

## Ep #268: The Power of Personal Style with Elsa Isaac



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**Tobi Fairley**

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## Ep #268: The Power of Personal Style with Elsa Isaac

You are listening to *The Design You Podcast* with Tobi Fairley, episode number 268.

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

Hi, friends, I hope you are ready to think all about fashion and style and apparel and all the things and maybe even a few things you're not usually excited to think about like your body and how you express yourself through your body and your clothing. But today is not only a treat for you, it is a treat for me because I have one of my favorite human beings on the show today, my friend Elsa Isaac. And she is a New York City based fashion and image stylist. And she believes style is really about self-expression which I love so much.

And she has helped me elevate my style starting with a brand photoshoot a couple of years ago and now it's been this two year process of curating and elevating my style and my brand through my wardrobe. And we're going to talk all about that today. So get ready to have your mind blown, to get excited, to dream big about what's possible for you and the way you present yourself because Elsa is unbelievable. She has over 20 years of experience in the fashion industry.

She is East African born and she has the most noteworthy portfolio you can imagine, including Lenny Kravitz, Katie Couric, Rachel Rodgers who I've watched her just elevate in every way with her style and that has been so fun to watch. And she does all kinds of work from custom styling with you like we talk about on the show, to some other fun things she helps people do like photoshoots. So get ready because this woman is a powerhouse. You are going to be so happy you know her. So I'm going to be quiet and let you hear my fabulous and fun conversation with the amazing Elsa Isaac.

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Tobi: Hey, Elsa, welcome to *The Design You Podcast*. This one is a real treat for me because you're one of my favorites, so welcome.

Elsa: Me, I feel the same way about you and your little family. Thank you for having me. I feel like we've only met once but it feels like I've known you for a long time.

Tobi: I know, isn't that weird? But yeah, we met once except you spent three days with me in my house every moment with my family, with my child, with my team, with our clients, with everybody. So speaking of that, why don't you tell everybody listening who you are, what you do, what we're even talking about. And we're going to get into some really exciting fun conversations today.

Elsa: Yes. So I'm Elsa Isaac. I am a wardrobe stylist for women professionals and entrepreneurs. I got my start 20 years ago by accident and I feel like I went from the commercial world working in the land of photoshoots for fashion magazines and corporate companies, commercials, things like that. And didn't feel fulfilled. And now I get to help women really own who they are from the inside out and show up in the truest, boldest version of who they are. So that they can focus on the work that they are putting out in the world.

And so that enough of the people who need what they do, or need what they offer can really connect with them instantly and get to it sooner.

Tobi: I love that so much. Well, I had been following you for a while before I reached out to you because I don't remember who I first saw you from. I feel like it was when you styled Marie Forleo for her book cover or something, some big name and I was following. I'm pretty sure it was her and she was talking about you and I was like, "Who is this woman? And this is fabulous looking." And so I started following you for a while. And then I came to a point a couple of years ago when we were ready to rebrand.

I did a huge photoshoot and bringing in some clients and our team and I was like, "Okay, we're taking this whole thing up a whole other level." And

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I've always felt pretty confident picking out my own clothes and knowing how to dress my body. But there was just something different. It is just a different experience to have a professional elevate your style because she'd take risks you wouldn't take. Even just confirm things that you would do which was so much fun. So let's talk about that.

Tell me a little bit about what your experience has been with the people you've worked with in that exact way. What's the difference? What is the power of you styling people that they didn't even know was possible before that happened?

Elsa: The fact that I am not in their bodies and I don't have the history that they have with their bodies. And so I think for all of us, I think I am my hardest person to style. It's hard for me to style myself. And I can see it for you easily. I can see it for others easily because I see the possibilities without the history of the mind chatter that often takes over, you can't pull this off, this is too much. This is not for you.

And so I think I offer the perspective of a fresh new set of eyes and the really endless possibilities that you haven't been able to get to because you're busy worrying about a million and one other things. But also because you've evolved. I think we evolve a lot faster than we sometimes realize. And usually when my clients come to me, there is a disconnect. They feel like they're this other person but how they see themselves on the outside hasn't fully caught up to that and they're misaligned, yeah.

