

Ep #239: Let's Create a New Business Paradigm



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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.

Hi friends. Today I'm bringing you a solo show, yay. Although let's just acknowledge for a minute how incredible our recent guests have been. I have some seriously genius friends and some seriously genius people in my circle and that I end up connected to for all sorts of reasons. And I am so grateful for their wisdom and for you being here to listen to it and sharing it. So, thank you so much for being here.

But today I want to share with you some things that have been on my heart for a little bit. I would typically say they've been on my mind but I've really been leaning into listening into my body and really sort of as I always call it, voting my body back on the island. Maybe is that a survivor reference or something, where you get voted off? And yeah, I feel like I disconnected from my body a long time ago. And I've been working really hard the last few years to sort of reintegrate my body, and my brain, and my whole being. So, I'm trying to not be in my head quite as much.

That's why I say this has been on my heart more than on my mind. But I've basically lived I'd say pretty much my whole life from what I call my neck up, which means in my head because I depend so much on my brain and my intellect. And our culture really reveres brains, really reveres intellect and solving problems. We pride ourselves on solving problems with our brains and being fixers, and thinking things to death sometimes.

And let me tell you, is exhausting to use your brain that much and it can also be really harmful when everything is coming from our heads and not really from our bodies, our gut instinct, our intuition, our intuition, our knowing, our heart, all of those things, all those other parts that exist outside of our brain. And what I've really come to learn over the last few years and really also unlearn is the fact that all of the socialization that we

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have especially as female entrepreneurs comes from the male business roadmap which is primarily all about your brain and how you think.

And let me say as I always do when I talk about very gendered topics like this one and so many others when I'm talking about things like the patriarchy, it is not intended to exclude anyone, especially those people who are gendered non-conforming. Although most of us at least at some point in our lives, this is including as children were socialized towards one gender or the other even if it didn't ever feel in alignment with our identity.

And so, when I talk about these things it's really because the systems that are in place, that are very much alive and operating are very gendered which is part of the problem. So, I had this very classic southern upbringing as many of you listening did. And my parents are really traditional in their gender roles. My mom worked a little bit in my childhood but mostly for businesses that my family owned and not necessarily for someone else. And most of the time she was home with my brother and me.

And my dad is and always has been the breadwinner. So, he inherited a family business when he was in his late 20s and that's what he's done for a long time. So as long as I can remember my dad was running the family company. He was the main example for me of how business works. And having him as an example combined with the examples of other white male role models in business that he followed, and that he revered, and that he idolized, that's pretty much the example that I had.

That was my introduction to business especially entrepreneurship, and especially working for yourself. It was coming from white affluent dudes. But over time, and I mean it took quite a long time, but over time, I came to learn that what is ideal for those white affluent dudes was not ideal for me. I woke up to this wisdom years, and I mean years, at least 20 years after hustling, and grinding, and working myself to death trying to create financial success in my business.

And by that point I'd done a ton of damage to my health and my wellbeing. Wellbeing meaning in all sorts of ways, physical, mental, with my family,

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and it really took a toll. So, on today's episode I really want to break this down for us at a different level. So, you can understand if you're a female entrepreneur, or even if you're not a female entrepreneur, if you're gender non-conforming, or you identify as male, or were socialized as a male.

I want you to understand the problem with the model that we have especially for us women and really modeling our business practices after these male role models that really does not align with our nature and who we are. So, let's be clear also for a minute, for those of you listening that are male. There's also drawbacks of a lot of these socializations, patriarchal socializations, capitalism and other things that influence us that take a toll on men too.

So, gender norms as we probably know, maybe you've not thought of it this way but they're a social construct. They're not biology. And so, men are called to be super independent, bootstrap your business, not show emotion, only focus on yourself and your individual company instead of really the collective care of society. And this socialization takes a toll on men too. So, this isn't just an episode for women but it is a story mostly of my own lived experience as a person socialized as a woman and how difficult the model that I was trying to align with really was for me.

So, here's what I know now that I wish I had known almost 25 years ago, maybe even longer. But to be fair no one was really talking about this stuff back then. Thankfully we are now. And that's the fact that – well, one of the things that nobody was talking about much or at least not in the circles I was running in was a couple of things. The fact that natural working rhythms of our bodies and our capacity for women is really different than for men. And not to get too sciency or even too woo but men's natural rhythm and cycle resets every 24 hours.

Women on the other hand have a natural rhythm and cycle that resets every 28 days. That is a huge difference. And when I was growing up and starting my business as a young woman the examples set by women in the workforce, especially female CEOs was really just an extension of what men were doing.

