

Ep #254: The Power of New Dreams and Telling Your Story with Robert Hartwell



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Tobi Fairley

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You are listening to *The Design You Podcast* with Tobi Fairley, episode number 254.

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.

Hello there my friends, I hope you are having a great February. This year is rolling by as always and I hope you're staying warm. Some of you are probably like, "Hey, I live in Florida, it's 85 here." And others of you are like, "It's negative six where I live." It's been pretty chilly where I live and our heat has not been working. So that's given me a real appreciation for staying warm which is why it's top of mind. But what else is on my mind is how to dream and how to dream big. And we've been talking about this a lot in the last few episodes and today is no different.

So today I have an interview, a conversation with Robert Hartwell. And we talk about how Robert's built not just one dream but two dreams. So he is the CEO of Strength on Stages where he coaches entrepreneurs, founders and venture capitalists on the art of authentic storytelling and selling from the stage. Robert grew up in Raleigh, North Carolina. He was the son of two educators and he's always had a passion for teaching. But he began his career, his first dream in New York on Broadway.

And he worked on Broadway as a director and a choreographer and he then became a teacher for those in with the dream of being on Broadway, running the Broadway Collective for six years. And now he's transitioning to this new dream of his, teaching people to show up, tell stories and speak their truth. So if you have a big dream like Robert had a big dream and we even talk about another dream. For those of you that are designers, you'll appreciate this because he had another dream that was all about a house. So we talk about that in this episode too.

Ep #254: The Power of New Dreams and Telling Your Story with Robert Hartwell

So I'm going to be quiet, let you hear from Robert, hear how he's lived into multiple dreams and is still doing so. And I hope it inspires you to dream big So enjoy this episode with Robert Hartwell.

Tobi: Hey, Robert, welcome to *The Design You Podcast*. This is really a treat to meet you and to have you here on the show.

Robert: Oh, my goodness, thank you, Tobi. I am so excited to be here. I have been geeking out on your website for the past week getting excited about this time together. So I'm very grateful to be here.

Tobi: Thank you so much. Well, I feel the same way about you and it's been so fun to watch your journey over the last few years. I think the very first time I saw your face and heard your voice and learned about you was when you were helping one of your besties, Rachel Rodgers host her town hall meeting probably, what was that a couple of years ago maybe?

Robert: Yeah, that was I believe June of 2020.

Tobi: Yeah. So that was my introduction to you because I was following her. And I had known of Susan, your also other bestie through the coaching industry. But I saw you there and it was right around the time that you had purchased your house which I know you'll tell us about today. So I have been following along from a distance of years now. I've seen what you're doing. But I'm so excited for you to bring a lot of your expertise and your enthusiasm and just the way you think to our audience of creatives. I know they're going to love it.

Robert: Oh my gosh, that is so exciting. I have to say that town hall, it was such a special time. It really was such a special time because we were only a few months into the pandemic. And I feel we were all still really listening on Zoom and really engaging with each other. And I felt we did such

Ep #254: The Power of New Dreams and Telling Your Story with Robert Hartwell

beautiful work on that town hall, which I was so proud of Rachel and her team for putting that together on how to build an anti-racist business.

And it's been really beautiful to see the ripple effects in even our own company from the pledge that we took during that time so that makes me smile that that is how we were introduced to each other. I love that.

Tobi: Yes, it is, I know, it was so fun. Well, for those people who haven't been following along as I have the last couple of years, why don't you just give us, I mean it doesn't even have to be the short version, whatever version feels right as an introduction to what you do, who you are. You do wonderful various things from Broadway to now you're a homeowner and doing things with your house to all sorts of other things you're doing. So kind of get us up to speed on who you are and what you're working on.

Robert: This is amazing because I was actually just on a first date a couple of nights ago and this guy asked me the same question. He's like, "So, it looks like you do a lot of different things. Can you kind of explain to me what is it that you actually do?" I'm like, "Okay, yes." So, Tobi, you are not a six-foot-tall male-identifying person but I'm going to just imagine that you are for one second. I'm just kidding.

