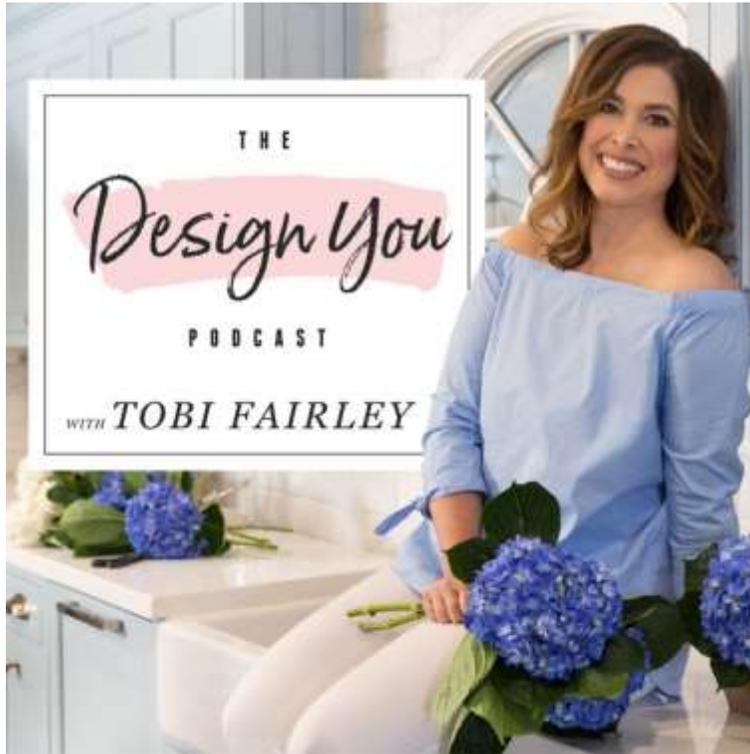


Ep #69: How to Hustle the Right Way



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Tobi Fairley

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Ep #69: How to Hustle the Right Way

You are listening to *The Design You Podcast* with Tobi Fairley, episode number 69.

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 is your host, Tobi Fairley.

Hey friends. How is your day going? And how's your week going? Heck, how's your summer going? Are you hustling this summer or if you're listening to this in the winter or the fall, are you hustling? And should you be hustling? What does that even mean to hustle? Let's talk about this topic today because it's definitely something that many of us struggle with.

Am I doing enough? Am I doing too much? And you hear so many different things out in the world. How much work or how much effort is enough? And am I doing too much? Am I working too hard? Am I getting out of balance? Am I losing sight of my priorities? It's confusing and of course we'd be confused because like so many topics in the world, whether it's nutrition or exercise or parenting or anything else, there's so many mixed signals out there.

There's so much conflicting information, so I want to talk today about hustling. Because some of the high achievers that I follow and you probably follow say it's all about the hustle, right? And others say the hustle is the fast track to burnout. So which is it? Well, I've tried both hustling a whole, whole lot, and I've tried less hustle.

And today I will tell you my take on this concept and I'll tell you where I still struggle with this and I'll tell you how you can learn which path is right for you and even if a little more hustle in your life could be a good thing. So hustling, what is hustling?

Well, one definition of to hustle is to proceed rapidly or hurriedly. A hustle used to mean something negative. We've seen movies called *The Hustler* or we've seen - whether it was a character in a book or a movie or in life

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that was a hustler, and they were trying to take advantage of others or they were just honest in dealing with others, especially in business.

But today, when I say hustling and when those of us in business really say hustling, it usually means to work really hard and it means to do whatever it takes to be successful, especially now that we live in this age of technology that we live in. So there's so much that you can be doing all the time, and so it's really that idea of going above and beyond.

And to me, it often means working long hours. Doesn't necessarily have to mean that, but it sort of accidentally means that in the life that I've been living for the last 20 years I've been in business and where I've accidentally at times gotten super busy, not necessarily productive, but just busy. A lot of times that fell into the realm of hustling for me.

So there's a belief by a lot of people, and I've definitely believed this, at least at times, that you have to hustle at least in the startup phase of a business or a launch phase of a new service or a new idea or at times when maybe business slows down or the industry changes, there's a belief that you have to hustle to be successful.

And I don't totally disagree with this. Aside from being able to brush past failures and adversity, a hustler is not only one who can get stuff done, which I love to get stuff done, but a hustler is also a person who can make things happen. And I like that too. I love to be able to be empowered and to be brave and courageous and go out and make things happen.

And I was looking up some content on hustling, some articles, and I found this one article. It was written in 2017. It's now on the site Medium, under tools for entrepreneurs on Medium. And it was talking about hustling, and hustlers were deemed to have three consistent characteristics.