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We were coming off the second wave of white feminism where the main focus of these feminist women and women trying to rise up through the ranks of companies was to create gender equality, and pay and opportunity mainly for white women, not for all women but mainly for white women. And they were just trying to match the success and the pay of white men. But no one seemed to notice or know at the time was the way that women tried to create success and earn their place in the workforce was just to work like men, to operate like men, to negotiate like men. And tried to think and show up like men.

And so, they had to separate, I mean and we do know this, but what I was going to say is no one was thinking that there was another way and probably there wasn't. But women had to separate work life and home life and I wasn't there yet. I was a young person, I wasn't even a teenager when a lot of this was happening. But women were detaching themselves from their emotions, working really long hours, as if these women had a spouse at home taking care of stuff, but they didn't. And they would work all these long hours and then come home.

And the majority of these people also then found all of their housework and family obligations waiting for them each night when they got there. Now, not a lot has changed but this is when this really started, when women really started going into the workforce and really started this whole equality movement in the 70s and the 80s, maybe a little prior to that too in the 60s. But it really was in full swing in the 80s and even the early 90s when I was graduating from high school and getting into college and then starting to think about my own business.

So, either it didn't occur to women or maybe it did occur to them and they just assumed, and if they did, probably rightly so, that working in their own way that aligned with their needs and their desires really wouldn't have created any success because women didn't have enough power or prestige in the workplace, in corporations, in the economy to command that kind of authority that allowed them at that time to rewrite or reimagine the systems.

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And they were really just trying to get a seat at the table and the way to do that was to just work like men, be like men, compete with men.

It makes a lot of sense but we didn't know really the toll it would take on us at that time. It's so easy to see it now looking back. Now, for me, my teenage years included what I used to call at the time like a chauvinist commentary from my dad, people might call it misogynistic now. I don't really hear the word chauvinist very much. But it was a word that was used back then and is was my dad saying, "Women are not good at stuff. I mean they're good at the home stuff. They're good at cooking, and cleaning, and raising kids.

But women aren't good at driving or running businesses but don't worry, Tobi, because you won't be bad at those things because you're being taught by a man." That's exactly, not kidding, the message that I was receiving. And the other message that I was simultaneously receiving from my dad is that women can be in business and they can have success but you absolutely still should look feminine, you should not be pushy, you shouldn't be too much for people, which means you shouldn't be too much for men, not just people, but men.

And anyone that didn't fit that feminine, really almost even Barbie doll look, I would notice that my dad would find fault with and generally just not like. And maybe he was threatened by them. I don't know. But it was very evident that I was hearing these messages, like if you want to do something, learn how to do it from a man, but you have to look like a woman, and be feminine like a woman, and show up like a woman.

And those of you that know anything about business and trying to show up like a woman in business in a society that we have been living in for a long time, it doesn't really work. And it's not even to say that it was just my dad saying those things. It was the socialization that we all got because an aggressive woman absolutely considered a bitch. A bitch with an agenda, a man hating feminist, possibly rumored to be gay, or lonely, and haggard, a spinster, or a divorcee that no one wants to be married to.

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We've all heard all of those tired tropes that were really designed to keep women from too much success. And I heard all of those things all of the time. And since I still really grew up in a time where it was mostly believed that women's only job was to marry and to have children. And a lot of you are probably close to my age and have the same experience. Women did make progress in the workforce, mostly white women but it came with a huge cost personally, emotionally, physically, and on their families.

And for the women who weren't white, they weren't even getting a lot of the opportunity to succeed in the workforce. They would keep having the more low paid jobs. And we've heard the statistics, I've talked about them here on the show before. So why am I telling you all of this? Why am I bringing up this history that you probably mostly already know? Or maybe could have come up with on your own because it's not like these are novel ideas. It's not like it's something you haven't heard of before. So why am I telling you and reminding you of this history and what it was like when I was growing up?

Well, it's really important to what I've learned and the way I'm working and helping people now and how it's really in contrast to that way of being. So, by the time I started my own business at around age 27 which was 1999, all of these practices and these tropes about women in the workplace were firmly in place in the world and in my brain.

And with my own socialization at home that was very traditional, and patriarchal, and the messages that I had heard from my dad, it added a goal, or maybe even a desire for me to prove that I was not just like most women, not emotional, that I could hack it at work, that I could balance it all. That I wouldn't quit and just be a stay at home mom. I had a double dose really of proving energy or proving need, need to prove that was raring to go to show the world and my family that I could do it, that I could be that super woman.

And this double dose of proving would ultimately be my downfall in a lot of ways. So, in the late 90s and early 2000s, we were smack in the middle of hustle culture, really for all genders. Men were hustling like crazy, mostly

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still are, and women were trying to keep up and hustle as well because that was the only way to make it. But we also had technology that was really changing in huge ways and making it possible for us to be connected to work 24/7, computers, Blackberries, pagers, all the things.