Tobi: Absolutely. Yeah, that makes so much sense. I think that's so true and it happens all the time. It happens every few years, you've grown again and you haven't brought your mindset or your kind of identity up in alignment with who you've become. Yeah, that's so true, I love that. Yeah, that's amazing. And one of the things that I noticed, well, a couple of things. First let's just kind of talk about what the process is like because let's set the stage for people.

I mean everybody listening or most people listening to this are going to be creatives or people who work in an adjacent field to fashion like design and

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they're all about details and that sort of thing. But I think also a lot of times, like you said, not only are we doing a million other things, we kind of just get in the habit of being the workhouse and not being the talent or the person in front of the camera. A lot of times we're behind the camera, especially in interior design.

So let's talk about what even happens and I'll share some of my experiences but from your perspective how do you describe the process? When someone comes to you and says, "Okay, make me, me, but better. Help me stretch my boundaries, fix me up." What happens when they reach out to you?

Elsa: My whole philosophy around how I work with clients is to shift the focus from outside sources of influence to internal. So to refocus it back on you. And I think that's because no one really teaches us how to get dressed or how to dress our bodies specifically. And I think I want to empower my clients and anyone listening to realize that it starts and ends, this whole style, personal style journey starts and ends with you. So what's your body shape? Who are you in this moment, not five years ago, not 10 years ago, not two years ago but in this moment?

And what are you drawn to? I have clients create a Pinterest board, curate a Pinterest board because sometimes we don't fit in a category. Maybe you're not bohemian, maybe you're not edgy, maybe you're not rock. But there's no real distinct category and images fill the gaps where sometimes words just aren't enough. And so curating a board without filter, without any, I don't know if I can do this, is this for me? Without any of that, just what are you drawn to on a visceral level and start to pin images and curate kind of this well of inspiration that kind of guides you.

So when you're in a store you're not left like oh my God, I don't even know where to start. You at least have curated this collection of images that will guide you towards what to experiment with. It may or may not work, that's okay, but at least you have some direction.

Tobi: I love that, yeah.

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Elsa: And then the last thing is I always have my clients come up and I know you did this, three words that describe how you want your clothes to make you feel. Again, all about you, not a trend, not a designer, not anything like that, not a mannequin in a store which I know really comes in clutch I think sometimes for us when shopping. But let's focus on how you want to feel in these clothes because at the end of the day people do business with you as the face of the brand, as the creator, as the creative.

And I think sometimes we think that people just want our work but they actually connect with us as a human being first and that kind of is part of why it's important for you to stand in your light.

Tobi: Yeah, I love that. So when I was doing this process it was so fun. And I even had sort of the added layer of doing the brand photoshoot and knowing what I wanted the website to look like. And so I had this vision that maybe, it's interesting, I don't know if I would have had you just styling me for say a speaking engagement. I'm not sure I would have tapped into quite the same level of who I wanted to be because it was truly this whole connect the dots between the website and my social media and how I show up and how I look and what people expect of me.

And it's funny, I noticed that my work is so colorful but oftentimes I would not dress in color and then people would be really disappointed if I would come to a speaking engagement in a black outfit or something. They're like, "Wait, no, this is not okay." So it really helped me because like you said, we have so many stories and I'm like, "Well, black makes you look slimmer and too much pattern is going to amplify all the places I don't want to amplify." And none of that was true.

So I let myself just be free and pin all these pictures and dreamy things of me in hot pink suits and color blocking and all of this stuff that I would do in a room and then I left it to you to help me come back and say, "No, this actually will work for you." And it was so fun to watch the process because you have to let go and you have to trust for somebody else to do this for you. And you were like, "Okay, do not start editing the cart, just order all the



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things because if you start editing some stuff, I'm not going to have what I need and you can't even imagine yet what it's going to look like."

So there is a big trust thing because you look at what's in the cart that you're going to order, knowing you can send some stuff back but part of you is like, "Is she serious? I cannot wear that." And then you have us put on and we were like, "Damn, that looks really good. How did she know that?" So it was so creative, it was so freeing. And what I really came away from it in a lot of ways, I learned so much for my day-to-day dressing.

