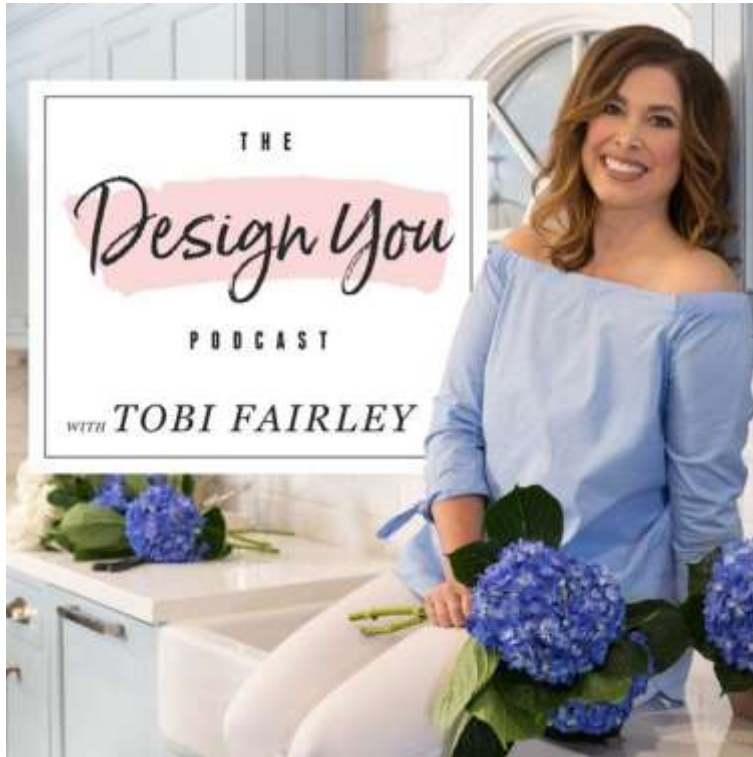


## Ep #144: Word of the Year 2021



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Tobi Fairley**

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## Ep #144: Word of the Year 2021

You are listening to the *Design You* podcast with Tobi Fairley, episode number 144.

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.

Hello friends and bravo, bravo for the new year. This episode comes out on New Year's Eve so as you're listening you may be just a few hours or even a few moments from 2021. Or maybe it's already the new year and you're catching up on your podcasts while you're laying around and enjoying a relaxing New Year's Day off work. Either way this is one of my annual traditions and favorite episodes. It's my word of the year podcast so let's get down to business.

I have been picking a word of the year since 2012. So that's about nine years if you do the math, almost a decade. And my previous words starting in 2012 have been disciplined, then inspire, the next year was action in 2014. 2015's word was significance, then I had focus, joy for 2017, then one of my all time favorites thrive was 2018, 2019 was freedom, another great one. And then there's 2020, there's 2020 that in and of itself says it all, the pandemic year. The pandemic year's word was sort of hilariously, but maybe necessary, it was the word flourish.

Now, did I flourish? Well, it depends on how you look at things. And isn't that true for any year of our life, it's what we believe that it is. If it's good, if we believe it's good it was. If we believe it's bad it was. And you can hear more about my year, if you didn't already listen to last week's episode, you can head over and listen to that, another of my traditions which is my annual year in review. So go back and listen to that if you want. You can see what you think, whether you think I flourished. But I'm going to choose to believe that in more ways than not I did in fact flourish in 2020.

Okay, so what about 2021? Well, let's talk about that for a few minutes. And let's talk about how many of us may be feeling about the new year because we are likely both excited and fearful. I've seen several memes about 2021 that say something to the effect of, before I start 2021 I'm going

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to need to see some terms and conditions. But just because things may be uncertain, we can still get just excited as ever about the new year because guess what? Every year forever as long as we've been on this planet have always been uncertain, every single one of them.

We never know what's coming in the future and worrying, and being fearful, and pessimistic is always optional, we can choose that. But we can also choose to believe and feel about the new year any way that we want, including feeling really excited and positive. And I definitely believe the more optimistic and the more positive that we are, the better our year will be in spite of any crazy circumstances that may or may come up.