And we had a work ethic that was a holdover from way back in the industrial revolution and Henry Ford that says you have to work like a machine basically, like robots, which is very de-humanizing for everyone and really out of alignment for women. But we had moved forward to this time where we had this kind of work ethic, kind of old fashioned work ethic combined with hustle culture and really a period where people had vacation days but it was frowned upon to use them.

And people were starting to champion four and five hours of sleep. If you were really successful you could go on very little sleep and you got up at a ridiculous hour to get started. We started seeing all sorts of 'success principles' popping up to help you hustle more and hustle better, morning routines, the real habits of highly effective people, which always included some form of waking up at the ass crack of dawn. And also working well into the night and weekends. And when you got home, starting to work again.

And I got right on that hustle bus without questioning it. I didn't even know to question it. The message that I was hearing was you can sleep when you're dead and working at this rate, being dead was maybe not that far in our future because it was completely unsustainable. But I didn't even know there was another option. And I had been taught that you've got to work really hard to make a lot of money. And that a lot of money is the ultimate goal, maybe the only goal.

And the more money we have the more things we can buy, including experiences but that we can't really even enjoy because we're not supposed to go on vacation without bringing our work with us. And we're not supposed to disconnect. And that was the training ground for me in entrepreneurship. And of course, nowhere in this conversation was there anything being said about white privilege. I truly believed that it was really

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my own efforts because I was working really as hard as I possibly could on my business.

But I had no idea that I also had a tremendous head start because I'm white, because I had parents with money that helped me get started, that can invest in things and help me buy computers for my business, and advertisements and all sorts of things, helped me get loans. So, I didn't even know that even though I felt the need to prove that I didn't understand how far ahead I was of other people even. And I did get that I had a lot of financial privilege. And I think part of my proving energy was to prove that I was worthy of that.

And apparently the best way I thought to prove that I was worthy was to work constantly, to punish myself with work, to show my parents and the world that I deserved all the success that I had because I was hustling like the best of them, or maybe even better than the best of them. And it was not at all really the truth of the matter. I mean really when I look back on, and almost 25 years later I just feel mostly duped. I feel like at some level, and it's not just me, so some of you are going to relate to this, but I won't speak for other people. I won't say we in this moment. I'll just say I.

I was really, I guess, brainwashed at some level by culture if not brainwashed, if that's too strong, highly influenced by culture and my family of origin to work really, really hard and to hustle all the time. And I would hear these stories all the time. And I used to think that my dad was the only person that influenced me to work this hard.

But looking back I know that my mom did too because I would hear stories like how her family who came from a much more humbled background than my dad, would get up and on Saturdays they would all work, work, work to clean the house and do all the chores and all the things. And then and only then after the work was done could they all load up in the truck and go get a five cent hamburger from the little dairy bar which was the only time that they would eat out and not eat at home.

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So, this story which seemed innocent and quaint at some level was part of the influence on me, to hear that you can play after the work is done. But guess what? When you start a business the work is never done. So, there is never play, there is never relaxing, there is only hustle, and more hustle, and more hustle after that. And I rarely talk about some of the physical toll that this type of working for more than a dozen years, for at least 15 years, if not 20, really took on my body.

I have talked about how it was hard on my marriage, and my husband and I went through some struggles with our marriage, going on 10 years ago or so now. It was hard on my daughter when I worked all the time when she was young, thankfully I changed a lot of those habits a long time ago. But what I don't really talk about or haven't really talked about because it's a little more new, is the physical toll that working this way and being under a lot of stress has had on my body. And has really caused a problem with chronic pain.

I've mentioned it recently on Instagram and I had some people DM me that said, "I wish you would talk about this more." And you know what? I realized they were right because I do deal with this a lot. And I'm going to tell you more about it in a second. But the part of me that taught me to work past my physical and emotional capacity, to keep forcing and pushing myself when I was beyond tired, beyond exhausted, beyond my limits.

That same part that taught me to ignore the signs and signals of my body and really vote my body off the island because I never wanted to look weak, or like a victim, or like a martyr, or like I wasn't working hard enough, or like I was lazy. It had me keeping any ailment or struggle under wraps and mostly even ignoring it, or downplaying it to myself. Toxic positivity is what that's called, a term that we now know. Always having to put a positive spin on everything which I have been brilliant at doing for years, including about some physical issues that I've had.

And I would always think, no one wants to hear about my problems, or my issues, or my pain. And so, I didn't and rarely do talk about it now. But in this context for this podcast episode especially after hearing from a few

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people online that I was talking to. I do think it's really important for me to mention it here and to tell you a little bit more about it.

