

Ep #81: How to Survive Feeling Uncomfortable



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Tobi Fairley

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You are listening to *The Design You Podcast* with Tobi Fairley, episode number 81.

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. It is fall. Well, at least when I'm recording this it's fall. Well, technically it's not even fall. It's the last day of summer on the calendar when I'm recording this but tomorrow is fall and it's September and it's getting close to October.

And you may not be listening to this in the fall. Maybe you're listening to this in the spring or the winter. Who the heck cares? But right now, while I'm recording this podcast episode, I'm so happy because fall is my absolute favorite time of year because it's football season and heck, I skipped the football game this weekend. Who am I kidding?

But there's just something about the memories of football my whole life, and we live in the south so football is a big thing and I love nesting at home this time of year, and I love when the cooler weather rolls in. And I love cooking in the fall and wearing fall clothes and the whole thing, and it just makes me happy.

Now, that's not to say that fall's not busy or that fall is easy because often fall for me is a time that I have a lot going on with work and with family and thinking about the end of the year and thinking about the new year and all the things that come with fall.

And I love that even though I may be hustling a little more this time of year than some other times, I can still enjoy my favorite parts of the season. So anyway, enough about seasons. Let's talk about feelings. Some of you are like, no, let's go back to seasons. But yup, today we're talking about feelings.

So for those of you who want to go back to the warm and fuzzies of fall, I'm sorry. I'm not letting you off the hook with the feelings talk today because this topic has been coming up so much lately. Like, with 100 O's at the end of it. So much lately within my Design You coaching members and just with my friends and my peers in general.

And in particular, the conversation I want to have with you today is about our unwillingness to feel discomfort, which is really the same thing as our

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unwillingness to feel our feelings at all, whatever they are. But I want to especially dig into this idea of discomfort.

So today I want to take you back to some self-coaching concepts that you can use to move out of being stuck in your comfort zone and step into the person and the life that you say you want. Because we talk a big game. We think a big game of who we want to be, but the minute we feel uncomfortable, all bets are off.

So here's the deal. A lot of us are telling ourselves a whole lot of lies every single day. And those lies, they seem like the truth but they're actually very, very far from the truth. So these lies or excuses seem so very legit. I mean, they are. But a legit excuse, as I've told you before, is still an excuse. So let me give you some examples.

So I have people say things like Tobi, I just don't feel like I'm worthy of success. Legit excuse for not succeeding, right? Or, Tobi, I just can't possibly charge more than what I currently charge in my area or in my niche or in my industry or with my clients. You just don't know what the people are like where I live, Tobi.

Or maybe you say, Tobi, I couldn't bear it if I put myself out in a big way, say I created a course or a webinar or something that felt big and scary and nobody bought it or nobody showed up. I would die, Tobi. I just couldn't possibly do that.

Some of you say, Tobi, I'm just not capable of being like all those people I see succeeding when I scroll Instagram. I mean, I'm not half as thin or as pretty or as wealthy or as smart or creative or successful. I mean, they don't say all of those things typically, but they throw one or a few of those in. I'm not as blank as those people are. So why should I even try?

And here's a big one a lot of people say. You know what, they've already got all that covered. Or Tobi, you've already created this course. Why could I create – why should I create one too? I mean, you've already created it.

And let me tell you friends, before we keep going, there are literally almost eight billion people on the planet. And I want you to notice that you're thinking that there's a limit on how many of us are able to be successful at once, or how many of us can create a course and sell the heck out of it at once, or how many of us can really do anything because there is a limit. Only a certain number of people can be thin and pretty and wealthy and smart and creative

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and successful on Instagram and it's already been covered so why am I trying to be that? Hello scarcity mindset.

That is not abundance thinking at all and yeah, but I'm going to tell you in a minute why it's codeword, it's an excuse for staying small. Some of you also say, you know what Tobi, I just can't show up on Facebook Live and talk about my new niche or my new services because my peers, my friends will think I have lost my mind. They'll think I'm weird and I'm crazy. They will think I'm nuts and that would just be too embarrassing for people I know to think I'm crazy or weird or for them to be talking about me behind my back.

