without moving my body.

I wouldn't have been reminded of how my body responds to the combination of lots of grain, and dairy, and sugar that I was now putting in that I had been skipping for quite some time. And I would have forgotten that those foods create physical pain for me. And that combined with no exercise or movement that it's not good for me and that I'm not removing toxins or stress.

And gosh, stress was higher than ever, and I wasn't removing it in the way that I had been especially during this time of political unrest, and the pandemic, and the unstable economy. My gosh, the stress is off the charts for so many of us, especially people who had loved ones or you personally

Ep #143: 2020 Year in Review

that were actually impacted by Covid. So not moving our bodies is not okay. And it's not about being some particular weight at all, it's just moving your body to get that stress response completed and out.

And I would never have remembered what a toll it took on me until I stopped doing those things. And had I not in general gone back to sort of an all or nothing thinking and behaving which is exactly where I went. I wouldn't have been reminded that everything I want and everything I dream of is on the other side of taking simple consistent daily actions, period. Not grandiose gestures, not these big starts and hype for the latest and greatest thing I'm trying in any area of my life, followed by quitting on myself.

No, that all or nothing stuff is not what works. But the just keeping it simple with a handful of things that I know are my things that work for me. I wouldn't have been reminded that that is what helps me create the body, and the life, and the feelings, and emotions, and wellbeing, and business, and relationships that I want.

So yes, even though early on I was telling my followers all the right things to do, my followers, and my members of my community, and my clients, I was saying, "Don't give up on your routines, and keep working out, and eat clean, and get up and get dressed", and all the things. I knew exactly what to do but a lot of days and in particular a lot of moments I did just the opposite of that. And I want you to know that. But I'm so grateful that I did in the weirdest sort of way.

My health coach once asked me if I would be willing to gain 50 pounds to once and for all figure out the secret to showing up the way I really want to in my life. And I thought have you lost your mind? Hell no. And I didn't gain 50 pounds. I've gained 15 or maybe a couple more, but not 50, but still some people did. Some people really struggled in this area and I would say that I'm one of those people.

But now I know what she's talking about. Now that I'm grateful that this happened I see what she's talking about. If you had to gain the weight back to figure out what it really looks like to consistently do this. And I would say

Ep #143: 2020 Year in Review

that's true in almost every area of my life, my weight, my health, my sleep, my mental game, my relationships, all of it. I had to go off track and create results I didn't want to be reminded of how not hard it is to consistently do the things that create the results I really, really want in my life. So now I know exactly what she means.

So no, I didn't gain 50 pounds, just the 15 that I had lost the year before and probably five other times prior to that in my life. But I'm so grateful that even though these 15 pounds were the byproduct of my choices, I solidified my beliefs around what works for me and what my body needs. And what my, you know, my needs and how much sleep I need. I became really, really clear on what doesn't work for me. Lack of sleep is a no, late bedtimes is a no, lots of grain, dairy and sugar is a no, eating on the fly with no plan is a no.

Eating when I'm not hungry to numb my emotions and my anxiety about Covid, and politics, and the world, and money is a no. Not drinking at least 64 ounces of water is a no. Not moving my body is a no. Not lifting weights is a no. Too much negativity and news coming in is a no. I am so keenly aware of a whole lot of things that just do not work for me. And there's no confusion. And there's really kind of not even any desire for them.

And I'm not saying I'm perfect and that I've fixed all those areas of my life. But I'm just saying I'm clear now on why those things don't work for me, which kind of makes me not ever want to do them again. And I'm sure I'll have my moments because it's hard when we use things to numb our feelings, or because we're busy and we just eat on the fly because we weren't prepared or we didn't plan ahead. And those moments are going to happen. They're not going to go away. But I'm clear on what the consequences are for me.

And there's a lot of those things that I'm just not willing to have anymore. So here's what I want you to know, this isn't all a sad story. This is a story of awareness, and growth, and love, gosh, radical self-love. And it's a story about making room for a lot of things that I would not have made room for had I stayed on my old routines, even the ones that worked.

Ep #143: 2020 Year in Review

Because I needed to remember some of the other stuff that I now made space for, the connection, the fun, the joy, the laughing, the TV time with my family, the piling up in the bed and staying up till late at night. I need to remember those so that I can choose those sometimes, just not every day. And there's so much that can come from what Glennon Doyle calls the brutiful parts of life where things are both brutal and beautiful. And I'd say that's what 2020 has been for so many of us. I think this period was definitely brutiful for me.

