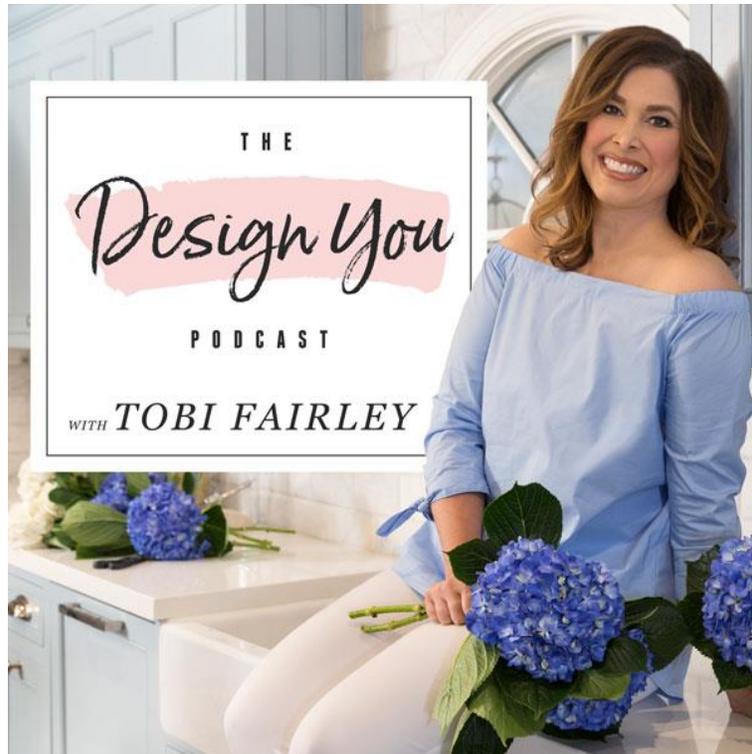


Ep #187: Retro Edition: Design Your Days to Design Your Life



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Tobi Fairley

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You are listening to *The Design You Podcast* with Tobi Fairley, episode number 187.

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. I hope you're having a great week. It's been a good one over here and I'm about to go spend a little girl time, a little quick trip to see the Kips Bay showhouse with my mom and my daughter. So that's going to be a fun day and a fun 24 hours. So, I hope you're doing something fun too, or something fun this weekend. You definitely deserve it. And today's episode is sort of related to that.

So, I'm doing something we haven't done before here on *The Design You Podcast*, and that's digging into our archives. I've never rerun a show before but there are some shows in our vault of 186 previous shows that are just too good. And I want to make sure that you all have heard them, or if you haven't heard in a while, that you revisit it. So today we're pulling out good old, archived show number 70 and it is all about how you design your days. So, it's very related to time management, and how you think about your time, and what you want in your life.

And it was a really fun episode for me to relisten to recently. So much has changed for me, a lot of things in the episode that I talk about still working on, I've made lots of progress. But at the end of the day so much of the show is still so true for me, that every few months I have to dig back in and see what's gotten out of whack in my schedule and get things reorganized. And so, the more I listen to it, I was thinking this is a show that our audience needs to hear, or if they've heard it before, hear it again.

So, I'm even leaving the original intro in for you because there is a lot of gold in that part too. So, enjoy this episode from our archives and I'll see you again at the end of the show.

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What's up my friends? How is your day looking today? Are you happy about what you're supposed to be doing today? Are you following your schedule today? Is your day exactly the way you would design it by choice? Wow, that's a big question. Is this a day that you would design by choice? So, if it's not, maybe you want to take a hard look at the choices you're making and the way you're designing your days because the way we live our days is the way we live our life, the whole thing.

Now, that's what we're going to talk about today in this episode, and I spend a lot of time designing my days. And I spend a lot of time noticing how I'm feeling about my days. And if I'm dreading what's on my schedule a couple of days from now or next week. And if I'm craving rest or if I have packed too much stuff in the week in front of me and it's just really not working for my energy level or my mindset. And I notice often if I'm putting too many action-packed or brain-bending activities back, to back, to back, which by the way, I'm super prone to do if I'm not careful.

And when I notice this stuff, when I pay attention and I really design my days there's a lot of days and a lot of weeks and even a lot of months or quarters that I've got to go back and rework some things. Spread some things out, move some things around, cancel some things, postpone some things, eliminate some things altogether. So, on a regular basis, I dig into my schedule and what I've committed to. And I see how what's on tap for me, what's in my plan, how it makes me feel.