Because I've learned there is some specific science and research behind some of the issues that I now deal with, particularly with my nervous system that working past capacity, and working with exhaustion and fatigue for months or years at a time. And I did those again for at least 15 years, if not 20, forcing, and pushing, and ignoring your emotions and needs for years in a row. And staying under almost constant money stress and stress of managing other people that comes with running a small business or a team. And trying to be a CEO who's trying to make it big.

All of that is a recipe for disease and dysfunction in the body, and not necessarily incurable disease. Some of these things can be regulated and I'm working on it. And I'll tell you a little bit more about that in a second. But there is actually science behind this and there are some doctors including Dr. John Sarno and his protégé Nicole Sachs, and a lot of the work in the book, *The Body Keeps the Score*. That even work that's mentioned in the book, *Burnout* by the Nagoski sisters.

Really studies have been done that stress and emotional cycles in the body, stress cycles and emotional cycles in the body that move through the nervous system, that aren't completed, that stay in the body, that gets stuck in the body can cause long term physical symptoms. And they're really a form of trauma in the body. And as I've been studying a lot more about the nervous system, a lot more about somatic work, like moving the body to move stress out of the body.

I've been studying the polyvagal theory, about the vagus nerve and how it uses things like fight, and flight, and freeze, and fawn responses to deal with stress and trauma. I can see now how for literally more than a dozen years, I was rarely completing the stress cycles that came in waves through my body, not even through my body, to my body because they didn't move through it because when they got into my body they were stuck there.

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They were stopped there because I was taught to be tough, and not show emotion, and work really hard, and push past your limits, and have a positive attitude. And all the things that at some level are gaslighting ourselves and not allowing us to see that the stress and this trauma that's coming into our body has to move out of our body if we don't want it to become toxicity and disease and have longer term impact. So, at the time I was either just stuffing it down, or I was numbing it out, sometimes with food, rarely with alcohol for me, occasionally with shopping.

Mostly what I did was just work more, overwork to numb out the feelings and the stress that were getting stuck in my body. So, when stress stays stuck in our system like that and it's not released it is very toxic especially when you have a chronic cycle of working this way for years at a time. So now after about five or six years I'd say, maybe a little longer of dealing with chronic pain that originally was coming on gradually at first. I could feel pain to touch my arms and my legs, really has hit kind of a peak point in the last couple of years hopefully. Hopefully this is the peak.

And I can see now that I know all of the science and this information about the nervous system, and about what happens when we don't complete stress cycles and remove that stress from our body, the damage that we can inadvertently do by overworking, and living in our head too much, and ignoring the messages, cutting off those messages from the body that are calling for rest, and recovery, and pleasure, and play, and all the things that I wasn't doing.

And again, if this is you in the past, if this is you now it's really important that you hear this message because now it's quite true for me to say when I look back that I was totally ignoring my body. I was definitely ignoring its intuition and wisdom. It knew, it knew it wasn't working for me. I was pushing past all of that. And I was really focused on work and where I was thinking about my body, it was not about its wisdom or its intuition.

It was about how to control it to keep it thin, or to fit it into the mold of beautiful feminine women, that culture and my family had told me was what success had to look like. So, push really hard, work like the devil as we

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would have said back then. But look beautiful and feminine and be all the things that culture wants you to be. So, for me that looked like punishing myself for years with long work hours while simultaneously hating my body for not fitting the ideal perfect but unachievable version of what I thought bodies should look like.

And I did that by trying to restrict myself, through diet, a lot of exercise, really kind of earn my way to a body type that I didn't even really possess, but I guess I thought was possible. And this just added more stress to the work stress. And a lot of stopping and starting of various kinds of diets and exercise programs. And then I would go on a work binge for a while. And I would fall sort of off the wagon of those things. It really wasn't allowing me to release the stress and the pressure from my body at all.

So, when I look back on my habits, and my mindsets, and the socialization that was happening at the time, it makes it really easy now for me to see that the way I was striving for success, and achievements, and accolades which were all external validation I was seeking, would take a toll on any human body and does. And I even had a lot of privilege, particularly financial privilege.

So, if it was that hard on me, and for me, I can't likely imagine how hard it is for people without access to money because that's even a different lived experience than what I have, with even an added layer or multiple added layers of stress. So now at age 50, I deal with daily chronic pain, technically probably called fibromyalgia, but not that much is known. There's more known all the time about fibro but it's sort of a catch all term for a lot of chronic pain. I have been tested for every autoimmune disease there is. And although I have symptoms for tons of them I never test for any of them.

I have also symptoms like neuropathy in my hands and my feet. I have really kind of the most uncomfortable thing is burning, stinging nerve pain and joint pain pretty much all over my body most days and it's not fun. While COVID was happening it even sort of progressed a little bit to a different place and the pain moved into my chest area which was really

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kind of scary because I'm like, "What's wrong? Is something worse wrong? Do I have cancer or a tumor?"