And from those ashes, I burned a bunch of stuff down, came an awakening that I could not have come to otherwise. And I honestly believe that had I not experienced these last what, six, eight, nine, ten months, however long I was kind of off my routines, had I not experienced those things exactly the way that I did, some of the most important lessons and shifts of my entire life would not have happened.

I have spent 48½ years trying to learn to truly love myself. And until I showed up exactly as I did in the pandemic off the wagon or whatever you want to call it. I often say there is no wagon, but it's a great way to describe being off our routines. If I had not shown up in that way and so many ways in areas of my life I don't believe I would have made the biggest shifts ever towards radical self-love and the healing that came with that.

And there's one particular moment recently where I had an out of body experience, really kind of looking back on myself as if I were a child and just feeling this extreme amount of love and gratitude that I felt for myself in that moment. For the very first time that I ever felt that way about myself, of just seeing myself with so much compassion, and understanding, and love. That I was showing up exactly the best that I could and it really blew my mind.

And I suddenly realized that the reason that all of my habits, and efforts, and rules, and structure had never worked before fully was because they were not coming from love, but from not enough-ness. So the same routines I had before that were working sort of but were so easy for me to throw out when I had a good excuse. I now see that I can pick back up

Ep #143: 2020 Year in Review

many of those same habits but from a completely different place, a place of love, not that place of not enough-ness.

Those efforts were coming from scarcity, not abundance. They weren't coming from a desire to be kind to myself before. They were coming from a place of proving something, or fixing something because it wasn't right, or good enough yet, or successful enough yet, or worthy enough yet. And so this is a lesson that I thought I'd already learned but I hadn't. I thought it was fixed but it wasn't. And maybe what if those lessons are never really complete?

What if we're just on the continuum of this work, which is probably the truth and every time we think we've arrived we haven't. Even now in this moment I haven't because it's not a destination, it never will be. But through this awakening to loving myself more than ever even in my imperfections. And trust me I'm on the very beginning of this new journey of self-love at this level. But it was for the first time now me truly loving myself, which allows me to truly love other people and their flaws, and their shortcomings, and their differences for me.

And wow, is that ever important? And we've seen that, the division we have with people this year. And loving myself at this level radically in all my imperfection taught me that I can do the same thing for other people. So until I can accept and truly accept and love all the parts of me. That are off track, or rebellious, or overweight, or scared, or angry, or childlike, or dramatic, or selfish, or needy, or not at all in line with what the world tells me I should be. Until I can accept all of that how in the world could I ever really love my own child, or my husband, or any of you? I can't, I couldn't.

And until I see every part of me as a 100% worthy and completely beautiful, all the parts, the parts that maybe don't fit in my jeans the way they did nine months ago. The parts that I want to eat to cover up, my fears, or when I overwork, or when I'm anxious, or when I'm yelling at my family and I'm stressed. Until I love all those parts of me, the parts we want to hate, the parts we wish would go away.

Ep #143: 2020 Year in Review

Until I love and I accept them as being just as much a part of me, and just as important and amazing as all the bright, and shiny, and palatable acceptable parts of me. Then I would be fighting the same battle and losing the same battle with myself and with my relationships until the day I die. Until I can have total compassion for me when I'm showing up at my worst then I can never ever love myself even when I'm showing up at my best.

And I now see that this is why no matter how much we do to create, or achieve, or build, or grow, or become all these things on our list, of goals and aspirations. If we don't love ourselves at our very least we will not start love ourselves at our very most in those 'successful' moments. And that is why even when we should feel happy and successful, and those moments that look so amazing, and where we should be on top of the world we often don't.

Whether you're religious or not, this whole conversation of loving ourselves at the least so we can love ourselves at our most, or our best reminds me of the scripture in Matthew 25:40 where Jesus says, "In as much as you have done it unto one of the least of these my brothers, you have done it unto me." And in that verse I'm reminded that if we are hating the least of ourselves then we hate the whole of ourselves, period. Radical self-love was the foundation for so many other shifts and silver linings during the past nine or ten months for me that have changed me forever for the better.

And stepping away from my routines, though it brought some negative consequences and affects it also brought some of the biggest gifts of my life. Stopping my routines that were born out of scarcity and opening myself up to see my entire life from a blank slate allowed me to identify those things I have mentioned above that I now want to keep and I didn't get rid of. I didn't get rid of them. I thought I was getting rid of them for a while. But now I'm like I want to keep those just for a totally different reason.

