

Ep #163: Shifting your Business to Suit Your Lifestyle with Beth Diana Smith



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Tobi Fairley

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You are listening to the *Design You* podcast with Tobi Fairley, episode number 163.

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 Beth, here's your host, Tobi Fairley.

Hey friends today I'm talking to you if you are ready to kick the hustle to the curb. What do I mean? If you're tired of working nights, and weekends, and putting your health last and falling into some really bad habits that don't serve you or your business, and don't create the life that you really want then I think you'll love this episode. This is a really fun and super transparent interview with Beth Diana Smith, an interior design friend of mine. You'll hear more about her in the episode.

But I really love this conversation because we really got honest about some things that Beth was experiencing in her life and I could relate to so many of them. And really talked about kind of how we intend to show up differently moving forward post pandemic. And so Beth has some awesome tips about how she's put herself first, added more pleasure back in her life, put boundaries in place with a lot of her clients. And really just started becoming aware of what she needed to be her best self and figuring out how to sustainably show up and do that day after day.

And I think that is the key. It's about balance. It's about giving yourself grace and figuring out the exact right plan to work for you. So take a listen and see what you think. I think you'll like this interview with Beth Diana Smith.

Tobi: Hey Beth, welcome to the *Design You* podcast. I'm so glad you're here today.

Beth: Yeah. I'm actually really, really excited to finally have this conversation with you.

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

Ep #163: Shifting your Business to Suit Your Lifestyle with Beth Diana Smith

Tobi: I know. So we have been having the pleasure of serving on the House Beautiful Advisory Board or Committee together since last fall which sprung up out of a quest for House Beautiful to create more diversity and more conversation about just challenges in the design industry which has been so much fun and so enlightening and helpful. But one of the highlights for me is I've gotten to know people like you that I didn't really know before which is so good.

But the reason you're here is one of those meetings you were talking about something that really piqued my – and spoke to me because it's how I believe too. And that's what we're going to talk about today which is how you've shifted your business to really suit your lifestyle or what I'm calling the anti hustle culture approach to business.

But before we get into this much needed topic and conversation would you please tell everybody a little bit more about you, and where you live, and what you do and just a little bit about your business so that they can kind of understand, yeah, where you're coming from when we get into this fun chat?

Beth: Thank you for having me. Hi everyone, I am Beth Diana Smith. I am a New Jersey based interior designer, ex corporate finance and accounting girl. So interior design is my second career. And I feel like that gives me a very different perspective on my approach to interior design. And I think my journey to interior design has made my background to be very interesting, I should say to say the least. But as we were saying I feel like life is a learning experience so here I am to conquer the next juncture of my life.

Tobi: Amazing. And you're also a very accomplished designer. You have a beautiful style, a beautiful body of work. And you're doing other exciting things. You've had other exciting new opportunities and things coming, is there anything else in that realm that we should talk about before we move on to our conversation?

Ep #163: Shifting your Business to Suit Your Lifestyle with Beth Diana Smith

Beth: I'm really lucky to also, as Tobi mentioned, to be part of the House Beautiful Advisory Board. And I agree with what you said, it gave me such a great opportunity to really get to know people. I'm also on the New York School of Interior Design DEI Commission. I'm a founding member of the Black Artists and Designers Guild. I am a style expert for home goods. I mean I feel like I've been doing a lot. But I've been really blessed in my career with a lot of great opportunities and a lot of great press. And I am a self-proclaimed eclectic maximalist.

Tobi: Awesome. Perfect. Well, let's talk about these shifts you're making. So before we started recording you were saying to me, "I've kind of done a really good job at creating unhealthy habits in my business." And you said, "I think burnout is the thing I'm being most successful at right now", which I love. I mean I don't love that you're burned out.

But I love that you're saying that because it's going to speak to so many people because we get into business and we just think we're doing all the things we're supposed to be doing. And before we know it we're exhausted and we're not keeping all the balls in the air. And we don't even really know how we got there, right?

Beth: Right. And that's exactly what it felt like. I was like the only thing I feel like I'm doing well right now is being burned out. And it's a terrible feeling. I feel like I got to so consumed in making sure that I had every client nicely in a box with the bow tied. And I was staying on top of everything and making time for other opportunities and trying to manage my social media, that I neglected the basics. And I was like you know what? I've been working seven days a week for months now. This is why you're always tired.

