

Ep #233: Perfectionism and the Patriarchy



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Tobi Fairley

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Ep #233: Perfectionism and the Patriarchy

You are listening to *The Design You Podcast* with Tobi Fairley, episode number 233.

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, you all, welcome back to the podcast. I'm so glad you're here. So today we're talking about perfectionism and the patriarchy. Now, recently I posted on Instagram a post, a carousel with some thoughts, some words in it about how perfectionism is a major tenant of patriarchal systems. And what the post was really about was that the reason we creatives are blamed for never finishing things is this standard of perfectionism. It was all about how we are expected to take our ideas as creatives all the way from that creative vision to finished projects or products.

And when we don't, the world, and our family, and friends, and people think we're flakes and that we never do what we say we're going to do. And we're always starting things and never finishing them. You've heard all of those things. You've probably even said them about yourself. So, the societal belief that causes us to be really hard on ourselves is this perfectionism standard and it is straight out of the patriarchy. And when we're thinking, we're all over the board and we're not disciplined. And we're just not doing what we're supposed to.

It's remarkable the number of talented incredible creatives that I see weaponizing these thoughts, this information, these beliefs, these truths even because they think they're true. Weaponizing them against themselves, beating themselves up, worrying, fretting, afraid to start new things, afraid to put ideas in motion. Because they have been told so many times that they never finish.

So I was on a live call, a coaching call recently inside our Design You coaching program. And that's when this concept really became clear for me, it really occurred to me because I was coaching someone who I just love working with. She is talented. She's worked really, really hard and she's been in different positions, professions, mostly not creative, she's

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now going after her creative dreams. But she's been in very, very respected professions. She happens to be of South Asian descent.

And the only reason that that's relevant is because culturally from my understanding about her parents which makes sense to me. They have a very strong work ethic and a very strong tendency to want her and people from this race, and this heritage, this culture, want their children to do really, really well in the world. And that's not only true for people of South Asian descent, that come to America, or that come to the west. It's true for a lot of us. It was true for my family.

But what she has shared with me is that her family really believes this and so she often struggles with this sort of socialization from her family of origin. And just the indoctrination and socialization of the world that creates a standard of success that's based in perfectionism, that's unachievable most of the time. And it really has held her back as she's starting this new creative business. And especially when it comes time to take risk in business.

And every piece of this makes so much sense to me because when you have parents like this and I did as well. That want you to do things that are professional, that will be successful they think, that the world deems as successful, and respected, and a worthy career, which often we know for most of us is not the arts, or creative endeavors. I mean we all know the stories and have seen the movies where someone decides they want to go into show business or be an artist. And the parents have a complete meltdown over it.

Because it just doesn't feel promising. They're afraid we won't make money. And so those creative things are really considered better for hobbies. But we should get a real job, a respectable job, one that's going to make the money, one that's more intellectual, one that's more stable. This is exactly what my life looked like. So, I got an accounting degree before I figured out I wanted to go to design school. And it's fine, I have it, I call myself this sort of right brain, left brain creature.

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But the more I lean into my creativity I even wonder how much of that is true. Because I'm pretty much a creative at my core. And maybe I just adapted the other side of my brain because it's the thing I got validation for. And I wouldn't be surprised at all if that was true for my friend and student in Design You that has shared with me her own story, and her struggles. And the things that she feels about herself based on these beliefs that her creative bent, and habits, and personality don't follow through.

And yeah, it was my dad who was like, "You should get an accounting degree." My brother has one too. We neither one like it but he said, "It's a great degree to fall back on at the very least depending on what you decide to do." And I'm not saying he was wrong there, but I'm just reminding us how seldom in the past, and it's still true some today for sure. But especially people that are my age, people that are probably even in their 40s, maybe late 30s, a lot of us had parents that believed this type of belief system, this type of socialization.

And so, as I was coaching this person and she has incredible ideas, and so many of them. And we were fleshing one out in real time on this coaching call with probably 40 people watching, trying to figure out what was holding her back from launching this new idea. And I was able to help her realize through coaching that her role is the visionary piece.

And that she needs a person that is great at integration, at operations, at all the details, at bringing the thing to fruition after her vision is complete, after she's designed it in her mind and on paper. And knows what the thing is going to be. And the thing you all, might be a product or a service, it can be anything. But once the vision is complete we need that partner, that person, that partner in crime as we call it, that other kind of side of the process to really help us complete the thing or the service so it can be sold out in the world.