Because you would combine things like a shoe with a belt or a pattern with a pattern that I would have never done on my clothes but I would do all day and every day in a room. And I hadn't been able to see the connection or the throughline for that.

Elsa: Isn't that crazy? Because I walked into your home and I was like, "This makes complete sense. This is Tobi." And I know it's hard. This is a very personal process, I recognize that. And one of the things that I think makes me really good at what I do is that I'm so empathetic. I really tap into that because I even do this. I think part of the reason why I kind of fell into styling was because I probably needed it for myself. And feeling like I'm behind the scenes person but I'm actually, even as an interior designer, we do things behind.

It's the house and the work that I do will speak for me but at the end of the day it's your magic that is different from the next interior designer. And so I felt like, obviously I had been familiar with your brand and I was like, "She's going to be easy, this is going to be." And I will say, cameras are tricky, what you wear in real life doesn't translate to camera. And so that is also what is really hard to do in terms of translation because how you show up in your day-to-day world, you've got to kind up the ante and consider specific things in clothing that do make a difference in how you photograph on the camera.

Tobi: Yeah, which I can understand too because there's so many times that you're looking at something in a room and the eye can pick it all up and it

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makes sense but on camera it looks busy or weird or sometimes we'll even photograph things, a chair, looking through the lens it looks like it's two feet from the table but it's actually pulled right up to the edge of it because the camera distorts things and changes things. And it's about kind of the form and the silhouette and all of those things and so it makes so much sense to me knowing that your eye is trained for whatever it is.

I mean are we going on stage or are we going behind a camera or on camera for a website? What are we using this for? And sometimes things can go both places I'm sure. But you know what you're looking for, that we just haven't trained our eye to know that. It's kind of like to me when interior designers think that they would automatically be good at graphic design or they should be great at styling themselves. I mean because they're similar but we forget the 10,000 hours that somebody else has put into the process of figuring out what works that we haven't done.

Elsa: Yes. And another similar thing that I kind of get frustrated about is when people hire one person to do hair and makeup. And I'm always like, "Those are two very different skill sets." And so I think it's like there are some people that really can do a couple.

Tobi: Can do both, yeah.

Elsa: Yeah, they can do a couple of things, both things really well. But it's really, really rare and like you said, that 10,000 hours, that's what we want. We want someone who can come in and just instantly be able to provide their expertise so that it all comes together. And I think one of the things I really appreciated about the shoot that you did was you really went in and hired experts in so many different, really in every aspect of that shoot. And I can't tell you, I'm trying to think, I can't tell you the last time I was on a shoot like that.

Tobi: Well, and it was terrifying because like you're saying, I had changed a lot of things too. My photographer I'd been working with for 20 years had retired. And she was really an interiors photographer anyway, so I had stretched myself and hired a photographer that my web designer had



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introduced me to that does brand shoots which was so fun. And then she brought in a videographer and I brought in a stylist to help. I got a room stylist to just be looking because I couldn't be looking at the room when I was on the camera.

We had you, I mean we had a huge crew there. But the results were off the charts, so good, so good. So when people are listening and they're like, "Okay, it's fine but maybe I'm not going to do a huge brand photoshoot like Tobi or whatever maybe, or I'll do a smaller thing or I'm going to speak here or there." What do they need to hear that's going to help them understand that this is different than what they can do on their own? Why invest in this? How does this really amplify you, your brand, your persona, connect you with your audience? Talk to us about that a little bit.

Elsa: I think it's really about showing up. I think most of the clients, when I'm doing the discovery calls with them, that initial call, we're talking about what has been happening, what was the catalyst for them to get on this call with me. And oftentimes it's about I just don't feel like me. I don't feel like I am the person that I know I worked hard to become all these years. But there's a disconnect.

And I find myself really not putting myself in rooms that I want to be in but feel like I don't have anything to wear so I'm just not going to go and that's tragic to me. Because here is this brilliant human being who has been in the trenches and really been creating a career or a business for themselves for years. And because there's just this one area of misalignment makes them feel like they are not worthy of being in a room with their peers.

