

## Ep #227: Navigating Life's Transitions



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**Tobi Fairley**

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## Ep #227: Navigating Life's Transitions

You are listening to *The Design You Podcast* with Tobi Fairley, episode number 227.

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, happy end of summer. Some of you live in places where summer doesn't really end until September but where I live, summer is pretty much coming to an end when you get to the beginning of August. And here we are the beginning of August. So, today's episode is a little bit different. It's probably going to be pretty short. I usually have a script or even a written transcript of what I'm going to talk about. But lately I've just sort of been thinking. It's sort of like musings. And maybe that's because I'm in a period of transition.

That's what really I was thinking this episode is about, transitions. And it's really fascinating how you think about things for a long time, years, sometimes decades, arriving at a certain part in your life and then all of a sudden you're there. And so earlier this year as you all know if you listen to the podcast regularly, I turned 50 back in January. And now speaking of August, my daughter, my one and only child is about to start her senior year of high school.

So, in the next 12 months I will become an empty nester and that's something that I've known was always obviously in my future with one child. But it was going to come sooner than later no matter how many children you have. But it's here, it's time to start thinking about the next phase of my life and it's so fascinating and interesting to be in the place of thinking, what do I really want to do next? What is this going to look like? What do I want for what I would call the second half of my life?

So recently, and I'm going to tell you more about this in a future episode because it was so, so lifechanging. But recently, that would be say since March, so the last four or five months I have been going through the advanced certification for feminist coaching with Kara Loewentheil. And so, it's just something I elected to do because I love to work on growth. I love

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anything that has to do with humanity, and politics, and our identities. And so, I signed up for the certification and it was definitely lifechanging.

Now, a lot of you know that I have been doing work for going on three years. So probably about two and a half years I've been doing some really committed work around antiracism, and equity, and diversity, equity and inclusion kind of stuff. I've been doing another certification on equity centered coaching and leadership. And so, I've done a lot of work around identities, and marginalized identities and that sort of thing.

So, a lot of the advanced certification for feminist coaching was around the patriarchy and how women show up in the world and with work and all kinds of things. And I learned a ton in that part of the certification as well but it wasn't totally new for me. But there was some lifechanging mind blowing stuff that was really new for me that I did not expect in this certification program.

And the point of the certification is to prepare you as a coach to really understand all of the things that women especially if you're coaching women but sometimes it applies to men too. Because let's be honest, the patriarchal society impacts everyone of every gender and those who identify as gender non-conforming. We're all impacted by a patriarchal society.

But some of the things I wasn't really expecting and thinking about were the chapters and the weeks that had to do with relationships, romantic relationships, especially friendships. A lot of us really understand that when you get to be an adult, making friendships as an adult is really just as hard as making friendships as a child or a teenager, I mean it brings back a lot of the weird middle school things. But adult friendships and then even a lot of content in the program around sex and sexuality, our bodies.

There's so much stuff that we are socialized to think in a patriarchal society around all of these things, what relationships should look like, what kind of friendships women should have, what kind of sexual or intimate relationships she should have. So, a lot of stuff around these areas really were mind blowing for me over the last few weeks.

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So, what does this have to do with turning 50, an empty nester, my daughter is starting her senior year and all the work I'm doing in the world? Well, this episode is really just a little bit of musings of me thinking about what this transition for me in the next year or so is going to look like. What do I want? What am I thinking about? What are the options? And some of you may be in periods of transition too, or you have some on the horizon, or you're just thinking about the future like I've done.

Five years from now my daughter will be graduating. Or eight years from now my daughter will be graduating. Well, it's now, it's here, it's today. So, what do you do for transition periods? Well, we're going to talk a little bit about what's on my mind but let me tell you a couple of stories that are really influencing this.

So, I don't know, maybe two or three years ago I heard a podcast and I've probably referenced it before, I think I have because it really stuck with me. And it was an episode actually of Tim Ferriss' podcast and the guest was Tony Robbins. And love him or hate him, sometimes I talk about Tony, he can be very problematic but he also can have some wisdom. And he was talking about coaching Andre Agassi. And he was saying, "I was coaching him, he had just become number one in the world. He had reached all of his dreams and then he hit a slump."

And he came to Tony and he was like, "What is happening?" And what Tony realized was that Andre had reached the end of his dreams. He had this vision for working up through the ranks and winning all the trophies, and all the tournaments, and all the things in tennis. And then he reached them all and then he hit a slump. And Tony's like, "Well, this makes a lot of sense. It's not something that he had noticed. But he had come to the end of his dream, all the things he had seen in his future. He had checked every box. It was all done.

Now, I'm not saying I've come to the end of my dream but I have checked a lot of boxes in 50 years. I've done a lot of things I've wanted to do. I have been both very fortunate and very privileged, financially and otherwise to be able to go after and reach a lot of the things that I had on my list. And

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so, in a lot of ways I have come to the end of that list and I knew that back in January when I turned 50 and I started thinking about what do I want to do next?