It was just all these things and as I was mentioning, I know I'm not one of those people who functions well when they're tired. I am an eight hour kind of girl. That's where I need to be the best version of Beth when I wake-up. And I realized I'm in this perpetual state of feeling like I'm at my least

Ep #163: Shifting your Business to Suit Your Lifestyle with Beth Diana Smith

version of myself. And I was like, “That’s not good, that’s not good for me. That’s not giving the best to my clients or whatever opportunities that I’m doing.” And I was like I had to make a shift.

And I realized I’m also not making time for the people that are most important to me either. So I was like, “Alright, I have to make a change.”

Tobi: I relate to that so much. I’m also that eight hour girl. I mean even eight and a half hours is kind of my sweet spot. I don’t need nine and I don’t need ten but again eight, eight and a half, I’m with you. And I’ve always really honored my sleep because like you if I’m tired I just feel like I have a general fogginess about myself. I don’t feel like I’m on my game or that I could respond quickly or thoughtfully to the work I’m doing. But I have found during the pandemic for whatever reason, I waited until I was 40 however old I am, I think 48 when the pandemic started.

And I decided to just completely hijack my sleep, staying up with my daughter and my husband. And it’s probably because we were just off our schedules. And so I don’t know if that played a role in your experience as well. But for me, I know what you mean. And I feel like for the last year I’ve just been in a fog with this layer of exhaustion kind of in my day-to-day. And I do not like it at all.

Beth: Right. The same here, I’m a 100% with you. It was like you were living in this perpetual fog because I was feeling the same way. And the pandemic definitely at the start it completely screwed up my habits. The alarm clock would go off every day at 6:30 and I’d be up to start my day. But then I was like, but I was up binging such and such last night until 3:00am. And now I’m so tired. And now by the time the world started to reopen I was like, “I’ve got to break that habit.” I’m struggling doing it.

Tobi: Yeah, really am too. I’ve been surprised at how much. And the other thing, I have a 15 year old daughter at home. And we were just talking earlier, she’s like, “Well, I like to stay up till three in the morning. And daddy likes to go to bed at 9:00pm.” And they both want to be connected with me.

Ep #163: Shifting your Business to Suit Your Lifestyle with Beth Diana Smith

So I have this internal fight, do I go to bed with my husband when he goes to bed or do we let him go to sleep peacefully and I come upstairs and hangout with my daughter and end up staying up till one in the morning?

And the latter one of those has been winning more often than not, whichever. It's horrible. And now it's fun and I feel so connected to her and I kind of feel guilty getting back on the schedule. But that's neither here nor there, that's a whole other side. But the point being when you make choices pandemic or not, and I think most people's choices that lead to burnout are not in the pandemic. And they're just the saying yes to too many things, don't you?

So what led to those, besides the pandemic, those unhealthy habits? What were you thinking at times that were causing you to constantly not put yourself first in your business?

Beth: Part of it I feel like was FOMO fear of missing out. So I didn't want to turn down certain opportunities because they sounded great. Or because it was a brand or a publication that I really loved and I wanted to join them in whatever they were trying to do. But then I realized I had to hone in those things. And I also realized that I got tired of feeling foggy. And it's a weird place to be for an extended period of time. And eventually I was just like, "Are you happy feeling like you suck?" That was my hard question.

Tobi: It's your goal to be half assed every damn day.

Beth: Right. And that was my hard question to myself. And I feel like with my friends I'm a straight shooter and that's how I am with myself. So I was just like, "Beth, you must be okay sucking so what are you going to do?" And even there's this quote that I read, my God, this is probably in my corporate life. And it was like you have a choice, you can either have excuses or results. And I wanted to have results. I realized I had to make a really hard shift with actionable steps to change my behavior.

Ep #163: Shifting your Business to Suit Your Lifestyle with Beth Diana Smith

Tobi: Yeah, that's so good. Well, and as you were saying when those opportunities arise it's not that you have some leeway in the deadlines, especially if it's a publication. They're like, "We'd love to quote you in this story. Can we have this entire thing by you? Fill out this entire page and put thoughtful answers by tomorrow morning at 8:00am" or something. It's always last minute. And you want to say yes and then your calendar's already booked.

And so I think so many of us, we do find ourselves in that position, between the rock and the hard place of do I say no or do I squeeze it in? And yeah, and was it happening with clients too, did you find clients always asking you or if they weren't asking you they were allowing you to squeeze things in or work nights, or weekends, or all around the clock?

Beth: Right. I realized when clients would be calling me at 8 or 9:00pm or calling me on the weekend. I was like, "Okay Beth, well, let's be clear. They are part of the problem but you are also part of the problem because you are picking up the phone and you are talking."

Tobi: Exactly. Yeah. And what's the fear of not answering? Because a lot of us have that, for you what was that fear, if I don't answer I'm afraid this will happen?

