

## Ep #237: Getting Back to Your True Self with John McClain



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**Tobi Fairley**

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You are listening to *The Design You Podcast* with Tobi Fairley, episode number 237.

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, so we're still partying. We're still partying and celebrating over here at Tobi Fairley Design with our new website, and all our new fun stuff, and our giveaways, and partying, and all the things. But it's time for another episode of the podcast so life must go on I guess. We're not going to stop having fun but we are going to have another episode.

And today the episode is with my good friend and our advisory board member for Design You. And a member of this, well, former member but I guess he's still a member because he's an advisory board member and they're all still members. But a person who's worked with us in Design You as you'll hear him talk about on the episode, John McClain. And John is the CEO and creative director of John McClain Design. He is a very accomplished interior designer, speaker, business coach, on air contributor.

He's one of the people who does the in style, what were they wearing thing. I mean he's just a cool dude. He has businesses in both Orlando, Florida and California where he lives full-time. So, he has an amazing team on both coasts and he's just doing all the things these days including launching his first design book that just came out called *The Designer Within: A Professional Guide to A Well Styled Home*. So, he is rocking and rolling. He's launching a course, probably around the day or the week that this episode comes out, that goes with his *Designer Within* book.

So, it's *The Designer Within* course and you'll hear him say on the episode, we were so happy to play a part in helping him learn how to create a course and all the things. So, it was such an honor to get to work with him. He's just a really nice guy and I think you're going to love this episode, so enjoy my conversation with John McClain.

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Tobi: Hey, John, welcome to *The Design You Podcast*. I love when I have my friends on the podcast. So welcome, because this is a treat for me.

John: It's a treat for me. I have listened to your podcast, Tobi, literally from day one and it has become a part of my weekly routine. So, to be here is such an honor, thank you for having me.

Tobi: Thank you so much. So, tell everybody a little bit about you. They may know you, they may follow you, they may have already seen your beautiful new book, but in case they haven't, who are you? Where do you come from? What are the things that we should know?

John: Aren't those fun question? Yeah, I grew up in a small town in Georgia, and my family was always very active in building homes. And my mom loved interior design to a certain level, mostly interior décor. And I love all these little things that were related to home. And I had this great family, they were supportive of me. I'm gay so I was doing this whole coming out thing in Georgia which was never easy. And all of these lessons I've learned in the past have shaped me to who I am now.

And now I have my interior design firm. I have offices in LA where I live and then back in Florida where my original office was. And I've also now become a business coach and I'm helping other designers sort of streamline their business and not make the same mistakes that I did. And then part of those mistakes by the way, are being true to yourself. So that's part of the mistakes that I made along the way.

Tobi: Amazing, so good. And you have just launched a book and you have new courses and you're about to have your own podcast. So, you're doing all the things which I'm so excited for you, so good. So, let's start with that story of where you come from because you and I spend a lot of time talking sometimes in DMs on Instagram. You're also on one of our advisory board members for Design You, so we get some real kind of exciting conversations happening through that avenue.

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But I want to bring this to the world, not just our personal conversations. Let's talk about what you and I both have kind of come to – we've kind of come on this journey together a little bit of revealing who we really are, showing up at a whole other level, embracing all the parts that we used to keep hidden about ourselves. So, can you just start to kind of tell me a little bit what that journey has been like for you? What were you hiding? What façade or image were you trying to create? Where were the pressures coming from for that? Let's just dig right into that.

John: Well, I think it's always helpful and thanks to you and lots of other work that I've done to have someone pull you out of where you were. I think once you see somebody doing something or someone saying something, or just behaving in a certain way, it really does help you. And I remember, a quick story, when I was coming out back in Georgia and I told my best friend, Brian, he's gay as well. And he said, "I think I'm gay." And I was like, "Oh wow, oh my gosh, what are you going to do?" I said, "I think I'm bisexual."

