

Ep #248: Let's Play in 2023



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Tobi Fairley

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You are listening to *The Design You Podcast* with Tobi Fairley, episode number 248.

Welcome to *The Design You Podcast*. A show where interior designers and creatives learn to say no to busy and say yes to more health, wealth and joy, here's your host, Tobi Fairley.

Hey, friends, it's almost the New Year. Here we are, the last Thursday of 2022. How is it possible? But I have to say, I'm truly enjoying life right now. I'm enjoying the holiday season. I've had a good bit of relaxation and so much fun over the last two weeks, really over the last several months. But in this holiday season we've been to Memphis twice. We've been to see my in-laws, it's really outside of Memphis. They moved into Mississippi but we've been to see them twice. One of those times was to see our Razorbacks play in the Liberty Bowl.

I've done so much creative fun stuff this year. And really I've made fun and creativity a priority at least for the second half of this year. I've put creativity and fun back into my days every day. So what does that look like? Well, I paint most days, usually watercolor but sometimes other things. I do a lot, and I mean a lot of needlepoint. I'm always exploring something creative these days, other art mediums. I've tried pottery for the first time this year, paper collage, drawing, so many things. And I love the creativity of baking.

I sometimes enjoy cooking. I used to really enjoy cooking and I enjoy it now when it's not a necessity but it's for fun. And you've heard me talk about how I'm just putting creativity back even in my work in a different way. But definitely doing all the creative things. I'm, for Christmas or for my stocking received a little crochet kit. I've been wanting to learn crochet for years.

My grandmother was a crocheter, my mum's mum. And I wasn't interested enough in crocheting while she was able and healthy to teach me how to crochet. She has been gone for quite some time, but before that she was sick for several years. So I'm learning on my own but sort of in honor of her. I always knew I needed to know how to crochet. So hopefully this year in 2023 I'll be making some things, I don't know, making some, as I called

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them jokingly on a recent coaching call, some little varmints, some of those little crochet kits, that are little creatures and critters.

But my goal is to make blankets or maybe to make dishcloths, I still use a lot of dish rags that my grandmother made by crocheting. So who knows what my crocheting future looks like. But all of this to say that this is not a podcast about crocheting, but this is a podcast about putting fun and creativity back in my life. And you've heard me talk about the creativity I'm bringing to work these days. The most recent episode before this one, I think, was the one where I was talking about being multi-passionate and how many businesses and ideas I'm creating or 2023.

They're just flowing through me. And I feel like I'm plugged into the creative motherboard. I'm in creative flow so much more than I've ever been in my life. And it is giving me life. Creativity is my lifeblood. Building things, businesses, room designs, programs, artwork. That's at the core of who I am and what I do, at least when I'm thriving, it's what I do. And the more I've flexed my creative muscles this year the more creative I have become. Isn't it amazing how that works?

It's like a practice, imagine the more you do it then the more you do it. And the more you do it the better you get at it and the easier it comes and all the things. But I'm not saying that 2022 was all rainbows and unicorns. The beginning of the year, especially the first half of the year, felt hard to me. And let's just be honest, there is hard in every day. There's hard in every week. There's hard in every day. But from talking to a lot of you, you also felt in particular that 2022 was a hard year.

I have said and I've heard many of you say that in a lot of ways this year felt harder than the two years before that were the actual 'pandemic years'. This one, we tried to get back to normal and we didn't know what the heck to do with ourselves because our values have changed. And we had a major reality check with the pandemic. But here we are at the 'end of it' which is not really the end of it, the pandemic that is.

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But also here we are at the end of the year with a chance to start again, to start fresh. Fall and the holidays are probably my two most favorite times of the year. I don't know which one comes first, in what order. But the New Year in January is right behind those to me as a very favorite time of the year. Now, it doesn't hurt that my birthday is in January. And I've always loved my birthday and I hope you all love your birthdays too. And I think that's because we have an excuse around our birthdays to play, to be childlike, to be creative, to have fun.

And there's so few excuses as adults that we really believe in for having fun. Sometimes some of us believe occasion is okay to have fun, a snow day is permission to maybe relax and have fun, our birthdays. Some of us don't even relax or slow down from work unless we have a sick day. And you all, that's not very fun. I just was talking to some of my members in Millionaire Mentorship this week that have found themselves overworking again. And they're like, "Yeah, sometimes I sadly think, well, at least if I get sick I can rest."