Beth: It wasn't that, it wasn't fear. It's just that I was so used to working late into the night on the weekday. And because I was already working on the weekends it was just like my brain wasn't distinguishing it. It was just like you're already working. It's not a big deal. But then I realized it is a big deal because you are setting the expectation that it's okay. So I adhere to my office hours and when I a client called it'd be like, "Hey, it's outside of office hours, I'll get back to you on the next business day. Or I'll get back to you on Monday. Have a great weekend." And they'd be fine.

Tobi: I know, yeah.

Ep #163: Shifting your Business to Suit Your Lifestyle with Beth Diana Smith

Beth: And then I noticed they stopped calling late at night or on the weekend. And if they do it's always a funny message like, "Beth, I know it's outside of office hours. I just wanted to tell you that I saw such and such and I love it and we can't wait for you to come back." It's always now a fun message and they are also being respectful of the time which I appreciate. And that's like they should want that.

Tobi: I agree. And isn't it amazing that most of the time they weren't really the main cause of the problem anyway because like you said, they adapted so easily. It's reasonable not to work all nights and all weekends, people get that. But if you are the kind of person who does work nights and weekends they're for sure going to take advantage of it. They're not going to be like, "No, I'm not calling." Most people, occasionally I'll have someone who's like, "No, I want to respect your time."

But most of the time unless we set those boundaries I think people will be like, "Well, she's texting me, I might as well take advantage of it." It's so interesting. So you were saying that you had some really good friends that are good at keeping you accountable. So you started cleaning up your habits, tell us a little bit about what that looks like.

Beth: So first I started being really great at saying no. And I feel like that was probably the number one breakthrough moment, just because an opportunity comes to you it doesn't mean that you have to do it. So unless I felt like the opportunity served me, served my business, served my growth and was paying it's not really an opportunity. You don't have to say yeah. So I started funneling them out. And I became really an expert at saying, "No, thank you, but thanks for reaching out." So that took so much off of my plate.

Then I started using a productivity planner which I love. And it's forced me to be more realistic with my time because I was one of those crazy people with 20-25 things on my to do list every day which is not attainable to

Ep #163: Shifting your Business to Suit Your Lifestyle with Beth Diana Smith

complete. But that wouldn't stop me to staying up all hours of the night and at least trying to get most of them done.

And this productivity planner which was actually a recommendation from another very organized friend. And it forces me to not only prioritize my week to only 15 items but it forces me to prioritize my day with only five things that I have to do starting with the most important thing. And you get done with that most important thing using the Pomodoro method. Then you could do these next two things. And if you finish those two things then you could do these other two things. And once all the things is done, yes, girl, you had a rock star day and if you didn't it's fine.

Those things can be pushed and then you can add some other things. I've realized that's what my brain needed. I had to be more realistic with the amount of hours that were available in a day.

Tobi: Yeah. And how long things take, really we underestimate how long things take. We're like, "Surely I can do these 25 things." And you're like, "No, I really can only do five of them." And when you're consistently failing at 25 again you're like, "I feel like I suck. I'm tired. I'm a total failure." But you don't realize that you're like, "No, I'm not a failure. The problem is I'm believing that it's possible to do these 25 things." Yeah.

Beth: That's exactly what it is. I feel like it was literally keeping me on the Beth, you suck, path. And I hate that. I am such an ambitious overachiever that it wasn't healthy for me. Feeling that way emotionally and mentally was just like, girl, you are better than this. God did not put you on planet Earth to be mediocre so you have to clean up this behavior that you've created.

Tobi: Yeah, so good. And then you said once you started telling your friends they were your keepers.

Beth: Right, they, oh my God, the way they ripped into me in December because I decided I was going to take, I think a week off between Christmas and New Year. It actually might have been two weeks. And I told

Ep #163: Shifting your Business to Suit Your Lifestyle with Beth Diana Smith

all my clients that the office would be closed but that was the extent. I shut off communication with my clients but I still worked every day because I felt like let me do these things. I guess I'll have the New Year, feeling all productive, lovely.

Tobi: Get caught up.

Beth: Right. And I was still working every day, at my desk every day, working late every day. And they were like, "I thought you were taking time off." And I was like, "Well, I am. I'm just not meeting with clients." And they were like, "Girl, you know that doesn't even make sense. You should take time off." And I was like, "Well damn, you're right."

Tobi: Guilty.

Beth: Right. And I appreciated the honesty and they were a 100% right. I realized that I was still doing the things that I was trying not to do anymore.