I don't know how many of you have read a book called Traction, it's a business book and so you may not have read it if you're a creative. And that's fine, you don't have to. But it is all about the marriage, the combination, the partnership of a great visionary with a great integrator.

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And one without the other is really not successful typically in running businesses. And I contend that the same is true for bringing creative products and things to life.

And yeah, a creative might be able to paint a whole painting by themselves. But how many of us know creatives that are really good at selling their work, are really good at the business person part, and the promotions, and the marketing, and all of those things? Not very many of us. And in the design world, we might be really, really good at the creative vision, and selections, and design of a room. But the pricing, and the ordering, and the follow through, and the installation. Yeah, that's where it all falls apart for us if we're visionaries.

And so, I was able to help this client see that it really wasn't her fault that she was trying to force herself to do the whole thing, both the visionary and the integration pieces, because the world makes us believe that we should be able to, especially if we're women. We should be able to do the whole thing from soup to nuts, top to bottom, beginning to end. And when we discover that what's really in our way.

And this was true for her, when we discovered what was in the way for her, that it was her fear that she would once again 'quit', not follow through after the vision. And that when she quit yet again as she was telling herself, she would let her family down, those she loved. They would think that this was just yet another thing that she started and flaked out on. And that she had put time and money into this and it would be wasted, if it wasn't all finished. Which we also agreed and learned was not even true.

Because she's learned so much in the process of developing, and imagining this new idea. But even so, even if we're just thinking about having it finished, what we realized is that she was setting herself up for failure. And not only did she expect herself to finish every single piece of the process, and the marketing, and the having things manufactured, and ready to sell. And she was also putting a huge expectation that it be an enormous financial success right out of the gate.

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It had to sell immediately because if it didn't she was also a failure. Imagine the pressure. Anybody would quit. And when you think about those projects that you didn't finish, how many of these same thoughts were in your head and you didn't bring it to fruition. And you didn't do the other parts, and you didn't let yourself even attempt to integrate your parts, even though they're not really your job, because you were so afraid that you would fail.

And what I want to tell you is that this narrative that we have to be perfect and we creatives have to do everything and we have to be visionaries, and integrators, and wearer of all the hats. That narrative, that story is complete bullshit. It is BS. It is not true. And when I really showed her in this moment, in this coaching call, a consultant gives advice and sometimes I consult. A good coach though, we're just showing the person we're coaching what's in their brain, what their thoughts are, how those thoughts are getting in the way, how they're feelings are getting in the way.

And so, when I was really able to help her see what her zone of genius was and what was in her wheelhouse, and the parts of the process, the vision that she loved so much and that just lit her on fire and she couldn't hardly sleep because she was so excited to create. And then we looked at everything else that had to be done that also made her not be able to sleep but for completely different reasons. Because it made her terrified and stressed out, and upset, and afraid she would fail.

When I showed her that those things could be done by someone else, maybe you can imagine the amount of relief in her. It truly blew her mind. She had to just sit there and say for a minute, "I need a minute, this is literally so big, I'm not even sure I can wrap my mind around it. Because it was so anti, what do you call it, antithetical, anti, is that even a word? It was the opposite of. It was counterintuitive, it was contrary, it was contrasting the beliefs, that she had in her brain, in her mind. And she'd been practicing for years.

That unless she finished every part and piece that she was a flake, she didn't follow through and she was a failure. And so, what's even more compelling and moving is that through coaching her, and there were

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literally dozens of people on the call watching. I had to really focus and concentrate to stay with her while coaching her because I was noticing that multiple people on the call were moved to tears. Some were literally weeping. Because they were recognizing in that moment that this was so true for them too.

They were recognizing the pain and the suffering that they've been putting themselves through for years, maybe their entire life, for as long as they can remember, as long as they could talk, and walk. So, their entire lives they had been believing they were flakes, and unstable, and never finish anything. To which through coaching this other person they were able to see that they likely had finished most every vision, or darned near all of them in their lifetime. And it was the other stuff, the integration piece that had fatigued them, and frustrated them, and bored them.