But so far it looks like what I have is something called costochondritis which is inflammation of the cartilage in the chest wall that's extremely uncomfortable and painful. And it really goes hand in hand with fibromyalgia. It's kind of a form of that. It also is related to thyroid issues which I have, which also can be impacted by stress, and overworking, and all of the things I've been describing so far. And so, I've been working with doctors and therapists, and not just clinical psychologists and therapists for brain, which I do work with those too and coaches.

But therapists for nutrition and hormones therapy and all kinds of things to try to get all my symptoms under control along with trying to regulate my thyroid which has been a major challenge. And it's still not really regulated after a couple of years of working on it. So, we're trying all kinds of different things, and supplements, and functional medicine. And it's a process and it really takes a holistic approach to removing stress and to adding in more selfcare, which there's a whole other world of selfcare that isn't just like pedicures and baths, I do love those and massages.

But really daily care of yourself which includes mindset shifts. And it really includes some work on healing traumas. I have some childhood trauma as we all do. I have a lot of trauma that was created from these beliefs and stories that came out of my childhood but that really happened during my 20s and 30s when I was working, and striving, and trying to achieve at this level.

And all of that really has to be healed and moved through the body in hopes that according to Dr. John Sarno and to Nicole Sachs, and some other people that study this, that you can actually reverse some of this autoimmune response and body response to the stress that's in your body. So, I don't say any of this to get attention, I mean I'm fine, in general I'm fine. These are inconveniences that can be really uncomfortable and annoying. But in the grand scheme of things, I'm a really healthy person. I don't have any major health problems at all.

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I mean I have really good genes in my family, no heart disease, no diabetes, I mean very little of anything. And thankfully I have genetic privilege too in that way. A lot of those genes were passed on to me. But it doesn't change the fact that I deal with this daily now mostly because of my response to the systems that were at play, and the socialization at play that showed me what it looked like to create success.

So those of you that know me, know that I'm a big nerd and I will study and read every bit of information known to man, woman and the world to figure things out, become expert in it. I'll probably get a certification in something, you know me. I will have this all figured out at some point, but this time it's not just about putting more information in my brain. It's a different process, it's learning which is maybe some of the hardest work I've ever done to listen to my body this time which is definitely a journey.

And this may just be the first of many of similar journeys as I age, I just hit 50. Hopefully I live a lot longer, but if you haven't noticed, our country, and our culture, and our socialization also not big on old people. It's not big on aging. It wants you to hide it, ignore it, numb it out, get some shots and injections, pretend it's not there, which is the exact opposite of listening to the body, of leaning into your needs.

So, the reason I wanted to talk about all of this here is for a few reasons. First of all, it no longer feels really honest or helpful for me to show the highlight reel of my success and not tell this full story. I've told you a lot of the costs, the toll that was taken on me. But I haven't really talked about this because this has sort of been developing over the last several years. And really until about probably three years ago or so when I started making some other major changes in how I show up in the world. I really was also hitting a point that I could no longer ignore this chronic pain.

It was actually disruptive to my days a lot of times and so I had to really get serious about paying attention to it. So, what I'm clear on now, and this is the point for me telling you a lot of this is that putting women, or maybe at least myself as a woman, I'll speak for myself, and then I'll let each of you decide if you're a woman, or even if you're not, if this resonates with you.

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But putting myself through the system and approach designed by men and for men to succeed was not a path that worked for me but it was the only path I knew.

Was the only example I had, and I'm dealing with the consequences now of many of those choices today, physically and emotionally. And it's so clear in hindsight how I did a lot of that damage to myself but I don't blame myself because I didn't know any different. I can see the mindsets that I was practicing and the goals that I was striving for that kept me on the hustle bus. But let's be clear, it wasn't just me, it wasn't just my mindset. These are actual lies of the patriarchy, of capitalism, of white supremacy, of the systems and culture we live in.

And when we ignore those and act like it's only us, we are responsible for just ourselves and how we show up in the world, then it's really, really confusing and really frustrating, and really another level of a toll on you, to blame yourself for these problems when it's really not all our fault. There are major systemic issues, beliefs, concepts, constructs, socialization that sets us up to show up in the way we do because we want to belong. We want to belong, we want to be loved.

Even Lizzo says in one of her songs, I think the song is To Be Loved, she says, "I did the work and it didn't work." And she may be talking about a relationship but I'm talking about I did the work and it didn't work. I did the work exactly the way I was told. And a hustled, and I pushed, and forced, and pushed through and ignored my body and it didn't work. And most of us working that way, some of us which have a lot more privilege than others, but we're all striving for success like I talked about at the beginning of this year when I started talking about redefining success.