And even shying away from opportunities, saying yes to an interview that just kind of gives them more publicity or puts them in front of an audience that would just kind of boost their business. And I find that a lot of these clients of mine are sitting out in many ways because they don't feel confident. And I think it's an energetic shift. At the end of the day if you feel not comfortable in your body that resonates. That comes across in everything that you do.

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Whereas you show up for a speaking gig completely owning that stage and owning your body and how you feel in your body and that then resonates with the message that you're delivering. I think the reality is that when, it almost feels like they're faking it. It's like there's a fake version of themselves. I call it their fake representative they keep putting out there because they just don't know how to make the pieces fit. And that's what I can help you do.

Tobi: Well, and that's reminding me, so when you came it was, so not quite two years ago that we did the big branch photoshoot. That's hard to believe it's already been that long. But it was right on the, well, still in COVID but getting to the point that we could open it back up a little bit but I had forgotten this until just now. So I'd gained weight like a lot of people did during COVID. And normally for something like this I would think I'm not going to show up. I'm not going to spend this much money unless I'm at my skinniest and my most perfect.

And I would go into this whole old pattern of diet mentality everything. And I decided not to do that this time, which was kind of mind boggling to look back on it, because not only was I spending more money than I'd ever spent on all of the people we talked about that I was bringing in. And I was going to put out this whole brand. I had just decided to just, I was about to be 50 at the time, but over 51 now. And I was like, "I'm just going to own who I am finally", for the first time.

And when I look at the transformation in me by putting out those photos of me looking like a million bucks but probably being maybe one of the heaviest I'd ever been when I put myself in a professional photo and feeling so good about myself. And feeling like I was just, I was beautiful and curvy and normal and a human being. And there was a whole other level of just owning and not apologizing for who I was.

And then the response that I got from so many people in the world because you kind of hold your breath and you're like, everybody's going to be like, "She's really packed on the pounds", or something. And maybe some people did, who knows? But the response from the people who were the

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opposite of that and who felt so, I think, empowered themselves to just be really who you are and show that I don't have to be what I think is the perfect version of me that wear all kinds of exciting things.

And there's brands out there that dress all sizes of bodies and it was completely transformational to me as a human being, maybe one of the pivotal moments in my life. And it was culminating with me turning 50 and everything else. But a lot of it was how you helped me show up and own all of those clothes like they were made for me. And the confidence was just off the charts.

Elsa: Yeah. And I will say, I feel like I remember how, a stylist isn't meant to be your crutch forever. I think what you were able to do even after because I remember you were saying, "I think I'm going to get this thing and I'm going to pair it with this." And you were texting me these ideas that spawned from our work together. And that is the difference because now you have these templates. You have these templates of the outfits we created together and you knew what was possible.

And then you could take that even further because now there was no limits really. And I think at the end of the day too it does take time, that first initial shop that we did together took a lot of time because I was casting the net a bit more wide, very targeted but wide so that we had enough options to play with.

And then what I hope you walk away with, my goal is to leave you with brands and silhouettes and templates of looks that you can now take and either duplicate in different ways and go to stores and go to brands that you can start at. So that eliminates so much of the overwhelm of where do I even start.

Tobi: Totally. Well, it's interesting, I had always just kind of, I'd wait until the somewhat last minute before I needed to dress in the past. And even though I shopped for a lot of things online I would go to one or two stores locally which I do still love shopping locally. But I'd just go in and have them help me find something right before I needed it. And now I've really noticed,

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even just the experience of you showing me, just get on, order all these things, just try them all.

When your brain's like, I don't know about that, put it in the cart, bring it in, try it on in your house with your things, with your shoes, with your stuff. I'm just so much more prone now to just try, I'm always just bringing things in. And sometimes I send everything back but sometimes I'll pick a piece or two or a belt or a thing because you taught me to just be comfortable going, "Let's just get it here and see. Let's just try it." Which was so fun.

Elsa: You just mentioned two things that I hadn't touched on, I love. Yes, this is the most efficient way right now. And I know that locally it's always good to support locally, but from an efficiency standpoint, right now stores are still, brick and mortar stores are really still trying to get back to pre-COVID inventory times. And so there is still a gap. They won't have all the sizing available on hand. They won't have a lot of selection, especially in these non-major city towns.