Tobi: Yes. We have such a beautiful talent for lying to ourselves, and finding loopholes, and pretending that we're not just doing the same behavior but calling it a different name, don't we?

Beth: Right, that's exactly what it is. It's holding yourself accountable is sometimes difficult because to your point, you find your own loopholes. And sometimes you need other people to call you out on your nonsense.

Tobi: I love that. And one of the things you said earlier really resonated with me. You were talking about how you're a major overachiever which I would consider myself that as well. And I think for those of us who are that way and we like to get a ton of things done and we get our validation and probably always did from our parents because we were so productive. And our culture does that to us too, they're like, "You're such a good girl, you did all these things."

And I think to your point it's really hard then to retrain yourself to do five things a day when you have this even unconscious almost belief system

Ep #163: Shifting your Business to Suit Your Lifestyle with Beth Diana Smith

that you're supposed to be doing five times that. So how did you start to reconcile that overachiever part of you into teaching it to believe that five things was probably actually more overachieving than the 25 that you were sucking at?

Beth: I think it boiled down to reevaluating what my priorities were. And I realized that out of all the things that I was doing I was not on the list of priorities, my wellbeing, my health just wasn't a priority. I was like, "You are treating your vessel really terribly." So part of it was putting myself back on the priority list even with actionable things. No matter what, once a month I'm going to get my facial, it's going to be extended. I'm going to spend 90 minutes on the table. And that is my – at least I've scheduled one time a month just for myself to do something that I like to do.

Finding more time to even do the things I like, like reading, setting aside specific times, spend time with my loved ones. That became part of it. And then I realized – I have a neck and back injury and because of it I had to not do the workouts I used to do. But I am probably crazy, but if I can't do something all the way it's like my brain says, "Well, then don't bother." So because I couldn't do bootcamp anymore, I couldn't go for a run anymore, I decided, well, you can't workout girl, so eat whatever you want.

Tobi: Because those are related.

Beth: And that's literally what I was doing and I was just like, oh my God, Beth, you've gained – I want to say I have gained probably 25, 30 pounds. And I was like you can't even be slingshotted into your clothes anymore. So part of what I was trying to grapple with last year was just like oh my God, you have already gained this weight and now you have your corona weight. We were calling that the Covid-20.

Tobi: The covid-19 or whatever, yeah.

Beth: Right. And yes, that was part of it is shifting your lifestyle to make sure that you can get back to a size that you are – I don't have to be the

Ep #163: Shifting your Business to Suit Your Lifestyle with Beth Diana Smith

size I necessarily was. But you should feel – you should just go down to a size that you feel comfortable in your skin, that is healthy for your height because I'm a teeny tiny girl so that became part of it. And I was just like, "This isn't rocket science, Beth, you are being crazy. You can watch what you eat. You don't have to eat that whole thing of ice-cream just because you're not working out." They're not related.

Tobi: I do the same thing and I've always yo-yo'd with my weight. I'm working a lot on intuitive eating now which is anti-diet which I think so much healthier than a lot of the crazy things. I didn't want to just get back on the latest diet. But I did the same thing as you. I mean pandemic came, I mean I probably was as happy as I've been in my skin and my body.

And then I'm like, "Okay, well, let's just not sleep, let's stay up all night. Let's binge watch things and let's just eat whatever the hell we want." Ice-cream, we haven't had ice-cream sandwiches since I'm a kid; let's throw some of those into the Kroger list and gummy bears. And just asinine eating and I mean of course it was the – I mean we didn't even know I don't think what the stress was doing to us of the pandemic and what fears were underlying. And if we happen to be people who cope with eating then of course we're going to do that.

But I think it's so fascinating. And I think it's important that we talk about this too, not to shame ourselves or beat ourselves up but to all the people who are out there feeling shame right now. It makes them feel normal. I have wonderful habits in my life and business and have been successful, you've been very successful. But it doesn't mean that at any given time that there's not some area that you're sort of ignoring or showing up in a different way I think.

Beth: And I think it's important to – especially I'm a single woman and my friends are a mix of other single ladies, single moms, women that are married, women that are married with kids. And because of that mix of friendships I think I've always had a great overview of things. And one of

Ep #163: Shifting your Business to Suit Your Lifestyle with Beth Diana Smith

the things I realized was that I don't need to be perfect but I need to be cognizant. And I realized that I was not being cognizant of a lot. I was using the solution of okay, well, Beth, wear yoga pants and sweaters every day.

Tobi: Me too.

Beth: I don't dress like that. I don't even like dressing like that.

Tobi: I don't even like getting dressed now. I mean honestly, [inaudible]. But when you wear yoga pants and big flowy tops or sweaters every day and then you go try to put on real pants you're like, "How did this happen?"