So, this was my cover up to say. He said, "Honey, you're gay, just embrace it." So, he said, "I know." So, it took me a minute to process and the next week I was like, "Alright, you're right." But anyway, I say that to say our true selves are always deep inside of us and we try to pretend to be something else for whatever reasons. And the interior design industry specifically there is this façade that interior designers love to put up. Everything's beautiful, and everything's perfect, and oh my gosh, no, I had no problems with that install. Oh my God, I have the best clients ever.

No, they never try to sue me. And I'm really just over it and I want to take down that barrier between what the 'successful interior designers' are saying and showing to the world, and how public perceives that. So, I'm on a mission to not only find my more truthful self. And by the way, it's a working progress, I've started the journey and I never stop learning, or growing, or changing. But I'm also on the mission to educate just consumers and say, "Hey, everyone, we are real people." I don't come from an affluent background.

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I had a great life but I didn't have everything on a silver tray. And I think that so many times the public sees interior designers as untouchable, and reachable. They can't even talk to us. And I'm done with it, I'm over it. I want that to change.

Tobi: Yeah. And I notice, I was just talking to someone about this, this week. I notice that even when we try to break down these barriers we fall into patterns of still creating some of this ourselves. I notice when I see people at events, or at conferences, or other things and it's like, "Yeah, we're going to even now talk about things like diversity and inclusion, and being your real self, and authenticity." And then we're still going to gather with the cool kids instead of with the common folk that are coming to this conference or whatever.

It's just so part of who we are. And I think we're socialized this way too, to want to feel validated, feel important. And kind of sadly the way we do that is we're always measuring, well, I'm more important than this person but less important than this person. And I've had more success than this person but not as much success as this person. It's like we're always kind of deciding where we are on the ladder, don't you think?

John: Oh my God, totally.

Tobi: Instead of throwing away the ladder. I mean part of that's just human nature. But what comes to mind when you think, do you see this, does this feel true for you too? And do you find yourself accidentally doing this still sometimes?

John: Yes to all of that. And something my therapist, yes, I'm in therapy.

Tobi: I love therapy.

John: Everybody should do therapy. Something he said to me the other day, he said, "Why can't you just be?" And I said, "That is a very good question." Because I was letting him know all of the stresses, and career,

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and family, and life. And he said, “Have you ever just been yourself?” And I said, “That is really true because I don’t know.”

It’s a good question because I don’t know that I have just sat and let myself be without worrying about what other people are thinking or trying to say the right things on this design panel, or doing some sort of presentation for a client and hiding certain parts of myself. So yeah, and I was always that person, I was friends with the not as popular kids in school and I was friends with the popular kids in school. And I never really saw a division between that. Sadly, though there was a part in my 20s and 30s where I was like, “Let’s follow this path that everyone says you should do.”

Tobi: Yeah, me too. Yeah, totally.

John: Yeah. And I hated it. I wasn’t myself and I hated it.

Tobi: Agreed. Agreed. You and I both have the benefit of – well, I mean you have the benefit of being a white male. I have the benefit of being a white woman. We had, both, I’m sure, lots of help along the way, lots of mentors, money, support, all kinds of things that we had access to. And then we work our way to the table, or the club, and then for some of us we’re like, “Oh, it’s really kind of not that fun over here.” And it’s the same crap different day but we’re pretending now that we’re important or that we’ve arrived which isn’t really even true a lot of times.

Life still is full of challenges and no matter what kind of club you’ve decided to put yourself in. But I think all of the promises we thought arriving at those things would bring, they didn’t bring any of that stuff. It didn’t suddenly make us always have a full pipeline, or always get published. What do you think about that? Did you find the same thing? Did it feel empty when you got to some of the places you were trying to arrive to? Is that how you knew it wasn’t really aligned or authentic, what was that like?

John: Yeah. It was kind of a hollow feeling where I was happy in the moment. And then I was like, “Okay, now, what’s next? Now, what else? What is this other person doing that I’m seeing that I need to do now?” And



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again, like my therapist said, why can't I just be in that moment and be okay with that? And I wasn't and I couldn't. And I'm like you, I've always been a dreamer, and a planner. And I love setting goals for myself. What I realized was sometimes my goals were other people's goals that I placed on myself.

