

Ep #231: Fuck It Is The New Hustle



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Tobi Fairley

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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 friends, we are rolling right through this year. As this episode comes out on September 1st which is my dog, Izzy's 10th birthday. So happy birthday Izzy. But we're also rolling into my favorite season. So, bring on the firepits, the big pots of soup, all the cozy socks, the blankets, the football, all the things. I'm here for it every year. You hear me say this every year at this time of year, so let's go fall, yeah, baby.

Okay, so let me also give you a little bit of a heads up that if you have littles around while you're listening to this, and I don't know how many of you that listen have little kiddos, but you might. So, if you do, there's going to be some swear words in today's episode because the title even has swear words in it. And that's not something that we do all the time but we do sometimes and today we are going to do some cursing. So, if you have little ears around this might not be the episode for them.

Okay, so I absolutely love today's episode which is entitled Fuck It Is The New Hustle. That's right, fuck it. And it's not only the new hustle for us, it's the new motto at Tobi Fairley Inc. And we're actually really excited about this. So, I want to give you some context around what we mean and what this shift means for us. It may not be exactly what you think it means, possibly sort of. But yeah, let's get into it.

So, a lot of times when we hit the point of what we would call fuck it, is when we're exasperated. We have been trying everything, or something at least and it's just not working. Maybe it's a diet, or it's a marketing plan, or it's social media, or something. Any of those things, if you're still trying them, by the way. I mean I gave up diets a long time ago but definitely, yeah, you hit that point where you're like, "This is not working, just fuck it, screw it, I'm done with it."

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But the point of being a lot of times at fuck it, is code for giving up on something. And I guess in some ways our new motto of fuck it is the new hustle is giving up but it's not giving up on ourselves. So, I want to get really clear about that. It's actually kind of the opposite.

What it's really for us giving up on is all of the rules, and the standards, and the expectations set by society, and the patriarchy, and white supremacy, and all the systems, and all the things, and people, and success, and capitalism, and all the stuff that we sort of just got in line with. Just adopted because we were told that's what we were supposed to do. But we kind of did that without our consent. We weren't really thoughtful or mindful of is this what we want? We just believed.

We believed what the world told us, what other people told us, and at this point, in our lifecycle at Tobi Fairley Inc., we are completely over all of that stuff, O-V-E-R, over it. And the way this is coming up for us is in multiple places but definitely when we're creating things, when we're launching products, when we're doing some planning, or a lot of planning on our team. It's so easy to fall into perfectionism that aligns with those standards that we have been taught our whole lives.

Because we humans we love to think in binaries, right and wrong, or good and bad, what's the right way to market? What's the right way to launch? What's the right way to do this? So, we're always trying to do things right, humans and Tobi Fairley Inc. people, my team and me. And it's not that we don't want to do things well, we do, but we're told that doing things the right way is what's really good. It's what we should be doing. I mean how many of us heard our whole lives, "If you're going to do something, do it right or don't do it at all?"

And we're taught in school that A's are acceptable, or good, A+'s are better, B's are okay and anything else is really average or a fail. And this thinking is so straight out of the patriarchy playbook. And it holds so many of us back, my team, our teams included. So, we decided as a team recently to come up with a new motto, one that reminds us that there is no place for perfectionism in our company at all because here's what we

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know. Perfectionism is the enemy of progress. Perfectionism is the enemy of creativity. And perfectionism is the enemy of possibility.

And we could go on and on, perfectionism is the enemy of growth, there's so many things that perfectionism is the enemy of. And you could replace perfectionism with hustle because hustle is also the enemy of. So, where we notice ourselves struggling to let go of perfectionism, it's not really in the visionary roles like when we're thinking of what we want to achieve. We really do allow ourselves to be creative there. But it's when we move from vision to a plan, to implementation, to integration.

It's that piece of the puzzle of the doing that it's so easy for us to get rigid if we're not careful. And it's so easy to think that there's a right way to market, a right way to do social media, a right way to launch, a right way to plan. And certainly, a right way of mapping out each and every step because it makes us feel more secure and less vulnerable.

But it can also make us feel simultaneously overwhelmed and overworked because if we say we're going to do something, my team is so responsible and so conscientious that they want to follow through on the commitments that are made. I think they are way more committed than me most of the time. And it gets really frustrating when we've set a plan and then we don't follow it. And here's the thing, when we get rigid plans that look beautiful, and amazing, and systems, and processes, and structure, and I'm not anti all those things.

