

Ep #195: My Wish for You



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With Your Host

Tobi Fairley

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You are listening to the *Design You* podcast with Tobi Fairley, episode number 195.

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.

Hi, friends, how are you? Happy holidays from me as I'm recording this, it's a little bit before Christmas. But by the time you're listening it'll be about two days before Christmas which is what we celebrate at my house. And I'm sure thick in the getting ready of prepping and hosting because I host Christmas Day, Christmas evening at my house with a lot of family. So lots of table setting, and cooking, and flowers, and all the things. So I hope you are having the happiest of holidays, whichever holidays you celebrate.

And I hope you're having a lot of wonderful time with your family. And I hope you're not wearing yourself out too much, it's a little tiring to prep for Christmas at my house. So we do some fun things though and I like to mix it up. You know me, I'm always mixing things up. So since I started being the one hosting Christmas, I decided that we don't do the traditional holiday meals at my house for Christmas because by the time we've gotten to the Christmas meal on Christmas night we're all sick of all the holiday food that we've been having since Thanksgiving. And so I mix things up.

So last year we did Italian with a bunch of different kinds of pastas and sauces. It was super fun. The year before we did surf and turf with a variety of seafood, shrimp, and lobster, and crab, all cooked in my steamer. Then my hubs did some delicious beef on the PK grill, his favorite grill to go with it, also super fun.

And this year I was going to do Asian food. But I'm not, I'm learning, I'm learning how to cook dumplings and things in my bamboo steamer, and some really cool amazing techniques for Asian food. But it's not something that I'm quite adept at yet enough to really ensure that all the parts and pieces will turn out perfectly. So I was hoping to do dumplings, and fried rice, and some other awesome dishes but I think we're going to go to homemade pizzas this year.

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So Italian for year number two. So I have this awesome pizza oven. It's a Breville pizza oven with a pizza stone in it. And I have perfected my pizza crusts. And so I think my mom's going to make her homemade fettuccini alfredo which we didn't do last year to go with a bunch of homemade pizzas. And I'm going to do a big charcuterie board. And we're going to just really have a casual fun holiday this year. So I think that's what's on the menu, by the time you're listening to this I'm probably prepping all those things. I'll report back if it changes.

And then the next year my goal needs to be really perfect all of my Asian dishes. So, so much fun to bring in other traditions, other cultures, appreciation for all kinds of food, not just the same old, same old Americana Christmas at my house.

So why am I telling you all of this? Well, I like to mix things up in general, that's my approach to life these days, and to push the envelope, and to get outside the box, and to not do the same thing all the time. So this episode is about my wish for you. Because if I could give you all a gift it would be the gift of courage to step out of the eight most boring and problematic words that we have a habit of saying. Do you know what those eight words are? Let me tell you. That's the way we have always done it. That's eight words. That's the way we have always done it.

I want to give you the courage this year and next year to step out of that's the way we've always done it. And if I was stuck in that's the way we've always done it, my holiday menu would be boring. We'd be eating the same food for the 12th meal in a row, since the middle of November. And if our holidays were just the way we had always done things then everybody would get together. We would eat the same food. My dad would just sleep on the couch before and after dinner and the rest of us would watch football and chat a little bit and then we'd call it a day.

But a few years ago, when I started hosting holidays, my daughter and I were like, "No, screw that's the way we've always done it. It's boring. Let's mix things up." And so we started planning new themes, and games, and activities, and gifts every single year to surprise and delight the family in

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new ways and everyone loves it. You all, we didn't think my family had any spontaneity in us at all. We thought we were the most boring, don't like change people. And we were. But we have shaken shit up around here.

Everyone believed they didn't like change and they didn't like being silly and cheesy, and letting our hair down. And that is not true. But it was probably my dad's mom who's not with us anymore who cared more about what people thought of her and who wanted to look sophisticated, and cultured, and all of those things. But no, not me, I'm calling BS on all of that. Life is short, why be boring? Why not laugh so hard it hurts every single chance you get with the people you love the most?

And so that's true for my holidays and it's what I'm wishing for you for your business life too. So where are you stuck in the way that you've always done things? I bet it's all over your business if I had to guess. And you're likely offering your services the way you've always done it, even if it's not working well or if it's not profitable. And even if it's exhausting and sucking the life out of you, you're like, "This is the way design is done. And this is the way we've always done it. And we better keep going."

You're probably running your business processes the way you always have, even if it's taking a toll on your team members and you. You're probably still allowing your clients to shop you, or you're allowing you and your team to drop lots of balls and not give clients the service they deserve or that they're paying for because you're like, "Well, this is how design works. And this is the way we've always done it."

You're also likely still hiring the same way you've always hired, hiring the first person or two you interview when you have a job posting. You're like, "I've got one or two people. Yeah, let's pick one of them and let's pay them minimum going rate for that position, the minimum amount we can get away with. And let's hire the team member even if they aren't really our ideal team member because they're one of the two that showed up for an interview."

You're probably still doing that and you're probably still offering not very much in the way of benefits, or minimal amounts of vacation for your team.

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You're probably not offering some kind of creative bonuses or stipends for growth or development. Because you've never done anything like that and you didn't know business could be different.

And you're probably still wearing all the hats and running yourself ragged and believing you don't have any other choice. That you're the only one who really cares about your business the way that you do, which is probably true because of all the ways you're doing things, the way you've always done it. And you're probably still hiring and working with team members, and vendors, and clients who look almost just like you and have life experiences a whole lot like yours with little diversity and little uniqueness.

And most of us do this all the time. Most of us are afraid of change and we find comfort in the familiar, even if the familiar is not even really working. So my wish for you this holiday season would be to see you step out of the way you've always done things and explore the possibilities. What could life and business include if you were willing to think differently? What might be on the other side of this is the way we've always done it? So often our natural tendency is to bristle and to feel resistance to something new. We fear failure, or regret.