Because they're for sure not talking about you, about anything behind your back right now, right? Some of you say things like Tobi, I just can't come up with something to sell or create. It's all been done. Again, as I was saying a minute ago, why would I create a course on business when you've already done that? Or why would I create a program on marketing or social media when somebody like Amy Porterfield or Jenna Kutcher or Hilary Rushford who are the gurus have created one, or Tony Robbins.

Why would I create a design course or an online design consulting service? Or anything when even Wayfair and TJ Maxx already have things out in the world that people can buy at a really cheap price. Why would I even try to do that? I bet Steve Jobs was thinking that. Don't you?

Why would I even try to step into the computer or electronics industry? It's all been done. Of course not. He was not thinking that. That's why he became the Steve Jobs we know and love. But here we are thinking why me? Why would I?

Some of you are saying things like Tobi, how could I possibly ask the people that I dream about being connected with, say the people I dream of being on my podcast or that I want to have a relationship with in some way, or that I want to collaborate with, how could I possibly ask them to be connected with me?

They would laugh at me, or more likely not even return my email or my call if I asked them to be on my measly little podcast or do something with my measly little social media that I only have 100 followers. Would not ever happen, so why would I ask? Because I would then have to feel rejection.

And Tobi, how could I possibly take your advice and create a new version of my business that is more online based maybe with digital marketing or

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something that's out of the box of anything I've ever seen in my industry? Why and how could I possibly do that because my family and my friends and my peers in the industry and the big named old school people that I admire say if you're an interior designer, the big name old school designers that I admire would think I had lost my ever-loving mind, Tobi.

And I clearly – what you're saying without saying it is I clearly care way more about what a lot of people think of me than actually being successful and making money. So how could I possibly step into a new version of something that's never been done before? Because it would feel too humiliating and weird just to show up and own the fact that I'm doing things differently. That'd be horrible.

And Tobi, I just can't make my website look the way you teach me that it should. The sales style thing with my picture all over it and make it about me instead of just my pretty images of my work. Because even though my website that I've had for years with those pretty, pretty images of my work is not converting a bunch of clients, if I made my website about me, if I put my picture all over it, all the other designers I know that have really good taste who are chic and stylist, if they happen to swing by and see that new website, they would think I was unsophisticated and that I was weird, that I was pedestrian, that I was DIY, and that would be so totally embarrassing for somebody else in the industry to think that I was self-promoting and that I was uncouth or tacky. I could not bear that.

And honestly, y'all, I could fill the entire podcast, the whole thing. We could go two or three hours actually on this podcast episode just telling you more and more and more and more of the legit excuses I hear from people and sometimes myself every single day.

There are so many ways that we keep ourselves comfortable and we keep ourselves small and we keep our businesses from the success that we deserve, and we keep ourselves from helping other people, frankly. Because we hold ourselves right where we are in this minute and it never ever, ever gets us to where we want to be with this kind of thinking.

So why is that? Why do we let our fears stop us? Why are we constantly rolling all these thoughts around what people would think about us? And fear of rejection and fear of embarrassment, looking stupid, looking silly, no one showing up when we do a Facebook Live or a webinar. What do we let these fears stop us from being who we want to be?

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Because first of all, do you realize that it's not 100% the truth that our worst-case scenarios are going to come true? Maybe we do have some Facebook Lives that nobody comes to but heck, if you do a few of them, somebody's going to start showing up. If you keep doing it, a lot of dang people can start showing up.

But I want you to see why we do this. And it is, it's those fears – let's name them for a minute what those fears are. Fear of rejection, fear of failure, fear of being judged, and even fear of success. Because if I do it and it works, then what? I won't know what to do, where to go, how to step into being that person. We don't know who she is or he is because we've never been her before. We just can't get our head around how we could actually be that successful.