But let's just be clear, when we get rigid, it often takes the fun out of the process of work because we tend to be over-committers and overachievers for a lot of reasons. And we're socialized to be that way in society again, A's are good, A+ is better. Women's value comes from their work and what we do for other people, and how many things we've crossed off our to-do list today. And so, what we noticed is what we've done in the past, it's worked. It's worked to have a schedule and check all the boxes to a point.

We've had success, anybody from the outside looking in would say, "Oh my gosh, yes, you've had success." But in a lot of ways, we don't really create the impact that we know we're capable of. And what we realized is

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that if we keep doing the same thing in the same way with these systems, and rigid plans, and integration, and checking the boxes, what if that's holding us back from what's possible for us as a company and the impact that we can make in the world, what if?

Could there be another version of our future company that's holding on to the reins so tight right now that it's keeping us from getting there? And here's the thing, my heart and my gut which I trust both a lot, they both say, yes, a resounding yes. So maybe this is because in my own personal development work and growth over the last several years it's really shown me all the ways that perfectionism and rigidity were holding me back.

All the ways that doing what the gurus and experts say were keeping me squarely inside the box and keeping me from showing up as the truest version of myself. And keeping me forcing myself to do things that I don't like and that don't feel good, that feel like forcing, that feel like I have to, that don't align. I mean honestly there's not a word I hate any more in the dictionary, in the English language than discipline.

And a lot of you may be gasping right now because you were taught that it's all about discipline, and willpower, and habits, and showing up, and doing what you said you're going to do. And maybe for some people that don't show up a lot and that tend to procrastinate more, maybe that's true for them. But there's a lot of us that are type A overachievers, that that's absolutely not true. We absolutely show up and overshoot and can't quit things and that's me.

And thinking there's one right way and thinking I have to do things for success, it's not in alignment and probably never was. So, we've decided to take another route. We've decided to lean all the way into writing our own rules, or even having no rules at all. But this isn't just a top down decision from me. As a leader it is really important to me that my team loves their work and that we reduce stress, and that we aren't always gearing up for the next big launch that has a huge pass or fail feeling to it because we're so focused on getting it right.

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And after we've finished one launch or one thing, or one project, it's time to go right into the next one and do it right. Because that approach leads to burnout and it's not the way to build sustainable workloads. It's not the way to show up as ourselves and it's sure not the way to infuse fun in our life and our days. So, when I brought this up to our leadership team, my COO, April said transparently that not following a specific plan feels super uncomfortable for her which makes perfect sense.

Again, the comfort comes from the certainty but that comfort is an illusion because certainty is an illusion. Because we have to understand that just because we have a certain or rigid way of showing up, doesn't mean it'll create success, doesn't mean something won't happen that interrupts that plan. It happens all the time. Hello pandemic. Hello internet going down. Hello someone getting sick. Things happen all the time that are beyond our control but we have this belief that we are in control even though it is an illusion a lot of the times.

And so that belief that we're in control is what creates the certainty. And any time I or we have experienced growth in our company it's never the certainty, it's always through the great discomfort and the stretching of ourselves.

So, when we were talking about this and I was bringing it up to the leadership team, my COO April said, "You know what, Tobi? Any time I have to do the deep work of stepping outside the box, and really pushing myself to something that you've suggested, that feels super uncomfortable. The only way I can get there is to adopt a fuck it attitude. As in I don't have to worry about pleasing Tobi, or winning, or getting gold stars because all those forms of external validation that most of us are typically looking for is what I'm looking for.

And so, when you tell me to stretch, and when you tell me to do something different. And when you tell me to loosen the reins on the plans, and when you tell me to think out of the box I have to adopt the fuck it attitude, as in fuck it. Fuck it, we either win or we learn." It's the opposite of gold stars for April and I think for many of us it's the same. It's to say fuck it. So, here's

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what she taught me and I think it's so true. She said, "When I want to go there I have to say, "Fuck it, let's go for it and see what happens.""

No guarantee, can't promise you we're going to win, might not work but fuck it, let's go. And that is the exact opposite approach from what we end up doing a lot of times but it's the thing that excites me the most. Because certainty and rigidity are ways that we humans try to mitigate failure. And certainty is always an illusion as we said and anything can happen. But we think it prevents failure. We can have those best laid plans, we've had it happen so many times, webinar launch today, Zoom goes out. But we think the plan prevents failure.