So even New York, Saks, Fifth Avenue which is a 10, 11 floor department store, still when I bring clients there, I haven't brought clients there for a while because of this. We have to order that size in or we have to order that garment in. And that just kind of kills the experience. So it is about how can you make this easy for yourself and right now online shopping is the most efficient way. Make sure everything is returnable but buying a bunch of options at a time and like you said, trying it on in your own lighting, surrounded by your own accessories.

And there's no time pressure, as opposed to being in a fitting room and feeling like someone needs the room, I guess I've got to hurry up. You have 15, 20, 30 days depending on the store, maybe even a year like Nordstrom does. And then also understanding that you're going to say no, way more than you're going to say yes and that's okay.

Tobi: Yes. And it was so glamorous too because I ordered the clothing rack and we hung everything up. And we steamed it all and I felt so special and it was so glamorous and it was in my own house which felt really safe. Like

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you said, a lot of times you go into dressing rooms, they're small, they're cramped, the lighting is terrible, the mirror's weird, you don't want to go out and stand in front of people and look in the big mirror, all the things. And so there was something so intimate and so special but also super glamorous the way that I just took the time.

I was like, I'm going to order a clothing rack, I'm going to get pretty hangers. I'm going to put it all on there and I'm going to make it an experience which was really, really fun too.

Elsa: You did. And I also think we took time. You and I set aside time. When you hire a stylist, that's the difference too. And that is such a game changer. Because I think when you're backing yourself into a corner and you have limited time, you're going to make bad choices. You're going to make choices out of desperation because you need something and it's crunch time. Whereas imagine the energy shift, if you set aside two hours a month to just play in your closet.

And to put on your playlist, pour yourself your favorite drink and just play without the time pressure. That allows you to be creative and feel into what you have and be able to assess more clearly, do I even like this thing? Why is it still hanging in my closet? I think I need to get rid of it. So that eventually you're really left with key players, key garments in your closet that you really feel confident in and are excited to wear and hopefully have pre created outfits ahead of time so you don't have to rush.

Tobi: I have never felt so prepared. In the past I would always get ready for an event and think, I've got to find something for market because I'm going to have a speaking engagement. And now I just went to market, High Point furniture market for five days. I had three speaking engagements. I don't think I bought a single thing the week or two before. It was all things I had been buying along now and some of them I hadn't worn yet. But I could literally go to my closet and be like, "I haven't worn this.

And I'm going to put this skirt with this other top I got." Because I remember tying that on, it looked so fun. And it was a different kind of just peace and

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not that franticness that you always go to of what am I going to wear? It was just all there for me and I felt so supported which was a completely different experience than I've had in the past too. My closet, and of course I can add things to it too.

And if I want something special I can order it but I don't have to ever get in that panic mode that I used to get in of rushing around at 11 at night being on all the websites going, "Who can still get this here in 24 hours so I can try it on and maybe get an alteration done", or whatever. There was so much frantic pace that I always had around my wardrobe that now I just feel I'm good. My closet has me. It's all good.

Elsa: You have no idea, I'm so lit up to hear that because that's what you want. That's what you want and then you can focus on what you're going to market for and feel confident too in your wardrobe options because you've been curating it slowly over the past almost two years, [crosstalk].

And also the tailoring, you touched on it slightly but I feel like we have this unrealistic expectation of these clothes made by designers who are trying to make money. They're designed to fit as many different bodies as possible. So what does that mean? Shapeless, often less tailoring, just baggy uninspiring clothes. I'm not saying that there aren't beautiful options out there for you but it is, like I said, you're going to say no more than you're going to say yes.

And also consider saying yes to a garment that is 85% of the way there. And if the rest is fixable with tailoring, let's use that tool in our toolkit to be able to make that. It becomes a custom garment then.

Tobi: Yes, absolutely. Yeah, my mom, thankfully, always was a big fan of tailoring. We've always done that. She's always had an eye for style anyway but she's always known about that tailoring was the difference. And she's funny, she's the stylist for the family and so she's dressing me and my niece and my daughter and my dad. And there's tall and thin people, and there's curvy people and my niece is 100 pounds and super tiny and



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nothing fits her, even a zero has to be altered. And so we're just accustomed to it.