Beth: Right, that's exactly what it was. And I was just like, you know, I have a friend and actually another designer friend we're really close. And she said, "I don't know how you've been dealing with everything you've been doing in your personal life and doing all this work stuff." And she said it because she knew some of my health situations. And I was just like, "You know what? I don't know. I think part of my unhealthy habits was putting things in little buckets and putting them away and not dealing with them."

And I was just like, I think her also saying that made me think, you are not dealing with everything in a healthy way. And because you are working all these hours you are not giving yourself time to cope or process and to deal. And I was just like, "Girl, you're going to snap if you don't change these habits." So I was just like my productivity list and then stopping working weekends and only doing, and if I wanted to happen to do something, only do the things that you feel like doing. You're not a robot. You don't have to treat yourself like a robot.

Get back on a healthier living plan. And once I started doing all those things I started to feel better. And once I started to feel better and that fog started to lift it was just like all my creative juices were flowing. And that, I feel like that made me feel my best. This is it. I felt like I was feeling like a rock star with my clients. I started revamping my processes and I felt like that was my magic ingredients that came together.

Ep #163: Shifting your Business to Suit Your Lifestyle with Beth Diana Smith

Tobi: I love that so much. The one thing that I – I've tried to be really careful about not beating myself up or with the other designers I coach in my programs, making sure that you remind them not to beat themselves up. Because we just went through something we've never had happen before in our life. So any response if it was gaining weight, or some people were drinking more wine, or some people were staying up too late, all the things. I want us to think, any response we can give ourselves some grace around because we were of course doing the best that we could do.

But at the same time I think there's so much we can learn from it and that's what I hear you saying is how much you learned from it. And in a way even though I maybe might call it – I went backwards in a certain area or I let a habit fall away in a certain area. To me some of that helped remind me or reinforce what habits I actually wanted to keep up because there were some things I was doing that I believe were important and I stopped doing. And I'm like, "I'm never doing that stuff again, there's just no need for it."

It's not like we had to go back to the way, like you're saying, that we were before. And so I would love to hear if that's the same for you, when I started eating junk again it wasn't just the weight gain for me. It was just that I didn't feel good. My stomach would hurt, or I would just have indigestion, or not sleep well, or whatever. And it started reminding me some lessons that I had learned once upon a time and suddenly threw them out the window. And I think coming back to some of my habits I'm more committed to them or connected with them in a different way.

Like you said, it's not just about now I want to get skinny and fit in a certain size. It's like when I eat that thing, when I eat dairy or something it just doesn't make me feel good. So I'm just going to not do that very often anymore. Did you have that experience too like it was more of a learning experience in a different way?

Beth: Yeah. I think I feel like the key word you said that really resonated was when you used the term 'grace'. And for me that was definitely

Ep #163: Shifting your Business to Suit Your Lifestyle with Beth Diana Smith

something that I had to learn was I'm not showing myself grace. And I've never really been good at showing other people grace because I'm just as hard on other people as I am at myself and that's not fair. So I need to show other people grace. I need to show myself grace. It's okay Beth, to make a mistake. If you make a mistake you do not have to spend the next days or weeks beating yourself up about it. You are human.

You are not artificial intelligence. You're a living, breathing thing. And I hated, and from what you said, you're a 1,000% right. I hated feeling like I was doing things and then automatically regretting it. Beth, if you don't stay out of the Burger King drive through, you do not need that whopper and that Oreo shake. What are you doing? As soon as you eat it, no matter how delicious you find it, I always, always, always regret it. And it just got to the point where when are you going to be tired feeling like you're making bad decisions?

And that was my reality check. To be blunt I don't want to constantly feel like I'm doing stupid shit. And that's just kind of what it boiled down to.

Tobi: Yeah. Well, and the other thing, and I kind of learned this from my life coach training and I'm curious to know if this resonates too. The other thing I learned is when I'm doing what you're calling stupid shit which we all do, a lot of times I think we're covering up. And I think you kind of alluded to this already, the actual work. What's the feeling that I'm not loving that's creating anxiety or something that when I drive through that Burger King it suddenly goes away when I bite into that food that gives me these warm and fuzzes or sends dopamine to my brain, what's under there?

And I think when we can just get enough space to see, I mean it's not like it has to be a catastrophe or a big giant problem to solve. But there's something under there that we're not wanting to feel or deal with like you were saying. And so we're just covering up with work, or food, or something else. Did you feel that way too?