We worry about wasting time or money but I find there is more regret in living a life that is always the same. And I think true failure is not being willing to try something new. My business has never been more fulfilling than it is right now. And I think it's because we are stretching and we're saying yes to a lot of stuff that we've never said yes before. But not yes to what the world and our culture would have us say yes to. We actually are saying no to a lot of that stuff.

We're saying no to a lot of the way we've always done things, no to the hustle, no to the overworking, no to all looking and thinking the same, no to hiding parts of our true self just because they might repel people or clients. No to more is more, no to working nights and weekends. But yes to a lot of possibilities. We're saying yes to paying people more, yes to giving back more, yes to training our team, yes to fun events and trips for our team, yes

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to more autonomy, more responsibility for our teams and our departments yes to more time off, to more benefits.

Yes to paid days to go volunteer as a team, yes to bonus structures and profit sharing, plans that we're planning for in the future, yes to diversifying, where and how we spend our money. Yes to standing up for our values and standing up for justice in and outside of our company. And we're saying yes to constraining and streamlining our offers, to simplifying, to streamlining and clarifying our message. We're saying yes to shorter workdays and even potentially yes to shorter work weeks. We're trying that on for size and saying, "How could that look in our business in the next year?"

So where are you telling yourself that's the way we've always done it? And where could that be holding you back? There's something called a thought terminating cliché. Those are phrases designed to cut off or nullify a thought. So according to Wikipedia, a thought terminating cliché, also known as a semantic stop sign or a thought stopper, or bumper sticker logic or clichéd thinking is a form of what's called loaded language or rhetoric. And it's used to quell cognitive dissonance. It's used to stop people when they start questioning things.

And so examples of thought terminating clichés are phrases like, it is what it is, or everything happens for a reason, or to each his own, or God never gives you more than you can handle, or everything will work out in the end. Always look for the silver lining, positive vibes only, failure is not an option. Those are all thought terminating clichés. And I think and believe the phrase, that's the way we've always done it is one of the most used thought terminating clichés in our businesses that shuts down our thinking.

I work with really successful business owners all the time that I consult with, that's private clients and in our programs. And they make their lives and businesses so much harder than they have to be a lot of times because they shut down their own thinking with the phrase, but that's the way we've always done it.

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So often when I ask why they're making a certain decision, why are they so upset about a team member wanting off, or wanting more vacation, or wanting pay, or not liking the way something's happening. Why are they always saying, "Well, why am I the only one thinking about business in the way I'm thinking about it?" And when I ask them to dig deeper, I'm like, "Well, why is that a problem? Why aren't you going to consider giving them more time off or listening to what your team needs?" The answer I get more often than not is, "But that's the way we've always done it."

That's the way we've always done it, and I often to say to them, "That's not an answer." It's sort of like when we say, "I don't know", when I ask a question and they're like, "I don't know." And to that question when they say, "I don't know", as the answer to questions maybe about how they're running their business, or about their feelings, "Why are you feeling that way?" "I don't know."

Any time something hard comes up we love saying, "I don't know." To which I always respond by saying, "But if you did know, what would the answer be?" And more often than not, in fact almost a 100% of the time when I say, "But if you did know why?" Suddenly they have an answer, one answer, sometimes three answers, sometimes a whole lot of answers. But our first thought terminating cliché is I don't know, just like when we say, "That's the way we've always done it."

So what are you possibly cutting yourself off from or shutting yourself off from in your company or with your team by saying, "I don't know", or "That's the way we've always done it?" I think you're probably cutting yourself off from a lot. What would happen if you let yourself answer the why for real? Why don't we pay more for our employees? Why don't we think they can do their job from home? Why do we think we can't afford to offer benefits? Why do we think that scalable products and services don't work in our business or industry?

Why do we think that we have to wear all the hats? Why do we think that a new process would be better than the one we have or wouldn't be better than the one we have? Why do we constantly say, "I don't know", and say,

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“But that’s the way we’ve always done it?” There are so many questions that I want you to answer for real. When you ask why, why do we think this, because if you really ask and you really answered, what might change in your business or your life? I don’t think we let ourselves think critically almost ever.

We don’t really explore all the possibilities. We don’t even let ourselves go there because we’re afraid to even go there in our mind or on paper. We don’t practice what’s called design thinking, or white box thinking when making decisions for our firms, which is to suspend all the bias, the bias like that’s the way we’ve always done it, suspend it at least temporarily and prototype a lot of different options for what we might do instead. And why don’t we do that?

Why don’t we do design thinking? We’re designers, we’re creatives yet we don’t do design thinking, we don’t do creative thinking when it comes to our own businesses. And the reason why is we let fear get in the way. And that’s the way we’ve always done it is the perfect thought terminating cliché to shut down any level of spontaneity, or out of the box, or progressive thinking immediately so we don’t have to feel the fear and uncertainty and what ifs that come with thinking bigger than we let ourself think.

So my wish for you in this holiday season is to mix things up, friends. Grab onto that courage, shake shit up as I say, eliminate the phrase, that’s the way we’ve always done it from your life. And whether it’s your holidays, your holiday dinner menu, or the many ways you choose to run your company next year, or even just in your own day-to-day life, let new possibilities make it onto the table for consideration, at least consider them.

There is a whole fun, exciting and new world out there that you could be enjoying if you let yourself go there.

Okay friends, happiest of holidays for whichever amazing holiday you’re celebrating because we have audience members and listeners that celebrate all kinds of things. So we love you and support you here at Tobi Fairley and the *Design You* podcast. And we wish you the happiest of holidays and we’ll see you next week. Bye for now friends.

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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.