So again, flourish was my word for 2020. Did I flourish relative to the circumstances? I'm going to say a big old yes, and I want the same thing to happen in 2021. I want to shine. I want to show up the way that I want to. I want to thrive. I want to really make the most of whatever happens. And I bet you want that too.

So how do we get to this process of picking our word of the year? Now, if you are feeling scared, or pessimistic, or like it's not worth it, why bother. I recommend that you do a bit of journaling, maybe even a little yoga or meditation, maybe some breathing, whatever it takes to get you in a place of calm and a place where you're really present before you get started. And I know that might sound hokey to you, but I'm just telling you, it really works. And what doesn't work is coming from a place of negativity, and fear, and why bother.

So think about making some time, making some space to get yourself in a great state of mind before you pick your word. Now, let me tell you a bit about what I'm thinking for my word for 2021 and my own goals. And once I tell you a little bit of that back story then I'll reveal to you what my word is. So here are a few of the things that I'm most excited about in business in 2021. I plan to roll out a new and very exciting digital product later in the year of 2021 that's just for interior designers.

And I can't tell you yet any more about it, I can't tell you yet what it is. But hopefully it's going to be launching in the spring, late spring, early summer.

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And it's definitely something that many of you have been asking me for, for a very long time. So I'm really excited about that. That's one of the things I'm looking forward to in the new year.

I'm also beyond excited about the new business coach that I'm working with in 2021. Her name is Lauren Cash. She's a Life Coach School Master Coach. And she is just an expert in all things leadership, and time management, and stepping into being a CEO at another level. And so she's going to be working with me weekly for an entire year to help me go next level with becoming a better CEO and helping me to empower my team to step up and shine like they never have before. So it's kind of just like personal development for me and my whole team but doing it at work.

That is the most exciting thing I've ever heard of, you're maybe like, "No, thank you Tobi." But for me, a self-help guru, personal development guru, person who likes to learn and just elevate how I show up in the world, that is so exciting to me because I'm not just doing this for myself. I'm investing in my team, so I'm investing in me in a big way and in them in a big way. And that's not really something I've done before ever. I mean I've taken some people to a conference or two, I've taken them to market – we've done a little bit of life coaching amongst the team for various projects.

But I haven't committed to a whole year of investing in me and my team in a big way and that's what we're going to do. Now, the coach mostly works with me, she's also going to work with the team, but we're doing a lot of other things to invest in the team. And I'll tell you more about that next year as we get into it. But it's just, it feels so exciting.

And then also one of the things I'm excited about is as a part of this work on me and my team we have as plan to really double down on our systems and our processes in my business. Again, that may sound boring to you. That sounds like the sexiest most exciting thing ever on the planet to me. We already have a great foundation for our systems and our processes. But we are committing to making the way we run this company, world class.

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And we will be using our core values that we created in 2020 and our company manifesto that we've written to drive what we do as a company in all of 2021. It is going to literally take us on a path, it's going to be our guide that that work of core values and manifesto as we really, really dial in our systems and our processes and the way we work together like never before.

So besides up-leveling and investing in myself and my team, which is all wonderful, we are also committed to doing the same thing for our clients. So especially our Design You members and our private consulting clients, we are putting a lot of time and financial resources into bringing the best, and I mean the best solutions to our customers this year more than ever before.

So I'm just – I mean if I was excited about developing me and my team on another level, I'm just beyond excited about what we're going to do to create and invest in the people that we help to help them achieve their dreams. And it feels so – I don't know – just good and fulfilling to give at this level. And to spend my money on other people's dreams, my team's dreams, my clients' dreams, not just my dreams.

So this is really fun because I tend to be a really independent person, a person who's spent a lot of my life thinking I didn't need a lot of help, I had really good ideas, I can make this happen on my own, which is absolutely not true, but I thought so. And never before have I really been in such a collaborative spirit or coming from a place of where can we invest? Where can we invest and develop people, and things, and programs? So that's really fun.