And you know what? There is a trick to when and how to do this so that you don't find yourself just procrastinating things all the time. And this is not at all the same thing as I don't feel like it, meaning that excuse we use, the I don't feel like going to the gym excuse, or I don't feel like eating healthy excuse, or I don't feel like doing my work excuse. Not the same thing as

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that. And I'm going to tell you in this today's episode how that's different and why that's different.

So, there is a process that I use to determine if I'm really creating and designing a life I want versus am I just procrastinating? Am I just taking the easy way out? So, in this episode today, I'm going to show you that process that I use to design my days and therefore design my life and you might need permission to do this in your own life.

You might need me to tell you it's totally fine to take charge of your life in this way. So, if you do, this is your permission slip right here, this episode, to say you know what, stop believing you don't have control of your life and that you can't design it the way that you really want it to be, because I promise that you do. The only person that has control over that is you. And with the steps I show you in this episode or I tell you in this episode, you'll be able to do that here moving forward.

But before we can stop doing the things we really don't want to be doing or that aren't serving us and before we can add more white space into our schedule that allows for the things we do want. We have to at the very least have a time management system or habit in place, so we even know how we're using our time. And yeah, you're like, "Why Tobi? Why are you going to make me have this time management thing in place?"

Well, if you can't see how you're spending your days right now, and most people can't. Most people have no clue how they're really spending their moments, their hours, their days. And if you can't do that, then you can't make a change. And I think I've sent you back to episode 54 about time management on the last three episodes. Which is funny because the last three episodes haven't even really been that related. But that's how important time management is and I really want you to know my time management system in case it'll work for you.

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So, I'm reminding you again to go back to that episode on time management and learn if you need a system. Learn my zero balance time blocking approach because you're going to need to use it at least for a couple of weeks or even a month to have the data that you need to start designing your days the way I'm going to show you to do in today's episode.

So, the awareness that comes when we can see, not just feel, but see on paper and really the best way is on a digital calendar, but when we can see how we're spending our time, it is so eye-opening. And it brings so much clarity to why we are getting the results we're getting and possibly not getting the results that we say we want in our life and in our business.

So, if you're consistently keeping up with how you're spending your time, your days. You're going to have a lot of information. And when you're doing that, if you're looking at it and you have a really thorough tracking or monitoring of your time over a couple of weeks, a month, maybe longer, a quarter. Then you can absolutely see where you're losing time, where you're wasting time, where you're committing to things that you're dreading that aren't serving you in some way, you can tell when and where.

And I'll teach you how to do this to track this too, when and where you're feeling overworked, or trapped, or maybe on the flipside you're feeling uninspired, or bored, or depressed. And when you have all of this information you then have the data that you need to make changes to create the life that you really want. Now, I go through this exercise on average about once a quarter. I for sure do it at least once every six months.

And I don't especially go through this exercise just because it's on my calendar, like getting your oil changed or something and I'm like, "Now it's time for a tune up." I wish I had it on my calendar in that way and that I could say that it was because I'm just checking in that everything's running

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like clockwork. But the reality is I do this because I start feeling out of alignment. I start feeling uncomfortable or overwhelmed. So it's not just maintenance for me at this point. It's actually a necessity to get me back on track of where I want to be.

So, about every quarter on average, every two to three months and for sure within a six month period, I always start feeling out of alignment. I'll start feeling overtired or disconnected from myself, my emotions, disconnected from my body in some way and my wellness, or some other feeling that I don't like the way it feels. So, a lot of times, for me that is overwhelm or anxiety. And that is my signal that it's time to tune back into what I really want.

And another thing that I notice when I'm getting out of alignment, the way I'm spending my days really isn't aligning with what I'm telling myself I want and what my goals and my needs are, is I hear myself complaining a lot. And I notice this because I practice not being a complainer. I practice being a problem solver but not a complainer. But heck, we're all human and we're all going to complain sometimes.

And so, when I hear myself saying to my assistant Claire, or to my mom, or to Devon, who's really kind of my right arm on my team, or to my husband and my child. When I hear myself saying, "I'm so tired. I'm exhausted. I don't want to do what I'm supposed to do. I'm supposed to be working, I just want to hang out with you, I'm supposed to be eating a certain way." That doesn't sound good. When I hear these kinds of phrases, which are really just thoughts that I'm thinking. But when I verbalize those, which I do because I'm an expert.

You may be an introvert, so yours may just be in your head. But when I hear myself saying these things, I absolutely know it's time for a tune up. My days need designing. So again, this is far different when I'm saying, "I'm not really interested in doing what's on my schedule. I'm dreading what

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I'm supposed to be doing next week. I'm too tired to be doing that." That's totally different than me just saying every time I'm supposed to go to the gym that very morning, I don't feel like going because we're going to have that happen a lot.