That is not how I want to live my life and I lived it for so many years, you all, and that is not how I'm living now. I'm living in the fun, and the play, and the creativity. So yeah, my birthday's in January. This year I'm going to have a whole lot of fun in January. I'm going to Dallas for a market which is going to be fun because it has to do with some of my new product launches and things we're doing, programs we're launching this year. Then for my birthday, on my actual 51st birthday I will be sitting in Vegas seeing Adele, which is so exciting.

But I love January regardless of my birthday being in January and these fun things I have planned, just because I love the start of things and January is the start of a new year. You heard me talk about, on my recent episode, the one before this I think, if I recall, that I am a manifesting generator in human design. And man gens love to start things. We don't necessarily love to always finish things, sometimes we do. But we love to start things. And I find that I'm more likely to finish things if I'm infusing those things with play and with fun.

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So starting the new year definitely qualifies for me as starting something new. And I have so many things that I'm starting and building and launching in 2023. Some won't launch till 2024 but who cares. I am so excited about it all. Now, last week you got to hear a bit more about those big plans for lots of creative things coming in the new year, including a new company I'm starting with my mom, a new LLC and a venture with my mom. I'm also starting a new venture with my almost 18 year old daughter. So she will be 18 by the time this thing is really up and rolling and it's a dream of hers.

And so those two things are happening which are going to be just dreamy because those are my two favorite people on the planet. And I love being with them but creating something with them is even more exciting. And then I also have other big new ideas that I'm dreaming up that I've thinking of for a while. And they're going to make their debut. They're things that my team and I are building. And with that much happening in 2023, I already know it's happening, I'm already on to it and I'm already working on it.

I keep thinking about the year end in relation to those things and kind of also how I've been trending in my thinking the last few years around the New Year. Now, I always pick a word of the year and knowing how they guide me, I know that the right word or words, I'm going to tell you about that in a minute, it's going to be plural, will be very helpful in 2023. So I'm picking two. One for me personally and then another one that's going to guide the team and the company through 2023.

But in years past for this last episode of the year, I used to do a big old giant year in review. And even way before the podcast, that usually came in blog form. And I would literally go through all the highlight reel and put it all in a blog. And it was fun to reminisce and I definitely think you should celebrate, give what I call equal airtime to those positives and exciting things as you do all of the challenges that you're always thinking about. So I did a year in review typically. And then I would pick the word of the year. A lot of times since I've been doing the podcast, that would come either the last episode of the year or the first episode of the following year.

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But today we're going to combine all of that. We're going to kind of talk about a little bit of a year in review but in a different way. We're going to talk about all the fun I had this year and hopefully it will inspire you to remember all the fun you had this year, not just the challenges, and maybe plan for more fun next year. And then I'm going to tell you about those words of the year. So in our company, gosh, we've done so many things in the last two years with the team, with the company, with our company culture. And so we now do quarterly reviews.

And so on November 28th of this year we did the final quarterly review of the year and we celebrated all the things we've accomplished this year. And it blows our minds when we hear them listed. My COO, April, gathers all that information. And she will go down and read all the things big and small that we accomplished in the year. And it is a lot. And even though this year felt hard in many ways, we did so many beautiful things.

One of the biggest things we did was launch our new website and brand. And in 2023 we're expanding on that. We're doing more with that because we're expanding back into our design business for the first time in a few years. So there's going to be some more energy put into a sort of sister website that's going to be coming for you in 2023, all about the stuff I'm doing in design and some of these new design ventures. I intentionally slowed down the design stuff for a bit, I kind of got tired of it. That's a good manifesting generator for you.

We do things, we burn out on it or we get tired of it and we kind of park it for a little while. And then maybe we pick it up or have a new version of it, which is exactly what I'm doing. And so I sort of parked, except for my favorite best clients the interior design stuff for a few years. It wasn't, you know, I used to do 10 or 20 projects a year. And I went to doing two or three which has been a really fun sort of approach to the design business for the last four or five years. It also was convenient when there was COVID.

And I had built this other online version of our coaching business which was very convenient because I didn't have to leave the house during a

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pandemic. But here's the thing, 2023, design is coming back with a vengeance for us. It is going to be full of design, full of favorite client projects, new constructions, renovations and then all of the new stuff I'm doing with my mom and my daughter that are very much in the design world.

So besides all the business stuff we accomplished this year and that list that we were able to celebrate, I personally also had a bunch of fun memories and moments this year. So I recently just did a little quick review of that because I think it's so important to remind yourself what you're doing that is lighting you up, and that's positive, and it's giving you life. And it's so easy for us to just complain, and think about how things are hard, and think about how we're frustrated. So again as I said earlier, I want you giving equal airtime to the positives.