Now, I have to say it does feel better really doing this for other people even than it does when I've invested in myself, because I've been investing in myself for years. And I'm thrilled that I did, don't get me wrong, it was worth every penny, everything I've ever done, every course, every program, every coach, every bit of self-care, any of the things I've done, education, all of it has been worth it. But this feels different which is really good.

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So I spent a lot of time in 2020 getting very real with myself. And I turned inward and I did more mindset work, gosh, than ever, which is hard to imagine because I do a lot of it all the time, a lot of thought work. I did a whole lot of getting coached. You can't even imagine how much I got coached, coached with other people. And this was in an effort to learn to really trust myself like never before. And so often we don't trust ourselves, we don't believe in ourselves, we don't believe we know enough or the right things.

We're always thinking we're not enough, that we don't know the answers. But here's what I believe. I believe that we absolutely do. And I believe that no one knows better than we do about what's right for us. Nobody, not a single person, not a consultant, not a doctor, not a guru, not an author, we do. We know what's right for us. And so I spent 2020 really learning to trust myself like never before. And I've always been pretty good at this. I trust my instincts a lot. And I know I have good ideas.

But I did fall into the trap of always reading the latest book, the latest thing, following the latest guru, I'm not saying don't do that, I've enjoyed that process. But there comes a time when we've got to stop looking outside of us, we've got to start looking inside of us and listening to our gut, to our nudges, our intuition, our wisdom like never before. And so that's what I spent a lot of time doing last year. And most of us struggle with this, we second guess a lot, we doubt a lot, we don't listen to our heart or our gut more often than not.

And the hard part may be even the most important one there, we might listen to our gut instincts on things, but our heart, our heart's desires, what we really, really want, we don't listen to that a lot of times. So after all of 2020 really dialing that in, doubling down on listening to myself and learning to trust me like never before, now I'm committed this year to move into that investing phase, showing my clients, and my students, and my team what's possible when we invest in them and teach them to trust themselves.

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And that, it kind of gives me chills because it's so fun to think about what's possible. I know what it's made possible for me when I started doing this work of really trusting myself. And so when we become the guide and a tool, or a resource to help our team members, our students, our clients really listen to their instincts and honor their true desires, that's when it gets really, really fun. And I have done that for myself.

And I want to be an example of how you can do that too. I want to show you how you can start to trust in yourself, and believe in yourself, and teach yourself to be the source of your answers so that you don't get stuck all the time. Because when we're always looking outside of us for something, for the answers, for the experience, for the tool, the wisdom we get stuck a lot and we doubt a lot.

And so if I can be sort of a conduit or a guide to help people really see what's possible for yourself then that will be an extremely successful year at the end of 2021. If I get to the end of the year and we say, "Yes, we invested in our systems, our people, our clients, and we invested in showing those people what's possible when you believe in yourself and when you trust yourself." That my friends is going to be really fun.

So with all of that in mind, that being the approach of what we're doing for all of 2021 in my company, and really personally too because what I do typically is align my personal goals and my business goals. So even just showing everyone how I'm trusting myself in everything personal, in my health, in my wellness, in my relationships.

And of course I'll be talking about a lot of that, it's all very intertwined, it's all very integrated because that's how I like to work because I think I get the best results when I really have more than anything a singular goal, kind of an overarching goal. And that's what that's going to look like for the new year.

So having said all of that no further waiting, here is my word of the year, drum roll. Pavel, can you put in a drum roll? Pavel is my editor, Pavel and his team. So drum roll please. Okay, the word I have selected is lead, to lead, because I believe that is my role this year like never before, my

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calling, my purpose for the next year is to lead. And let me give you a few definitions of lead, because I really want to get clear on that. I mean I'm clear on it, but I want you to get clear on this with me so you understand this process of picking a word of the year.