It was the part which they gave up on the most, the part that was really probably never meant to be or needed to be theirs in the first place. So why am I telling you all of this? Because I sound emotional and I am, and I sound passionate, and I am. Because I'm so tired of seeing incredible, remarkable creatives, especially creative women do this to ourselves over, and over, and over. Because I want to help you hopefully let yourself off the hook of perfectionism, of wearing every hat, of playing every part in a process, of expecting yourself to be good at everything all of the time.

But there's two specific reasons. And I want to get into these. So, one of the reasons is I want to break down the why, the why we struggle so much with perfectionism, which the answer is the patriarchy. I'm going to tell you more about that in a minute. And then the other reason is I want to show you the pushback that we're going to get from society, and maybe our family, and possibly our friends, and maybe our coaches, and maybe the gurus we follow. When we attempt to change the narrative, when we try to right the wrongs of supremacist systems like the patriarchy and white supremacy.

That both play a role in the perfectionism epidemic that we live with. And this is not to remove all the responsibility from ourselves. It's not about that.

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It's about us not taking so much responsibility including for the things that we don't control because we do live in societies that have oppressive systems that favor some people over others, and some genders over others, and some races over others.

So, let's look at those two reasons. The first one being really how perfectionism is a key tenant or characteristic of both the patriarchy, or a patriarchal system and a white supremacist system. And I want to make sure that you all understand the patriarchy is not another word for men. When we talk about the patriarchy, people get confused. When people think you're a feminist, men hating, always talking about the patriarchy. That's not true at all. I don't hate men.

I love a whole bunch of individual men, my husband, my dad, my brother, my nephew, people I work with or have worked with as vendors and businesspeople. And there's so many men that I admire and that I care about. That's not what this is about. We are talking about the system that favors the men, male gender over the female gender, and anyone that's gender non-conforming on a regular basis in the system we live in. It advantages men. And the same thing is true for white supremacy.

It's not that we hate white people. I am a white person. But we live in a system that advantages people who are white and disadvantages people who are not. And this is not my opinion, and that's what was so interesting. When I posted this on Instagram, it's funny, I had a lot of other things that were much more controversial that I thought about posting. And I was like, "Well, I'll post this. This is a safe one. Everybody that follows me is a creative or a partially creative, they're going to love this."

And it was so funny because that wasn't true. I got a lot of pushback. And we'll talk about that in a minute because that was that part number two, the pushback we're going to get. But the funny thing was I wanted to make clear to the people that were arguing with me, or that were frustrated about this post, or were dissenting. That this is not my opinion. These are facts and can be found in research about both patriarchal systems and white

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supremacy systems, what they are, that we live under both of those in the United States.

A lot of people live under these across other countries across the world. And so, these are factual research based tenants of this system, whether people like it or not. And let me just give you an example of what I mean by this because if you Google, characteristics of white supremacists, of a white supremacist system, or the 15 characteristics of a white supremacist system, you can find this information just like I did. And so, what I found and I had heard someone else at one point talking I think about 15. So that's why I knew that number.

But you might not know that number. You might just start Googling. And you're going to find a lot of information but here is what I found from one source about the 15 characteristics of a white supremacist system. Number one, perfectionism. Number two, a sense of urgency. How many of us are constantly feeling urgent about everything, all these deadlines, we're behind, it has to be done yesterday? Defensiveness, that seems familiar especially when I posted this on the internet.

Quantity over quality is number four, worship of the written word, only one right way to do things is what we're trying to say, that's number six. Paternalism, number seven. Either or thinking, number eight, remember that one, we're going to come back to it in a second. Power hoarding, fear of open conflict. Individualism, that's going to come up a lot too. I'm the only one is number 12 and then progress is bigger, or anything that when you're talking about progress it means things are bigger or more grandiose. And I'm definitely always having to fight that, thinking bigger is better.

Number 14 is objectivity and number 15 is right to comfort. Now, we're not going to go into each of these on this episode. Maybe in a future episode I will come back. But I wanted you to see this list or hear this list because it's not even my list and it's not my opinion, it's research on systems. And that particular one happens to be about white supremacy. The patriarchy is the BFF of this system. And capitalism is the BFF of this system. And people get really frustrated also when I talk about capitalism.

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They're like, "You are living in an ivory tower over there. And you're just throwing stones out of that tower because you have money. And capitalism is the reason you do." And I get what they're saying. And here's what I want you to know. I am not anti-capitalist but I am against the way that capitalism favors some people over others. And in a capitalist society there will always be people who can't even make enough money to care for themselves. That is how the system is set up, so it needs to be reformed.