But what I'm really understanding now is it's less about what I want to do and more about who I want to be with this transition. Who do I want to be in the next half of my life? So, the other story I wanted to share with you is recently I was having a conversation with Nicole Yang who I'm going to have on the podcast soon. I keep talking about her but she is a young woman who is phenomenal and very progressive in her thinking and the way she runs her business. And she just really impresses me so much.

And she is in her early 30s, she does our graphic design but I also spend a lot of time just – well, not just graphic design, that's not enough. She's really instrumental in helping me build our brand, our brand visuals, the way we present our brand. And then a lot of times it even gets into brand voice conversation and what's the messaging we want to share? And she and I have a lot of more philosophical conversations about what's happening in business and what's kind of the sentiment of the consumer these days? And where are we going in society and how do we want to show up?

So recently I was talking to her and she said, which was so beautiful and at the same time kind of innocent. She said, "I really do worry a lot about life after 40." Well, here I am just turned 50. And she says she worries about life after 40. And I'm like, "Yeah, right, I understand that." And her point was, as a creative, because she's one and I'm one, so often you don't even see creatives reinventing themselves after 40 and doing, of course people do remarkable things after 40, I'm not saying that everyone ages out.

But we've talked about on the podcast before how America in particular is obsessed with youth, not really impressed with aging, not really impressed with all the things that come with aging. And she said, "I worry that so many of the female role models that I follow just become coaches and teachers after 40 but they're not really doing anything exceptionally creative after

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40.” And this really got my attention. I’m already a coach. I’ve been a coach since my 30s because I love coaching.

It’s not that situation that I always heard for years which is those who can’t do, teach, which I don’t even believe that to be true but the point being it’s not that I’m just aging out and so now I’m starting to be a consultant because it’s easier. But that was her point. She said, “I see people working so hard and pushing so hard in their 20s and 30s that by the time they get 40 they’re really just freaking tired.” And she’s not wrong. I definitely hit burnout at 38, I hit it again at 44. So, she’s not wrong.

But it’s less about I think time passing and the hustling we do, or the efforting we do and more about the way we’re thinking. I’ve thought about this conversation so many times since we had it just several weeks ago, maybe a couple of months ago. Life after 40 that she’s worried about which for me now is life after 50, am I just going to sort of take a break, prop my feet up, become a coach and teacher because it’s easier than the things I did in my 30s and to an extent maybe but not really.

So, what else, what else do I want? What does the certification that just introduced me to a new way of thinking about friendships, and relationships, and sex, and sexuality? I mean shocking first of all that I’m even mentioning sex and sexuality, period, on this podcast because I think we’ve talked about it maybe once but here I am a good southern girl and those are not the kinds of things you talk about. But really life is happening and we never know how long we’re going to be here.

If we’re lucky we live until an old age and we have the opportunity to reinvent ourselves again and again but what am I waiting on? What am I waiting for? Where do I want to become the most honest, most clear, most true version of myself? And that’s saying a lot because I am pretty honest and pretty direct. And I have been peeling away layers for a long time but I can just tell. I have a nudge, it’s stronger than a nudge, I have a pull to think about what the next level, the next version, the next half of my life looks like and what identities I want to embrace.

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What does empty nesting mean to me? What else is out there that's possible? Who do I want to become? I've known for a long time I've wanted to be an author and I probably thought I would have written books before now in some ways. I also for a long time have thought I wanted a beach house and now maybe not so much. I mean that sounds like a privileged life. Do I want a beach house or do I not? But I've been dreaming lately about a different home to live in, maybe some land, maybe a bigger property, maybe building a house which I always thought I would do.

There's so much to think about. And what I really love is this calling that I'm having to be more honest with myself than ever before. And if I haven't already mentioned some amazing women on this episode, I've mentioned Kara Loewentheil, amazing, Nicole Yang, amazing. I referenced Trudi Lebron's Equity Centered certification I'm working on, amazing. I have some amazing women in my life right now that are influencing me. And believe it or not, all of them are younger than me which is also a shift, it's so interesting.

You get to be of a certain age and I still think I'm very young at 50. But you get to be a certain age and you're like, "How did this happen?" I even saw a meme on Instagram yesterday that said, if people born in – I don't remember, it was 1985 or something, are x age, so whatever year, I don't know. It was probably even 2000. If people born in 2000 are 22 years old, how is that possible because I'm still 22 myself? So, the older you get you still think you're young.

And so, I'm being influenced by all of these women that are younger than me which is delightful but fascinating. What does it say about ageism in America? Ageism was another topic we looked at in the advanced certification for feminist coaching. What does it say about this point in my life? And I've even started to question a little bit, what do I look like as a 60 year old influencing people and being a thought leader, what about a 70 year old? Who's going to listen to me? What do I have to say? And I know I have a lot to say.