And once we start really becoming aware of these fears, guess what we do? We take a lot of those phrases I was talking about and we suddenly want to label ourselves with things like I'm just so unworthy. I just feel so unworthy. Or I just feel so overwhelmed with all the things I need to do. Or I'm just so confused about where to start. Or here's a big one; it's just too hard, Tobi. It's too hard.

That one is huge. The too-hard legit excuse that we do. Let me tell you some of the too-hard things we tell ourselves. Running a business is too hard. Making a lot of money is too hard. Losing weight is too hard. Being healthy while I travel or while I'm a mom or while I'm running my firm is too hard. Putting myself out into the world is too hard. Public speaking is too hard. Pitching myself or my work is too hard.

Charging what I want to and what I need to in order to make the money that I really want, that's too hard. Creating a course or creating content, or heck, creating a blog is too hard. Going to bed and getting enough sleep is too hard. Fitting all my tasks and important stuff into a 24-hour day is too hard. Eating what I planned to eat to lose weight is too hard.

Meal prepping is too hard. Not drinking alcohol is too hard. Finances and budgets and not overspending is too hard. Cooking at home is too hard. Saving money is too hard. Keeping my house clean is too hard. Raising children is too hard. Being married is too hard. Staying married is too hard. Believing in myself is too hard.

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Speaking up for what I really want is too hard. Not pleasing other people is too hard. Saying no is too hard. Not just eating crap and binging Netflix is too hard. Especially when I'm tired, it's too hard. Going out to eat with people and not eating junk or drinking cocktails is too hard.

Going to the gym is too hard. Working on my business, not just in it is too hard. Showing up and following through for myself and my dreams is too hard. And goal setting, that's just too hard.

I mean, seriously y'all. Again, I could spend the rest of the day just listing all the things that we tell ourselves every single day about ourselves and our goals and our dreams about how it's all just too hard. But here's what I want you to see; that's not true. And how do we know that that's not true?

Well, first of all, think of all the people who do a whole bunch of those things all at the same time every single day. If it were as hard as we say, then nobody, not a single person would be doing any of this stuff, right? And to even go a step further, think of all the people who do those things with ease, and people who do a whole lot of them all at the same time with ease.

Like stay fit and have a successful business, and make a lot of money, and have a great marriage, and are a great parent and have great kids. There's many, many, many people who pull all those things off all at the same time, friends. If it were as hard as we want to believe those things were, then how are those people doing it?

Of course, then our next thought or our next legit excuse goes something like this. Well, those people, they just have the it factor. Or they obviously have a lot more money than I do so they can hire help. Or they must not have my husband and my kids. Their spouse and kids must be super organized and super easy and never cause them a minute of trouble.

And they must know a secret that I don't know about how to fit it all into a day. Or the big one most of us use is I must be doing it wrong. There must be something wrong with me. Clearly they can do it. It couldn't possibly be that hard. So I just must be stupid.

And here's what I want you to know; they do know a secret. They might not even know they know the secret, but they do. And here is the secret. They are willing to feel uncomfortable. That's it. That's the secret. That's the only secret. They are willing to feel uncomfortable.

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And your success or lack of it in every single area of your life is 100% related to your willingness to feel, to be uncomfortable. And I mean to really be uncomfortable, to feel this discomfort. And that's not the same thing as covering up the discomfort or buffering the discomfort with food or alcohol or drugs or overworking or overspending or watching Netflix or scrolling Facebook or Instagram, or any other behavior that you do when you feel uncomfortable.

So what I want you to see is that all those fears we talked about, fear of rejection, fear of failure, fear of being judged, fear of success, all those and all those other feelings that we want to think like, I feel unworthy, it's real simple. All of those are really just codewords for one thing. One phrase, one sentence. I have a fear of feeling uncomfortable. Period.

Not willing to be uncomfortable is the only reason that you are overweight, under-earning, under-performing, having issues saying no, not putting yourself out in the world in the way that you dream of. It's the only reason you care what others think of you. It's the only reason you compare yourself to others on social media. You don't want to feel uncomfortable.