And the definitions are so important and why? Words don't always mean what they think they do, or we can grab a particular definition, or a particular meaning if that one guides us the most. So to lead, a lot of times we think to lead is to kind of be bossy and to tell other people what to do. And I think it's really in a lot of ways the opposite of that. So here are a few of the definitions of lead that really resonate with me.

The first definition is to cause to go with one by holding them by the hand while moving forward. So holding you by the hand, that's being your guide and helping you move forward.

Another definition I really like is to be a route or a means of access to a particular place or a particular direction, or even what I would add, a particular destination. So a means of access to a particular destination. The place I would love to help all of you access is that place where you absolutely trust yourself. That's where I would like to help lead you this year.

Another definition I like is the initiative in an action. So it says to be an example for others to follow. And that is exactly what I think a leader is, to show the good, the bad, the ugly, the hard, what it takes, but to be an example to follow for others, to make it easier hopefully for you.

A few more, another definition of to lead is to go in front of. Another one is to direct the operations, activity or performance of a thing, to bring someone to a conclusion or a condition. And to tend toward or have a result.

So all of those things fit perfectly into this approach I'm taking to lead which is hold people by the hand and move them forward. Have a means of access to a particular destination, be an example for others to follow, to go in front of, to bring you to a conclusion or a condition to land you or to tend



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toward a result. A result that you've wanted for a really long time, say time freedom or financial freedom, but you haven't been able to get there.

And I've spent years believing my job was to better myself. And it was in a lot of ways because the better we become I think the more we can help other people. But I thought it was my job to find the solutions to all my problems and to fix all those areas that were broken and become better than I am, a better version of myself, or even maybe at some level, I believe to become perfect even though I know that's not really possible. But it was a quest to fulfill my potential, to make a lot of money.

And all of those things sound like a good idea and they are in a lot of ways but here's the problem with that kind of thinking. When I was just thinking my job was to make me the absolute best me I could be, by fixing all my problems, the problem was that I'm not broken. We are not broken, we don't need fixing. We're already enough.

And so that work I've done, although it has led me to a lot of incredible results in my life, it has also created a lot of suffering for me along the way, because not enough-ness comes from a place of lack, a place of scarcity. It's often rooted in the belief that the answer to whatever it is we're trying to fix or become is outside of us and we've got to find it. It's like a quest, a treasure hunt, a needle in a haystack maybe is a better example.

But what I know now, thanks in large part to the year 2020 is that we already have and we already are everything that we need, truly, we really, really have it. We really, really know it, it's in there. And we've just got to trust it. And not matter if it's money we want more of or it's something about our health, or some other result we want to create, we already know everything right now we need to know. And it's usually not very complicated, in fact it's the most simple things.

If we just did those things, if we just did them consistently we would create the life that we want. We would have already done it. But we're just not doing it. And so the bigger problem is usually that we're looking outside of us for the next great idea or the next great answer, that thing that's finally

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going to create the life we want. But we're looking in the wrong place. And what we should be doing instead is trusting ourselves.

What will help us create that life is to understand or remember that there's no better place than where we already are, over there, or up there, or out there, that place in the future there is not better than here. It's not better at all. In fact in a lot of ways it's going to be the exact same thing because we're going to take our thoughts with us and we're still going to be searching when we arrive up there for the next place that's going to be the thing that fulfills us if we don't learn that lesson today.

So what will help us get to that place that we want to get to is choosing to believe that things aren't too hard, they aren't too scary, they aren't too anything today. And that we can simplify and we can be willing to trust ourselves and whatever the next step we take we can choose to believe it's the perfect next step. But it's training, it takes practice and sometimes it takes an example of someone else being willing to do that to help us get to the place we really want to be in our lives.

So there's no such thing as failure in my opinion, there's only feedback, there's only data, there's only information that reminds us once again that every single thing we need is already inside of us. And this is the work I'm going to do to help myself remember that, my team remember that, our customers remember that, our clients remember that, our members of Design You remember that.