Those are just obstacle thoughts. And they're going to come up regularly no matter how introspective we are about our desires and our goals. Those things are just going to come up because our brains want to be lazy. They just do. And anything that feels uncomfortable, our brain's going to go, "I don't want to do that today." That is not what we want to give into. That's not what I'm saying. If you're dreading going to work out at the gym, it doesn't mean that your life is out of alignment.

Now, you might want to consider it if it's every single time for months, and months, and months that there might be a different kind of exercise that's better for you. But what I'm wanting you to see is that it's far different than just not wanting to go to the gym one day, as opposed to saying, "I don't want optimal health anymore", which is one of my goals, really my main goal for this year.

So, if I were to say, "I don't want to eat this way. I don't want to work out this way. And I absolutely no longer want optimal health." That would be the bigger picture, the bigger goal of me making a choice to change things in my life. I absolutely am not throwing optimal health out the window. But yet I'm still not going to want to go to the gym sometimes.

So, I'm talking about those bigger overarching goals, like I want to make a million dollars this year. Or I want to make five million dollars this year. Or I want to create and achieve optimal health and wellness. Or I want to invest in my relationships at a level I've never done before. Those are those bigger goals that I'm talking about that I want us to look at. Because sometimes, we really decide we don't want what we thought we did, especially for me in the areas of business. So, we'll talk about in a second.

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I'm very, very driven and I'll show you how that plays out. And you may not have the same personality type as me and that's okay. We'll talk about the flipside of my personality type, the other side that's maybe not as driven. But I just want you to see that I'm saying I might go after a big goal for six months and then go, "You know what? I thought I wanted to make five million dollars a year." I really don't because it sacrifices my health. It sacrifices my family.

I'm perfectly fine now after creating some evidence, some data, some information and looking at how that goal of five million dollars was going to make me spend my days. That's not really what I want anymore, and it's okay to make those types of changes. And those are the kinds of changes that I'm talking about, the bigger goals. The overarching kind of themes, and wants, and desires of our life. Not am I going to give into an urge in the moment and not go to the gym, when I'm going to be mad at myself later.

Because what I really do want ultimately is optimal health and I just was quitting on myself. Two totally different things, and I think you're probably clear on that now. So, what I'm talking about here and with this practice and the steps I'm going to tell you in this episode is to tune into what it is that you're going after, that goal. And checking in and seeing if that's really what you want after you've been working towards it for a period of time, a quarter, six months, maybe a year.

And for me, what also happens is I may not have given up my goal. I may absolutely still want to make five million dollars a year or a million or whatever the goal was. I may absolutely still want optimal health and wellness, which I do. But sometimes in that period of time, that quarter or six month period, old habits and bad habits are creeping back in. They're still there, they've been with me for years. I reinforced them for a long time and they don't just suddenly go away in a quarter because I started working towards a new goal.

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And so those creep back in too. And I have to realign because sometimes I've put a whole bunch of new things into my days, new things that are going to get me to my new goal and then the old stuff creeps in too. And then I'm living in a place of overwhelm and I'm out of alignment again. So, I have to notice all of that. And you need to do this for yourself too. So, for me, noticing if my drive to achieve and to make money is overriding my goal of health and wellness. Or it's overriding my goal to spend more time with my family, if that was the goal I was working on at any given time.

And also noticing too that after I've been committed to something for a while, is it giving me the results I thought it was going to give me? And is it giving me the feelings that I thought it was going to give me? And if it's not and I'm fully following through, I'm not halfway doing it because of course, if you don't fully do something, you're not going to get results for sure.

But if I'm fully following through on a goal and I'm doing it for a quarter, or six months, or a year and I get to the end of that period and I'm like, "I thought I would feel differently after this. I thought I would have a different set of results." And now that I don't, I want to rethink this a little bit. I want to make sure this is still something I want to pursue. Or maybe I want to change directions, either slightly, just tweak it a tiny bit, or maybe in a big, gigantic way. I want to abandon that goal that I thought I wanted. And go back to the drawing board and say, "With this information I now have, what do I really want?"

Now, there is a quote that I love, and it says the way you do one thing is the way you do everything. And I believe that to be true. And I think that is too true with what we're talking about here today. So, I'm very structured and very driven for the most part. And in the same way that I'm structured and driven really about anything that I do, my goals or anything, that is going to creep in a lot when I am just designing my days. And again, the way you do one thing is the way you do everything. The way you design

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your days is the way you design your life. So, this very much correlates here.