Tobi: Perfect. Perfect.

Robert: Oh my gosh. So I spent 10 years as a Broadway performer here in New York City. So I got to do five Broadway shows and two national tours and perform on the Toni's and the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. And I just was living my best Broadway life. And at the time I found two friends, thanks to the Internet Streets, Rachel Rodgers and Susan Hyatt. And it really got me going on the idea of entrepreneurship because much like you it's like wow, you are an artist and your job is to serve people and for me, bring a musical to life for them, for you, bring a design to life for them.

And I didn't realize that I could help teach other people how to do that. And so I made the decision to open up my own musical theater academy in

[The Design You Podcast](#) with Tobi Fairley

Ep #254: The Power of New Dreams and Telling Your Story with Robert Hartwell

2016. And was able to grow that to a multimillion-dollar business in a few years and really ran that company with every ounce of energy in my body for six years. And then at the top of this year, I realized I was ready for a change because I created that company based from a seven-year-old dream that I had which was to get to Broadway. I got to Broadway, perform on Broadway. Got to do that.

But then the next part was okay, now, build a company to teach other people how to do that. And really during the pandemic my passions started to change and who I was starting to lean into more, it was a different group of folks. So for so many years, I had worked with young teens who want to be on Broadway. And every time that I would be with Susan or Rachel at an event, people would come to me afterwards and would say, “How do you tell stories from the stage the way that you do? How were you able to build a multi-seven-figure business from selling from the stage, how did you do that?”

And I realized, oh my gosh, there is a framework that I’ve had in my head for a really long time that no one’s really ever asked me to teach and one that I didn’t even realize I was following. And so I said, “Alright, I’m going to go out on a limb like I did six years ago and create a new company and that’s where Strength on Stages happened.” And I didn’t know kind of when I opened Broadway Collective, I didn’t know who would come. But it’s been amazing to serve all of these female-identifying entrepreneurs and help them tell their story and help them find the confidence to sell from the stage. Help them find the confidence to pitch me the opportunities.

So the short is I spent my career as a Broadway performer and opened a musical theater education company and then earlier this year opened a storytelling for entrepreneurs company.

Tobi: Amazing. And did you close the Broadway Training Company, did it run its course or does it still exist?

Ep #254: The Power of New Dreams and Telling Your Story with Robert Hartwell

Robert: Yeah, it still exists and we will close at the end of this year which is really bittersweet and it's been quite a transition for our team and also for the students. But I know that it's the right thing to do for this season of my life.

Tobi: Well, I love, I know there's some other things we want to get into, really this idea of using your voice and all the storytelling things you do. And even just tapping into opportunity around you but before we get there, I want to hang out here for a minute in this idea of leading into new passions and passions changing because I've really been in this – well, I mean I've always known that I did a lot of that. I did a lot of changing and growing and adding new things. And sometimes I close things down, that's the hard part for me.

But I think that there's a narrative that successful business people are not trying new things all the time and not always starting new things and that can feel flighty or that can feel unstable. And I really want to challenge that whole concept because as creatives and also depending on some of our specific personality types, some of us are just designed to create new things all the time and for things to run their course or be in a season and then you move on to the next season.

But I don't hear people talking about that very often but you just described a beautiful scenario where you did exactly that. And I think before we even go on to using our voices can you talk a little bit to this? It's really kind of a courageous act to be willing to change and grow and start new things and say goodbye to old things that I think a lot of creatives maybe struggle with. Because other people in their lives who are much more linear thinkers and much more structured are going to think that's flighty or weird or here they go again. And that's not really the way that I look at that sort of shift.