So here's just a few things I want to say out loud in case they inspire you to do more in the new year or remind you of things you did this year. So some of the things I did personally with my family was a lot of travel. We started the year off with a trip to Disney this time last year because our Razorbacks were playing in a Bowl game down in Tampa which is what, maybe an hour from Orlando. So it made the perfect excuse to hit Disney to start the new year. It was so much fun having New Year's Eve and New Year's Day in Disney. And I had a Bowl game.

We're big sports fans over here, especially big Arkansas Razorback fans, so there was that. I also had another trip to Disney in the summer, you all, my daughter would go to Disney quarterly. She'd go there weekly. Heck, she'd go there daily if she could. And I have to admit I really love it too. I get that some of you hate it. I guess I love the playfulness of Disney, just like the playfulness that our birthday gives us an excuse to kind of tap into, at least for some of us, something about Disney allows me to be playful and childlike and I just love it.

So every time she's up for going, I'm up for going. And we did it twice this year. I also had a fall girl's trip to Dallas to see Lady Gaga. So I'm not a huge concert goer, although I do love music and I've said for years, really

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the two people on my sort of bucket list to see in concert, Lady Gaga and Adele. So I saw Lady Gaga in September. I'm seeing Adele in January. So hey, I'm all over the bucket list. But that just kind of shows you how much fun, and play, and creativity, and tapping into all those things really has become a priority for me lately.

So we did a girl's trip to see Gaga in Dallas. Then I went to Post Malone, my daughter's a big Postie fan, in St. Louis. And I took my daughter and my teen niece in September and we had the best time. And they got custom made golden geese where you get your name and all kinds of fun little things that you pick out, put on them. Yes, we're privileged. Yes, they are spoiled. And yes, they are amazing and it was so much fun, so we had that.

And then we had a dreamy big family trip. There were 15 of us, so I think 10 or 11 of my family members and I guess there's 10 of us when I count my parents and my brother and his kids. And then some close friends, five of them. So 15 of us total went to Hawaii. We went to Maui and some of us went to Honolulu. And it was magical. It was magical to be gone on the thanksgiving holiday. So, so fun, 2022 I was telling myself was so challenging yet I spent New Year's Eve and New Year's Day in Disney. And I spent thanksgiving in Maui and Honolulu. I mean that's pretty dreamy.

And it's so easy to forget, so many of us are so privileged, not everybody can do this. There's plenty of you listening that are thinking, I would love to do that but the money isn't working, or the schedule isn't working, or I don't have anybody to go with, or my family would hate that. And so it was really truly magical and it's important to remember these moments. We did have the excuse for going to Maui of our Arkansas Razorback basketball team this time playing in the Maui Classic. So as I said, we're definitely big Razorback sports fans over here.

In fact the day I'm recording this, just before Christmas, I'm recording it so I can get in the car and drive up to Fayetteville with my daughter, do some Christmas shopping, my daughter, my husband and go to a Razorback game. So sports are a great excuse for us to also loop in some fun trips

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over here. But we also, we did all of that and then I personally had a fabulous trip to Connecticut in October, really with a group of mastermind progressive female entrepreneurs. It was led by my equity coach, Trudi Lebron. And it was just spectacular.

I've never been to Connecticut and I love going to new places. There's something that is so playful and creative about going places that are new, kind of like a new start. I like new things. And so I went there in the fall and it was the perfect dreamy time to be there with pumpkins everywhere and they took us to an apple orchard. And we went to a cider mill and drank hot cider and ate apple fritters. And we had a bonfire one night and a cookout in the chilly Connecticut air. We did a lot of inspiring masterminding, and dreaming, and connecting with each other.

It was, so, so good, good for the soul. And it wasn't a quick trip. My mentor, Trudi, really on purpose made this trip a little longer and a little more leisurely. And there was lots of downtime because we're always in such a hurry. And we're like, "Okay, well, I can play but I can squeeze it in between here and here. I can do something fun in my schedule between this hour and this hour, or this day and this day." And you all, I'm really working to loosen those reins. I'm not throwing out my time blocking. I love a good time blocking.

But there's so much more time on my calendar that is for play. And that is not earmarked for anything so that I can practice being more spontaneous which for years I thought I wasn't spontaneous at all, but like play, and like creativity, it can be a practice. So what I'm saying to you and telling you all of this stuff, is not to brag and not to remind you how privileged and fortunate I am, or the expensive things I do. All of that is true.