Now, it can help you to show up. And it's not that I think everyone all the time should just show up and do whatever or whatever they feel like, or throw mud on the wall and see what sticks. There are so many times that relying on our systems isn't really, really helpful. But there are also all those other times that so many things are constantly out of our control, instead of trying to continue to control what we can, which is sort of the American obsessed with productivity approach.

We started to wonder as a company what would happen if we just leaned into our creative nature, and we loosened the reins, and we just showed up all in but not with a rigid plan, what would that look like? I often think that we set markers for success, like we want 30 new members in a Design You launch. And when we do that it might actually prevent us from showing up and serving in our most loving and authentic way. And I get that it's great to have a target and I understand goals, I've been practicing them for probably 40 years, at least 35.

And I know people say, "You need to know where you're aiming." And I get that. But what if the target that we pick is far too low for what we're even capable of? And so accidentally but intentionally we undershoot our potential time and again, and again, and again. I love the idea of shaking things up and trying new things, and seeing how it feels, and that for me doesn't just mean tripling 30 to a 100 and saying we want a 100. Because if

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we don't believe in a 100, or we don't hit a 100, we're still going to feel like a failure.

But what if we don't put a number? What if we have a belief that we're going to go get the most impact, go create the most impact that we possibly can and we're going to show up in that energy? What will happen? And then we don't judge ourselves if the number's eight or 80 because we just lean into how can we be even more ourselves? I love this idea of shaking things up, and trying something new, and seeing how it feels because the feeling is what gets me to show up.

And the feeling that comes with the rigidity, and the numbers, and the feeling like a failure are what shuts us down, and what makes us not want to get up and do it again, and what creates the burnout. So, the response from our team has really been remarkable. After a day or so of April, and me, and the other people getting used to the idea of letting go of the rules, and getting past that initial discomfort, especially April, she goes, "After I let myself adopt this fuck it attitude for 48 hours."

Then she came back to me and she had all these ideas, and all these epiphanies, because let me remind you that perfectionism is the enemy of creativity. Rigidity is the enemy of creativity. And when you let that go, wow. And guess what? For almost every one of you listening, creativity is our superpower. And if creativity is our superpower, perfectionism is our kryptonite.

It wasn't an accident that a couple of days following this decision that April was in a little shop on a weekend in Maryland and she saw, where she lives, she lives in Maryland. And she saw a cosmetic bag that said, fuck it is the new hustle. And she took a picture of it and she sent it to me on a weekend. We don't usually talk on weekends, our team, sometimes, only if it's not really work related, only if it's fun or connection. And so, she sent it to me and she's like, "This made me think of you and us."

And so, I immediately never having heard this saying, went on the internet and searched, fuck it is the new hustle and probably found some coffee mugs with the same saying. And those of you who know me well and have

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seen my Instagram know I drink out of a mug every day that has a saying on it. And also, because I love merch, I just love to say the word 'merch'. I love saying the word 'merch' as much as I can. I love to say it to my daughter any time we go to a concert. We've got to get merch.

So, we need merch for fuck it is a new hustle, is the new hustle. And what a better way to commit to this motto than to buy merch to remind us. So, I bought April a mug and I bought me a mug and I'm probably going to buy the rest of the team the mug. So let me be clear here, I'm not saying to never have systems and plans, I love both.

And again, if you're struggling to meet your goals because you don't have systems or plans, and you're all over the place, and you don't follow through on things ever. Then your work may be the exact opposite of this right now. What's true for most people is there will be some places in your life you're rigid and other places you're not. So, some places you may need systems because you do want to follow through differently. And other places maybe not.

But even with this new motto of ours, it doesn't mean we don't do anything. We're still tracking, we're still seeing how many times we're showing up on social and other places but were not doing it in a rigid way. We're not doing it where we're putting ourselves up against a deadline that says, well, if we don't have emails written three weeks in advance then we don't get to send them. Because we might want to send one this afternoon of an idea we thought of this morning.

And that rigidity of planning, and not overworking people we thought and getting our ducks in a row and doing things way in advance can take a lot of the spontaneity and the personality, and the real time connection out of what we're doing.

So, if you're really good at systems and you tend to become anal or rigid about them like we do, it's definitely what happens in our company a lot of times. The commitment to getting all the plans and systems in place way ahead of time. And if we don't, if we're kind of at the last minute even

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though we do them, we tell the story of how we're late, and we're behind and we should have done this earlier, and this feels stressful.