And what I know about myself is because I tend to be so structured and driven at work, and with my calendar, and with achieving, I have a hard time just being relaxed. For example, I have a hard time just reading a book at the beach for fun. And if someone comes up and starts talking to me, and I've only gotten through three pages, and I start talking and having so much fun all the rest of the week that I never finish any more of the book than three pages. I have a hard time with that because I tend to turn reading a book into a goal.

And so that means if I go on a trip, I have to finish this book by the end of the week. Or heck, the reality is a lot of times I have to finish these three books by the end of the week. And I don't really like that structure and that drive always showing up in every part of my life. But I accidentally by old habits dying hard, and maybe I want to even call them bad habits sometimes, they keep showing up. So, I'm thinking I'm going to have a goal to relax more maybe. Maybe that's a piece of my optimal health and wellness.

And here I am finding myself at the beach, or on a trip, or on a vacation with a whole stack of books in my bag and I can't even let myself take a nap, or relax, or spend time with someone because I'm so driven to finish these books. Well, that's the very kind of thing I want to notice about myself. I want to notice about my days. I want to tune in and see is that really how I want to spend this time?

And I absolutely do love how driven I am. And it especially serves me in certain parts of my life. But I also sometimes get tired of achieving. And it's really even kind of hard for me to say that out loud you all, that I get tired of achieving. In fact, when I'm thinking of resting and I'm thinking of maybe pulling back my goals a little bit, I have some internal struggle sometimes. I

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have some mindset things that pop up that think – tell myself, “Oh, that's just being lazy”, or “Don't take the easy way out, Tobi”, or, “Are you really going to choose to be mediocre?”

And so, I've got to really spend time looking at where my thoughts line up with my actions because they always do. You think a thought, you feel a feeling, and that makes you take an action. So, my thoughts are driving my actions, which are driving my days, which are driving my feelings. But I might not like the way I feel at the end of that. And that's again, that awareness of you might need to take a look at this, Tobi. You might need to take a look at how you're spending your time, you're spending your days, you're spending your hours, you're spending your vacations.

And I don't get tired of being successful. That's really, really fun. But I do get physically tired sometimes of doing so much and of being so deadline focused all the time. But there's a part of me that doesn't really like the thought of being the person who doesn't achieve. So, this is pretty deep work. And we've got to think, how do I want to show up daily versus what do I want my life to have looked like when I look back on the last year, the last decade, the last 25 years, my whole life? Because the way we spend our days is the way we spend our life. Pretty powerful.

So, the results that I get in my life from my thinking and from my schedule are usually very positive. They usually lead to a lot of success, a lot of money, a lot of output. But sometimes they're not as positive as I want, or in the areas that I want them to create a positive result. Again, say my mental health or my physical health.

And so even though they may look super successful on paper and in my bank account. If I'm too tired to keep that pace, if it's not sustainable long term, if it takes a toll on my health or if it leads me to burnout or takes a toll on my relationships. That's a problem for me and what I really want, what I desire, what my goals are long term. And so the way I start to notice this,

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that I'm accidentally making daily choices that aren't aligning with what I ultimately want is the way it makes me feel both physically and emotionally.

And when I feel certain feelings. That means I'm in need of turning back to my calendar and seeing how I want to redesign my days for the next week, or month, or quarter, or six months ahead. So that I can maybe find more balance or get a different result or slightly shift my focus from what I thought I wanted. Because what I thought that would bring me is not what it's actually bringing me.

And we don't ever really know when we set a goal. We think it's going to do one thing for us, but a lot of times it might do that, it might partially do that, or it might do something totally different. It might bring trade-offs and other cost along with it that we weren't anticipating. And we have to really dig in and say, "What do we think about this? Where do we want to go next?"

So, it's sort of like a flight path for an airplane. And you may have heard this analogy before. But I really, really like it because I've heard that the process of flying a plane from one destination to another destination is a process and a path of constantly tracking where you are. And really realigning so that you actually land where you're supposed to.

So, I've heard that that means that a lot of that flight path for the plane and the passengers riding on it and the pilots, that you're actually slightly or sometimes even more than slightly off course almost the whole time. But you're consistently tracking and realigning so that you land exactly where you were supposed to. And I think that very thing is what happens to us in our lives because of the way we spend our days. And it requires us to redefine, and refine, and realign our path pretty often.