We have a belief, especially in America that we're supposed to feel happy and good all the time. And there's a couple of things that don't align with that kind of thinking. First of all, there's a 50% chance at least that we're going to feel bad sometimes. Life is really 50/50. Some things are good, some things are bad. You are not going to feel happy all the time.

The other thing that's a problem with thinking I'm not supposed to feel uncomfortable is growth and success and money and being thin and all the stuff we want is on the other side of the discomfort. So if we just buffer it with stuff, if we eat when we're uncomfortable, if we procrastinate when we're uncomfortable, if we watch TV when we're uncomfortable, if we shop when we're uncomfortable and get ourselves in more debt when we already don't have money, if we do any of those things instead of just feeling the discomfort, we block ourselves from what we're supposed to learn from the discomfort.

So if the whole path to getting where we want to go is going through the discomfort and we haven't let ourselves feel uncomfortable in years, no wonder we're still right where we were and where we don't want to be in so many ways, right?

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So what I'm finding with a lot of my clients and a lot of my Design You members that I coach, and myself and my peers is that it's very helpful to not label ourselves as all these other things we want to label ourselves with because it makes it so much easier for us to stay in and accept that where we are is okay.

Here's what I mean. It's so much better when we don't say I just feel so unworthy, or I just struggle to show up for myself, or I'm just such a people-pleaser, or I'm just a train wreck when it comes to my schedule, or I need to be more disciplined, or I need to be more organized. I want to tell you something. Telling yourself that stuff all of the time is just one more legitimate excuse to stay right where you are.

It's one more reason that you're giving yourself to not feel uncomfortable. Well, this is just how I am. I just am unworthy. I'm just a disaster. I'm just a hot mess. People, please stop telling yourself you're a hot mess. You're not a hot mess. You do a ton of things. You just don't want to feel uncomfortable. As simple as that.

And when you can embrace that and go I just don't want to feel uncomfortable, but you're willing to figure out how to feel uncomfortable instead to get to where you want to go, that is when things really start happening. But when we label ourselves, we're just staying in that excuse. You know me. I'd sure love to change but I'm just a big old people-pleaser.

No, you just don't want to feel uncomfortable. Period. You don't want to disappoint people. Not because they will be disappointed but because how it will make you feel, which is uncomfortable. Until we can see our own BS and admit, crap Tobi, you're right, I detest feeling the feeling of discomfort and it's holding me back from everything I say I want. And if I am not willing to feel it then nothing will ever change.

Our finances won't change, our bodies won't change, our relationships won't change, and our businesses won't change because nothing will change until you're willing to practice discomfort and get so good at feeling it, not resisting it. Not white-knuckling it. Not buffering it. Not covering it up, but just feeling it and allowing it to be there and no trying to make it hurry and go away.

That one's huge. If you can just without taking it out on everybody in your life and yourself, just feel uncomfortable some days. Feel it. Like anxiety. It's there. Discomfort is a feeling but when I know, oh, there you are discomfort,

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this is great. This means I'm about to really learn something. This means a breakthrough is coming.

Okay, I don't love you. You don't feel really good, but that's okay because I can allow you to be there with me, and for me to not run away from you because I'm willing to let you be my teacher. I'm willing to let you help me change the way I think so I can get the results that I really want.

And I want you to see that because you've buffered and resisted and white-knuckled and tried to make it hurry and go away, that you are the reason and that is the reason that you have right now in your life, the exact results that you have. And if you're not willing to do this work, then those results will continue to be your results.

So here's what I want you to know. Other people eating fattening food around you is not the problem. Your thinking about that circumstance is the problem. Your thinking that you are suffering because they're eating. Change your thoughts.

Looking at other people who are thin and successful and rich on Instagram is not the problem. Your thinking about them and what you are making it mean about you, that is the problem. Your thinking is the problem. Our feelings never come from outside circumstances, like other people or things.