And that's not fair to me and it's not fair to anyone else to put that stress on there. And so yeah, I'm happy, very happy with the success that I've had. But I also know that that comes at a cost of either accepting the fact that okay, great, good job, John, you did this, pat yourself on the back. And then redefine what that success means and I think that that's what I'm doing now is peace and quiet is success to me. Relaxing on a Sunday morning is success to me. Going out to dinner and not having my phone ring, all those things are just, that is what I'm feeling as success.

Aside from all the things that the public is seeing, I'm trying to really let everyone know that there's other ways to find happiness and success in your life and in your business. And so many designers, we're people pleasers, we know that. We love to put up this front for our clients and to say, "Oh God, no, it'll be fine, whatever you want, whatever you need." I don't do that anymore either by the way.

Tobi: You're like, "No, you can't have any of that and you can't have it on that deadline, and you cannot have it for that price." Anything else?

John: Yeah. Or I'm not even going to allow you to sign with me because you're not the right client. And I'm very upfront with clients as well. So, I think that your personal life, it comes into your professional life if you allow it to. And if you really embrace who you were and who are into your career because you've said it a million times and I wholeheartedly believe it. There should not be this divide between your personal beliefs, and values, and morals, and all those things, and your career path, and your company especially when we're entrepreneurs.

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I mean we're literally in charge of our entire company. So why are we building our company on what someone else is doing with their company? That's not the way to do it.

Tobi: right, yeah. So, what are those areas that you feel like you were hiding that you've now mostly brought, kind of integrated into the whole, what are some of the standout places? If people are like, "Okay, I hear you", and compartmentalize, there's the day-to-day me and there's the persona I've created, what were the areas that, probably the things you were most afraid for people to see that you've now integrated into the whole?

John: Yeah, so many. And I think it really came to the surface one day when my friends came to me and they were like, "John, you're not that same person on social media that you are when we go out to have a drink." And I was like, "Oh shit, I really am not."

Tobi: [Crosstalk] that you notice, crap, I was pulling that off so well.

John: Those people who tell you the truth that you really need to listen to. It's kids and your friends, those are the ones who tell you everything. And so yeah, I hid a lot of stuff. I mean of course the interior design industry, people are accustomed to gay interior designers. But I never made it a topic of conversation. I would hide my husband. We've been together for 20 years, why am I hiding someone that I love? And it's so hard for anybody to find the right person and I've found them, so why am I not telling clients about my wonderful supportive husband? It's so silly.

And then also just my upbringing in Georgia. I loved where I was from at the time but I never embraced it. I never really understood what it gave to me. And to be honest, it has given me so much of the basis of my business. So, I started to be open and honest about that because in the past, oh my God, if you have a southern accent, you're stupid and you're dumb. There is this connotation to that and I also fell into that trap. So, I just started being me and everyone honestly, it drew the right people to my business as clients.



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It drew friends, it also weeded out some friends and it also weeded out some clients as well which I'm not unhappy about because I didn't need that anyway. But once the first level of success I had by being the true me happened, once I was validated by someone by saying, "Oh my God, I like this, I like this part of you, I like who you are." Then I was just full steam ahead. And I'm like, "Alright, balls to the wall, let's do this."

Tobi: I agree, I loved it too. I mean I love seeing that part of you. I love seeing your husband. I love seeing you at the Pride parade. My favorite thing is to see you at amusement parks. And so, I had to giggle, you sent over your information about the podcast and you're like, "When I was a child, I've always been an entrepreneur because I used to set up this amusement park in my backyard and I charged my friends to come to it." And I'm like, "That's where the amusement park things comes in."

Because I always see you and your husband at Disneyland and all these places which we love that too, my husband, and my daughter, and I. And so, it's so funny how that thread really does come from your childhood and who you are. And I can see the connection now. And it's endearing, and adorable, and real, and a lot of people in the design industry would never admit that they actually wanted to go to Disneyland, or Disneyworld. But I've seen both of us there in the last three months or four months on social media. We've both shown up at amusement parks.