And that's why I say at least once a quarter, if not more often, at least every six months at the very least for me, I have to dig back in and say, "Do I need to bring things in alignment?" Now, there are a lot of you that can relate to the achieving, and the deadlines, and the things I've described

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about myself and that you're a whole lot like me. But there's also a lot of you who can't relate to that at all. There's people in my life who just don't understand why I like to work so much. And they're more of the work to live and I'm a live to work, and I get it. We're all different.

So a lot of you may be the exact opposite of me and that's okay because you still need this process too. So maybe you have a hard time being disciplined enough. Maybe you waste a lot of time. Maybe you always dream of the things that you want but you're not very good at making them happen, about taking action. Maybe you procrastinate a lot. And you also have the results to show for the way you design your days. So, the way I design my days gets me my results. The way you design your days gets you results.

And again, there is no right or wrong here. My days are not better than your days. Just because mine are more structured, if I'm still not getting the result I want at the end of them, I'm just as off track as you are. Now, I do think we need the structure to have the awareness because without it we can't really see what we're doing. But just by nature of looking at my days and your days doesn't mean that well, Tobi's way better because she's structured than you are because you're unstructured. Again, if neither of us have the results we want, it's still the same problem.

So you may not be burned out, you may not be exhausted, you may not have a tense jaw and tense neck to go with it like I often do. You may be bored. You may be depressed. You may feel less than your potential. You may beat yourself up a lot because you think you're not really making anything of your time, or that you're wasting time, or maybe you're embarrassed that your life's not the way you want it to be. But again, mine may not be what I want it to be either.

So, who's to judge which version of not hitting our goals is the right one or the wrong one? It's not about that. It's not about judgment. I'm here to tell

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you that if you redesign your days and I redesign my days to get the results we want, to realign and get back on the path that we say we want. That is the answer for both of us to get exactly what we want out of our life.

So often on both sides of this coin, we both, both of these personality types, we have excuses for why we can't get on a schedule, or why we can't possibly control our days or our results. And why designing our life and following through with what we say we really want is really just an illusion or a myth, and that work-life balance is a myth. We have excuses. And they're legit excuses. If we look at them, we're like, "Yeah, that's true." But they're still excuses.

So those of us who are achievers like me, might say these kinds of things. We might say, "I'm too busy to get that structured or organized. I have so much to do already. I can't even possibly think about that." Or "I don't have time to get my schedule organized. And even if I did, it changes all the time anyway, so why would I?" Or "I don't have a choice but to meet with my clients when they want to meet with me, even if I don't want to meet with them. I have to pay the bills."

And we might say, "I have to take even non-ideal clients that are draining me because they're part of me making my money goal. And I need that money, or I want that money. So even if they're taking a toll on me, I don't have a choice." We might say things like, "Hustling at this level is the only way to get what I want. And I'll take care of myself after I make the money, and self-care is a luxury anyway." And we might think I put everyone else's needs ahead of mine because I have to. I don't have a choice but to do that.

And we might even say things like, "I work better under pressure and at the last minute. So, it's okay that my schedule is just jam packed and I'm tired under all of the pressure. I'm tired, I'm exhausted. But that's the way I work best." We might say, "You know what? I'm overwhelmed with my huge to

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do list but hey, I want to get that stuff done. Yeah, I'm tired, I don't have any energy, I'm stressed, but.” That's what the internal dialog can sound like for an achiever. And guess what? Those who struggle with getting stuff done, those who struggle with procrastination, it's not that far off.

You might be saying things like, “I don't know where to start. I'm terrible at time management. I don't have any real skills anyway to make money or be successful. I only know how to be a stay at home mom, or I only know how to do this one thing at this one job that I don't even like but I'm just going to stay in for indefinitely.” Or we might say, “I'm a creative and we just don't do structure and schedules as creatives. It doesn't work for us. And I have to work or create when the mood strikes me.” And for a lot of us it rarely strikes us these days.

“And I don't know what I want. And I'm confused. And I don't really like to read, or study, or spend time figuring it out. And I'm tired and I don't have any energy. And I have to do the housework, and I have to take care of the kids. And I can't work and be a mom, or I can't explore new ideas and keep the bills paid with my current job and self-care is a luxury. And I don't have the money for self-care anyway.” So, there was a lot of overlap there.

And no matter which side of the achieving versus procrastinating or some of both, which side of structure you fall on naturally or due to a long time commitment to bad habits. I'm telling you, the way to start creating the life that you want, the way to start feeling the way you want regularly is to design your days to design your life. So how do I do that? well, let me tell you the exact steps.

