

Ep #196: A New Way to New Year



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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 196.

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.

Happy New Year, friends, okay almost Happy New Year. It's almost here so cheers to what was 2021 hopefully for you. And cheers to what 2022 will be and what the current state of life, who knows what that even means. But let's hope for the best. So today I want to talk about doing the new year a new way, so a new way to new year. So what do I mean by that?

Well, for the last however long I can remember I had a pretty dialed in year end and new year ritual. And I would say it's been pretty similar since about 2008 or maybe a little before that. So I'm talking 14 or 15 years and even prior to that I had a lot of similar practices for ending a year and moving into the new year. And that for me typically included writing a year end review, blog post at least for those last year 14 years, 15 years or so. And some people call it a year end review, I called it a year in review, same thing.

And it typically was a blog post that took me hours to write documenting all of our successes for the year and thanking all those who were involved in helping us create those. I also have had a word of the year since 2012. And I've done goal setting for basically my entire life, starting as a teen or maybe even younger than that. I have been a big goal setter. And there was also a time that I believed in resolutions. So probably around my 20s I was big into resolutions. At some point, so probably in my 30s it evolved to more intentions.

And then I started doing something probably closer to being in my 40s called non-resolutions or un-resolutions which were all the things I was resolving not to do, or to unlearn, or to let myself off the hook from those resolutions that had always basically been doomed to fail in my past. I let myself do the opposite of writing those kinds of resolutions, so the un-resolution.

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

Ep #196: A New Way to New Year

And most of those years, all through the 20s, 30s and 40s my goal setting involved a lot of big dreams, really putting on paper the giant ideas or accomplishments that I desired to make happen. And that usually involved money, it always involved weight loss or some change to my body, a lot of times it included some material things like getting a new house, or a new office, or some other kind of purchase. And the majority of my goals and resolutions were usually centered around self-improvement, or personal development, or career achievement, or accolades, all of the doing.

A lot of my new year focus has also always been around the things that I needed to do to make myself better, to fix what was broken about me and my business. To align myself closer to what society told me I should look like physically, or what our business should look like, what culture said success looked like. All the things that whatever guru I was currently listening to told me that would create the most success, or those high-performance habits, or the results that they were promising. That's the stuff that made its way into my new year plans, and goals, and resolutions.

So basically, everything that I was thinking at the end of the year and the beginning of the new year lined up with either the new year new you concept or the new year better you type of thinking but not this year. Remember, this is a new way to new year. So maybe that's because I'll be 50 in about a month. And at 50 I will say I'm pretty much all out of giving a shit about what society, and culture, and gurus tell me success should look like, or pardon my French, but as my friends and I like to say, I'm fresh out of fucks.

So I'm no longer interested in fitting the societal and cultural beliefs and norms. So maybe it's that I'm turning 50 or maybe it's the intentional work that I've been doing in the last couple of years to think completely differently about myself, and my body, and my business. So the truth is it's probably both of those things. So this year as much as I love the new year because I often say it's my favorite holiday because I love a fresh start, it's so fun and full of promise, and full of hype.

Ep #196: A New Way to New Year

And yes, I'm still super excited about the new year but this year it's for completely different reasons that I am excited. I am doing both year end and new year differently this time around. So let me tell you what that looks like. So first, I am not doing a year in review blog post, or podcast, or even writing it down in my journal this year for the first time in over a decade. And that's not necessarily because I'm not celebrating my successes. And it's certainly not that I'm not grateful.

We're celebrating our team and our successes and those who helped make it happen in a big way actually, and a very conscious way in my company both with the fun gifts we gave our clients and vendors this year. They were all neat gifts that gave back in some way either to feed the hungry, or helping developing nations, or saving the Earth. And they also happen to be really awesome gifts that did good also in the process. So we did that.