These are the three. Unbeatable work ethic, pretty good, right? I love a good work ethic. No regard for rejection, which is really interesting. It's a whole mindset piece if you have no regard for rejection, if it doesn't stop you in your tracks. And number three, innovative knack for getting noticed.

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And to me, those are all really positive characteristics in business. Something that I would strive for. Unbeatable work ethic, no regard for rejection, and being really innovative in your ability to get noticed, to be seen, to make a difference, to build a tribe. All the things that come with getting noticed.

Now, for some in the business world, being a hustler is really, in 2019 and beyond, an industry standard. It's not optional. But it's also sort of the minimum baseline, and that, I think can be where we get into a little bit dangerous territory. Not that we don't all need to hustle at times, but I want us to think about that for a minute. What do we think about that? Is it the industry standard? Is it kind of the minimum baseline? How are we judging how much hustle needs to happen for us to be a success?

Now, if you're unwilling or unable to hustle, this doesn't necessarily mean that you will fail, but the question is will you excel and do you have to hustle in all areas of your life and your business, or in just certain parts of your business, your career? Or at certain times in your year or over the period of a few years?

So the ambition to excel and the motivation to put in the work and to generate that innovation that is needed to stand out is what makes an entrepreneur that hustles stand out from a regular one. It's those three characteristics. And I agree with those, and I love really thinking about those three characteristics.

But hustling can also be a key component in burnout, and many creative entrepreneurs and entrepreneurs in general are constantly on the brink of burnout. Dealing with exhaustion and a total lack of balance. So I've been there myself several times on the burnout side of the equation, or really close to it. I've been guilty of thinking that really kept me in a place of overwhelm and really moved me towards burnout.

Thinking thoughts like I don't have a choice but to work really hard, and that's a mentality. That's a mindset. I don't have a choice. And that kind of thinking may have served my bottom line. It may have served my business

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and my profits to think I absolutely don't have a choice but to work really, really hard and to work all the time.

But rarely did that mindset really serve my mental health, my physical health, my family, or my relationships. So there's a big trade off with the hustle mentality. So what's an entrepreneur to do? Well, luckily for you and for me, I have five key steps for really how to hustle the right way, and that's what we're going to talk about today.

So the first step to hustling, in my opinion, the right way is to constrain. And you've heard me talk about constraining before probably, if you've listened to a lot of my episodes, but when you simplify or reduce the number of goals that you're hustling to achieve, and I suggest bringing it all the way down to one goal at a time. But if you constrain, then some hustle or even a good amount of hustle is doable.

Hustling at one or two key things versus trying to do and be everything at the highest level, those two things are vastly different. And again, I've tried it both ways. Now, this thinking of constraining is in line with one of my favorite books ever that you may also have heard me talk about but it's worth talking about again, and the book is called Essentialism by Greg McKeown.

And the subtitle of Essentialism is The Disciplined Pursuit of Less. And it definitely takes discipline to constrain. When there are so many opportunities available to us as entrepreneurs, as business people, as creatives all the time, there's so many bright, shiny, amazing opportunities, it really, really takes discipline to say no to a lot of those things.

But it also takes discipline to hustle at the one or two right things at a time that are going to make the biggest difference. So yes, to hustle is good if you're being very intentional about where and about when to hustle.

Okay next, number two, it's very important that you focus on the numbers, the math, your financial results from hustling. Because hustling alone does not equal money. There have been many, many, many moments in my life

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that I was hustling, that I was making connections and landing even big clients, but I wasn't profitable. A lot of times in those moments my expenses were too high and I was putting my efforts into the things and the places where I may have been making a difference on the surface, but I wasn't making the most money, and I sure wasn't making the most money in the least amount of time, which is absolutely my goal in anything that I do.

And that kind of hustling is the one that can equal burnout. The one where we work, work, work, and push, push, push, but it's not changing the bottom line. So the way to ensure that your hustle pays off is to be very clear on your revenues and your profit goals, and to measure both your revenue goals and your profit goals weekly.

And yes, I said weekly. And I'll link to it in the show notes, but by the time you're listening to this episode, I will have just taught my latest version of my course Financials for Creatives. I taught it live stream inside of my *Design You* coaching program, and it's a course that I teach all about setting and measuring money goals and really, just understanding finances in general for those of us who've never gotten them in order or who are afraid of them or who get kind of undisciplined or lazy about them.

So if you want to know more about that course, check out the show notes. It's available inside my *Design You* program. It's awesome. If you want to go see the sales page about it, you can go to masterclass.tobifairley.com/financials, but that's also going to be linked in the show notes. So you can check it out.