So, when I talk about these systems that exist and the problems with them, doesn't mean I hate money. Some people are like, "You should give up everything you own and take a vow of poverty and move away if you don't like capitalism." And that's such an interesting approach. And if you look at some of those tenants we were just talking about like either or thinking and there's only one right way.

That's what we start to see in these examples of these systems is when you criticize them, when you critique them, when you're even just aware of them and how they're impacting you. People don't like it. So, you're going to see in the list I read you, if you're to search about patriarchy or capitalism, you're going to see a lot of overlap. There is a ton of overlap, even the idea of paternalism, this part of the list that says paternalism.

That's where the definition by the way of paternalism is the interference of a state, or an individual with another person against their will. And defended or motivated by a claim that the person interfered with will be better off or protected from harm. So basically, the system is parenting you. And those are a lot of the arguments we get around the patriarchy, men know better than us, they're basically parenting us. White people know better than everybody else, they're basically parenting everybody else without consent.

And so, in the capitalist system, the big businesses and corporations that make all the money, the millionaires and the billionaires, they're the parents, they're the paternal figure in that situation. They're parenting the rest of us who don't know how to make money and don't know how to care

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for ourselves. And couldn't possibly run a country or a business. And so, you're going to see a lot of overlap.

But in the patriarchy in particular where the male gender is valued more than the female gender. And anyone that's gender non-conforming, that's where we see that men know better than the rest of us. But this is the same thing that sets up the standard of perfectionism that the rest of us are supposed to live up to.

So, did you notice when I started reading those 15 characteristics, the very first one was perfectionism? And I'm sure it would be number one of the patriarchy list. Because patriarchal systems that really are based on the concepts that women should do all of the work, caring for and nurturing other people. We should do all the work associated with homemaking and childcare. And we should do that perfectly and we should look perfect and our bodies should be perfect, and we should never make mistakes.

We should be thin and happy all the time, I mean talk about perfectionism and talk about unachievable. Who do you know that's thin and happy all the time really? No one. So, I did a little more research on the web about this concept. And I've been studying this now pretty intently for about two and half, going on three years, these systems. But I did a little research on the idea of perfectionism in particular. And I came up on a site called Ditch Perfect which is a pretty great name, kind of reminds you of that Pitch Perfect movie.

But Ditch Perfect, like get rid of perfectionism. It's kind of like that anti hustle movement, anti-perfectionism movement. And I for one will tell you I'm ready to sign up for it. But on her website, I think she's a coach too. And she was talking about ways that you unconsciously internalize patriarchal oppression. And this is true for all the genders, men can also have internalized patriarchy tenants that they have been socialized into, that they don't understand are in their belief system and are oppressing them. And I know this to be true with all the systems.

So, Ditch Perfect goes on to say, not only are there ways that we're not even conscious of, that we've internalized these patriarchal tenants. But

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that also patriarchal ideals dictate that you must be exemplary, and you must have everything together all the time. And you must be clean, and pristine, and free from blemish, and mistake and failure. Again, perfection. And she says, “You must also be small, and contained, and calm.” Again, a picture of perfection.

How many of us especially women, creative women, strong women have felt like we’ve been asked to contain ourselves, and calm ourselves, and shrink ourselves our whole life? I definitely have. So, this lady, this coach who’s the creator of Ditch Perfect and if you want to see her site you can just Google. We’ll also put it in the show notes. But I think she’s a coach for creatives. I don’t know her personally. I literally found her on a Google search but she had some really amazing things to say.

And I love how she shared even some ways that perfectionism shows up in behaviors that creatives do, including the following. Being intensely afraid of making mistakes or being criticized. Check. Constant ‘mask wearing’ to hide your perfectly imperfect self or who you truly are. So, putting on that façade. Check. Three, was pushing away anger and other desirable emotions because we’re not supposed to be angry. Check.

Again, this is part of what people don’t even like when I do podcasts or posts like this, because it feels uncomfortable and undesirable because I’m calling something out. And I’m not just being happy all the time. So, pushing away those undesirable emotions, definitely. The next one is conforming to shoulds and supposed to’s of what is seen to be acceptable as a woman. Check. Deeply believing that you’re not worth it, and it can be anything, fill in the blank, success for one thing. Check.