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That's not diminishing or saying when I'm giving up. But who do I want to be? What are the identities? And my point with talking about these amazing young women is one other younger than me woman that I am influenced a lot by is someone named Simone Seol. She has a wonderful podcast called the Joyful Marketing Podcast. She has a business called the same. And I just did a little brief two week summer camp event she had. And one of the things that you could do in her 'summer camp' was to pick an activity to kind of next level your marketing.

And so, the one I picked was this opportunity to spend two weeks getting even more honest than normal in your marketing, in the things you're sharing. The funny thing was I didn't really share that much. So usually, I follow every rule when I take on something like the summer camp, I follow it specifically and to the tee. I think that the challenge was to create the most honest post on social media for a two week period that you have talked about ever. And when I started doing the work, now, trust me, I will post soon.

But it just brought up so much more about this transition for me. And so, one of the things that I loved that Simone taught in this exercise, if you picked the one about it was called Campfire Stories and in the whole idea of summer camp. What are the stories you're going to tell to your audience over the next two weeks that are truly about you and that are more real, and raw, and honest than anything you've ever said? And so, it took me down a rabbit hole which was connected to this idea of transitions and the next version of me and what I want.

And here's the thing that I loved that Nicole taught me. She said, "So often people in marketing think they need to talk about their business or give value." We hear this all the time, "Make sure you're giving value." And she said, "What people don't understand is value does not mean it's another business tool every week or another something that people can implement." Value might really even just be you showing up as a human, people hearing what you have to say and what you believe in, people hearing your voice, people seeing your face can be valuable.



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This podcast, even when I'm rambling and doing musings like this episode can be so valuable. But what she said is, "Write out the stories." And she gave us some prompts, sort of like journal prompts. "And whatever you write then ask yourself, how could I be more honest and then write that. And then look at it again and say, "How could I be more honest?" And you do this again and again until you're truly at the place where you're being the most honest with your story."

And so, the reason I haven't posted yet is because this kind of took me down the rabbit hole, coming from a person who believes themselves to be super honest and super direct, and I would say that that is true. There's always room for more honesty. There's always room to peel away another layer. There's always room to go next level. And so, I'm doing that work right now. What's the more honest version of even what I want to say? What's the more honest version even of this podcast?

And in this process she says of course to have your own back, it's not about doing things and putting things out in the world that you're not ready for or that might harm you or someone else to share. But really just hitting that point and you know it when you hit it because it touches a place in your soul or your spirit and you're like, "Can I even say that?" What would people think about that? What do I think about that? And this is the work that Simone's exercise had me doing.

So, I just wanted to come on and leave you with this today. If you're in a transition already, or you're past a transition but you didn't really take it as a moment to reinvent yourself, or you see one on the horizon, and you're doing like I was a few years ago going, "Yeah, in five years. In five years, my daughter will start her senior year. In five years, I will be 50." I just wanted to give you this opportunity to get even more honest with yourself than ever.

So, as I continue to ask myself, what do I love and want to do? Who do I want to work with? What do I want to write about? What do I want to stop doing? What do I want to say? What opportunities or moments do I not want to miss out on? What do I want my life to mean and my legacy to be?

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What do I want my 50s to look like? Do I want to be the teacher who's tired of doing everything else so she's a consultant, and a teacher, and a coach? Or do I want to revolutionize what 50 means at least for me if not for other people? That sounds like me, doesn't it?

But the thing is, I don't even have to do that. It is okay if all I want to do is be a consultant and slow down. It's also okay if I want to ramp things up. And it's also okay to be in the moment I am right now where I just don't quite know and I haven't decided yet. And I get to explore again which reminds me of how I felt when I was leaving high school, what do I want to be? Who do I want to become?

And I will say at this moment looking at the impending empty nest that's coming 12 months from now, I'm in that moment again, what do I want to be? Who do I want to become? What do I want my marriage to look like? What do I want my days to look like? What do I want my relationships to look like? Is there anything I want to change or stop doing, or end, or begin? And that's what's on my mind right now. So, are you thinking about life after, fill in the blank, life after 40, life after 50, life after 60?

Are you at the end of your dream like Andre Agassi of what you had planned? And are you just going to kind of ride off into the sunset and let things happen that happen or are you going to reinvent yourself? And in what ways can you become even more honest and then more honest with yourself than that, and then more honest than that about what you're going to do with this as they say, one precious and amazing life? That's it you all, that's what I have for you today. It's short. It's sweet. It's deep. It's profound.

I know some of you will reach out to me and say it blew your mind, it was like I was in your head. You're welcome. I'm definitely in my head right now. And I'll be back next week with something more structured and more – I don't know – valuable maybe. But when I really think about it I think episodes like this are probably the most valuable. So, for what it's worth, thank you for indulging me and listening to what I have to say. I'll keep you

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posted and I can't wait to hear from all of you that are also thinking about this and transitioning to another phase.

Some of you are transitioning not by choice, something happened in your life that you have to become the next version of you and whatever the reason is, if it's by choice or not, just remember to be the most honest with yourself that you can be and I'll see you back next week friends with another 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](http://TobiFairley.com).