But anyway, this is not a sales pitch for Financials for Creatives. I just want you to know if you're like what the heck, I don't even know how to set revenue and profit goals, and I certainly am not measuring them weekly, I teach you how to do that in that course, so I'm not leaving you hanging here. So there's that resource. It's really cool, and let me know if you have questions on it.

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But let's get to this idea of hustling. You've got to be checking in on your goals and your revenues and your profits all of the time. You can't just check that stuff once a year. So, sometimes what seems like hustling to us is actually just you being really busy. But a lot of times, it's more of you spinning your wheels than actually creating profits.

And that can be a big problem, and you cannot wait weeks, and you especially cannot wait months to know whether all your effort is paying off. So I suggest that you set a yearly revenue goal, a yearly big number, and I would rather you also set a yearly profit goal because as a lot of us in business have found out, just because we have big revenues, it doesn't mean we're profitable.

So also, I highly recommend a book called Profit First if you want to check that out, but I'd love for you to set a yearly revenue goal, a yearly profit goal, and I'd like for you to look at especially the revenue goals by month, and then take it all the way down to by week so that you know if you are converting enough sales consistently, week in and week out, with the efforts that you are hustling to create.

So for example, let me give you some numbers. This is a big number, but I want you to see, I don't think this is as impactful or as clear if we use a tiny number that doesn't stretch us. So let's think about if you want to make a million dollars in revenue a year, and you may think oh my gosh, a million dollars, that's a huge number. Well, I don't think it's huge at all. I want to make far more than a million dollars a year, and we do.

But I want you to see that a million dollars in revenue a year is \$83,333 a month, every single month that you have to bring in if you're going to hit a million dollars in revenue. And if you look at that by week, it's \$20,833 per week. Now, that's not a small amount of money for those of us who are small businesses.

So if you are blinding hustling to make contacts and get leads and create content for social media and all of the things that we have to do in our businesses to be relevant, to be seen, to be successful, if you're doing all

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of those but you aren't converting sales consistently, I can assure you that the amount of hustling that you're doing, even if it's a high amount, won't magically help you hit your million dollar sales goal by the end of the year if you're not measuring it, if you're not paying attention.

Because effort doesn't always equal achieved goals, so know what you want to accomplish and know if it is monetary or if it's something different. Are you trying to generate those revenues like we talked about? Or are you trying to do something else with your hustling? Are your revenues good? Is your salary exactly where you want it to be? Are you making the profit that you want to make?

And that's all set and you want to do something else with your hustling like grow your followers, or your reach, or get published, or get some kind of partnership or licensing deal, or get a certain level of person as a client or on your podcast as a guest, or something else that's a relationship goal. Know what the things are that you're trying to accomplish because some impact profits, but some don't. Some just generate expenses in the short run because you're spending money to do some of these things but you're not getting a return, and you need to know which ones of those things are happening in your business.

So again, also each of these goals, because they're so different, depending on whether they're monetary or not, have different measures of success. And so that's why you've got to measure, and if yours is not a money goal that you're working towards, then you're still going to be measuring regularly and maybe even weekly, but you've got to define what success looks like for that particular type of hustle.

And you want to be clear on what you think constitutes success related to that hustling that you're doing, otherwise hustling is too hard to sustain. If you aren't making progress or if you don't know if you're making progress, and also if you don't know how you're going to define success, so you don't know if you've hit it or not, then how in the heck can you measure if you're getting closer to it? You can't.

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And when you are putting out all this effort with no evidence of success, of hitting goals, again, that's where you get into that territory of burnout and it's just not sustainable long term. So that's number two is know your numbers, know your success measurement and look at it all the time, as in every single week.

Okay, number three. Once you know how to define success for your particular hustling that you're planning on doing, once you have successes, you've got to stop and celebrate those successes. And I am terrible at this. I have to really, really work at this. I'm the person who I'm like, oh yay, we did it, now moving onto the next thing. And that also is a recipe for burnout.

In fact, the difference in burnout and not burning out is all in your mindset. And you can hustle and you can be hustling while thinking really negative thoughts about the hustling you're doing, and it's going to take a toll on you, or you can hustle and be thinking different thoughts and be celebrating your successes and not even come close to burnout.