Routinely shoving your opinions down or trying to talk yourself out of having those opinions. And I would add to this, talk yourself out of having those big creative ideas. Check. Who am I? How many of you have talked to yourself or even me if you’ve coached with me or been in our programs and said, “Tobi, who am I to create this thing? Who am I to have a podcast? Who am I to have a voice? Who am I to be a thought leader?” I hear it all the time.

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It's coming straight from the patriarchy, you all. So, check, that one's a check.

Obsession with thinness and dieting, and having a negative body image plus low self-esteem. Check. Delaying pursuits, projects and ideas until later, which often becomes never. That right there, you all, is the not finishing things, pushing pursuits, projects and ideas until later which becomes never because we don't think we're worthy of it and we are not perfect. Check, check, check times 100 on that one.

Always asking for permission to complete a normal human task or justify an expense, including a business expense. Can I do this? May I do this? If we're the business owners going and needing validation from everybody before we do something. Check. Because that one goes into the fact that we have been taught by the patriarchy that men are the only ones that know how to manage money. So, we have to ask for permission before we spend any or at least ask for validation.

And then the last one she shares is routinely keeping your creative work invisible, hello, or giving it away for free. Hello again. If you did not just identify yourself in every single one of these bullet points that we said check and check, and a million times check too. If you're creative I don't even think you're being honest with yourself because this is what we do over, and over, and over. And we thought it was us and we thought it was something wrong with us. We thought we just weren't good enough, or worthy enough, or perfect enough.

And this is why it's so important that you know that there is a system working against us. It's not just us. I hope your mind is blown by these lists and this concept that perfectionism is the killer of creativity. When perfectionism meets creativity these are the behaviors that we practice. And I have to tell you, perfectionism is rampant in creative industries including interior design. And one of the reasons especially in the US, that we live in this patriarchal system and white supremacy system.

It's one of the reasons that it's so rampant because both of those systems are under-guarded by the concept of perfectionism, they're built on it. They

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are one and the same. So, there's this other part of the conversation that's also very important. And it's one of the reasons why I wanted to create this episode because the day after that incredible coaching call that our member had this enormous breakthrough. And I'm not taking credit for that, let me be clear. A good coach is not the reason. We're just the guide. We're just the facilitator.

You do all the work. And so, this incredible creative human was able to get a glimpse that what she was believing about herself might not be true. And I gave her some facts and some supporting information that helped her see that it could be due to a system that she lives in and under, and it surrounds her and all of us.

And it brought so many people on that call literally to tears, mostly tears of relief but also tears of grief for the many years that some of those people have been assaulting themselves with this idea of perfectionism, and patriarchy, and white supremacy. And all the internalized oppression of all these systems that we operate under. So, I was just coming off of this and I couldn't stop thinking about it. And so, I wanted to post this thing on Instagram. Because I thought, if it moved these people it's going to move some other people.

And I don't want to share the intimate details that aren't really mine to share, that are confidential within the group, but I knew I could share the story like I did here. And I knew that I could write a post that helped other people see themselves in this concept when they read it. So again, I actually had several other things that I could have written about. And I thought this concept was universally the most resonant and safe. And that women, I guess I made the naïve assumption that all women would be like, "Oh my gosh, yes", all creative women.

I assumed it was the least controversial. But I was wrong. Of course, I was wrong. How could I not be wrong. So, I made this post and here's where I wasn't wrong. It did help a lot of people. And there were a lot of comments on it and it's still there. You can go see it. It's still there and there are a lot of comments from people who were like, "Hell, yes. And I can get behind

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this. And thank you for saying this. And this is the best thing I've ever heard. And whoa". And all kinds of stuff that are positive, that it moved them.

And so that's evidence to me that a lot of people needed to hear it. So, there were far more comments and DMs, personal DMs that were like that. That it was more lifechanging for people. It was eye opening. It was a relief. It was validating. All the things. So, I'm really glad that it was received in that way as I suspected for most people. That's why I do the work I do. That's why I help people. That's why I especially work with women, to help them drop these perfectionist and unachievable standards. And instead show up as our truest and most impactful self.

It's why I just went through in just an amazing certification to become a feminist certified life coach. And it's why I'm still in equity centered life coach certification and equity centered leadership certification that I've been doing for almost 18 months now. To really understand these concepts and be able to help the people I work with even more. And create safe and inclusive opportunities and communities for people to really get out from under these systems. And to dismantle these systems in their own lives.