We also had very exciting team bonuses, financial bonuses this year. And we made some really exciting charity donations. So we made some impact that way. And we had a companywide volunteer day where everybody was paid to be off work but to volunteer. So lots of amazing celebrations. In fact, they were celebrations that were way more meaningful than just writing a year-end blog post of our highlight reel.

And also, we're going to celebrate big in our company in January because we have a yearly planning session as a team in early January. So we're really looking forward to celebrating all our growth from last year. We'll go through all the things we accomplished, and we'll celebrate, and we'll get excited, and think about what that means for where we're going this year.

But for me personally the year in review was typically something I did by myself. And it was mostly about what magazines I'd been published in, or what product lines I had launched, or what trips I went on, or what fancy Instagram worthy activities had happened in the last 12 months. That stuff that would garner me external validation and honestly, I'm just less motivated by those things these days. Now, that's not to say I didn't enjoy all of those things when they were happening in the past.

Ep #196: A New Way to New Year

And it's not to say I'm not grateful that they happened. It isn't like I'm now swearing off all that stuff, or I'm shaming you, or dismissing them if it's on your list of accomplishments or goals this year, not at all. But what I am saying is that I've shifted a lot in my belief systems. And I have clarified my values both personally and professionally, and most of all I've gotten really honest with myself about what matters to me right now and what I want to spend my time doing in this phase of my life.

And what I've found is that it's just not really that stuff anymore. The stuff that makes a beautiful year in review is not the stuff that lights me up right now. So what is it instead that I want to be doing with my time and my year? Well, I'm greatly valuing my team more than ever, and doing things together with them, collaborating and creating impact together through our client work and just in the world. I am absolutely loving the team.

I'm also crazy about being a mom. I've always been crazy about that but it's just so much fun with my 16-year-old. She's got 18 months left at home before she decides what she's going to do next after high school. So I'm just soaking that up. And it's kind of hilarious to me but thanks to COVID and all the time I've spent at home in the last couple of years, I'm currently super attached more than ever to my pups, and our fish, Nigel, and our snail who lives with Nigel, Archie, Archibald, and all my houseplants who also have names but I won't read all of those off to you because it would be 20 names.

And I'm also crazy about the lettuce, and herbs, and things I grow in my hydroponic garden. So completely loving all of that. I'm also excited that I'm getting back into hobbies. So last year I took some water color painting classes. Now this year I'm back into needlepoint as a hobby. I used to needlepoint and cross stitch a lot when I was in high school and in college. And I'm thrilled to have a renewed interest in this hobby and some new canvases and yarns.

And I mean seriously I'm geeking out over how fun that is. So that I can create beautiful things instead of just mindlessly scrolling Instagram for hours instead. I also still love reading, mostly non-fiction but I am throwing

Ep #196: A New Way to New Year

a few more fiction books in. This year I read 42 books and only four of them were fiction. So maybe in 2022 I'll add a few more fiction books but don't hold me to it, but maybe. But I will never tire of reading. It's just who I am.

And I'm also loving a lot of podcasts right now, so political ones, anti-diet podcast, conscious and anti bro marketing podcast, progressive religion podcast. My favorites right now if I had to pick, in case you're wondering, would be Maintenance Phase and Duped, two really, really provocative, thought-provoking podcasts. I highly recommend them both, check them out. And I'm also always still listening to both of Brené Brown's podcasts, Dare to Lead and Unlocking Us, they're always in my top five year over year, month over month on any given week, truly Brené is the ball.

New to my new year this year is that I am 100% enjoying the fact that I completely gave up dieting, and weighing myself, and truly even losing weight. Unless it just naturally happens, I'm not consciously attempting to lose weight anymore. That's been a process. I've finally landed here and it's really amazing. So what's not on my list for the new year in any way, shape or form which is so refreshing is losing weight, dieting or anything in that realm.