First, number one, you have to track your schedule and I mean all day every single day, including your sleep, including your eating, watching TV, all of it for two to four weeks and it has to be written down, and I mean very detailed. Even write down what you eat. Even write down what you watch

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on TV. What time you get up in the morning, how many cups of coffee you have. Write down when you're complaining.

I mean honestly, write down as much information on a schedule as you possibly can. Because we've got to have data to know what we're doing, what we're choosing. Sometimes we don't even realize we say and we think we're doing something and we're not. I can say, "Oh, you know what? No, I totally am a clean eater." And then I look at what I'm eating and I'm like, "Oh, I'm like a 70% clean eater right now." So, you got to write it all down and be very, very detailed. And that's step number one.

And number two, the next thing you have to do is you have to write down how you feel each day. So, you can either do this by writing down how you feel all throughout the day, or you can do what I like to do is write how you feel in the morning. So, I journal in the mornings and how I'm feeling today, not only about what I have going on in the day. Am I tired about what happened yesterday? Just how I'm feeling to start my day.

And then I like to do it again in the evening when I'm tracking. So, in these times when I'm assessing my life and my days and how I'm designing them, I like to track it again at night. And say, "How did I feel throughout the day? Did I have low energy? Did I dread what I was supposed to be doing? Was I trying to skip the gym? Was that just an urge? Or is that a bigger sign of me really wanting to make a change in a bigger way?" And so I have information not only about what I did exactly, but how I felt about those things.

So, ask yourself that. Do I feel relaxed, or stressed, or overwhelmed? Do I feel confused, tired, happy, inspired, creative, joyful, or something else? And a lot of times when you're doing these exercises, you're not going to feel a whole lot of joyful or inspired because a lot of times the reason that we're paying attention is we're in sort of that phase where we need some

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realignment. So sure, there's joy and there's happiness throughout the day. And we need to give credit where credit's due.

Sometimes we're only focusing on the negative and we're not as miserable as we think. But I want you to know. So you have to track it. And yeah, you're going to have more than one feeling in a day or at a time. You may have several. So, know what they are and pay attention. And you might even start to notice that you consistently have two or three feelings that come up all the time, most of us do. And notice what those are.

So again, this is tedious but it's so important. And you don't have to be this tedious in between these sort of realignment and designing sessions for your life. But when you're going through that period, you've got to have all the information so you can make a good decision.

And then the third step is during this sort of analyzing phase, I want you to take a look at when you do your nightly assessment of how you feel. Go ahead and look at your calendar for not the next day but the day after that. So at least 24 hours in advance. And when you look at that day after tomorrow's schedule and maybe you can even look at farther out than that if you want to, so a few days in a row. Ask yourself how you're feeling about what's on your schedule.

So, for example, if it's Monday, how am I feeling about Wednesday, and Thursday, and Friday this week? Am I dreading them? Am I excited about them? Do I feel inspired or uninspired? Do I feel scared, or intimidated, or overwhelmed? And why do I feel those feelings? Now, don't judge the feelings at all, just write them down.

And write down the thoughts too that are associated with it. So I feel tired and the reason I feel tired is because. Or I feel excited and I feel excited because. Because you want to know not only what you're feeling but what you're thinking, because our thoughts always create our feelings. But again, no judgment at all. No judgment on the feeling or the thought. Even

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if the feeling is dread and the thought is I hate my life, don't judge. Just write it down and gain awareness.

And the reason that I don't have you do this for tomorrow, the night before is you need some space between where you are and what you're assessing, and here's why. The night before or the morning of is too close to the activities that we're assessing because when we get within that 24 hour window, we're not using our prefrontal cortex part of our brain. We're not using the planning part of the brain. We're not using the part that has the ability to think objectively and to remember what we really want ultimately, what our goals really are.

When we're in that shorter timeframe, we're using a much more primitive part of our brain. And that's the part that gives in to urges. That's the part that fills those obstacle thoughts. And so, if you're saying, "Do I want to go to the gym in the morning?" Well, no, you probably don't. You're probably tired and you want to sleep in. But if you're going, "Do I want to go to the gym on Friday morning?" You're like, "Yeah." You don't even know if you're going to be tired Thursday night at that point and you're like, "Yeah, I do, I really do because I really want to have optimal health and wellness this year."

So, see, when you think farther out, you're using that planning part, that decisions ahead of time part of your brain, the prefrontal cortex and it gives you much better information. Because most of the time, the primal brain, that part that deals with urges, it's the part that wants to quit, or slack, or give up due to discomfort and fear. It's always going to tell us we don't like our goals. It's always going to tell us we should redesign our days.