But just that part of kind of cutting through the pretension and the façade I think is so much more charming and real than this kind of parodied thing that we try to do as designers to say, "I know every antique. And I know all the history of design. And I go to Paris once a year at minimum. And I've done all the chic things." Which is all so funny because it's more for our peers, our clients for the most don't care, don't even really know what some of that is I think but what else?

What are the other things like that that you've noticed that you've embraced of, yeah, I go to an amusement park once a month? I go to Pride parades. I love all kinds of different food, and restaurants, and experiences, I see you

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at concerts all the time. It's so fun but it's a mix and it's not all the top most chic thing in the world. It's just real life which I love.

John: Well, and it's real life and real life isn't always pretty, and it isn't always easy. And it isn't always beautiful on social media. But it's there and I feel like there is this awakening in the world honestly, with people really realizing that what really matters to them and making that pathway for themselves based on who they are, not what someone else says. But I knew it was also working too when one time I was with a client and we were just having a chitchat conversation about a light fixture or something over her dining table.

And then I said something about my mental health and how I'm trying to really work on that. And I mentioned to her my lowest point when I had a big, big, big burnout session. And I don't even know why I felt the need to tell her that but I did. And it turned into a two hour conversation. We talked about everything under the sun and then after that she like, "And by the way, I want you to now renovate my upstairs." Which wasn't my goal. But I'm saying, when you are truthful then other people see that, and they trust you more, and they feel like they're a part of your inner circle and in your head.

And I love to just be me. And even when I wrote my book, I wrote the book because of course I love pretty pictures, we all do, we all love redesign projects. But I also wanted to take down that fence between me, and my followers, and fans of my work and just really let them know that, "Hey, listen." Because I write from my heart. And now I also make sure that I speak from my heart, just in my daily activities.

And I've gotten the best compliments I've gotten from people on my DMs where, "Oh my God, the book is beautiful. But I can tell, I know that you wrote this from your heart and soul." And I said, "That means more to me than any other takeaway that you have from this."

Tobi: Absolutely, yeah. So, let's take that kind of the next step because you're also, you've just launched courses. You're going to have this

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podcast. And you've talked some to me about making design accessible to other people because that's one of the other things that we do, I don't know, sometimes it's intentional I think and sometimes it's accidental. But when we create this façade and this persona to make ourselves feel important, like you said earlier, we create a divide between us and the customer.

We make it unreachable, they don't think they can talk to us, they think we're too busy, they already assume they can't afford us. And beautiful homes, functional homes, things that nourish you, things that help, that impact possibly your mental health should be something that every single human has access to. But I don't think we've done a really good job in the design and decorating industry of making it accessible at all. We've done the opposite. We've really kind of helped perpetuate that it's luxury only. And yeah, stuff is expensive. That's the economy.

There's a lot of stuff we can't impact with supply chain but we continue to uphold that narrative that it's all about luxury. I mean we don't even know we're doing it sometimes. Even just how we tell people to create selfcare and the average person does not have just an extra \$200 to get a massage every other week. And that's the thing that we're not noticing that we're perpetuating in their spaces, in their homes, and their lives. So, tell me a little bit about these courses and the way you're starting to create more accessibility to the benefits of design to the world.

John: Yeah. And to your point about designers doing 'luxury homes' and high profile projects. A lot of them aren't even making money while they're doing that.

Tobi: Exactly. We're lucky if we break even and didn't pay for half of that person's stuff. We're like, "I paid for that sofa out of my own pocket. I hope you enjoy it."

John: I remember, I had a mattress in the back of my truck one time taking it to a client's house for an install. And I'm like, "What the heck am I doing?" But by golly, we will have that lovely picture on Instagram and make sure

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that we show that to people. But again, they don't know how we got there. And so, the façade is not just with what we present to other people. It's also kind of what we present to ourselves.

Tobi: 1,000%, yes.

John: And it's so exhausting to try to keep up with the Jones', being myself and the Jones' being the public. And just trying to constantly be this person that other people want you to be. And so, I really try to make my designs accessible in so many ways. I mean obviously I'm a member of Design You and I've learned so much there. And this whole value ladder is really a concept that I think most people don't embrace very much but they really should. Most designers feel, oh my God, I have to only do a full service project.