So instead of what I would have thought a few years ago would have been my 50th birthday resolution would be to get skinny for 50 or get hot for 50. No, I'm just accepting myself for 50 and it is amazing, exactly the way I am without change. Also, with my body and my, I guess, health and wellness routine, another change for me for this year is I am not going back to the gym again. So I've quit the gym before during COVID and it's just not working for me right now. I mean it's working but it's just not aligned with me right now.

So I'm not loving working out, I kind of like it, I love the people, I love my friends that I work out with, I love my trainers. But I've just really struggled with working out. I had some sort of hormone issues and some vertigo that was related, and it's made it difficult to work out in the mornings. But I just find that I'm forcing myself to go to the gym and I'm canceling a lot when I don't feel well.

Ep #196: A New Way to New Year

And so I'm just going to try to not force myself to do anything in 2022 if it's not aligned, if my body isn't cooperating, if it's not feeling good or with relative ease, even though working out is not always easy. Getting there and going is not easy. And I'm going to try believing for this next year that it's just not right for me right now and see how I feel when I lean into more ease and more alignment. I think it's going to be good but I'll report back on that one for sure.

And instead of going to the gym I'm going to allow myself the more gentle movements and the things I do at home that I actually really love and that are easy for me to be consistent with like walking, and yoga, and meditation. I'm going to practice believing that those things are enough. And I'm going to stop believing the story that I usually tell myself that they're not sweaty enough, or hard enough, or any other realm of sort of diet mentality thinking.

So no big resolutions at all for me this year in the getting in shape, changing my body area. My only goal there is just to make sure I move my body regularly because I definitely feel better when I move than when I don't.

So as you can tell the main thing I'm giving up for new year this year is all the things that society and culture would likely have me do, starting a diet, or restricting myself in my food in some way, or losing weight, setting crazy hustle-based goals. Showing my highlight reel, believing I'm broken and needing to be fixed or to change in some drastic way, hitting the gym with all the January gym and diet enthusiasts. None of those are happening, not a single one.

But that doesn't mean I'm not having any goals or that I'm skipping planning altogether this year. I'm just doing it in a gentler and more conscious way. And I will still have a word of the year which I'll tell you about in a minute because I enjoy having a word of the year. But what does this even mean, a gentler approach to the new year? Well, let me tell you a little bit more about that.

Ep #196: A New Way to New Year

So first before I do that let me say that if any of the things I've already mentioned that I've done in the past are perfect for you then go for it. I hope your biggest takeaway from this podcast and really all my podcast episodes is that there's not one right way of doing things in business or life. There are many. So this is about you doing you really. And I think that happens the most when we're honest with ourself and what we really want and what feels really good and aligned for us.

But I also hope that you do understand what that looks like for you to do you. Because a lot of times it's hard for us to differentiate between that and what someone else or culture would tell us we should do in the name of success, or the almighty hustle, or because you love being validated because of those things by others. That is not really always you doing you. Because I've found that the hustle and the validation are usually pretty empty promises that don't typically bring us what we thought they would or even what we really want.

So as long as you're honest with yourself, then go for whatever version of new year makes the most sense for you. But for me I have long been a lover of the gentler approach to life but I rarely have allowed myself to believe that was enough. I often get swept up in achieving because I have access to a whole lot of energy and personal power. I'm super driven. I'm an action taker. And so it's super easy for me to believe the messages that we're all bombarded with, that say things like I can be more and that I have so much potential. And don't I want to be all that I can be?

But the truth is that I don't really want to be all that I can be because I can be a lot. And I have a ton of privilege and a lot of access to things like money, and opportunities, and stuff. And if I don't constrain then I get really tired because if I'm not perfectly honest about which of the things that are available to me that I really want at any given time, I'm setting myself up for exhaustion and burnout. So maybe for the first time in my life this year, gentle exercise and movement is enough for me. Maybe staying home quite a bit still and enjoying my family and nesting is enough for me.