But not too long ago, I don't know, six months ago or so, Ellison one day said, "Mom, do you realize that almost nobody gets their clothes altered?" And I was like, "Yes, babe, I do." And she's like, "What in the world?" But we've just always done that even since she was little, but I think you're so right. And people think, well, I'm not going to buy a Target dress for \$30 and then pay \$50 to have it altered but I will do that all day every day because then it looks like a \$200 dress.

I mean it's still such a value and people don't understand that, they think it's a waste and it's the exact opposite of that.

Elsa: Exact opposite. And you don't even have to start with shopping outside your closet. If most of the people listening right now just went through their closet and did a closet clean out and even assess from what they have that they're not wearing, that they could spend an additional 20, 30, 40, even \$50 on a garment to make it more wearable and custom tailored to their body. It makes a world of a difference because that thing, that garment that you're not wearing, there's a reason you don't go to it.

You don't feel comfortable in it and it could be the fabric content, in which case you can't tailor that. But that's a giveaway or a consignment. But if it's a fixable, for example, for women, oftentimes button downs gap in between the buttons. And it is the easiest fix to just take it to a tailor and ask them to put hook and eyes in between those buttons so that everything lays flat and they're not showing anybody their [crosstalk].

Tobi: The girls are not out.

Elsa: The girls, exactly. Little things like that, shortening sleeves, shortening hemlines. And honestly, if you don't know, you can just, what I do when I'm looking for local tailors near my clients is I'll search both on Google and on Yelp for the best tailors and read the reviews. And usually if

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someone can alter a wedding dress or a really complicated suit then they have, people tend to have...

Tobi: Skills, yeah.

Elsa: Exactly, that's someone who knows what they're doing. But you can start by taking simpler jobs like the hook and eyes or the hems and things like that. But it really is a game changer. And I feel like women, we take it personal when things don't fit us. Men are very matter of fact. They're like, "This jacket doesn't fit, here, here, here." And they just go to the tailor and they really do utilize tailors a lot more often than we do as women and I think, isn't that crazy?

If the majority of us really empowered ourselves with tailoring our clothing, I think that in and of itself is a game changer.

Tobi: Yeah, absolutely agree. So one of the things I did want to touch on is in some of the notes when we were exchanging what we were going to talk about, something that really stood out to me. And you said, "For this to really work one of the first things you need to do is know exactly who you are. So can you speak to that a little bit too because I think it goes back a little bit to what we were talking about of maybe not owning our identity. But can we dig into it a little bit more? What does that mean? How do we get to know who we are in a way that helps us express ourselves through our clothing?"

Elsa: I touched on it earlier, when I said, "This is a question that needs to be answered, is who are you in this moment?" And I feel like this may take a while. This may take you a month or so, maybe it takes you six months. But I think it may be a journaling exercise. And maybe an experimenting with dating yourself essentially. But really I think what's important is one of the things about you Tobi, when we had our first call was we had a long conversation. And I think we touched on politics. We touched on the pandemic. We touched on so many different things.

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And that was data for me in terms of, okay, these are things that are really important to her. And you're so confident, I mean that's generally the goal regardless, but I feel for you, I remember thinking, I've got to make sure she feels 1,000% confident because just in talking to her, she's so powerful in her mission and powerful in her messages and messaging. And she's not this dimmed interior designer. She's so bold and bright that I need to, so I think understanding, what do you stand for? What brings you joy? What brings you peace? Do you like to travel?

And I think just really journaling this and really understanding that because the more you can communicate that to a stylist that you want to work with, the more aligned the shopping will be and the clothes that are chosen are going to be. Because I think we forget that this is about you. This isn't about what's trendy. This isn't about that you should be wearing high end designers because that's cool. No, this is about, you can, sure, let's do a Gucci thing and let's do a Target thing if it just so happens to be garments, two garments that make sense for you.