Our desire to work this hard is coming from a need to be loved, and a need to belong, and a need to fit what society tells us we should be. We want to be loved by our families, by our clients, by perfect strangers on the internet, that we call followers and friends but we really don't know most of those people. And we ultimately just want to be loved and revered by the world,

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we want to feel like we belong. We want to feel successful, we want to be significant. But at this moment I have to ask at what cost?

So now I'm in a phase of unlearning which is the ultimate learning, it's both. It's both unlearning and learning. And at 50, I'm having to be really patient with my body. It doesn't respond or cooperate in many of the ways that it used to. I used to manipulate my body all the time and it would respond to a quick weight loss, or to whatever it was that I had cooked up in my brain. And I guess my body wised up because the last two or three years had to be a crash course in patience, and self-love, and in body love because the body was like, no, you are no longer in charge of me.

I don't trust you anymore, look what your brain has led us to do. So oddly enough being home during COVID when I was having a lot of these symptoms gave me some space for this process which was helpful. Because I don't know if we had been keeping the same pace of that hustle bus we were all on during that period of time when my pain was getting worse and worse. That I could have heard it, felt it, seen it and slowed down to process it and to pay attention.

And so, I'm really thankful that other than dealing with this chronic pain which is a bitch, let's be honest, it is a bitch but I am extremely healthy otherwise. So, I don't have to deal with other issues right now. I can isolate a lot of the things that just the chronic pain and my thyroid issues. But what I have had to deal with is that the size and the shape of my body has changed. And my body has its own plan these days of when it's going to hurt, and when it's going to get tired, and how much stamina I have.

And it's really leading the way these days and my brain is not so much in charge anymore. And that's a whole new way of being that I've had to learn. So again, maybe this is helpful, maybe I'm just getting ready for what the rest of ageing looks like, when other things stop working in the same way that they used to. But it also is a reminder of how much I want to care for myself so that I don't add to and exacerbate problems as I live the next hopefully 30 or 40 years.

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And so, this whole process, this patience, this learning how to listen to my body, this learning how to be different completely is requiring so much self-love and body love really that it's had to become a practice more than ever before. Now, the fascinating thing about this is it's actually been a pretty rewarding process and maybe there's a reason that it takes till we're 50 to do this much damage to ourselves, but to also not give a fuck at that point of what other people think about you.

Because what I have noticed, what has been fascinating is that at my thinnest when I was younger I didn't love or appreciate my body at all. I took it for granted. I worked it so hard. I did not listen to it. But today I both love and appreciate my body, at least on most days. I am still human, so some days are harder than others. But most days I love and appreciate my body exactly how it is. I have an extreme level of gratitude for my body and my mental capacity now.

And I ask myself often for forgiveness a lot, you all, on the days that my body hurts, that my feet hurt, that my joints hurt, that there's literally stinging burning pain all over my body. I ask for forgiveness for the times I abused myself. I don't know for sure that that caused it. But I do know that I ignored a lot of needs and I constantly overrode things and forced myself to work against my own internal wisdom and my own internal knowing for many, many moments, but guess what? My body's still here for me after all that.

I would have divorced myself. I would have said, "No more." But my body is still here for me and it's allowing me to do meaningful things in my life. It's allowing me to love on my people and wrap my arms around my daughter, and my mom, and my hubs, and my pups, just to name a few people that I regularly hug these days. I used to not even make time for a lot of those hugs. Now I those nurturing squeezes are what my nervous system loves the most.

And my body's here to let me do that and it's also here supporting me as I make a difference in this world, right here on this podcast, and in my company, and in the work I do with other people. And so, thinking about

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your body in this way, truly grateful that it's a vessel that your being resides in, that allows you to experience love and meaning in life and to create change in the world.

That's a far cry from trying to fit the mold of what society tells us our body should look like and how they should be, which was the old model that I was working under when I was overworking for all of those years. Possibly even the bigger takeaway though of this path of my entrepreneurship, this journey over the last 24 years in business is that for most women and a lot of men, the entire model we've been trying to work under to build business and to create financial wealth is toxic literally, is toxic.

And when you think back prior to the industrial revolution, and Henry Ford, and factories, and conveyor belts, and all of those things, when you think back way before that to the renaissance times. People worked two to four hours a day in their craft. They'd have lunch, they'd have naps, they'd take a walk. They would do activities, sports, horseback riding, whatever their things were. Sometimes they came back to their craft or other creative endeavors for a bit. They would study, they would learn, they would dine, they would rest, they would be in community with others.

And that way of being makes so much more sense for our body, and our mind, and our wellbeing, but it doesn't work with capitalism. It doesn't work for making our bodies, machines and robots that produce money especially that produce money for a small group of people who own the businesses. So today, capitalism, particularly the toxic late stages of capitalism that we're in right now, where we mostly operate in the United States and other places around the world, a lot of them do too.