But also just to remind you how important it is to reflect on what was amazing because even in the amazingness of all of those things, a lot of the tiny little moments were just as beautiful. The sitting for hours and needlepointing and watching Christmas movies in my PJs in the bed with my daughter on a random Tuesday afternoon, just as important and fulfilling as going on a lot of these trips.

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So I've been telling myself that this year was hard, but wow, it was so much fun. And there were so many beautiful moments. And it's so easy for us to remember the hard, but aren't all years hard, because isn't that life? Isn't life, as Glennon Doyle calls it, brutiful, brutal and beautiful, isn't life just a mix of hard and beautiful moments? And if you're willing to choose them hard and playful moments, and hard and creative moments. I hope you will reflect on your year and I hope you'll give that positive stuff, all that airtime in your brain as much as you do the challenging stuff.

But I also hope you'll use it to propel you forward about what is possible for you in the New Year. I want us to now think about the future. I love being future focused. I'm so happy when I'm future focused. One of my top strength finders, I think it's number three or so is futuristic. And so I love the future because just like the New Year, just like that man gen part of me that loves new stuff, in the future, everything is always possible. And I love possibilities.

In the future is a creative's dream because there's time and there's space to do things differently or do things you've wanted to do, or play more, or connect more. In the future anything is possible if I'm courageous enough to dream it and if I'm courageous enough to carve out time for it. And those are two big ifs because so many people dream and think but never take action. So many people dream and think and then just go back to work and do the drudgery and the sludge of the work. So I want you to think about the future differently.

And for me what that looks like in 2023 is I'm kicking goal setting to the curb. And I am shocked that that's even coming out of my mouth. For years goal setting was like I don't know the epitome of me as a human. Set a goal, achieve it, high achiever, do all the things. And trust me, I'm not trying to not achieve, but it's not the achievement that is the goal for me in the future. It's the playfulness, it's the creativity, it's letting things happen, it's letting things reveal themselves to me. It's taking a step and then seeing what happens.

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I always think of it almost like we have this motherboard in my brain of us and who we are. And I'm like, "I wonder what happens if I turn this dial or flip this switch." And that's what I'm doing here. I'm like, "Going to turn the goal setting switch off for the year." And think about the way I'm going to show up in a different way because for many, many years I prided myself on goal setting, especially the idea of making big giant unrealistic goals, big, big ideas, as big as my mind could dream. And that concept still excites me.

You're hearing me talk about lots of big things I'm doing next year. But here's where I'm making a shift. So goal setting, especially in the New Year was always very much akin to this idea of New Year's resolutions. And like resolutions, my goals, I would get so excited about them at the beginning of the year but they had a way of falling off track because I would just get busy in life and they would fade into the background. Only to resurface occasionally, maybe it was quarterly, maybe it was once or twice a year when I dared to check back in and see how much progress I was making.

And I have to say that allowing myself to not set goals, but rather make plans and just take action on them feels so fresh and invigorating to me. It's going to be a hell of a lot more effective for me I think this year because I'm not writing them down like in a numbered list, goal number one, do this thing, hit this revenue. Goal number two, have this event. Revenues and events are going to happen.

But what it's going to look like for me is this beautiful, collaborative evolving list of plans, many of which you've already heard me talk about that I'm just going to keep taking creative action on day, after day, after day. So I don't have to get up every day and look at the list of seven things. I'm going to get up every day and say, "What's the next playful, fun, creative, exciting, not rigid step that I can take to move me towards implementing, taking action on the things I have planned this year? And I love it.

So yeah, it's just semantics, it's just language, plans yes, goals no. But language matters. The word 'goals' used to resonate with me, now not so much. Now goals seems like something that's sort of at arm's length from

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me. It's out there and I'm kind of focused on it and hopefully I'll land at it at the end of the year. But something out there that I have to capture, that I have to land on, doesn't feel like it has a connection to me so much. Plans seem like the here and now. I feel connected to plans. I've always been a planner. When I make a plan I do it, I take action. Goals maybe not so much.

So what I've been wondering lately is if goals may actually be holding me back instead of moving me towards what's truly possible. What if I have a goal to hit \$3 million but then don't hit it. Versus what if I have a plan to launch and do all these amazing things and when I do them they result in \$3 million maybe, or two, or four, or one, or whatever that number's going to be.

But if I'm pouring myself creatively into the things that I love and that I'm inspired. I just have a hunch that the needle may move farther in the direction of what I want to accomplish than setting this rigid specific thing. And sort of using it against myself all year long. So I am much happier, truly happier when I can be less rigid and more fluid. And I'm really loving the idea of squeezing a ton of fun, and a ton of play, and a ton of connection, and a ton of community out of my days in all the creative ways instead of setting goals for 2023.