And usually it's going to say, "No, I don't want to work out and achieve something major at work. I want to lay around and eat ice cream and watch Netflix all day." And we know that's not the kind of life we want. So if you do find yourself giving into urges all the time, if you do find yourself never

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following through it's because you're listening to that primal part of your brain. And that's not what I want you to do in this exercise for step number three.

I want you to be looking out at least 24 hours, 48 hours and saying, “How does that few days look like? How does Friday look? How does next week look? Am I still feeling good about that?” And you can also get perspective on, and I do this a lot since I'm an overachiever. I look out to Friday, or Monday, or all of the next week and I'm like, “Wow, okay, I had no idea that I packed that so full.”

In the moment when I was making appointments, I was like, “Sure, I can do a five hour strategy day followed by a two hour live call where I have to think on my feet and answer questions, and then record a podcast afterwards.” When I'm looking out now ahead of time and assessing, I'm like, “Are you crazy? You're going to be exhausted. You're not going to perform very well. That's not going to make any sense for you.” So I want you to get perspective.

And know how you're feeling without judgment, without saying, “I shouldn't be feeling this way.” Just be honest, how do you feel about those tasks that are coming up in a few days? And notice the difference in, I really may want to shift my priorities or goals or I'm just having an urge right before I'm supposed to do something because it's uncomfortable. Two totally different things. I hope that makes sense.

So then step number four is now that you have done those three steps for a period of time. You've monitored your schedules for two weeks or four weeks. You really have monitored your feelings morning and night and your thoughts that go along with those. And you've spent some time looking out 24, 48, 72 hours in advance or more and assessed how you feel about what you were planning to do. Now you've got some real perspective on

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how you're using your days and if you're creating both the feelings and the results that you want in your life with the choices that you're making.

And this is where you really get so much clarity in step number four is looking at that two to four week period. Reading through how you spent your days, how that made you feel. What you were sort of starting to learn about your goals, and your wants, and your desires. And do you still want those things, or do you want most of what you had decided but you need to tweak here or there, or do you want to abandon some stuff completely? You're noticing at this point in step number four, are your days in alignment with your overall goals and really, your priorities?

And has anything drastically changed because the results you're getting are not the results you thought you would be getting after taking action on a goal for a period of time? So, is that the case or is it you still want the goal but you've just gradually gone off course a little bit? You've drifted into some old habits. You have drifted like me into overworking or into procrastinating, and you've just got to realign a few things, clean up your days, and then plan your schedule again going forward.

And this is why you're going to want to have a time management system like my zero based time blocking system, zero balanced time blocking system is because from this information, you don't just then go forward spontaneously day by day. You then plan a week or a month at a time based on your new information, and you consistently do that going forward.

So, at any given time, I've always got about two to four weeks, if not two to four months fully booked and mapped out, including downtime, reading time, vacation time, sleeping time, and all the things that I became aware of in this assessment that I wanted to make sure I fit in my life. Because they won't just happen by accident. And for me, when I just go spontaneously about my day, I overwork every single time. For some of you, you're going to procrastinate and waste a lot of time every single time.

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So again, it's about being very intentional, methodical, and designing our days, two weeks, four weeks, some period of time in advance. And then you live on that schedule until you start to feel again like you maybe need some tweaks, some things have slipped.

So, some examples from my own life when I'm really going through this process are that I often get really, really ambitious in the middle. The farther away I get from one of these sessions, and realigning, and forgetting my priorities, I start saying, "Oh, sure, we can do more for my community, my coaching clients. We can launch new courses or content. And yes, we can make three new lead magnets to get people on our mailing list all this month. And sure I can do that speaking engagement. And absolutely, we can redesign all the workbooks in the program so they can be better."

And oh sure, I can say yes to this other thing. And when I'm feeling really rested and inspired after getting myself in realignment but then getting a little bit away from it. I've rested. I feel better. And I completely forget the pain of not being aligned. That's when all that stuff starts creeping back into my schedule. And so, I will consistently fall back into these habits if I'm not watching it really closely. And I'll try to launch way too many ideas and plan a whole bunch of new deliverables and deadlines.

And then, what happens almost every single time is after about a quarter or six months of living like that. I get a lot of feedback on these decisions and the things I've crammed into my schedule from myself, my body, my finances, and from others. And they're not all negative. But I can tell at that point then when I start feeling out of alignment again, I can stop and go, "Let's assess." And I don't have to then track my days because I've been tracking them. I always track my days.