Well, what the heck is a full service project? What are you even calling a full service project? What does that mean to you versus what that means to the client? Are you telling them what that means or are you just assuming that everyone understands what that is? But with my book and with my courses, I have a homeowners course that I'm offering for homeowners, led by me. And I'm just teaching them things that I've heard a trillion times asked to me, questions that I've heard over the years, DMs, all those things.

And again, it's me, I'm accessible, I'm just telling them like it is and I'm not wearing a fur coat or sitting in a library. I'm sitting in my office and I'm just speaking to them the way I would speak to anybody. And so, I try to speak that way to my \$6 million homes and my \$500,000 homes. I don't care. They're all quality people and they all deserve a beautiful house and a place to live. I don't care if they're renting, if they own five houses or if they don't even own the house that they're in now. It doesn't matter to me.

Let's create a beautiful home and lifestyle for you. And it doesn't have to be multimillion dollar budgets for your furniture. I mean yes, design is a luxury industry if you take it to the highest level, of course. The clients who want you to hold their hand all the way through, I'm going to charge for that

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because my team and I are taking our lives and giving it to you for a year or 18 months. But for other people who just want a bit of that and just want a taste of how that can apply to their own home, whether they're in Georgia where I'm from or whether they're in New York City, or LA, I don't care.

I feel like there should be some point of entry for everybody to do something. So, I've realigned all of my business models to allow for that and to have a touchpoint with anybody. And so that's why the book is so important to me. That's why my courses are so important to me. That's why my podcast is so important to me. I really want to just kind of be the designer for the people.

Tobi: I love it so much. And I love that you have, although it's a lot of hard work and building courses is also hard work, and growing them, and all the things, podcasts every week is a lot of hard work. But I love that you also have just embraced these things. I can see how kind of getting back to your true self is what allows you to take the risk of creating these things. Because if you're still thinking somebody might think this is dumb, or somebody might think this is beneath me, or not fancy enough, or I'm DIYing or all of those narratives.

We wouldn't show up and try this stuff, that's actually going to be the most lifechanging not only for you but probably for your audience as well. But I love that you've embraced these things. So can you talk to a little bit about, for the people who are like, "I've heard Tobi and other people say, we could have a course, or we could do this scalable thing, or we could make money while we sleep", which you don't make it the first day, you have to build it. And then hopefully [crosstalk].

John: I don't think I've slept in the past two years.

Tobi: Yeah, exactly, hopefully make money while you should be sleeping is probably what it should say. But at some point hopefully you wake up one day and you're like, "Someone bought while I was sleeping." And that can actually happen but can you talk a little bit about what this process has been like and help people understand that it is something that they can

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consider and it doesn't devalue their brand. In fact, there's a lot of benefit both for you personally and then for the people that will consume that content?

John: 100%, and the journey has been open, and enlightening, and fun for me to just see how I have evolved into, as I'm working on my courses. It's taken me about two years. So, I have a course for business owners. And I literally take them through my entire process, warts and all, every single thing that I've done wrong and done right, and I let them know. I have systems and processes in every module. I also talk about mindset too because we all are in our own heads too often which is kind of the whole basis of this conversation.

But I knew that it was going to work when I started doing a few Zoom calls, Zoom interviews with different people. And I would just be this person and I would say these things. And I would take down the façade and let my guard down and say what I was feeling. And it resonated and people started to send me questions and ask me more things. And I was like, "Wow, this is really the person that I am, not the person that I felt I should be.

And even when you're building a course, or you're building something as an auxiliary to your main business, if you will. You have to sort of realize who you are and what you need to let other people do, and what you're good at, and what you're not good at. And I call it diligent delegating. So, I've been delegating diligently to my team right and left. And I'd learned that I did not have to do everything, which by the way is what led to some of my burnout in the beginning, wearing every hat.