Robert: Yeah. That's a beautiful, beautiful question, Tobi. I approach it from a spiritual standpoint around the idea of calling, around the idea that when I read *Big Magic* years ago there is this concept in that book around an idea

Ep #254: The Power of New Dreams and Telling Your Story with Robert Hartwell

is constantly searching for a co-collaborator. And if it latches onto you and you don't say yes it will go find another co-collaborator, someone that is going to say yes which is why Elizabeth Gilbert talks about in the book, the idea that you'll have an idea about a book or an idea about a blog post and you won't act on it.

And then two months or two years down the road you'll open a book and it is the book that you were called to write but you didn't say yes. Or the blog post, and you're like, "That was my idea." And it's like yes, it was your idea and inspiration came to meet you and you said no. And so I move through life in that way of, I don't want to miss my time and I also want to honor time. And I think it's what's really helped understanding that, is I went through a breakup that really shifted honestly my life. Because I just knew I would spend the rest of my life with this person.

And therapy has really helped me realize there are beginning, middles and ends of relationships. And I believe that in our businesses as well. And when you are a creative being, I think there's something in you that is constantly looking for collaboration, constantly looking for that thing to say yes to. And if we don't honor the endings of programs or the endings of seasons you are missing I think the mighty move of the newness. And I don't want to miss my move. I don't want to miss my shift because I'm so attached to the idea of who I was and what I did and how I did it.

No, we are ever-evolving if we give ourselves the opportunity to be ever-evolving. And so do some business people look at me and think that I've lost my mind, that I'm closing a multi-seven-figure company and not selling it or not trying to sell the pieces of it? Yes. But my brain is not on that right now. My brain is on how can I serve these women. How can I serve this current mission of helping more people tell their story? So it's not for everyone but I also don't think it is because it is scary.

Ep #254: The Power of New Dreams and Telling Your Story with Robert Hartwell

I'm not going to sit here and say that I am sitting here and I feel 100% comfortable in every move that I'm making. I'm not but I think that's the exciting thing about being a creative is you get to create.

Tobi: I absolutely agree and as you're describing that I feel it viscerally in my own body because I'm also always doing that and looking for the new and I love creating things and building things. And I know that even though we have plenty of programs that have been around for a while, to me my goal is not for things to always be forever like you're saying. So I completely feel it. I feel the butterflies of excitement in my stomach when you talk about the newness. It's uncomfortable and it's nervous, and will this work?

But that's also, how many of us are farther out in our business and we're like, "If I could only have the butterflies again. If I could only feel that feeling, whether it's a relationship or a business, the newness." There's just something so magical about that time, so good, yes.

Robert: And we get to create that. It really is available to us any time.

Tobi: I love that so much, love it. So let's talk about this idea because one of the things you said when we were chatting before we started today is you said, "One of the things that I loved about you, Tobi, when I looked at your site and your social and the other things is that you're a creative but you're also not afraid to use your voice. And I think that what you're talking about was storytelling and this whole idea of helping people step into who they are really is about using your voice. So tell us about that.

A lot of people probably aren't doing it so what does that look like? And then how do you start moving into this place of storytelling and sharing your voice and your authenticity?

Robert: It starts exactly with that, authenticity. And when I went on to your website I knew exactly who you were. It is so colorful. It's so bold. And I always encourage folks to sit into the truth of who you are because if you

Ep #254: The Power of New Dreams and Telling Your Story with Robert Hartwell

come to your website and that repels people or they're like, "Whoa, this person is too much." Listen, I would rather you not put your email on my newsletter because you're not my people and that's okay. And so when I went to your site and I saw the mastermind and I saw the testimonials of the women that have gone through your mastermind.

And I saw, Gail, the interior designer, her on your website I'm like, "Oh my God, I love Gail's work." I just saw her in House Beautiful this past month. And it just made me go, "This is what it's about." It's about telling stories and it's also about doing it in an equitable way. For instance, if I were an agent or I were preparing to get people together for an event and I went to your site I would absolutely lean forward in wanting to bring you in because in your bio not only do you talk about your accomplishments but you also talk about your work in the DEI space.