So, what I didn't anticipate is the people who didn't like the post at all. I had my rose colored glasses on that day apparently. And so those are the people who said quickly, by the way, that, "I disagree, and this is not the fault of the patriarchy. And sure, we want to blame the patriarchy for everything so that we don't have to finish anything. And we don't have to take responsibility. I got comments like, "Stop shitting on the patriarchy." I kid you not, "Stop shitting on the patriarchy." To which I said, "Hell no, until my last breath, I will not stop working to dismantle the patriarchy."

And if you call that shitting on it, okay. But I got all these comments and comments including things like, "Well, creatives just aren't disciplined." And that's a fact. This one might have made me the most frustrated. I especially loathe this belief that creatives aren't disciplined. It's exactly what I'm talking about. Society has socialized us to believe this about ourselves and

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again, it's total bullshit. I can think of many, many, many things in my life that I am so disciplined about.

My word, I have done as of today 233 episodes of my podcast and only one time have I rerun an episode. Okay, maybe twice, I think I had to when I had COVID this year. So, I have 233 episodes in a row without missing a week, only two of them have been repeats. That's pretty freaking disciplined. And I'm sure you can find things about yourself that are so disciplined that you never miss that you do over, and over, and over again.

But we will believe socialization just like this, that creatives aren't disciplined because they'll go find evidence of those things that really aren't in our wheelhouse to begin with. And say, "Well, you flaked out on that and didn't finish that part. So, you are undisciplined. You don't show up this way."

How about we stop saying we're undisciplined and say, "There are a lot of different people who like to operate in a lot of different ways, who have different strengths and some are morning people. And some are night people. And some learn different ways. And some see things visually. And some people are linear thinkers." But no, let's just paint the whole group of creatives with this broad brush and say, "They're undisciplined." Which is a lie.

And it also implies that there are a group of people who are perfectly disciplined about everything. And no one is disciplined about everything. So, in this somewhat heated, not really heated, I mean I wrote a lot. It's still there if you want to see my comments and my responses. Like them or hate them they're still there. So maybe not heated, let's call it passionate. In this passionate discussion that ensued between me and some other commentors, some agreeing with me, some dissenting, that perfectionism comes from the patriarchy.

Let me just say again, that's not my opinion. I do agree with it, that perfectionism comes from the patriarchy but I didn't make it up. It is research. It has been studied by many, many people that these are the tenants of these systems, the ones we've talked about today. And so just

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because you're uncomfortable saying that it's the patriarchy, because it somehow goes against your politics, or your belief system, or what your spouse believes, or what your parents believed, or what your religious institution believes, whatever it is.

Just because it doesn't align with what you would like to hear does not make it untrue. And so, one of the arguments that was posted in one of the responses was that there are many men who support women in being imperfect. And that there are many men who also struggle with perfectionism who are creatives. And guess what? I agree, both of those things are true and neither of those things negate that this is the result of a patriarchal system because here's what I want you to see.

Systems of oppression, they don't just hurt the people that they marginalize, they don't just hurt the people that aren't favored. They hurt everyone. So, men are harmed and held back by patriarchal systems in many ways too, just not held back as much as women. White people are harmed and held back in many ways by white supremacy, just not to the degree of the other races that are held back because they don't hold as much privilege.

So yeah, white people and men may be the least harmed in these situations but they don't go unharmed. If you listened to my episode back in the spring when I was doing the creativity series that I called Women's Work. I specifically talk in that episode about the fact that so many of the duties and roles that we play in our creative businesses have been traditionally expected to be done by women for free, homemaking, child rearing, entertaining, feeding people, all of the stuff, caring for the elderly.

And so, then when those things become actual professions like interior design, and event planning, and childcare, and nursing care, and all the things that women are expected to do, it devalues them in the minds of consumers. So, they don't want to pay very much for them, it impacts the price. But it doesn't just impact the price for the women that are doing those professions, it impacts the whole profession. And yes, there are men event

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planners. And yes, there are men interior designers. And yes, there are men in childcare.

And maybe they could charge a little more than some of us that are women, or that don't identify as men in those roles. But collectively the entire profession that's really viewed as women's work is devalued and therefore can command lower prices because it's expected to be done by women for free. So, I want you to see that yes, men and women both struggle with feeling like flakes and like they don't finish things. But it's disproportionately felt by women.