Ep #196: A New Way to New Year

Maybe working with and enjoying my team instead of trying to be that rugged individualist, independent bootstrapper that our culture would have me be, maybe instead working and collaborating with my team is enough because I mean damn am I enjoying my team. Who knew I didn't have to do all the hustle and make things happen all on my own with my own power and might like I tried to for 20 something years in my business? Why did you all not tell me how awesome team was, you all? It's incredible and I'm loving it.

And also, maybe eating all the foods when I feel like it because I want them is also working for me because it feels really freeing. And I mean all the foods, I ate quite a few cupcakes this week, I didn't have icing because I like the cake but dang, they were good. And I ate them probably all by myself the whole batch and they were amazing. And I have zero guilt. And I don't feel like I need to exercise them off. Maybe that's okay too for this year.

And for our business, planning 2022 started about three or four months ago, not last week. So we decided as a team what we would be selling next year. And we constrained a whole lot. We're only offering our two signature programs, Design You and Millionaire Mentorship and that's it. And I'm totally okay with that. And I'm completely okay if we don't do any design work in 2022. There's a chance we'll do a little because we work for our regular clients and who knows who will pop up with a project but it's okay if we don't.

I am no longer offering private coaching. We've transitioned all those people into Millionaire Mentorship and they love it because they love their peers, and the mentors, and it's just even better. And so we just aren't launching new things. And we've constrained a lot of other things that we were doing, no new programs, or trainings, or private consulting, or summits. And I've got to tell you, it feels amazing. It feels amazing to have such a simple set of offers that we can focus on delivering at our absolute best level to support our clients next year.

Ep #196: A New Way to New Year

It feels good to not have the pressure for maybe the first time ever of creating a ton of new stuff. We're going to refresh some of our current courses to make sure they're in alignment with our current values, so that'll be fun and exciting but not new. And it's different.

Just about a week or so to kind of help be with this process I took a great workshop called The Chart Your Course Workshop. It was hosted by a lady named Kelly Diels that I follow, an educator and coach and feminist that I really like. She calls herself a culture changer, which is awesome. She was hosting it but it was actually taught by her friend who calls herself a business refinement consultant and her name is Claudia Cordova Rucker. And it was really amazing.

So the Chart Your Course Workshop was a day long planning experience on a Sunday afternoon. And it helped the students enter 2022 feeling calm, centered and capable. Pretty amazing, right? We learned how to do a yearly personal life assessment to see where we were in all areas of our life. And we learned some planning rituals.

One of my favorites was we learned how to plan goals based on the seasons. So that could be the season of the year, the season of your life but really taking into account seasons and it was nothing I'd ever heard of before and it's incredible. I'll definitely be using this moving forward. I need to get Claudia to come on the podcast and talk to us about it. It was so good.

But the whole purpose of this event was to create a gentle beautiful life that nourishes you rather than exhausts you. Sounds incredible. Well, it was. And it confirmed so much of the gentle and conscious direction I've been moving towards. So this workshop helped me make sure that I infused that approach into my goal setting, which as I said for me can often get so swept up in cultural expectations. And I'm sure that's true for you too. But a gentler approach doesn't mean we aren't still a for profit business. We definitely are.

We fully believe that the more money we make, that we can generate in a conscious way the more impact we can create in our business, and with

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

Ep #196: A New Way to New Year

our clients, and out in the world. So we do have a big money goal as a team this year but that's different for us because it's not just me setting a big goal and trying to reach it by myself, it's a collective, collaborative approach. And we're still all in it together to hit that number. And we've got some really exciting bonuses and raises baked into it for all of us depending on what we accomplish.

But that's part of why we're simplifying everything because I don't want us selling a million things and trying to create new, and sell, and run in a million directions. Because I want to set us up for success as a company to hit our goals so everyone on the team wins big and our clients do too. So that's how we're going to do that this year.