And your work and wanting to make this industry, especially the interior industry which has excluded for so long, make it more equitable, to make it more fair, to allow other voices to be at the table. That just really excited me. And so when it comes to using your voice I think the first thing is sitting in your truth. I tell our clients at Strength on Stages all the time, "Don't bring your representative, bring you." I think people come into the space and you tell the story that you think people want to hear. And we can read through that BS so quickly.

No, but it's real because we sat at home for two and a half years and the only thing we could do safely was watch and listen to stories from the comfort and the 'safety' of our homes. So because of that, I think we're so attuned now to authentic storytelling and you can feel it and you can see it in just a much more clear way now. And so around using your voice I have to say it is about being authentic and being true to you. And then when you do it the other person on the other side gets excited. I have been excited to talk with you because I went to your space and felt, oh my gosh, I know what this person stands for.

Ep #254: The Power of New Dreams and Telling Your Story with Robert Hartwell

I know what this person likes and it allows you to then see if that's a match or not. And luckily for us, it's a match.

Tobi: Well, the good news is it took us a year and a half to build that website and it's only been up for six weeks. So I love that you never went to the site, not that it would have hurt anything but you would have had a completely different experience because we have spent so much time in this last couple of years really leaning into my voice, our voice as a company, who we are. And so it's such a delight to hear that it did exactly what we wanted it to do. And I think that's exactly what you're talking about. That's exactly what you're saying.

You can have something that is what everybody wants to hear, they think as far as whatever your craft is, interior design or Broadway, actor, or anything else. But that's not going to really connect with people. That's not going to light them up, good or bad. But I see so many creatives especially afraid of being transparent about their values and their beliefs and their politics and their everything because I think we come from this long history of don't talk about religion and politics, money or anything that could offend someone.

But we're in a completely different world now. We're in a completely different time. And I think you probably agree with me that if you're not able to kind of surmise what people stand for and what their values are when you go check them out anymore, you could just move on. You're just like, "Yeah, [crosstalk]." But there's nothing that's connecting with me there. So when people start to use their voices even when they're afraid, what are some of the things that you suggest that they can get started practicing being seen and being heard and showing up with.

You don't have to immediately start with antiracism or politics, I'm now very comfortable talking about to start telling your story or having your voice start to be seen, heard, right?

Ep #254: The Power of New Dreams and Telling Your Story with Robert Hartwell

Robert: Yes. Okay. I first want to ask if we can go back to the website because there's something I think really special to pull out and I'm sure you get this when you're working with your clients, especially in your mastermind. And I definitely feel this with our women at Strength on Stages is the idea of time. And everyone wants to see the peak of the iceberg but what about the work beneath? And you said that that website took a year and a half. And you also said, "And it did exactly what we intended to do."

Intention takes time. Time ends up getting results. I go on a lot of podcast interviews and there are some that I get real nervous right before because I'm like, "Oh my gosh, I wasn't able to really learn about this person." But I was from your site and so I first want to encourage people to take their time with the process. And that none of the work that will last and none of the work I think that will get the conversion that you're looking for is going to be done in a microwave. It is going to be done in a crockpot, slow cooker, all the flavors, really taking your time.

And then when you do you get this beautiful experience for the people that you're hoping to serve whether they are your podcast guests or whether they are your future mastermind. And so I would say the first thing around using your voice is taking your time and then also knowing who you are and sharing it. Because it's just going to magnetize the right people towards you. And I am definitely a person that believes there are people for you and there are people against you and that is okay.

But I would rather draw in all the people that are for me, not that I do not have people at my table that we may have different views on the world. However, our value system around making sure we're not excluding people and making sure that we are protecting all people. That has to be congruent, if that's not...

Tobi: It doesn't work.

Ep #254: The Power of New Dreams and Telling Your Story with Robert Hartwell

Robert: Yeah, just pick rocks, blessings to you on your path. I wish you nothing but the best but life is too short to be doing it with folks that don't have values that align with you. And vice versa, if we believe different things that's fine, you probably want to create with someone that believes what you believe and how you see the world. That's great, go find that. But you shared, around the idea of using your voice, what do people start with? I would start with sharing your truth. Truly share your truth.