Instead of putting a priority on our wellbeing and on people, it really puts profit before people, at the expense of our physical and mental health. And I know this conversation gets tricky for some people because we think capitalism is what creates our money. It's the American dream, but at what cost, if it even harms those of us with a lot of privilege it especially harms those with the least privilege and many others in between. Capitalism by

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design always has a handful of winners and a lot of losers, and the people that it takes a toll on in between.

And not only is capitalism part of the problem but since about the late 1970s, basically when I was born we've also been moving, actually not the late 70s, just all of the 70s. We've been moving away from a culture of collective care, and more and more towards individualism, every person for themselves. And I think about this when I think back even to my mom's parents who really valued community and really valued collective care so much.

It's really how they existed and anyone that they knew at any moment in their church, or their community, that was a need, or that was sick, or that was having a baby, or that anything was happening they were there to support them. And those same people were there to support my grandparents and their family when they through hardships. It was community but we've lost this community value. And it really results in most humans working like machines these days, but without a system of healthcare.

We don't have a governmental system of healthcare in America. So many people have no healthcare, but also without this culture of collective care and wellbeing to offset the toll that work takes on us. So, we have this lack of people that we're in community with to help take up the slack, to help ease the toll that working in this way takes on us. And when you add to that, so many people without financial stability, many that aren't even making a living wage. I don't know how those people even function.

Imagine the toll on their physical and mental wellbeing. And even those of us who are entrepreneurs, who may have our basic needs met and maybe have more than our basic needs met most of the time but because we run businesses that don't feel stable financially in a lot of ways, we're constantly worried about money. and staying afloat, and paying our team, and finding clients. And often we're unable to afford to hire as much help as we need. And so, our response is just more individualism, not collective care, not community but more individualism.

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So, we just add a few more hats on our head and take a little bit more responsibility, feeling that there's no option but to ignore our own wellbeing because we believe that we have to have the money that's coming from our business at this great cost. But here's what I've learned in the last two or three years. And that's that it doesn't have to be this way. And I really am happy to say, and hopeful to say, and encouraged by the people that I'm seeing, and following, and studying that are working hard to change this paradigm.

And I have some upcoming guests for you, one for you next week that's doing this exact game changing culture changing work, that's having these hard conversations just like I'm having here with you, and just like we're having in my communities, our paid communities, our free communities on social media, this need to reimagine, a human centered and a planet and climate focused approach that prioritizes care for everybody, collective care in a way that is inclusive and that is equitable.

But until we have that type of lifechanging system change, which let's be honest, it's going to require the dismantling of the systems we have now. And even though a lot of them are in later stages, they're probably not going to be dismantled in a lot of our lifetimes. But there are things we can do right now right away because the change can start with us especially us in community with other people.

We can start to create changes, leaders in our companies and in our communities, both our geographic community, physical community, our online communities, our work communities. This is work my team and I do. We do it personally in our company. We do it with other creatives, and coaches, and what we now call culturemakers, which are the groups that we say our Millionaire Mentorship is for. So, if you're a creative, or a coach, or you want to be this culturemaker, culture changer, join us in mentorship. Let's do this work together.

But our goal is to change the collective, the societal approach to the things that are no longer working, likely never worked for many of us, have for sure not worked in all of my lifetime. But we can start that change with

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ourselves and the communities we engage with and especially the places where we lead. And let's just be clear, this is not about not making money, it's not about not building wealth. People sometimes hear me criticize toxic capitalism and are like, "Well, it sure has served you. Why don't you take a vow of poverty?"

And you all, everybody wants to make money, everybody wants their needs met. Everybody wants to be able to care for their family. But just because you criticize, or reimagine, or work to dismantle a current system, that's the only economic system we know, doesn't mean that we're anti making money. It doesn't mean I'm a socialist or a communist but it means that we're working under a broken system that takes a toll on a lot of people, myself included.

But until the system of capitalism and some of these other systems are dismantle. One of the things we can do now is to get more money into the hands of changemakers, more money into the hands of conscious entrepreneurs, more money into the hands of people who are willing to change how they're showing up within the system of capitalism, within the system of patriarchy, while working to dismantle or change those things. But making a difference right now.

So, when changemakers, and culture creators, and conscious entrepreneurs, and liberatory leaders, and visionary leaders, and whichever one of those words resonates with you. When those types of people, which by the way any of those can be you if you if you want it to be. But when they get their hands on more money and I consider myself part of this group, here's what's some of the things we can do. We can pay our teams more. We can play the role of closing the wage gap by gender, and by race, and by ethnicity, and by people with disabilities, by people that are in bigger bodies.