It's not the doing it at the last minute that feels stressful, it's the story we're telling ourselves because we're saying we failed and we didn't do it early enough, and we should have been more organized. That's the problem. But when we do things too far in advance it's not allowing us to be as creative as we want or to even create this different level of results and impact that we're capable of that we didn't even know.

I sort of think about it like this. You do sort of need to learn the rules to know the rules and to follow the rules and know when it's time to break the rules, and where to break the rules, or if you want to throw out all the rules. And if you've never had any rules, or didn't follow the rules, maybe your test is to say, "Fuck it, let's finally get some rules around here. I'm tired of flying by the seat of my pants." So, check-in with yourself.

But if you're type A, like me and my team, ask yourself, do you need to shake things up a bit? Do you need to step out of your comfort zone and certainty of the way you've been doing things to see what else is available to you? And wherever you are, and whatever style you operate in, do you need to shake shit up? Do you need to adopt the fuck it is the new hustle approach? And if you do, what might it make possible for you, and your company, and your team that has been alluding you in recent weeks, or months, or years?

And maybe you don't need to adopt the fuck it model, you're already good at being spontaneous, but you need to stop believing the rules and telling yourself that you're a train wreck, or a hot mess, or a failure. And adopt the fact that this might be the exact right way to succeed even though it doesn't look like what the world would tell us we should be looking like with rigid structure and systems, and checklists, and meal planning a week in advance and writing down everything you're going to eat before you eat it, or at least right after.

And getting up at a certain time and going to bed at a certain time, and sending out a certain number of emails, and all the things, you all. That

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makes my creative heart want to scream. But I've been operating that way. And yeah, we got some results. And a lot of people will say, "Look at the results you created, Tobi, look at how you built a million dollar company." But what if loosening the reins creates a five million dollar company?

And it's not about money for me but what I can do with a five million dollar company, what I can pay people, what I can invest in, what I can donate to, what I can build. That is something that we want. So don't be afraid to trust yourself and your intuition and try something different, even if what you're trying is to keep doing what you're doing but turning off the mean girl or the narrative in your head about how you should be doing something different.

Notice that so often in productivity and hustle culture, there's that belief that success is supposed to be hard, that it's supposed to take a toll on us. But what if it doesn't have to be? And that doesn't necessarily mean it's easy. I mean let's just be honest, life is not easy and a lot of us use the term 50/50, life is 50/50. I don't know if I think it's 50/50, 50 good, 50 bad. But there is a lot of shit we don't have control over.

There is a lot of stuff that happens that is sad and scary, and involves death, and destruction, and climate change, and a whole lot of things that upset us. So, life is not hard and I'm not saying it has to be easy, really just easy. Let's just stop with that. It doesn't have to be easy. It's not supposed to be easy. But what if it could be easier because we are the ones that are making it so much harder than it has to be? What if success could feel easy sometimes, and breezy sometimes, and fun way more than it feels fun?

So that's our goal and we're going to keep you posted because we have a hunch that not only is fuck it is the new hustle, our new motto, going to work for us. We think it might also turn into fuck it is the new fun. And I think after the last two years we've had we can all use a little more fun in our work.

Okay, friends, that is what I have for you today. If you're playing a drinking game of every time I said fuck it, then you need a nap right now. That's why I warned you at the beginning. But I just couldn't think of another way to be honest and transparent because this is the exact word and phrase we're

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using in our company and I wanted you to get the full experience of really understanding what we mean, and how it feels, and even if you're not a curser I get that.

If you don't have what maybe my mom would call a potty mouth like me, I get that. But at least let yourself go to that place of screw it, or forget it, or whatever that word is for you, that helps you really tap into what it would feel like to create that kind of freedom and that kind of permission for you and the way you're showing up, whether it's in your personal life, or in your work life. I've integrated it way into all parts of my life and I'm so much happier than I've ever been.

Life is so much more fun than it's ever been. I take myself so much less serious than I ever have. It's really good for my health and my blood pressure. There's so much good about it. So, think about it, try it on for size, let me know what you think. Send me a message out on the inter-webs, on the Instagram, DMs, or TikTok, or wherever you're showing up these days. I'll be there.

I can't wait to hear what you think and I'll see you back here next week with another great episode, that is unless I say fuck it to the podcast but I'm probably not going to do that because I really love the podcast. Okay, so 99% sure I'll see you back here next week with another episode of *The Design You Podcast*. Bye for now.

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