Write a mission statement for your company that really speaks to who you are, why you're there and who you serve because it really becomes I think that north star that you can constantly go back to when you are having that entrepreneurial moment of I'm going to create a new program. Okay, amazing. Does it align with the values in your mission statement and really align with who you say you're serving? And does it help amplify that thing?

And I'd say the second thing when it comes to using your voice and really figuring out what story to tell, I always like to reverse engineer by figuring out what do I want the person on the other end to do, what is the action that I want someone to take? If I'm telling a story it's always one in service of other people. And so I ask our women all of the time, I'm like, "Okay, great, do you want someone to join your email list? Do you want someone to leave a marriage that no longer serves them? Do you want someone to put out a \$25,000 consulting ask? What is it?"

And then once we know that we can then reverse engineer the story from there. If we don't know where we're going and what we're asking of our people then we're just talking.

Tobi: Right, yeah. Well, and one of the things that I'm hearing because it's so interesting, you gave a few examples. You're like, "Do you want someone to leave their marriage that's not serving them or supporting, or that's harming them or whatever?" That's one thing. That's a wish for the people you're helping. Or do you want them to invest in you at some level?

Ep #254: The Power of New Dreams and Telling Your Story with Robert Hartwell

And so there are different results there but I want you to help us specifically with the one that has to do with selling.

Because I think people get real funny and nervous and they have some beliefs around selling, I'm not a good salesperson, I hate selling. It's uncomfortable. But when I hear you talk you're not saying do this one, two, three hard pitch thing. You're saying, just talk about your story. Tell people who you are. So can you help us understand a little bit how if we're willing to embrace our truth and know who we really are and then we're willing to talk about it, how does that make that whole process of selling what we do to other people easier?

Can that mitigate all of that ickiness that we hate about selling if we're willing to just be seen and tell our stories?

Robert: If you're willing, to tell the truth, yes. Because if you're willing to tell the truth you are going to have a testimony. So I'm listening to you and you're talking about this idea of selling a program, selling something from the stage and asking someone to say yes to it on the other end. And so I immediately go to the first time that I wanted to go on one of Susan Hyatt's retreats. And I was so shook by the price. I mean shook. I was like, "Oh my gosh." I was like, "Lord have mercy. How am I going to do this?" I was so shook.

But it was in that moment that I realized that I had imposter syndrome around worthiness and around what an investment in self-discovery actually cost. And so I would love to tell that story of that moment, even having a successful business at that time of telling the story of seeing that sales page, what I learned then from saying yes to that retreat. I would not have the life nor the business that I have right now had I not made that investment. So sometimes talking around where you have been and what you've struggled with.

Ep #254: The Power of New Dreams and Telling Your Story with Robert Hartwell

And actually, being real about it. Because then it shows people without beating them over the head of the idea of here's someone that I admire, and I look up to and they've been exactly where I am. And so they made an investment, they made a leap which was uncomfortable, which made them want to just jump out of their skin but they jumped into the discomfort. And look where they are now and look where I am. I have that same opportunity that he had when he was looking at that sales page. It may just be a different program on this person's page right now than what I was looking at. And so I think that's where I would start.

Tobi: So where do you think, do you see most people being afraid, to tell the truth? Is it they're trying to present themselves as perfect and they have it all together and they know it all, is it that? Or is it they just want to keep, almost like church and state, business and real life are separate, or are both of those a problem? Where do you see this issue for most of the people that you work with not being willing to kind of fully be vulnerable and telling the truth?

Robert: Yeah, Tobi, that's good. It's always when they get into their life coach language. And they start when it gets very, and I love flowers but when it is all peonies and daffodils and coming into our truth and I'm like, "What is the story? What happens?" I want you to when it starts going there I'm like, "Okay, alright, what happened? Truly, what happened?" Or when it's not specific, someone will say, "I was in a job that really did not value me." Okay, great, many of us have been in jobs that have not valued us.