So I think spending time with this current version of yourself and letting go of what we often, kind of the ideal version of us that we hang on to, that it's so difficult to let go, especially when it comes to getting dressed. This is what I see when clients don't want to get rid of a garment because of, I'm determined to fit in this. Not understanding that that's gone, that version of them has evolved into this beautiful newer version of you. And I get to show them that in a lot of ways.

Tobi: Yeah, it's like a reveal. You reveal themselves to themselves, you reveal us to us in that process which is so fun. And something that you said I love because it's so true and I've been comfortable doing this somewhat for a while but I think you even gave me more confidence. We had some things that we ordered for me that were literally \$39 or \$59 for a whole dress. And then I also had an \$800 dress and a \$700 belt.

Elsa: Belt.

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Tobi: But that makes so much sense to me because again it's in a room, sometimes we can put a \$600 pillow on something and it makes all the difference in the world. But I love that it wasn't necessarily about either all affordable things or all brand name things or all logo things. You didn't have any rules other than the person, the silhouettes, the look and you could see beyond. And you have an eye for being able to say, "Does this inexpensive thing still look expensive? Is the pattern matched well? Is the construction good?"

Because there's all ranges of that but it's refreshing and it's fun that sometimes I have on something that literally my shoes and my belt cost, together cost three times more than the rest of the whole outfit. And people don't think about that being something that they would put together.

Elsa: Yeah. And nobody knows. I think the ideal and what you said is absolutely correct. I'm looking at the silhouettes. And at the end of the day we don't know for sure what's going to work until we see it in person and we see it on your body. And so I think it's like there could be an expensive thing that looks cheap and a cheap garment or a less expensive garment that looks expensive and high end. And I think especially when you invest in tailoring that garment for example, it is like you would not be able to tell.

And I think it's really just when you're shopping to understand what stores are most likely to carry the garments and silhouettes and sizing that are in alignment with you and then be on that going in and being really targeted when selecting garments within that inventory. And then you get better and better and better at it, it becomes a muscle.

Tobi: Yes. And then you have Elsa in your ear. People tell me all the time, they have Tobi in their ear, they're like, "What would Tobi do?" Whether it's my business coaching or my design. I hear you all the time in my ear. I start to get dressed and I'm going to say have on a blue dress and instead of getting a black or a nude shoe or a blue shoe, I'm like, "No, Elsa would put an orange shoe with this or a hot pink shoe or this other thing that you can't imagine with this."

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And so it stretches me to remember that you're on my shoulder pushing me to take a risk which is fun too.

Elsa: I love that. I would love to be on your shoulder daily, Tobi.

Tobi: Well, you are, you're always on my shoulder. You're always in my ear. I love this so much. Well, as we wrap up, I mean we covered a lot which is so good. And I think we're probably resonating with so many people. So where do you start? Do they call you? Do they call someone in their area? Either one, can they start any part of this themselves? How do you get started on this process of not only knowing exactly who you are but knowing what that means for your wardrobe?

Elsa: Yeah, I think the first step is to figure out the answers to those four questions I asked earlier. What's your body shape? I have a body shape calculator on my site, if you just search Elsa Isaac and body shape calculator the page will come up because it's kind of behind a wall. And then figuring out who am I today in this moment? And spending time with that. Question three, what are you drawn to now? So curating that Pinterest board. I often ask my clients to take about seven days to do this. You can have, you can do this over six months.

Coming back to it, deleting what doesn't resonate anymore and adding new pieces. And then the fourth question is, what three words describe how you want your clothes to make you feel. So that's great, they don't, obviously not everyone's going to resonate with me but whatever stylist you choose to work with, bringing that information to them is hugely helpful. That's basic. Those should be questions that they ask you as well. And also research the stylist that you want to work with.

Are they dressing their clients like mini versions of themselves? Which I think is a big red flag. Or are they seeing people for their individuality and bringing that out in them? And then yeah, on my website you can book a call, and we can have an intro call and just talk about the options. I do work with clients all over the world, I was going to say all over the country, but all

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over the world. And I am actually offering a completely done for you looks photoshoot. This is our third round called Lights Camera Looks.

Because for the people who aren't like Tobi and really created, and massively organized I should say too, photoshoot and video shoot because you have video on there.