We can play a role in closing that wage gap in our own companies. We can create company cultures that are inclusive and that are built on anti-hustle principles, and that play a key role in redefining what success looks like, not only for you but for your team, for your clients, for your family based on

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the way you show up and work with all of these people that you're in community with. You can influence bigger change in the world with your dollars if you have more dollars.

You can support companies and work with vendors that are aligned with your values that are also doing this work. You can donate to causes that align with your values, that are also doing this work. You can become an example for your children and future generations, for what a sustainable workload looks like, for what conscious entrepreneurship looks like. You can get yourself off the treadmill that is still taking a toll on you personally and start to create a culture of collaboration.

And collective care for one another, that doesn't just elevate you the individual, but that collectively lifts up you, your family, your team, your company, your community, your neighbors, other people in need. And one of the ways you can do this is by switching from a me philosophy to a we philosophy. You can create impact now, you can leave a legacy for the future that positively impacts the world and the planet when you're gone. And yes, you can still do all of this while staying in the job that you at least once upon a time if not now still believe is your dream job.

Because it's really important we do this work where we are. It doesn't require us to switch to becoming equity and DEI consultants, or social justice warriors. We need those people too and we can join hands and be in community with those people but change needs to happen where we are, in all of our industries, and all of our businesses, with each one of us. It can't just rest on a few people that are out willing to make change. Change happens but showing up differently right where you are is where you can have the most impact.

Now, doing that requires you to deprogram and deconstruct the socialization that you've been influenced by and to get clear on what you really want and what you really need in your life based on what matters to you. So many of us like me have been programmed just to strive for more, more, more. And more is okay if it aligns with your values and supports the

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impact and the things you want to do, or the way you want to support your family.

But just more for the sake of more, which is what I always seem to be striving for, picking a number like let's get to 10 million, then maybe we'll go to 20. And I didn't even know what I was going to use that money for. What was the point of striving at that level? It can really deplete us, it can deplete our family, it can deplete our team and it can deplete the planet when we try to keep up with the more philosophy especially around things that don't really matter to us at the end of the day.

So just get really clear on what you're working for, what you want, what you're striving for, what matters to you, what you value. A few years ago, I was standing at the end of a period where I'd accomplished a ton of dreams. It felt like the epitome of more, more, more. I had multiple product lines and getting published everywhere, and winning awards, and being included in groups that I had longed to be in, and sitting at tables I had longed to sit at. But then I looked around and I checked in physically and I was tired.

I'd been working like a machine, like a robot, I wasn't really that fulfilled, none of that stuff felt as good as I thought it was. And I had physical pain, emotional pain, it had taken a toll on my family. I'd upheld a lot of these systems of capitalism and other things by just getting on the hustle bus without question but none of this was in alignment with my values really. And so, the working for the sake of more didn't feel happy or free to me.

Today probably three or four years later we, and I say we because it's not just me. We are well on our way to a different paradigm. And when I say we I mean my team, my family, the glorious community of likeminded committed people in our paid programs, in our social media world are doing things differently. And though we still have a long way to go to realize a lot of these dreams we now see for how the world can be different. We're making a lot of progress right now towards a life that is far more fulfilling and doing a lot less harm than we were before.

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So, if that sounds like something that you want, and that you need, and that you desire, and you need help with this, consider joining us in Millionaire Mentorship in the community, if that feels like a fit for you. If that's not a fit for you right now, listen to my podcast, follow us on social media, DM me for conversations. A lot of us are going to do business no matter, regardless of whether we stop and look at how much harm we're doing so we can keep doing business the old way that takes a toll on us, and those we love, and the global community, and the planet.

Or we can take an opportunity to keep doing business but do it differently. And I really invite you to consider the alternative. If you want to talk to me about any of this, and I mean any of it, my mind shifts, my chronic pain, the sources that I've learned from about my nervous system, things I'm reading and learning about how to dismantle these systems and how to work differently in our own lives and businesses. Or just to hear from me, and the philosophies and strategies that I've created on my own in response to a lot of my own socialization, just reach out to me.

Reach out to me on DM, email me, whatever, send me a message on TikTok, wherever you hang out that I hang out because this is important stuff, friend. And it's really me on the other end of those DMs, it's not a bot, it's not my team. And nothing excites me more than connecting with and joining together with people who really want to change the world. Okay, that's what I have for you today. I'll see you here next week.

I'm going to have one other guest I mentioned that's doing a lot of this very work, that's questioning everything, that wrote a brilliant book that's coming out any moment and is doing some lifechanging work. So, I'll see you next week where she and I will have a brilliant conversation that you love. But until then just think about this, think about how these things have shown up in your life, in your world and what would be possible for you if you come together in community with other people who are willing to work together to change the world. Okay, I'll see you next week friends, 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

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