But I want to hear about that moment that CEO said x, y and z about you and what was that breaking moment? And I think that there's a way to tell stories that, one, protect you and protect whoever is involved in the story with you. But to really talk through the details around what happened so that we're not in this Lala land of story, but it is specific and it's pointed. Because when it's specific and it's pointed people can then find themselves in the story. But it's just like you know when you go on Facebook and somebody's given you that vague book post.

Ep #254: The Power of New Dreams and Telling Your Story with Robert Hartwell

And you're like, "Okay, what's happening here?" But when someone gets to the point and really talks about that breaking point moment and what happened and the discovery that they made you immediately have empathy. You immediately lean in. You immediately want to know more. You immediately are invested. And so I think that's kind of the hardest thing for our clients to realize and find is what's the specific thing that happened? Because the more specific we get I think the more powerful.

Tobi: Right. But we're afraid that someone will judge us or that will think we did something wrong. And I think, what happens with this whole idea of – we've seen the influencer sort of phenomenon. And then we saw cancel culture. And then we saw everything that happened, George Floyd and election time and it felt really scary I think for people. What advice do you have for people of taking the risk of being seen, and what if they get negative feedback or what if they, not what if when they get negative feedback, how does that play out?

Because if you're going to be vulnerable enough to really create success with your voice, you're always taking a risk that somebody's going to say something negative or not like it or like you said, even just repelling people which to me is one of the things you're supposed to be doing. But a lot of people don't like repelling people. They want everybody to like them. So how do you manage that discomfort and fear around the response?

Robert: That is the cost of being an entrepreneur. That is the cost of being of service to other people. If you are going to step out and tell your truth, there's a risk there. And we just have to get comfortable with people hating us, period. That is just what's going to happen. It does not matter what story you tell, when you come out and you share the truth, someone's going to love you for it. Someone's going to be healed for it. Someone's going to hate you for it. Somebody's going to think you're lying. Somebody is going to trash you. Somebody is going to bolster you up.

Ep #254: The Power of New Dreams and Telling Your Story with Robert Hartwell

I mean that's just what happens. So I have experienced that even in my own life. When my post went viral two years ago around buying my home there were so many people that celebrated that moment. So many people that came for me, so many people that were hateful. But it's like did you do your job? Did you tell the truth? Did you tell your story? That's all you can rest your head on.

Tobi: Yeah. And if you tell the truth there's nothing else for them to use against you. You've already told it yourself. You're like, "Here's the deal. Here's the story. Here's who I am. Here's what I did." It's not like there are skeletons in the closet because you're willing to stand in that space and be completely honest about whatever the scenario is.

Robert: And also being okay to move forward without addressing them. My publicist, Yvette always says, she's like, "Listen, where you put your light is where attention goes. Why wouldn't you spend your energy and your day to the 2% of people that have made your business their business for the day?" That is nonsensical. Go shine your light on the folks that see you for who you know you are. And so for anybody that's listening right now that's like, "But I got, came for." Good, that means you're doing something right.

That means that you're actually telling a story that's worthy of I think being told. It's going to come with some backlash, that's just the nature of what we do.

Tobi: Yeah, totally, that's so interesting too. It's just the truth, speaking of telling the truth, it just is. You're just not going to be liked by everybody. In fact you're going to be disliked probably by more people potentially in the world than you resonate with but that's the whole point of like you said earlier, weaning out the ones that you know are not a fit or they know they're not a fit. So you can find that group that is perfectly aligned with you. So good.

Ep #254: The Power of New Dreams and Telling Your Story with Robert Hartwell

So as people are starting to think about this, not afraid to use their voice, being willing to be multi-passionate, try new things, evolve their business, use their skills in ways they hadn't thought of, are there some other things you would like people to know, either tips or ideas or things they should keep in mind? Because I think so many people have all the ideas. Like you said, they're there, the idea comes but they're just letting them slip away and go to somebody else because of all these things that are stopping them from showing up.