I'll go farther I think, and like my results more I think when I give myself the room and the space to squeeze all the creativity and fun out of every day. So will I? Will that happen? Well, there's only one way to figure it out. Let's try it. Let's park goals, let's lean into creative and play just like I got good at doing this year the last several months. Let's make it the strategy for 2023 and see what happens. So part of that will be potentially using a word of the year because I like that approach of just reminding myself what I'm focused on.

So each year when I pick my word of the year, I love to recap previous words of the year. There is just something about it, it's like let's go through and name all the previous words of the year. And last year was my 10th or 11th year in a row of picking a word of the year. I started it in 2012, this

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year, this past year, I called last year but last January 2022. So let's look at those words.

So 2012 was discipline. I just said words matter, the word 'discipline' for me these days is like nails on a chalkboard. We are oil and water, we do not mix. Discipline feels rigid and ick. But in 2012 it was the very word I obviously needed. 2013 was inspire. 2014 was action.

2015 was significance, and I remember that year, it really stands out because I had taken so much disciplined action for three years and I was having a moment kind like a lot of us did during the pandemic of what really matters to me? I was starting to overwork or had been overworking and I was like, "I need to tap back in to what really matters." So that was 2015. 2016 was focus. I love how they start to trend towards kind of where I am today. And 2017 joy. 2018 was thrive. 2019 was freedom.

2020 was flourish which it actually turned out to be the pandemic year. We of course didn't know the last weekend of December or first week of January that the pandemic was coming. But in so many ways, I did flourish when the schedules stopped and I had a lot of time for rest and connection with family. So 2020 was flourish. That was a fun little section there, joy, thrive, freedom, flourish. Those were four years of me really becoming the person I am today.

2021 was lead. I really wanted to go next level in leading my business and I did. That's when we started building the current team that we have. That's when we started creating the company culture we have. And then for last year or this year but last January, last December and January I picked consciousness for 2022. And I will say that I was very, very conscious, and intentional, and clued in and aware of what was happening and what I really wanted. So that one served me well. But for the first time I picked a personal word and a company word.

And our company word for 2022 was team because we had built, starting with 2021 when I picked the word lead, we had built this amazing new team over the last two years and I really wanted to lean into collaboration which

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we did in a beautiful way this year. I got out of the way in so many ways. And created a non-hierarchical approach to our company and collaborated with the team and let the team rise and thrive.

And I will say that because team was our focus and collaborating with the team was our focus for this year, it's the very reason I've had the space to be creative again and to play again. So the fun thing is, is I can look back on the each one of those years from 2012 through 2022 and I can see exactly how the words really did play out in my life and business. I remember why I picked each one of them and I remember the change I was hoping to create with those words or the accountability I was hoping to create with those words as my guide and it really worked.

So, for this year, did you notice a few minutes ago the sentence I said about what makes me happy now? Well, if you didn't, I'm going to repeat it for you and here's what I said. I said, "I am much happier when I can be less rigid and more fluid. I am loving the idea of just squeezing in a ton of fun, and play, and connection, and community out of my days. So maybe it's not squeezing in, squeezing out of my days in all the creative ways instead of setting goals." That's what I said.

So right there in that paragraph, those phrases, those sentences, are my two words for 2023. My team word or company word of the year is community. I'll tell you more about that in a second. And my personal word of the year is play. So through all of the things that I'm planning in business in 2023, my team and I are very focused on creating a community experience and connection like we've never done before.

We have been thriving so much in collaboration with each other, including me, seven of us on my team that we really want to bring that to the whole community. How can we connect with each other? How can we collaborate with our community? And for us, community means the people that are in our paid programs like Design You and Millionaire Mentorship. But it also means the people here like you, you listening to our podcast, you're part of our community.

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The people that are in our free Facebook group which we're going to migrate over to Mighty Networks in 2023. That's part of our community. The people that follow us on Instagram and TikTok, part of our community. The people in the design and creative industries, part of our community. So we think of community kind of global and the focus of the company is community. So we've never had this focus yet. And it's so exciting.

Since the pandemic, and heck, even before the pandemic, thanks to our devices, and all the electronics, and technology, and the way the world's been changing. We have all been digitally connected more than ever but not really feeling personally connected to anyone. That's why there's so much stress and such a loneliness epidemic. I've even talked about that here on the podcast. So we as a team are committed to reimagining community this year. We're adding back in person events in a bigger way.