And after you get in the habit of this, when you start to notice, you'll be able to just stop, like I do, for an afternoon. And look back over the last several

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weeks and look what you've got planned for the upcoming weeks and get some instant perspective. And what of these things, you can ask yourself, like I do, is really moving the needle financially? What of these things really matter and are getting me to my financial goals? Because if they don't, that's the first thing I'm going to cut.

And I can ask myself, have these things and has choosing to add these things into my schedule really made the difference in my income or some other way than I thought it would, or did it just make me busier? And we'll see, what did it do for me? What did it do for my customer, the community? If I hadn't added it, would they be less happy? Would I be making less money? And I can make really solid decisions. And I can tell what's taking a toll on my physically and mentally and what's encroaching on my personal time, my family time, and my health time.

And I can see how these plans or the days that I designed, even if I got a little off course, a little off track like those airplanes do and started cramming other stuff in and started saying yes too much. I can see how that impacted me emotionally and if it led to stress, or emotional eating, or me not showing up for myself with self-care or exercise, if I was starting to quit showing up again.

Or if they actually did the opposite, if they inspired me to take better care of myself. And they generated so much income financially that I could stop doing some other things that were less profitable to make more time for my health and wellness. And it's not always negative. Some things take me in one direction and some in another. And the biggest key, of course, is paying attention. And when I look at it, I can see if things that I'm doing are making a positive or a negative difference for my team, my community, my tribe, my clients, my family, but especially me.

And when I have all that very, very, very valuable information on paper in my schedule and I can assess my feelings in relation to them. Then I can

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make extremely clear decisions for the upcoming quarter or six months. And, friends, I cannot even tell you how big the benefit of having this practice of realignment, of designing my days in my life, I can't even tell you the benefit. It is so huge. I know it. I feel it. I see it. But I can't even quantify it and I think you will feel the same thing.

So many people get to the end of their life and they have regrets. They spend years not living the life they wanted. They spend years stuck in a situation, a job. And they really, a lot of times, spend those years not fully aware of how they're spending their days. And they stay confused on why they never have the life they want, or why they never feel great physically or emotionally, or why they're never really happy or fulfilled. And I want you to see that designing your days is the key to designing your life.

Using this practice is the key to regret proofing your decisions long term. And it keeps me continually coming back to my health, and my relationships, and my financial goals, and designing the right mix or balance of each of those things that work for me. And that ultimately, at the end of a period of time, a decade, my life, that I will land, just like those airplanes, really dang close to where I wanted to land because of the way I design my days.

So will you join me in this practice? I'm going through it again right now in my life because I've been feeling a little tired. And I'm super accomplished feeling right now because we've done so much this first six months of the year. But I find myself wanting to rest, wanting to quit. I find myself playing with ideas of should I just give it all up? And I know I don't want to.

But when I notice those thoughts creeping back in, that's when it's time to go, "Okay, you don't want to give it all up. You've worked really hard, and you love a lot of this." But clearly some stuff's creeping in that's not a good fit. And it's time to go back and plan and see what to do next. And so I'm in the process right now of planning what the second half of 2019 will look like

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for me financially, and in my productivity, and in my wellness, and in my joy.

And that's right, this is one of the key tools, just like I say in the intro of *The Design You Podcast*. This is one of the things that helps me create more health, wealth and joy in my life. So, give it a try. Design your days and you just may be able to finally design the life that you really, really want. So good luck with this, friends.

I can't wait to hear what this is doing for you, this practice. Let me know out on social media or join me in the free podcast community on Facebook and let me know how it's working for you. But give it a try and I'll see you back here with another *Design You* episode next week. Okay, bye for now.

Okay, so I hope we have you thinking differently about your time. And if you've kind of been using some of my tactics and time management, but maybe had forgotten that you needed to have a little tune up here and there, I hope this episode was a reminder to check back in.

Now, one of the things that's really helped me over the last probably 12 to 24 months is a book called *Do Nothing* by Celeste Headlee. So, if you want to really dig in even more to your time thinking and why we think as a culture the way we do about time, and to really reimagine, I guess, what's possible for you when you're not just falling into all the cultural beliefs, and expectations around your time, then I highly recommend you check out, *Do Nothing* by Celeste Headlee.

But either way, I hope that you are designing a life that you really love, that those days and the day-to-day are being spent the way that you would want them to be spent. So that when you get to the end of your life or the end of a decade that you can look back and know that you really made those days count. That's what we're here for. So, I hope you love this

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

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episode. I can't wait to see you again next week right here for another great episode of *The Design You Podcast*. Bye for now.

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 business model, there has never been a more important time than right now. So, join me and the incredible creative entrepreneurs in my Design You coaching program today. You can get all the details at tobifairley.com.