So how do we get these people off high center and being willing to grab that idea and go for it?

Robert: Get yourself in a mastermind. Get yourself with a coach, period. If you want to harness your mental wellness you find a therapist. If you want to find ways to eat in a new way maybe you hire a chef. If you want to harness your business ideas or your business acceleration, hire a coach that gets peopled results. I think we always want to talk about the reward of entrepreneurship but we don't want to talk about the education and the risk that also is needed.

It takes money to make money and I am baffled by folks who want to run six and seven and multi-seven-figure businesses that won't get themselves into a coaching program. You can't just cobble together people's freebies and their webinars and think that it's going to happen. And here's the thing, maybe it will and I so want to know what did you do, please email me and let me know what the secret was. But I have found that any time that I have an idea it accelerates when I am in someone's coaching program or when I have wise counsel.

And my director of operations and I, Dallin, we've recently maybe a couple of months ago made a Slack channel just called Parking Lot. And when we have all of these ideas, whether it be on the weekend or in the middle of the night, we write them out and we put them into the Slack channel. So they have an opportunity to be birthed and to live there. And when we have

Ep #254: The Power of New Dreams and Telling Your Story with Robert Hartwell

space in the calendar if there is a day of creation we'll go in and say, "Okay, hey, what do we think out of these things in the Parking Lot is going to move the needle for the most?"

But again it takes counsel to be able to even know what those needle movers are in your business. And what metrics you want to and/or need to be moving in your business at the right time. So I would say for everyone, make sure that you're working with someone.

Tobi: Yeah. And we give such a strong message, especially in America and American dream and bootstrapping and be an individualist. This theme keeps coming back in my life recently over and over again that I was just taught for so long to just go do it myself. But what really works is the collaboration and the connection and the counsel, like you said, being in relationship with other people. And so for all the people that are sitting out there by themselves right now going, "Well, I don't know why I can't move things forward." That's what you're saying.

You need, whether it's hiring a coach, getting in a mastermind, having accountability, or a buddy, a person on your team. You've got to have somebody that you're really in a relationship with to help you even bounce the ideas off or to bolster you when you're afraid or all the things, right?

Robert: Absolutely. It's so beautiful actually. My mom recently last year joined a mastermind for the first time, and to see how her life has changed in the last year from finding community and really finding folks. And really like you just said, Tobi, having people to bounce things off of but also an inner circle of people to be inspired by their work as well. To see what's working and what's not working because we do not have to be out here alone, period.

Tobi: So good, yes. Well, I love that about your mom. I have an adorable mom too and she's worked with me on various things for years. She and I are just about to start a new little company doing short-term rental

Ep #254: The Power of New Dreams and Telling Your Story with Robert Hartwell

properties, little Airbnb. And she's 74 and I'm like, "I love that we're starting a new business as literally, partners at this age." But it's because of this very thing like you're talking about of just staying in community and believing things are possible.

And if you're all by yourself somewhere you're going to probably err on the side of talking yourself out of ideas instead of talking yourself into the ideas, right?

Robert: Correct.

Tobi: Yeah, so good. Well, before we wrap up, what about all the people who are like, "I feel like I'm totally authentically myself but the thought of speaking from a stage or being on an Instagram Live or even on a podcast is so terrifying to me, I hate my voice. I don't like the way I look. I'm afraid to be seen." How do we get people being willing to share their story if they're just really afraid of that whole process and the discomfort of truly stepping foot in those places where they're going to be seen?

Robert: Go back to that mission statement and really see who it is that you serve. And when you see that you will realize that this opportunity in front of you is bigger than your fear, is bigger than your discomfort and that those things are actually fuel to help propel you into giving that keynote, into putting in that TEDx application, into doing that Instagram or Facebook Live.