Our Millionaire Mentorship retreats are going to be in person this year. That's so exciting to us. Some of you are going to want to join us because you loved being part of that in years past when I used to have masterminds, and you all, this group is on fire. You heard me speak about it a couple of weeks ago. There is just a chemistry happening right now. And we're going to be in person with them at least twice a year. So these have been virtual the last two years. This is starting year three of Millionaire Mentorship, so they're going to be in person.

We're also claiming some really cool in person meetups around the country for our Design You members that are going to be so much fun. So if I'm in a particular city at any given time or just even in between my own travels. We're going to have other members of our team host meetups and meet and greets in various communities out around the country which we're so excited about. And we're also going to do a lot of what we call community stuff at both Highpoint markets this year for the design industry. But remember we don't just work with designers.

We work with designers. We work with all types of creatives and other industries that are related and kind of adjacent to interior design like event planning and all sorts of things. And we also work with the coaches, a lot of

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coaches. And we work with creatives, people who identify as creatives but maybe you're in a less creative industry. We have lawyers in our program, you all, but creative lawyers who want to be in a community of creatives. So we are doing things both in the design community at Highpoint. We're doing things in our virtual and online communities.

And we're going to be doing meetups and other things around the country. And we're even doing a big upgrade as I kind of alluded to earlier in our Mighty Network because they have all kinds of new features. And so for those of you who may be a part of our podcast community or our online Instagram community, if you want to come officially, be in our Mighty Networks community there's going to be a free version of that. It's all going to be one network where we're all in there together.

And then for those people who are a Design You member or a Millionaire Mentorship member they can navigate within the network to the parts of the network that they pay to be a part of, that they are participating in. But we're going to bring everybody into one space this year. It's going to be so fun, virtually. And we've got some big new things coming, including a conference, a virtual conference.

We're doing stuff and thinking out of the box to create community like never before especially in person community, but both in person and digitally. It's like a hybrid best case scenario of all the ways we can connect with people. And with last year being focused on our team, the company word of the year was 'team'. We really built that team culture. It's mind blowing. Again you've heard us talk about it here on the podcast. And we want to bring that same culture of connection, and collaboration, and love for each other to our broader community and we just hope you'll be a part of it.

We want it to be so much fun. We love the idea, and in fact this is something that we say often. We love the idea of our platforms, and our programs, and our events being a playground for our community to take advantage of, a playground for you all to leverage. Instead of you having to build all your own, come over and play in our playground. Come over and be part of our community.

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And one of the ways we're doing that, we even started it this year is we're doing things like letting people that are in our Design You or Millionaire Mentorship community, do speaking panels and presentations in our programs or come here and be a guest on the podcast. If it's part of our platform, think about it as your playground. And depending on how you work with us, you have all kinds of opportunities to play on our platforms. We want to make community easy and fun, and collaborative with you and for you in 2023.

So I'm going to tell you more about that in upcoming episodes but I hope I've piqued your interest of how we think. You know when I think about something and I think about it in this intentional way, big things happen. So how can we be a playground for you? We have many ideas. We want to hear your ideas too. And that's going to be a lot of this ongoing conversation around community for 2023.

And then personally and very related, it's not an accident that it's related, you've heard me talk about how much I'm thriving in this creative zone. I've talked about it today. I've talked about it on recent episodes. This creative zone, making fun and creativity part of my daily life. So I'm going to solidify that with that word of the year in 2023 being 'play'.

I am so committed to being an example for all of you, for all the members of our community, our paid programs and every other place that we connect with people, being an example of how play can be integrated into your day's play or creativity, whichever words that you want. But I like the word 'play' because it's a little more of a pattern interrupt than just creative because a lot of us are already in creative industries. So this idea of infusing play, integrating it into your days, what if that is the thing, the secret sauce that's been missing to create the success you've been dreaming of?

So I'm going to be that example of how I am more successful when I have more play in my days. How I'm more successful when I have more creativity and creative outlets, and creative expression in my days. I see so many people including in our programs, our communities, our members

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that are postponing joy, and postponing play until their work is done. And I just had this conversation in our most recent Millionaire Mentorship weekly call, that so many people are postponing play. And they admitted it, they're like, "Yeah, I totally do that."

And I have a hunch that this postponing play or postponing joy is one of the main contributors to the burnout epidemic that we see. We've all heard how adult play is so important, but very few of us make it a priority or even make it happen at all. And so you may have heard my epiphanies, I've talked about this. I've probably talked about it on the podcast at some point. I know I've talked about it in my communities. But when I was growing up my mom always told me this story.