Ep #163: Shifting your Business to Suit Your Lifestyle with Beth Diana Smith

Beth: Absolutely. I think that part of my brain that said, “If you can’t do it all the way then just don’t do anything.” I feel like I was just like, “Well, Beth, since you can’t workout the way that you want to then just put whatever you want in your mouth.” And I realized that I’m thinking about this all wrong. It’s not like you can’t get stuck on what I used to do or what I want to do. But you have to figure out what is it that I can do that I would prefer to do that can work for me. And Beth, then focus on that thing and then with that watch what you’re eating.

And one of the things I did, I reached back out to the person that I always did bootcamp with. And this is something I did every summer for years. I reached back out to her and I said, “Look, chick, I’ve gained five million pounds. I can’t do things I used to do because I have these specific issues with my neck and my back. And I’m trying to get back down to a healthy weight for me so I can feel comfortable in my skin again.”

And she literally sent me a plan. You cannot eat more than 1,450 calories a day. Your mix of protein, to carbs, to fat, here are your percentages. You’re going to enter this into the My Fitness Pal app. And you are banned from Starbucks, because I like chai tea lattes. And no more fast food. And once I started to look at actually what I was eating I realized that there was barely any protein in my diet and a ridiculously low percent. My goal is 30 but I was only getting somewhere between 10 and 15%.

So once I actually started looking at the data and my corporate finance brain, that was like okay. And then I had a plan, I knew what I had to fix, so those types of things.

Tobi: I love that, yeah. And I love what you’re saying. I’m in a place and of course there’s no right or wrong, I’m in a place where I don’t want to go back to those restrictive things which is why I’m loving intuitive eating. But I think what you’re saying that I love so much is that we’ve all got to figure out what works for us and even with what weight you want to be. You didn’t say, “Well, the BMI chart says I should weigh x.” You’re like, “I don’t have to

Ep #163: Shifting your Business to Suit Your Lifestyle with Beth Diana Smith

be skinny, skinny but I want to get to a weight where I feel good in my own skin.”

And I love that intuitive approach to say, “I like this plan this lady gave me because I like numbers and it’s easy to follow and that works for me.” And I have an idea in mind of how I feel good and it works for me. So I love that. It sounds like you really tapped into an inside job, the intuitive piece instead of just looking at kind of maybe what you should be doing or we’re supposed to be doing.

Beth: Right, absolutely. It felt like it made some light bulbs go off into my mind. And once I started to see the scale go down, I realized that my confidence level and other things started to change, most importantly my interactions with new clients, because I don’t feel comfortable and confident with all this extra weight on me. I would joke with my friends, I was like, “This is my moon weight.” They were like, “What does that mean?” I was like, “It means that I feel like I weigh so much, I’m as big as the moon.” So I would call it that.

And because my personality is like I will make a joke or a nickname out of anything and everything. So I realized once the scales started to go down and I started to feel better it made me show up differently. It made me show up like the best Beth that always existed that liked to show up a certain way. And I was like, “This feels good. This is what I want to feel.”

So I feel it just started to get its claws in other aspects of my life. And it made me feel so much more productive. So once that one thing started to go better it motivated the other things. I was like, “Okay, now I’m ready to tackle x, y, and z.”

Tobi: Yeah. I think that’s absolutely right. And I think again from my kind of life coach background what I’ve learned for myself is it’s not necessarily the weight loss, it’s how I change my thoughts. But losing weight can make it easier for you to access nicer thoughts about yourself. And then when you start thinking those then all of a sudden it has this ripple effect in your life,

Ep #163: Shifting your Business to Suit Your Lifestyle with Beth Diana Smith

which is so good. And I think it's so true. It shows the power of the thoughts that we're thinking about ourselves. And I think that it does show the power.

It's interesting of how critical we are being about ourselves because we can be critical of ourselves when we're, what some people would think is super overweight or what some people would think was super skinny. But if we think negative thoughts about ourselves then that's the problem because it's those thoughts that are making us not show up. That's so interesting.

Beth: Absolutely. It's like you don't realize, it's almost like you think you're having negative thoughts only about this one thing. Now realize then now you've opened Pandora's Box for all those negative thoughts, impact all the other elements of your life. And the key is, no, you have to change your thoughts across the board. So for me it just became a mindset change. If you want to wake-up every day feeling like your best you that has to be intentional. That has to have an action plan behind it.

You can't just hope that things are magically going to change, that if anything, [inaudible] is that. You have to be intentional to make sure that you feel good, that you feel the best version of you. And I've always had this mindset of God did not put me or anyone else on the planet to be mediocre. So I don't want to feel mediocre at any aspect of my life. And that's always just kind of the guiding force to be like let's step it up.