There's a client that we worked with a few weeks ago, her name is Schnell. And she has a program, she's creating a program right now for young people to have the resources to share abuse that has happened in their life. And it was a story that obviously is very sensitive in nature and was very hard for her to pull together. And the thing we kept coming back to was we have an opportunity to see the eyes of these little ones right now, getting these resources in their hands.

Ep #254: The Power of New Dreams and Telling Your Story with Robert Hartwell

And when you use your courage and share this it's one step closer to resources that so many of us wish that we had when we were younger people. And so in that moment, it becomes less about self and more about service and more about the people on the other side. And when you see that you start to fight for the mission and you start to fight for the people and where you are, takes another seat I will say. The fear doesn't go away. But when you start to see that your story is actually giving life to other people, there are no words.

Tobi: Nothing like it. Yeah, that's a whole other level of fulfillment. I agree so much. I've had the same experience and I would say that lot of the joy that I think is missing from a lot of people's businesses is on the other side of them doing exactly what you just described. Because when you can be a vehicle, a catalyst, play a part or a role in something bigger than you. I mean wow, that's when truly game-changing, life-changing, fulfilling joyful things come into your business and your life. So good. Amazing.

Okay, so if people want to find you, they want to read the story which I do recommend they read the story about your house that you bought. And I saw recently, you made a post and you were like, "Okay, it's not done and it's still hard. And it's expensive and it's all the things." But a lot of my audience would love following that and I'm sure a lot of people would just love to follow you more and get to know about your programs. So where are the best places for them to find all the wonderful Robert moments and ideas and all the things?

Robert: I love that, Tobi. I would say at strengthenstages.com and there you can also find me on Instagram which is [@sirrobotakespics](https://www.instagram.com/sirroberttakespics). And I have a newsletter. And I also sit from my desk and talk about all things renovation, all things storytelling, all things life in New York City and being an entrepreneur and the trials and the tribulations and the joy.

Tobi: I love it so much and the funny thing is, is a lot of the people listening are creatives, a lot are interior designers or other types of creatives. And

Ep #254: The Power of New Dreams and Telling Your Story with Robert Hartwell

they're going to go show up and see, he's not even doing design for a living and he's showing up more about his renovation than I'm even talking about my clients. There's something wrong here but if he can do it I can do it. He just goes on and shares.

Robert: I love that, thank you, Tobi.

Tobi: So good, so much fun. Well, I loved our conversation, you're just everything I expected you to be, delightful, happy, fun. And we definitely have to do this again. We've got to do this again.

Robert: I would love that. I would love that. And congratulations on everything in your company, it's really beautiful to see what you're doing truly.

Tobi: Well, thank you so much. I mean you really have no idea how much that means because there are not a lot of people that didn't know me before that I've encountered, I've gotten to give this kind of feedback. So that was so fun, so thank you for that as well. And I'm glad it was the perfect example of really kind of supporting the work you do as well, of helping people step into who they are. So it was just right there waiting for you.

Robert: I love it. Thank you.

Tobi: So fun. See you soon.

Robert: Bye, Tobi.

Okay, friends, so if you're ready to dream big and you need help think about joining us in *Design You*. That is our coaching program for interior designers and creatives and we help you renovate your business, get out of your own way and really create the business you dream of. Not the one

Ep #254: The Power of New Dreams and Telling Your Story with Robert Hartwell

that you may have, that might feel like a chore, that might feel like drudgery, that might feel hard but the one you really dream of.

So to have our help in Design You, go to tobifairley.com/designyou or DM me on Instagram if you want to know more. And I hope you're out there dreaming big. I'll see you back next week with another great episode of *The Design You Podcast*, bye for now.

Thank you so much for listening to *The Design You Podcast*, and if you are ready to dig deep and do the important work we talk about here on the podcast of transforming your mindset and creating a scalable online business model, there has never been a more important time than right now. So, join me and the incredible creative entrepreneurs in my Design You coaching program today. You can get all the details at TobiFairley.com.