She's probably told it even recently, probably even this year because it's one of her stories and we all have those stories and I'm not criticizing her story. It's an important story for her. But it's interesting to see the impact it had on me. So she's told me for pretty much my whole life that when she was growing up, her family of six because she's the oldest of four kids and then she had her parents. And they had their little nuclear family. They would all get up, and they didn't have a lot of money. And they were all super hard workers.

And so they would all get up every Saturday and they would get really, really busy and they'd do all the hard work and clean the house, and polish the shoes, and do the chores, and the cooking and all the things. And then and only then after they were done with the work, then they would get the reward of going into town for a five cent hamburger. And so there's two parts of the story for her. One was that basically my daughter and husband are super spoiled because we eat out basically every meal and that was the only time they really got to eat out.

But also, and of course she wasn't being critical, she was just saying, "Wow. It's so interesting how often we eat out. We only ate out on those Saturdays." But the main gist of the story was always work first then play. And so for years I really internalized this message. I didn't know it for a long time. But my mom was always talking about this work first then play story.

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She was always talking about not being lazy. She was always talking about being responsible and how she had always been responsible and she'd never really been a kid, even when she was a kid.

And she wasn't that kind of mom to be super playful like maybe her sisters were. And she wasn't on the floor coloring with us. And all that's fine. I'm not traumatized by the fact that my mom saw herself to be way more responsible and not on the floor playing with us. But I do think these stories and these ideas really have a huge impact on me. And they played a role in me becoming a workaholic for years. Now, that's not to say I'm blaming my mom, because all kinds of things influence us.

The company culture of when I was raised and being a child of the 70s and 80s, and women getting into the workforce in a big way, and how we had to work twice as hard to be the moms, and the employees, and all the things. So all of those played a part in this including the stories that my mom told me about work first then play. And so I see that these stories really play out not only in me but also in many of the people I coach because they had similar stories and they had similar influence.

And so what I see them doing now is bribing themselves to say, "When I get all this work done, especially a lot of work that I hate, that I'm forcing myself to do, then and only then can I have fun. Then and only then can I be creative." But they have a belief that if they do the creative stuff first that they'll never do all the work stuff. And you all, I'm calling BS on all of that completely. First of all the work stuff might not even be their job because they're probably visionaries and the work stuff is really for integrators.

And they're making themselves miserable, holding themselves hostage to do all that work stuff instead of hiring it done and staying in their creative zone. But also just this belief that if I do the creative stuff first, basically I'll just be a loser, or a flake, or I'll just not be serious and I won't get the important stuff done that makes me money. But here is why I'm calling BS on it because I'm seriously saying fuck that, to doing the work first and then play mentality because I think it's what is killing so many of us because the work is never ending. The work never stops.

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When my mom was a kid, the world wasn't like it is today. We didn't have endless to-do lists. We didn't have women working and being moms, and parents, and all the things. We didn't have that invisible workload for women. And so here's the thing. When we have work first then play as our mentality and our belief system, we never get around to the play. So here is my question. What would it do for your business, your health, your joy, your happiness and heck, even your productivity if you put play and fun first?

Just yesterday, the day before recording this episode which was just a few days before Christmas I got up and I painted for two hours from 8.00am to 10:30. And then I started my day. In fact I even cancelled a doctor's appointment because I didn't want to get out in the cold and go to a doctor's appointment. I wanted to play. And so I listened to my heart and that tug. And I got up and I played in paint and creativity for two and a half hours and then and only then I started my day. And I had an incredibly successful day.

I had an amazing strategy day, strategy session with a private client. And then I had an amazing call with our Millionaire Mentorship program. And then as soon as that was done, my daughter and I headed to eat Japanese hibachi at five in the afternoon because we felt like it and it was fun. And then I came back and did needlepoint for four hours while we watched Christmas movies. That was a super productive day. I changed the life of my private client in a lot of ways or she changed her life with my guidance.

And I did the same thing in that strategy session with our Millionaire Mentorship group. And I wrote this podcast in between those two things. But I had play first and I was relaxed, and excited, and in prime creative juices mode in all of those things I did during my workday because I played first. It's sort of like eating dessert first and so many of us don't do that.

I always have heard that my great grandfather liked to eat his pie first. And I always thought that was the best thing I'd ever heard because what do the rest of us hear? "Clean your plate first and then you can have dessert. Eat the responsible healthy food and then you could have dessert." And I'm like, "Screw that", you all, life is short. I don't want to be too full for my

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dessert, if dessert's what I want that day. Some days I want broccoli first. Other days I want ice cream first. Life is too short not to eat dessert first. And life is too short not to play first.