So for example, if you feel obligated to hustle and forced to do this and like you don't have a choice, like I said earlier, if you feel trapped by this business but it's a big monster, it's a big monkey on your back and you got to keep it going and you got to keep all the balls in the air, and if you feel like you're exhausted and you're thinking those thoughts about how exhausted you are, and if everything you're doing feels so uncomfortable, and yeah, I love for us to feel uncomfortable and to stretch ourselves, but if we're constantly telling ourselves this is miserable, this is uncomfortable, I don't like this, I feel defeated, guess what, if you're thinking any of those thoughts, your hustling will easily lead to burnout.

But I want you to see that you can do the same amount of hustle, the exact same amount. It's not the hustle that's the problem. It's the thinking that's the problem. So you can do the same amount of hustle while thinking thoughts that make you feel motivated and energized and inspired and unstoppable. And when you're thinking those thoughts, guess what, burnout is not even close to happening.

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So even if in these two scenarios with these two different sets of thoughts, if in both of those you had the same exact amount of work, of hustle, it's the thoughts about the work, about the hustle that make you feel burned out. Not the work itself. And one way to stay excited and energized and motivated to keep hustling is celebrating your wins regularly.

So notice when you hit a weekly sales goal and celebrate it. Notice when you land a big client or a big podcast interview and do something to mark that occasion. And notice when you grow your tribe by a big number and celebrate it big time. Y'all, that is hard stuff.

And the celebrating your successes, especially works in the short run. It especially works when you're really getting started and you have a specific goal that you can see a beginning and an end to, like hitting a certain number or getting a certain number of clients. Like for me, if it's getting a certain number of clients in *Design You*, I know exactly when I've hit that number.

And so celebrating successes in the short run when a project or a launch is pretty new especially, this can really, really work for you. And knowing things are working keeps you going. So celebrating reminds you that it's working because so often we're focusing on all the things that aren't working about our business, our job, our launch, our services, our clients, and we're not focusing on the things that are.

So when you stop and really celebrate your successes, it's like hitting your sweet spot and you notice it, and it fuels your positive thinking and ultimately it fuels the results because we know, if you've heard any of my mindset content, if you've heard episode number four, way back when about the model, you know that what you think causes your feelings, causes your actions, causes your results.

So celebrate those successes. But what about the things that it's a little bit hard to measure? What about the things that are sort of the long game? Because a lot of us have things in our businesses, and I talk about this a lot in *Design You* about digital marketing, and some of the things we're

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working on, it's really a long game. And so how do you stay consistent with the hustle over the long haul?

Well, this is number four. And celebrating your successes may not be enough to keep you going long term, so the idea that I love for this comes from another of my favorite books called Atomic Habits by James Clear. And he so perfectly explains in his book how it's important and really important to focus on the process or the systems that you're using.

So in this case, the process or the systems that we're using to hustle, instead of focusing on the outcomes and the results. So think about that for a moment. Focusing on doing the steps versus consistently looking at all the time the results. Now yeah, we need to measure the results, especially the monetary ones to make sure that we're hitting our profit numbers and that we're keeping our business afloat, not just getting some other results in other areas.

But you can't constantly only be focused on this because if you're not consistently hitting that outcome every week, you're going to really - a lot of times, as we call it, fall off the wagon. You're going to quit on yourself. It's not going to feel good anymore. It's going to feel like your efforts are futile. So there are moments or there are certain objectives that we're going after that are much more of a long game and we've got to shift our perspective to long-term success by yeah, measuring that stuff, but that's just one measure of the success.

That's just one measure to notice what's happening with our numbers, but we also have to focus on did I follow through on all the steps, did I follow through every day, every week, every month, did I follow through all year long? And just focusing on the follow through can be a success in and of itself, and that's what really James Clear is talking about with habits.

So when we focus on the outcomes, again, if we don't reach them, so easy to be frustrated. And as we talked about already, this kind of frustration can lead to burnout. So long-term success and hustling, not just in the short run, not just for a smaller launch but literally hustling in your business for 10

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years, 20 years, 40 years, which can sound exhausting, that can really be sustained if you aren't obsessive only about outcomes but you commit to the completing of the tasks, the completing and the following through of the habits day in and day out.

So for example, if your goal is to grow your social media following, that can take a long time. So week in, week out, you can say yay, we got 50 people, we got 20 people, we got 100 people, and that's great when you're measuring those short-term results because you're like this is working. But where that can be a problem, if you're trying to get to 10,000 or 100,000, 50 people at a time, that can feel very disheartening.

So measuring is great. You've got evidence that what you're doing is working, and most weeks, you're growing, and that's amazing. But sometimes with a goal like this, you have to say you know what, I'm going to commit to 30 days, 60 days, 90 days a year and my only goal for that say, three months, six months, or a year is to just follow through and post on my social media consistently in the ways I've determined I'm going to post, not changing all the time as we creators want to do but creating a consistent approach and doing it every single day for a period of time, and knowing that in that period, your success is measured by did we post? Did we follow through? Did we show up in the way that we said we were going to?