And so quickly just to recap back to those definitions, my reason for picking the word 'lead' is to be an example of what's possible when we trust and believe. And it's to help me go in front of you and show you that the destination that you're looking for is right there inside of you, not somewhere to arrive. In fact you don't ever arrive anywhere. It's here, it's what we already have.

And my job as a leader I believe is to help you and my team see that any result you want, any result at all, anything, you can pick anything you want and it's absolutely possible. And all that's required of you is to just simply

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break it down and take the next action and believe that action is the right action and it's the perfect action. That's it, that's all it takes.

So I'm calling on myself to be a good leader. Now, I'm calling on myself actually to be a great leader. And a great leader has her own coaches, and surrounds herself with a team of incredible people and she puts her money and her mindset to work for the greater good of the whole, not just herself. But the company, and her clients, and the world at large, and I just feel so honored and really kind of emotional to step into this word 'lead' for 2021, to step into it, and embody it, and lead. And I'm taking it very seriously. I'm taking it so seriously what it means to be a leader.

And I think a lot of times as I said earlier, that's not what most of us think. Because I believe being a leader will require so much from me. A lot of growth from me, because leaders are not arrogant, leaders don't know everything. They're really kind of the opposite of that, I think they are humble. I think they're great listeners. I think they invest in other people. I think they're willing to try things and willing to get things wrong. I believe they solve problems, they use their resources to do that.

I think they're willing to be honest, and direct, and show others the way. But I think they're also willing to be shown the way and willing for others to be honest and direct with them. I think they're willing to give other people credit. I think they share the spotlight or even give it up completely. And I think they know what the great motivational speaker, Zig Ziglar knew when he said one of his most famous quotes which is, "You will get all you want in life if you help enough other people get what they want."

And I think that is what we're talking about, if I lead and I help you get what you want, then I ultimately get what I want, fulfillment, joy, success, however you define that. So there you have it, friends. I'm committed to being a leader in 2021. And that's different than just working on myself. When I've just worked on myself for a lot of years I'm just responsible for me. But as a leader I feel like I have a different level of responsibility. And I'm excited about it, I'm choosing it, and I can't wait to see what this word 'lead' does for me as I move through the next 12 months.

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I know a lot of you may think that I've already been a leader for years, I really do think this is different. So for me it starts tomorrow if you're listening to this the day it comes out on New Year's Eve. If you're listening to it then, then I'm gearing up, I'm ready to start because tomorrow is the first day I guess of the next 365 days that I'm committed to lead. And I'm committed to learning all the things that being a leader really means and what I know right now is that I truly have no idea what that means.

And I'm going to make mistakes and I'm going to fall down, I'm going to get frustrated. I'm going to learn, and I'm going to grow, and this word 'lead' is going to guide me as I do that. And I know I'm going to make an impact in 2021. But I know that more than anything with this as my focus, the biggest takeaway will be the learning. The biggest takeaway will be that learning and that growth, and that's all I really ask for. So are you ready to pick your word? Did I inspire you? Did I stare up at you?

Hopefully at the very least I didn't confuse you. But if I did and you need some help, I've got you, like I always have you. And I have a worksheet for you on picking your word of the year for 2021. And you can get it by going to [tobifairley.com/2021](https://tobifairley.com/2021) and downloading that word of the year worksheet. It's a few pages actually so it's not just one sheet, it's a little downloadable. And once you pick your word I'd love to know what it is. So tag me on Instagram with your word and let me know.

So here is wishing you a beautiful, and I mean beautiful new year full of all the things that you truly want the most and I'll see you back here in the New Year for our first episode of 2021 one week from today and we will get this new year rocking and rolling. So Happy New Year, friends, so much love to you, so, so much love to you. And oh, and don't forget to eat your black-eyed peas, because you know we've got to have those black-eyed peas for prosperity, and luck, and all the things they bring us in the New Year. Okay, that's all I have for you now. Bye for now, thank you.

Thank you so much for listening to the *Design You* podcast, and if you are ready to dig deep and do the important work we talk about here on the podcast of transforming your mindset and creating a scalable online

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