But my courses are, again, they're unfiltered, they're straight to the point. I don't have time for BS. I don't have time to circle the airport before we land. I just want everyone to get the gist of it and move on. And they're in digestible segments. I don't talk for hours. They're in great little compartmentalized segments so you can go and grab what you want to grab from it. But it is wonderful to me. And I did a presentation recently where it was sort of adjacent to the course but not pulled from it exactly.



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And after that I had so many people, “Where can I sign up? Can I sign up now?” And I was like, “It’s launching very soon.” And I just knew then, I knew that I was onto something and I knew that I was doing it in my own way, not in a way that I’ve seen other online educators do their model because that’s not me and that’s not who I am. And I needed to follow my own path.

Tobi: Yeah. And that’s the cool thing about things like courses and books is unlike interior design, you’re not going to have multiple interior designers at the same time. But you absolutely could take your course and my course, you could absolutely read your book and somebody else’s book. You could absolutely take information from different people that you admire or that you think have done something really well and then say, “How are we going to make this work for our company, or our team?”

And I think that’s what’s so fun about the more scalable model of things like books and courses, and trainings because it’s not an either or. You don’t have to get into scarcity. It’s not so competitive. It can be collaborative. It can be all the things. And each person is going to get something different. They may hear you and I talk about the exact same concept of pricing or how we run something. But we have different ways that we do it because of our own personalities, our own experiences, maybe our region or the level of clients that we work in.

And so, I think that’s what’s really fun about this to me is I don’t ever feel competitive in this space. I don’t really super feel competitive in the design space either because I just chose not to be. But I can understand where it’s really easy to get in scarcity. Are there enough clients to go around? But when you’re putting knowledge out in the world, that’s completely different. Yeah, have you found that to be true too?

John: No, I totally have and also to your point, I do feel that people need to take, and I say this in my own course, you don’t have to follow my model 100%. You take away what you want to take away from that and you apply that towards your business or from my business course, or the homeowner

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for their homeowner course. It's not like it's an all or nothing. You pull what you need as I have done for the past 12 years.

I have learned things from you, and so many other people who I was like, "Yeah, I would do that. But no, I probably may not do that. That doesn't fit with how I run my company." And that's okay. It's totally okay, yeah, it's totally okay. So that's the part that I think that most people, we're not taught business in design school. We're not taught how to, you know, I think my only business class was how to design a logo or something.

Tobi: Yeah, marketing.

John: Yeah, marketing, and that's not going to get me to get new clients and come up with pricing. And I know other people are trying to fill that void too. But I truly, truly have thought this. I knew when I put a book out or when I put a course out, I knew that people are going to – some people are going to read every word and listen to everything very intently. So, I'm conscientious of my courses, from what I say.

And I'm conscientious of my book of what I say as well. Because I did not want anyone to come away with that and do something wrong. It was on top of my head. I didn't want that on my shoulders. So that's important to me.

Tobi: Yeah, right, yeah. So, you're, yeah, just really in essence kind of responsible with what you put out in the world, yeah, intentional. That's really, really good. Something else you said.

John: Well, I love that word 'intentional', that's good.

Tobi: Yeah, isn't that good? Well, and the other thing that I was noticing when you were talking is not only do you not have to take everything someone says, I think part of what had been broken in some ways about things like the online business industry is these people who kind of deem themselves a guru and think, if you come back and say, "Well, it didn't work for me, I'm not making any money." Then they're like, "Well, because you

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didn't follow every step." And I'm with you. That is not helpful. It's not even true.

And so, I'm like you, I don't want to tell other people what to do and put them in some kind of rigid step-by-step, it's going to become more overwhelming than the problem they were trying to solve with the thing. And I have people all the time come to me and say, "But I've been in Design You two years and it's completely changed my life but I feel like I've failed because I haven't finished all the courses." And I remind them, "The goal here is not for you to come in college and take every single class that you can get a degree.

I want you to come in and if what you get is one thing and it changes your life for six months and you don't come back until month seven, then that's exactly how you're supposed to be using this information." If you can look at it and say, "This changed my business, this changed my team, this changed my bottom line." I don't care if it's three tiny little nuggets. It paid for itself 10 times over. And so, we try to help people and I know you will do the same.