And it might not be that you got 500 new people in a week, but over that period of time, you might look back and think oh my gosh, we just grew our social media following by 6000 people, and that's huge. But you're not going to see that until you turn around and kind of look at it in the rearview mirror, look at it in hindsight. And so when you have a longer term bigger goal like this, it is the marrying of measuring the small daily results monetarily or numbers wise, but also focusing on the process and just the follow through.

And this really can shift you into a whole other level of success. In fact, if you have not read Atomic Habits, please go read it because for those of us, especially us creatives who like a lot of change and who aren't always

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super consistent, it's really, really important for us to learn how to follow through and just outcome-based results measurement of our success is not always the best way to do that.

The other thing about it is if you do hit the results, then you still quit. So you're like I wanted 10,000 people, I got them, I don't have to do that anymore. Well, what's going to happen to your social media then? Everybody's going to leave because it's going to be boring because you're not going to be posting anything or engaging with anybody.

So the other thing about results being your measurement is you're like, hit it, I can stop now and that's not what we want to do to have consistently prosperous and successful businesses. We want to sustain at least some of the hustle long term. So those are the steps so far, and finally, my fifth tip for hustling the right way, besides all these great ones we've talked about already, which were to constrain, to know your numbers, to celebrate your successes, and to really focus on the process, number five is to use your schedule and time blocking as your absolute best friend for hustling.

And the reason that you need to do this is if you don't use your schedule and time blocking, you're going to not get all of the important stuff done while you're busy hustling. So hustling actually can become an easy way to procrastinate on the things that must be done but they're less exciting, they're less fun.

For example, if you're out meeting people, hustling, and you're enjoying relationships and say, you're an extrovert but you hate doing your finances, are you going to do your finances? Are you going to keep up with your numbers? Are you going to meet with your accountant? Probably not. Because it didn't feel like hustling at all, it feels like a chore.

So you've got to use time blocking to make sure that you're keeping the most important things going while you're out hustling to grow your business, and without tracking your time in a very deliberate way, you can miss important deadlines and deliverables and they can all fall through the cracks, or you can find yourself working 24 hours a day, seven days a

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week to fit in both the day-to-day stuff and the hustle that it takes to grow your business and hit big financial success.

So your calendar can make it really, really, really clear on whether or not you have enough time to do the hustling that you're planning on doing, and also get those other things done. And if you want to know all about how I write my calendar, which is a major, major game-changer, and the way I created a concept called zero balance time blocking and my own time management system, then head over and listen to podcast number 54.

And even if you've listened to it before, you should probably listen to it again because it is truly a game-changer. Okay, so there are my five tips. And when you use these five tips and when I've used these five tips, they really can make hustling work for you because yes, I do think that there's a certain amount of hustle that is required to succeed at a high level in business, but I also believe that if you focus on hustling in the places where you can make the most impact in your business and for your clients and for the place that you can make the most money, and then say no or delegate the other stuff that you can actually still have time for a life that you love. There can still be balance in your life.

So take a hard look at where you can hustle to really move the needle in your business and the most important parts, especially in your finances, and also look at what you need to stop doing, where you may need to stop hustling or what things are keeping you from having time to really hustle that don't make as big of a difference in your bottom line and delegate those things to somebody else or just eliminate them altogether so you can spend your time hustling where it really, really matters.

And for most of us as CEOs, our hustle needs to be in the stuff that brings in the big bucks. So if it's not that, then it may not be worth the effort. If it's not paying off financially in a big way, long term, probably not worth the hustle. It may just lead you to burnout. So that's what I have for you today, friends. I can't wait for you to dig in and see if you need more hustle, if you need less hustle, if you just need a whole different approach to hustling.

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So let me know. Let me know on social media what you think about that. And if you have a moment, would you hustle on over to iTunes and leave me a rating and review on *The Design You Podcast* because we want everybody to know that could benefit from this show like you are, all about what you're learning here and how it's changing your life.

And so please head over and leave me a rating and review, but for sure, reach out to me on social media because I love hearing from all of you. I get so many direct messages on Instagram every single day from so many of you that are listening to the podcast and it's making a difference for you, so let me know. I can't wait to hear from you and thanks a million for leaving a rating and a review and for listening, and I'll see you again next week right here. Bye for now.

Thank you so much for joining me for this episode of *The Design You Podcast*. And if you'd like even more support for designing a business and a life that you love, then check out my exclusive monthly coaching program Design You at tobifairley.com.