And yes, there are many individual men who support women and who don't expect us to be perfect. And I'm so grateful for all of those men, my husband is one of them, just like there are many white people who don't expect people of color to be perfect. And I hope I am one of those and I try really hard to be. One person in the comments also mentioned that women, not men are the problem. This couldn't be about the patriarchy because women are the problem. They are snarky, and competitive, and they tear each other down to make themselves feel better.

But guess what? That comes straight out of the patriarchy playbook too because we have been socialized as women to believe not only that we have to be perfect, and look perfect, and be thin, and small, and beautiful. But also, to believe that men are the superior gender, and we should be trying to get their attention because we want to marry them, we want them to favor us. And the closer you are to the favored group, the dominant group in any system the more privilege you get.

So especially in the patriarchy if you're revered by men you're going to get more privilege than people who aren't. So of course, we're socialized to compete with each other for men and for success. So, what was so interesting is that these commenters didn't realize that everything they were saying about individual men being nice and about women being snarky, all these things actually point to and support all the ways the patriarchy holds us back. And yeah, there are mean and snarky individual women just like there are really nice and supportive individual men.

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But all women aren't mean, and snarky, and competitive. The systems are what we're talking about. The systems are about the collective not the individuals. The systems can be alive and well, and oppressing us all collectively to different degrees and there can still be individuals who don't subscribe to the tenants of the system. And those people are the disruptors, the outliers, the rebels, the compassionate, the self-aware, the people, who are working to dismantle these system as we speak.

And again, I hope that I am one of those. And there will always be those people. You might consider yourself one too or want to start becoming one. But if you remember back on the list of white supremacy's 15 things earlier, number eight and I said, don't forget this one, we're going to come back to it. Do you remember what it was? Yeah, either or thinking. And what I'm telling you is that this is not about either or thinking. But the patriarchy and white supremacy want us to have either or thinking. Either there's a patriarchy or there is individual nice men but there can't be both.

Either there's a patriarchy or there's snarky women, there can't be both. I'm here to tell you, there is both, both and it is true that we can have individuals who act outside the systems of oppression for good and for bad. And we can still have the systems in place collectively across our nation and many other countries around the world. So here is what I want to leave you with. I do not blame the patriarchy solely for everything that we struggle with as creatives.

Some of the things are individual struggles. But if you don't call out the systems of oppression and if you just pretend that they're not there and that if we all just work a little harder and if we just start finishing those things that we typically flake out on, and if we get more disciplined, if we stop that part of us that doesn't follow through then all of our problems will be solved. And that is just not true.

And this is the very lie that keeps so many of us beating ourselves up and working ourselves to the bone. And leading ourselves to burn out because we're going to try with all of our might to become a person who is not like that. Yet the systems are still in play. And sure, there's many, many things

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we can do physically, and mentally, and emotionally to change our lives for the better. And I love taking personal responsibility. But we still live in a patriarchal and white supremacy society.

We still live in a capitalist society that advantages some people, and some identities, and some genders, and some races more than others. And pretending that that's not true is just going to keep you abusing yourself and wondering what the hell is wrong with you when you've done everything right and things still aren't working. And you get yourself so afraid to ever have another creative idea because the chances of you not finishing it, which will once again confirm that you are the flake that you are is a really big risk.

So, if you've been abusing yourself because you think you never finish anything, I invite you to see all the creative parts of projects and ideas, the visionary parts that you have completed over the years, and celebrate them because I know you have finished the vision on things, many, many times. And then I want you to invite yourself to see the parts that you even went farther than that and you did the vision and you integrated it, and installed it and completed it even though it was hard.

It's possible but it's just not in your wheelhouse so you can even be an integrator if you need to but probably not all the time because it's going to fatigue you, and drain you, and bore you. But you have absolutely done it, visionary parts and integrator parts too. So please celebrate those both and remind yourself that you absolutely do finish things because you are absolutely disciplined especially in the things in your wheelhouse, especially in the things that you love, especially in the things that light you on fire.

And you don't have to wear all of the hats to believe that you're a success. You don't have to finish all the parts to mean that you are a successful creative. That's what I want you to remember. Okay, friends, I'll see you next week, bye for now.

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