And if we learned anything in the last few years it is that life is not only short but uncertain. So you've got to eat dessert first, you all, you've got to play first and be creative first. The work will always be there. And what if these things being flipped on their head are actually the recipe, the secret sauce for creating those financial results that have been eluding you for years?

What if the more you lean into play and creativity, instead of this 'responsible' work first then play mentality and belief you've had for years. What if leaning into play and creativity first is the very thing that is completely tied to how our company thrives and how we thrive? I believe it is. So in 2023, my word of the year is 'play'. And here's the thing, I'm even thinking of replacing the word 'work' with the word 'play' which could be a little confusing but here's what I mean.

If I get up and I paint, and then I'm like, "It's time to go to play instead of go to work." How am I going to show up differently in the day? Because if I make all of my work playful, and I make all of my work fun, and I make all of my work creative, and I loosen those reins and those stories of discipline, and responsibility, and structure that I thought were keeping me progressive, and productive, and responsible. What if I loosen those because they were actually squelching all the most important parts of me.

What if my whole life changes in every way and it has the biggest impact on those around me which then will have the biggest impact on our finances and bottom line, I think that it will. So here's what I want you to think about. Give some equal airtime to all the fabulousness that happened this year along with, I mean you can still say it was challenging. It was challenging, you all, but it was also amazing, I know it was, even if those were just little teeny moments with yourself or with somebody you love. There was a lot of amazing so give equal airtime to that.

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And then think about how things like the word 'goals' could be squelching you or putting work first and not having dessert first could be squelching you. And I hope you will consider that a shift like this in your business in 2023 might be the very secret sauce you've been missing. And I really hope that you will try it.

So don't forget we're here for you. If you want to be in our Millionaire Mentorship group, the cart is closing, I think it's closing maybe the day after this podcast goes live or so. But check our Instagram. But if you're like, "I want you reminding me in those weekly calls, Tobi, with these other high achievers, that I can't postpone joy, and I can't postpone play, and I can't postpone creativity if I really want to be my best self and our work to be its best."

So if you want to be inspired to play more, create more, dream more, lean into fun and create a sustainable but elevated best version of your work ever then you might want to join us in Millionaire Membership if that's the level you are in your business and let us help you make that happen. Because yes, your business can also feel like a playground, your very business. You don't have to just come play in my playground, we can create your own playground. And I want you to stop postponing joy in your life in the new year.

Promise me, if you do nothing else that you'll do that, alright, it's a work experiment. And just yesterday actually, one quick story. I was going to wrap up but let me tell you this one thing because I think it matters. Just yesterday when I was in that private client session and I was in this mindset because I had painted for two and a half hours before we went into the work together. I asked her this, she said, "You know what, I want to shift out of more of that mindset of CEO and more into CVO, Chief Visionary Officer or CCO, Chief Creative Officer."

She was an artist for years and she finds herself not painting, or drawing, or doing other art because work gets in the way. And she said, "I really want to shift into that and I'm going to need your help because I do feel like it'll be a little uncomfortable when I've been getting validated for all of that

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work as a designer and as a boss. And I'm not going to be getting validated for that same stuff very much anymore if I stop doing it and delegate it, and have other people step up,"

And here's the question I asked her and I want you to think about this because a lot of us don't make changes and don't stop the work first and then play mentality because we get so much validation and as I call it, stroking for being productive, for marking things off our to-do list. So here's the question for you. What if external validation is a cheap substitute for true creative expression? I don't know, this just came out of me. Maybe because I had painted for two hours and I was tapped back into the zone.

But as she said, "I may need your help to sort of wean me off the external validation." I said to her, "What if external validation is just a cheap substitute for true creative expression and fulfillment?" And then we just sat there looking at other because it blew both of our minds, but I think it properly is, you all. So the external validation you're getting by priding yourself on being 'responsible' or 'disciplined' and not eating dessert first, what if that validation is the cheapest most measly substitute for true creative expression and fulfillment?

I'm feeling it right now and I have a strong suspicion that it is. So stop chasing validation and lean in, eat dessert first. 2023 could be your year of true creative expression and play and it might just be the secret sauce you've been looking for all along. And if you want to do that in community with us either in our paid programs or just in our free communities, come on over because we are turning up the dial on the playground. And the playground is going to be ripe for the picking this year in 2023. Or I guess that's next year, just a few days.

And we want you to play in our playground and leverage all the things we've built so we can teach you how and be an example of how this is the secrets sauce. Okay friends I'll see you in 2022. I'll be bringing those words of the year, community and play along and I hope that you will be there with me. See you really soon. Happy New Year.

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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.