And I was reminded of the real reason those habits, and thoughts and practices are important to me. And guess what? The reason to continue them are not the same reasons I was doing them before I stopped. So going into 'pandemic mode' as I call it, allowed me to see a lot of things I

Ep #143: 2020 Year in Review

wanted to stop doing, some things I wanted to start doing and a few things I wanted to keep doing, maybe a lot of things actually that I wanted to keep doing.

And by making the space to literally white box my life, stopping it all and taking a look and seeing what I wanted to put back in, that was so helpful because you're starting anew sort of, but with the wisdom of what works. And you're rebuilding it in a way that you want to with all the rules, and shackles, and proving, and cultural stuff removed you can build it the way that's really right for you.

So here are a few things that I did make room for. Trusting myself in my own knowing, this deep inner knowing of what's right for me instead of always looking to a book, or a coach, or someone, or something outside of me to tell me what to do next. I did a whole lot as you've heard on the podcast here of committing to showing up as an antiracist which is a journey that I'm just starting. So that was a huge piece of what went into the box for me.

I also really got an understanding of the role that the patriarchy has played in my life through religion, and my goals, and striving, and working, and my body image, and health. And how I want to create new beliefs in all of those areas that serve me so much better, even though they might be out of step with what our culture tells us is right or what we should look like or who we should be.

I also in this process embraced my religion, and my spirituality, and my voice in a whole new way, becoming so much more resolute and clear on what I believe. And being brave and confident enough to speak about it. And you're going to hear me speak more about some of this stuff in the coming year. And yeah, I have decided to embrace and discuss all the things we were taught not to talk about. All the things in the south that my mom said don't do because it makes people feel uncomfortable, which is what money, religion and politics, yeah, all of them.

They're all on the table for me now publicly and they won't go back in the closet, or the drawer, or swept under the rug. They're part of how I'm

Ep #143: 2020 Year in Review

showing up. And I really made space for a new definition of health and wellness for me, admitting things like what I like to eat that I was depriving myself of. Or I mean really kind of stopping more of the diet rules and thinking, but being honest about what types of things, and foods, and exercise, and movement, and space, and breathing, and walks outside, and fresh air, and all the stuff that fills me up. So I use this as a time to shut out what the world tells me is right for me about my health, or my wellness, or my size.

And I started trusting that I know the answers already. And it's not the BMI chart, or my scale, or some guru who decides for me how I look, or how much I weigh, or what I eat, I decide that from a place of love inside myself. And asking questions like does this food feel good to me? Does it make my body hurt? Does this movement or this exercise work for me? And I built this new definition of health and wellness from a place of being gentle and tender with myself more than I ever have before. Gosh, just that alone coming out of this year is such a gift.

And then I also re-imagined the structure and the systems in my business and my life from a place of kindness to myself and to my team. And really understanding at a new level how to get the right mix of taking risk myself and letting my team take risk, letting them help monetize and imagining grow the business more than ever before. And it really moved me more towards collaboration with people than ever. And I'm shifting to far more leading but less doing and all of that came from this year too.

So here I sit on the other side of 2020 and all the choices I made and I'm wiser, and I'm more loving, I have a whole lot of clarity. And it was all worth it. When I started 2020 I was so impressed with the idea of 2020 vision and how I thought this would be the year where we would put all our vision into place and just get total clarity and it would be easy, and tidy, and tied with a bow. And yeah, I got clarity alright. But I never in my wildest dreams would have imagined the road, the path to that clarity and how freaking bumpy it was.

Ep #143: 2020 Year in Review

But as hard of a year as this has been in so many ways I'm choosing to believe that it was not a wasted year, that it had an incredible purpose for me. And that where I am today in my mindset and my plans for the future could not have been possible without all that was in 2020.

So as we bid farewell to this year and gosh, yes, we're ready for it to go, and we hope that we never again feel the uncertainty and the pain that a year like 2020 has brought us, let us also not forget the joy, and the connection, and the love, and the growth that it made possible, that would not have been possible without this year.

So this year in review is one I hope I won't soon forget. I don't think I will because it taught me more than maybe all my previous ones combined. Those highlight reels were nothing compared to this behind the scenes journey of 2020.

Okay friends, cheers to learning, and to loving, and to leaving this year as we hopefully get the privilege of living out the coming year in a way that builds on the brutiful-ness of 2020 vision that we all now see so clearly in hindsight. Love to you all. Thank you so much for being here. And I'll see you back here again really soon. Bye for now.

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