And we do have a few other goals for the company but they're not earth shattering on paper. They aren't the most inspiring sounding things you've ever heard because I've learned that a lot of those inspiring sounding things that I used to pick were more smoking mirrors and often I fell short in realizing them.

But what really changes businesses and what really has changed our business and probably even the world most often is taking consistent and intentional action. And that can sound super layman boring for a goal or a resolution on paper but that's exactly what's on tap for us in 2022, consistent intentional action doing the things that are working. We did a ton of work last year. We built our team up, so we really don't need to hire more people right now, maybe one person but not really a big hiring plan this year.

We have some really exciting things we want to add to our diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives for 2022. But again, that's just going deeper in the work and our impact that we're already doing. It's not a new program. We're not starting something from scratch. It's an extension of what's been happening. So our main goal, keep doing what's working. Keep simplifying everything else. So we aren't spread too thin or expected to hustle day in and day out.

Ep #196: A New Way to New Year

Keep trusting ourselves and our processes, keep believing we aren't broken or confused, or missing out on something that some guru has the secret source for that we just haven't learned yet. We're excited to launch our new website in February which was the culmination of a ton of work last year. So that feels great to have that done. And it'll be so much more aligned with this way of thinking.

So 2022 is mostly more of the same and that's a good thing. My COO, April and I will continue our certification with Trudi Lebron and her team to become equity centered coaches and leaders. So we still have a whole left year in that. We started last July, it's an 18-month program. My team also was part of Trudi's collectives, so they learn from her every month. I'm signed up for Kara Loewentheil's certification class in feminist coaching which starts in March. It's a four-month intensive program. So lots of learning still.

I hope to take Eden Carpenter's certification in human design starting in July. So my whole education plan and learning which is my favorite thing to do is all mapped out and planned for next year. And I'm going to have some other free time, my daughter's going back to an in-person school for the first time in 18 months. I'm going to not make those extra hours that were about productivity and hustle. They're going to be for reading, and resting, and taking some naps.

I can probably say this is the most restful and gentle plan I've had in a long time. The last time I remember having a year like this was about 10 years ago when I was 39 turning 40. And I was feeling really burned out. And I'm so glad I'm not feeling burned out a decade later, that I'm just moving into more consciousness, and more rest. Maybe that's been a theme for me that in the new decade I would settle down. But maybe this time starting my 50s I hope to keep it going. I hope it's not a flash in the pan or a year of the decade that I rest and everyone else I hustle.

I hope this is what the next 50 years look like and I'm allowing myself a whole lot more being and a whole lot less doing. And I'm allowing that for my team too. And I'm working on taking a lot more time off. I'm planning a

Ep #196: A New Way to New Year

month off in the summer and probably two to three weeks at Christmas next year and even the first week of January in addition to all of our vacations and holidays in the company. So it's going to be fun. It's going to be fun to see what comes up for me and how it feels and how I operate in this different way, this gentler way.

I'm going to soak up my family and just celebrate them and love them, and celebrate my 50 years of hustle, like I said, hoping the next 50 years or more, consciousness, intention and gentleness. And for all those reasons my word of 2022 is consciousness. So a few definitions of consciousness that I really like are, one, the awareness by the mind of itself in the world. Or another one I like is the state of being awake. The third one I like is the quality or state of being aware especially of something within oneself.

And the last one I really like is awareness especially concern for some social or political cause. And I would say every one of these is so aligned with how I want to feel and how I want my team to feel in 2022. And I think consciousness will draw out our leadership, our work, our direction, our message, our message, our podcast and me personally. And so I really look forward to what this year and this new decade will bring for me. And I'm wishing you the most wonderful new year, friends.

If you want a gentler new year this is your permission slip to give it a whirl. We can compare notes at the end. So I invite you either way, no matter what you choose for the new year to just be intentional about it, to get really clear on your why and really do it for yourself. That's the only person that matters when it comes to your goals, do it for you. So Happy New Year my friends. I'll see you in 2022. Bye for now.

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