Not be overwhelmed by, just adding one more thing to the list to become a perfectionist, or to weaponize against yourself, to try to become that façade again. When we create these things, if we use them to perpetuate the old paradigm, we're not really helping anybody, right?

John: No, totally. And I have even broken up my courses in a way that you can have a la carte, you can choose this, or you can choose the whole enchilada. It doesn't matter to me. Because some people might be further along in their companies to where they don't need help with marketing but maybe they need help with pricing or social media. I don't know. So that's one way that I differentiate myself. Because I was like, "Well, I don't always need everything. And I don't always need this whole package but maybe I need this one little kernel of information from that."

So that's the part that I've felt that is making my courses a bit different than other people's. And they can just grab and go with what they want and

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apply it to whatever they need to apply it to. And by the way, we're also over-consumers of information I feel like in the world. I don't know how many times I've bought a course, or downloaded something, or whatever that I've never listened to or, or never even pulled up the template for. And I've tried to stop myself from doing that.

And as people are looking at my course and other courses, and all the courses out there, and all the things, really ask yourself. Number one, is it going to work for you? Number two, can you apply this and are you going to apply this? And make time for that. Because it's a two step process. You have to believe in what you're learning but then you also have to give yourself the grace and the time to actually put that into action. And that step B is something that I feel most people don't really do as often. We're just consumers, massive consumers of information.

Tobi: Totally, they don't take action. And then the other thing is that they think, I'm going to do this in three months. And then as you said, it took you two years to create this course. And you even came to Design You once and you're like, "Okay, I came in, I don't have time for it, I'm leaving." I'm like, "Cool. Come back later if you want to." And then you came back and you're like, "Okay, now I'm ready, I'm coming back." And I'm with you. Do what works for you. I certainly never have hard feelings if people are like, "I don't have time for it now", or, "I'm going to take a break."

I'm like, "Go for it." Because exactly like you said, sometimes you have to introduce yourself to an idea and you have to chew on it for a while, and you have to park it until there's space for it. And then you're like, "Now, I want to pull that back in and look at it deeper and see if this can work." And that's been fun to watch that process for you because I mean you may have been putting pressure on yourself behind the scenes that we didn't see. You probably were telling yourself this should be done by now.

But when you get to the end of something and you look back, I think it's so beautiful to see. It happened exactly how it was supposed to happen, when it was supposed to happen, in the right timing, is that true for you? And

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what are the other pieces of wisdom now that you're at the end of writing a book, and creating courses, and you're almost launching your podcast? What is that wisdom that you wish you had known at the beginning that maybe you were hard on yourself and now looking back you're like oh my gosh, if I had only known?

John: Well, I think it comes back to being two different people. In the beginning I was trying to present something to people that I felt that other people were also presenting. And then I wasn't saying it the way I would say it, or I didn't record my videos for my courses the way that I would record them. Maybe I wanted to record them the way someone else was doing it because that's what I felt that people would want. My wisdom and my knowledge that I've gotten from that is just again, to be my authentic self, to just be me.

What I feel will help other people I really do truly believe that in my heart and soul and I wouldn't be saying it if I didn't. Versus something just to fill airtime and just to fill the void or I didn't need to write a book. Listen, you don't write a book to make money. I mean, let's be honest about it. I didn't write this book to make tons of money. It's a great marketing piece for my company of course. But also, to me it had to mean something different other than just showing something beautiful.

And even my dedication to my book, I dedicated it to my grandfather. He could not read or write, Tobi, but he was the smartest man. I learned so much from him for design and for home construction. And he taught me, and I say in the book, he taught me more than any textbook could ever teach me. And that is not something that I would have said 10 years ago. I would have dedicated it to some industry elite, or somebody that I felt would be very prestigious to people. And now the me is being open and honest about where I'm from and what led me to where I am now.

And that is what's resonating with people. So, if anybody has an idea for a course, or a book, or big dreams in their life, they need to stop and take an inventory in their own self of who they are and let that flow through to every

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single thing that they do. And I promise you, it is the best feeling ever. I don't feel the overwhelm anymore. I don't feel the scarcity. I want everyone to be successful. I share things that other colleagues are doing proudly and I let them know that I'm proud of them. And it's not a cut throat world if we don't make it so.