Tobi: That's so good. So to me the overarching kind of message of this whole conversation is that you really got to know yourself at a different level. All of this is about self-awareness. And I think when we're running too fast, and working too hard, and hustling all the time, and working nights and weekends and there's not any downtime we can't get to know ourselves, or what's best for us, or what feels good, or what we don't like because we're just on autopilot.

Beth: Right. It's like being on that hamster wheel. And I realized I wasn't giving myself any time to self-reflect, reset, refresh, rejuvenate. It was just

Ep #163: Shifting your Business to Suit Your Lifestyle with Beth Diana Smith

constant going. I feel like that was the realization of that was the first aha moment.

Tobi: Awesome. So last question for you as we start to wrap up. What's going to happen do you think, how are you going to stay in this state of awareness and maintain these habits that you love now, that you've rekindled when life gets 'back to normal'? Because I think we've had this insulated experience with the pandemic.

And I've heard so many people, early on I heard so many people last year, this time saying, "I'm kind of not sad a bunch of stuff got cancelled, I was really tired. And I'm kind of not sad that I used to think I had to go to every market, or every event, or every whatever. And now I see I don't have to." And how are you going to, as you probably ramp back up in a different way or could potentially have those opportunities, how do you think you're going to stay focused on yourself?

Beth: I think it becomes a mix of making sure that I have a really great tribe around me who are comfortable enough with me to be honest with me regarding what they see. And sometimes what they see is as simple as you've been doing a lot and you've been seeming really tired. Or damn, Beth, you look a little exhausted, are you okay? That level of honesty I think is really important. I think staying focused and using that productivity planner has been amazing for how I attack my day-to-day and attack my business.

So I look at this thing every day and I think that is probably tantamount in making sure that I stay focused. Keeping that monthly facial appointment has honestly been something so simple. I didn't realize would have such a big impact on me mentally. So now I'm scheduled out till I think late summer, no matter what, you have this thing. And that I make time for my friends has been really gratifying, kind of how I was also on the House Beautiful Advisory Group. I was there for a week, I got to help and play with her new baby.

Ep #163: Shifting your Business to Suit Your Lifestyle with Beth Diana Smith

So it's those types of things, I realize that these are the things that bring you joy and remembering that you are not a robot and you can show yourself grace. And it's okay to not feel like you have to be perfect all the time which is something that I've always kind of felt I had to be. I felt like I always had to be perfect. But in realizing that you're not perfect is not attainable. And there are different versions. You have to find your version of perfect for you. And I feel like if I continue with all those things I will be good to go.

And making sure that I'm focused on how I want to look and feel and how I want to show up every day, I feel then I'll be in a really good place to continue the rest of the year when the world does reopen.

Tobi: That's so good. And what I noticed about all the things you just said is really essentially those are your values or your updated version of your values. And none of that was like I have all these giant business goals and I've got to get all these new clients. And not that anything's wrong with those but I love that these are the things that are coming to your mind first.

Beth: Right. 2021 was the first year ever that my list of goals for myself did not include business goals. The only thing that I had on there was streamline your processes for BDSID, Beth Diana Smith Interior Design. That was my only business goal, everything else was in that mindset of reprioritizing who I am as a person because I realized that would just make me a better entrepreneur, a better business owner. Business has been amazing. I have been getting more clients and more discovery calls between 2020 and into 2021 up to now that I've ever gotten in my career.

So I feel like that's great. I don't feel I have to hustle as hard to get clients because they're coming. I feel like now my focus is on hustling on how I can do my best work. And in doing my best work I have to feel I am my best version of myself.

Tobi: Absolutely, that's so important. And one of the things you've mentioned a few times and I think some people are naturally better at both

Ep #163: Shifting your Business to Suit Your Lifestyle with Beth Diana Smith

of these things. One is finding joy or having a good time and the other is having good friends and they go hand-in-hand I think. And I tend to be super independent and that overachiever part of me will kind of squeeze all the pleasure out of stuff and I turn everything into a task. I can have 12 books I now want to read and I need to finish them all by x date or just not connecting with other people.

And I've had several conversations and been the listener on several people talking lately about how we need a manual of how to make friends as adults because when you're little, people try to teach you how to make friends. But when you become an adult I think it's a whole different ballgame of making friends or even cultivating those friends. And you said the biggest thing that's one of the biggest helps is having this tribe around you.

Any last tips or advice of how to find that tribe or how to set some ground rules to make sure they are honest or anything around the friendships? Because it's definitely something that I'm not great at, I'll just spend all my time with my mom and my daughter and think I've got all the friends I need. And that's not really true, we need other people too.