Tobi: Yeah, we do.

Elsa: This is something that I feel like so many entrepreneurs and professionals struggle with because a photoshoot as you know is a massive undertaking. I've been doing photoshoots for 20 years and oftentimes people are piecemealing it and bringing in people here and there but not creating a cohesive vision. And so we decided to offer that option. So that literally clients of Lights Camera Looks walk in and walk out, then everything is done for them.

Tobi: That is so cool.

Elsa: Yeah, just to take that headache off because on average it takes about 200 hours to produce a successful photoshoot. And I know most people do not have 200 hours just to kind of invest in this completely new venture that most people aren't experienced in. So that's happening July 29<sup>th</sup> this year and all the information is on our website too. But yeah, there's lots of resources on the website as well.

Tobi: And following you on Instagram as well, right?

Elsa: Yeah, [elsaisaac.com](http://elsaisaac.com) I-S-A-A-C.

Tobi: Awesome. And you all, once you go down the Elsa rabbit hole you're going to be hooked. You're so good at posting. I love when you post all the time the various people that you're styling and what they're doing. And you work with all these powerhouse women all over the place, that are everything from doctors to personalities to all kinds of things, interior designers obviously. And it's really fun to watch. So definitely you're all going to get hooked when you follow Elsa on Instagram.

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And I'm sure they can DM you too if they want to reach out to get on your calendar or something if that's easier, but you're very good at responding there on your Instagram.

Elsa: I am, yeah. Tobi and I have this Instagram DM relationship that has continued.

Tobi: Which also is usually us ogling over each other's shoulder and mine's a grown human almost now and yours is the most adorable first grader but almost second grader.

Elsa: Yeah, I aspire, yes, I aspire, I just love Ellison and I love your relationship. And I was just telling you before we started recording that I just hope Ahman wants to be around me as often as Ellison wants to be around you.

Tobi: He will. I mean just keep giving him all the dinosaur stuff he could ever want and he's never leaving.

Elsa: He's moved on, Tobi, he is now...

Tobi: What are we into now, spaceships or?

Elsa: FNAF which is this whole YouTube thing that I wish he could just go back to dinosaurs, yeah, it's not good.

Tobi: Well, he is precious and you are going to see him on Elsa's Instagram too and fall in love like I did. Okay, well, this has been so fun. I knew it would be. It's like having a conversation with a bestie, so what a treat for me but thank you for being here. And I know this just already has helped so many people just from this one conversation, so thank you.

Elsa: Thank you for having me, Tobi. You're the best.

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Okay, was I right or was I right? Okay, I was for sure right. She is amazing. Check out her website if you haven't already. Check out her Instagram if you haven't already. Please reach out to Elsa or at least go and do the body shape assessment on her site, tap into her wisdom. Start following her on Instagram. She is unbelievable and you will learn so much from her as I have. And I know you're going to love her. And don't forget, we'll put it all in the show notes but don't forget about her upcoming photoshoot event that she is promoting.

I don't want to get the name wrong but it's all about lights and camera, what is it? Yeah, Lights Camera Looks. That's it. It's a one of a kind one day full service branding photoshoot experience that you may want to walk in, look like a million bucks and walk out just like Elsa said and let her handle everything else. Okay friends, I love this episode, it's definitely one I'm going to go back and relisten to myself.

I think I need to do the next level of my Pinterest board and see where my wardrobe is going next and see what excuse I have to bring Elsa back into my life again and do some more fun work with her. But in the meantime, I'll see you back here next week with another fantastic episode of *The Design You Podcast*. Bye for now.

Thanks for listening to *The Design You Podcast*, and if you're an interior designer or creative looking to uplevel your business, I have something for you. It's my Build a Better Business guide, because burnout, rampant undercharging and the feast and famine cycle are epidemic in the design industry. And there's a better way to run your business.

So head to [tobifairley.com/betterbusiness](https://tobifairley.com/betterbusiness) and get my manifesto and guide that will have you on your way to a business with more ease, more joy and more money. That's [tobifairley.com/betterbusiness](https://tobifairley.com/betterbusiness).