Tobi: Right. I love that so much, so beautiful. Well, I got the book that you sent me, thank you, and your beautiful inscription to me which I love it. And I've been through it once. And I'm sure I'll be through it many, many more times and sit down when I have time to really read all the pages because I do know it comes from your heart. So, thank you for that and thanks for being here. I can't wait to see what happens with all the things you've created. Just like you and what you're saying, that's why I do what I do. I want people to make courses.

I want people to create podcasts. I want people to expand, and grow, and show up, and do all the things. And so, I feel like you're proud, I won't say mama, I'm surely not that old.

John: No, you're not.

Tobi: But Mr., friend, all the things over here just cheering you on as you were saying. It's so exciting to watch people leap, and grow, and try things, and it's really fun. It's fun being in the spectator seat, so congratulations. I can't wait to see just where everything goes. And I know you'll do lots more. And thanks for letting us be part of it because it's been such an honor to be part of the process, interviewing you today, having you in Design You and all the things.

John: It's full circle. It's such a fun thing so thank you by the way for being this leader that you are. And I can only hope to be someone who guides people as well as you do and speaks their truth, and is just so open and honest about everything. And every day you inspire me. And that is, again, that's from my heart. And I really do mean that. And I just want to be 1% of that to other people and then I will be very satisfied.



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Tobi: Awesome. Well, you already are. You've hit 1%. I think you've hit 30 probably at least by now and so much more to come. If everybody wants to get their hands on the book, it's at all the places they buy books. And tell us about the book, the name of the book, tell us about your courses, tell about, what's the podcast? When can we get it? When can we start adding it to our weekly list? All the things.

John: Yeah. So, the book is called The Designer Within: A Professional Guide to a Well Styled Home. And I'll just admit, I know you have a book club and I'm not the best reader. I don't love to read deep, deep, deep at one sitting. So, I wrote the book in little kernels so you can read a chapter, or you can read a caption, or you can read a tip and move on and look at the pretty pictures. So, I did that intentionally because that's also how I read sometimes too.

So that's the book title, my courses are also called The Designer Within because I wanted homeowners to be able to find the designer with inside of them but to take it a little woo woo with the businessowners. I wanted them to also the designer and look within themselves and think about more how they're building their company and what they're doing for their own clients. So, the designerwithin.co C-O, not com, is where they can find all the information about the book and the courses.

And you can order a signed copy of the book if you want, you can pre-register for the courses and then, yeah, the book is out in stores.

Tobi: And the podcast is coming in the fall?

John: Yes, the podcast is coming in November. And I've already recorded some episodes and they're really, really good and fun, and maybe I'll pull you on there one day as well.

Tobi: I would love it. I would absolutely be thrilled, so yes.

John: And it's also called The Designer Within as well. So, the same branding for everything, The Designer Within goes across the board and a

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special thanks to my friend, Jess, who came up with that title years ago. And I never knew that it would become such a thing now. But I'm really proud of it, and I'm proud of what I've done, and I'm so happy to be here with you today. So, thank you for letting me spread the word of goodness, and knowledge, and authenticity.

Tobi: Love it. Thank you so much, it was just a joy.

John: Thank you, Tobi.

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Alright friends, grab John's book, it's beautiful, plus is he not the nicest person ever? He's just, I mean and if you don't know him, please go and see his Instagram. He has the best smile. He and his husband are the cutest. He's just real and he's showing up more real than ever. And as we talked about on the show, it's been so fun to watch. He and I have been on this sort of trajectory together. And I think it's just, you're going to like it, you'll see what I mean. Follow him. Connect with him. Tell him what you thought about the episode. Get the book. Check out his course.

And if you want help making your course come on over to Design You because we do this all the time. It is what we do and we can't wait to work with other people just like John who are going to go out and change the world by helping so many people with his gifts and talents. So, I hope you love the episode and I'll see you back here next week with another great 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).