Beth: Right. I think, and it's funny because I feel like the best thing I did for myself was editing my friendships down. So I feel like we all have associates and we all have friends. But I think to get to a core group of people that you can trust, that respect you, that value you and you feel the same way about them, that is friendship. And once I started to edit down and make sure that I was putting in the time, effort and attention in those friendships, I felt like it should feel like sisterhood and I felt that was key.

So also besides learning how to say no in 2020, I started to edit down who I spent my energy on. And that was like this is gratifying, absolutely.

Tobi: Yeah, that makes so much sense. And it's not meaning that the other people you don't like or they're not worthy. It's just you only have so much energy you can give at that level to be that connected with someone and so

Ep #163: Shifting your Business to Suit Your Lifestyle with Beth Diana Smith

constraining and finding the people that feel most aligned with you. I can see how that is so helpful and I agree. And sometimes I think when we tackle this I need more friends, it's like I need 12 new friends. And it's like no; maybe you just need one person that you really trust that you start regularly connecting with at a different level.

Beth: Right, absolutely. I had a friend and I realized that I found their behavior to be extremely manipulative. And I said, "Why are you maintaining a relationship where you feel like you're being manipulated? Is that helping you be the best version of you? No. Then Beth, stop it." And sometimes it's really just that asking yourself that hard question. If the person, does the person make you feel good? Great. Do you have great conversation? Great. Can you laugh with them? Can you smile with them? If there was an emergency would you feel comfortable calling them?

And I feel like once I can put that person in that category then it's like this is nice. I'm going to keep this up. And it's just a bonus when it's another designer because they get it. You can have those business conversations. You can support each other. And I feel one of the things that we have all learned that we need from the pandemic is that we all need to feel like we are supported. And I feel like that became really, really important for me as well.

Tobi: That's so good. Well, I don't know if I don't trust people enough. I've read in my Enneagram, which I'm an Enneagram 8 that they have trouble trusting. I never thought of as myself as a person who wasn't trusting. But as I've cultivated friendships it's funny because a lot of my best friends are across the country and not here locally. And I sometimes find that because of my political beliefs or other beliefs that I can't find a lot of people locally. I might have one really, really close friend that's an interior designer here.

But I think just what you're saying is we can get more clear on who it is that we need support from and then we can think creatively about who those people are and where those people are. I love that, so good, yeah. So

Ep #163: Shifting your Business to Suit Your Lifestyle with Beth Diana Smith

knowing yourself is still the moral of the story here, who you really are so that you can go find your people, so it's so good. Well, I'm going to work on that. I have one of my best friends lives up near you, one lives in California and one here.

And I think I need to work better on really cultivating that those are even deeper relationships. So thanks for inspiring me for that. That's so good and awesome. Well, this was fun, thank you for being super transparent and honest. I think it will help so many people, not only give themselves grace but believe that there is another option besides running yourself ragged all the time. And if people want to find you, if they want to see your work, if they want to see all those exciting things that you've mentioned that you're doing, where is the best place for them to check you out?

Beth: I am, so my website is bethdianasmith.com. And I am literally everywhere at Beth Diana smith. I'm most active probably on Instagram. But I'm on Facebook, Twitter, all the major platforms. And I'm pretty easy to find, luckily there's only one Beth Diana Smith.

Tobi: That's so good, yeah, we talked about it earlier and I said, "Do you go by Beth Diana or not?" And tell them what your response was.

Beth: I said, "For business I go by Beth Diana Smith. Because the reality is Beth Smith is very witness protection. But Beth Diana Smith is you usually just come across me."

Tobi: That's so good. Well, I look forward to seeing you on more of our meetings together and seeing you around Instagram. And I just am super grateful that you were here today, so thank you.

Beth: Thank you. Thank you so much for having me.

Alright, well, I hope we inspired you. I'm inspired. One of the things that's been on my to do list for a while is to take my closest friendships that I'm so

Ep #163: Shifting your Business to Suit Your Lifestyle with Beth Diana Smith

good at being too busy to connect with, and just dialing those in. So thanks Beth for inspiring me because I've got a few ladies that are my girls, some locally, some across the nation, you know who you are if you're one of my girls, my besties. And I think I need to put some more energy into those relationships, pour into those.

So whatever it is that you need to pour into like we talked about today, whether it's your health, or your boundaries, or your friendships, or some other part of your life, I hope we inspired you to do just that. And we'd love to hear from you. I'd love to hear from you. Beth would love to hear from you on Instagram.

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