Our feelings don't come from our husband and our kids eating cheese dip. Our feelings come from our thoughts about them eating cheese dip and why are we the fatty that never gets to eat cheese dip, right? Or our feelings about those other people on Instagram of how they're amazing and we're the opposite of that. That's the problem.

Our feelings only ever come from our own thoughts, and you can choose – in fact, you are choosing all of your thoughts in every moment whether you realize it or not. So though you have been thinking by default for years and you haven't paid attention, you're choosing those thoughts. Because at the same moment, you have an equal opportunity to choose a different thought.

You can look at those people on Instagram and think I will be her. I will be beyond her. I can do all of that and more because I know my personal power. And I may not be there today at this instance, but I already know I am there in the future and I know exactly when I am there, and I will take the steps to get there. Or you can think look at her, I could never be like that. I could never show my thighs like that in those shorts. I could never do a video like that.

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People would think I was an idiot. I could never embrace a unique approach to my business like that. People would think I have lost my mind.

Those are you choosing every one of those thoughts. They are not by default. You are choosing them even if you're not noticing and paying attention that you are. So yeah, your thoughts create your feelings. But here's what I want you to know about feelings and what a feeling is.

We desperately try to avoid feelings but all a feeling is is a vibration in your body. That's it. It's just a sensation. And it will pass. And it'll pass a whole lot faster than you think it will if you're not resisting it or white-knuckling it. And if you buffer it, it's going to come back up again. So here's what I want you to see.

If you buffer it, if you eat donuts or chips or drink wine to make it go away, you're just parking it over in the corner for it to come back up the next day. And what will come with it is a lot of other feelings probably of regret and remorse and shame and self-flagellation for why you now ate a bunch of stuff that didn't make you feel good.

So then it's double trouble. But it's nothing to be afraid of. Feelings are just vibrations in our body. That it is. Feelings will not ever kill you. They don't even hurt you unless you think and believe that they do, and I see people all the time who firmly believe that they cannot survive feelings. That feeling of rejection or humiliation or being judged will kill them, and it won't. It never does.

Feelings are nothing to be afraid of. We can survive all feelings. Feeling the feeling of failure won't kill you. I guess if you believe it will, it might. You might take an action that will. But the feeling itself never will kill you. How do we know that? Because there are a million, a billion, hundreds of billions of instances where people survived failure.

Think of how many times we fail every single day at something. There are so many failure survivors walking around all over the world right now and what I want you to see is the most successful people have survived the most failures. There's eight billion of us almost.

An infinite number of failures that have already happened and all of those people are still walking the earth right now today. Every single one of us has failed in our lives, even as infants. Even when we don't know how to think

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about this stuff yet. Infants try to walk or talk or eat or crawl and they fail at first, and they don't die from it. If they did, there would be no human race.

We would all be born, we would try something, we would fail at it, we would die, the end. So stop telling yourself you're going to die from failure. Stop telling yourself you're going to die from a feeling. Even the feeling of discomfort is just a vibration in your body.

And as soon as you can see that whatever label you give your feelings, like embarrassment or shame or sad or humiliated, they are all just some degree of discomfort. And not a single one of those, no matter what label you give them are lethal. None of them.

Here's the other thing you have to know. No success comes without failing first. None of us are going to get things right on the first try. Never. I mean, maybe one little part or piece of something on the first try, but then by the second time we get up again we're like, well that first one was just a lucky streak because here I am dealing with the failure.

You have to fail to succeed. And most of the time it takes dozens or hundreds or more tries to get things right. And if we aren't willing to fail because we're not willing to feel uncomfortable, we can never ever ever succeed at anything whether it's a diet, or a business, or a relationship, or anything else.

So check in with yourself right now and see if the secret to everything you want in your life is right now on the other side of you being willing to feel discomfort. I mean, feeling really uncomfortable in a lot of ways until you reach your goals. Are you willing? Because I suspect that – I even kind of know that the only thing that's standing in the way of you and the life and business and body that you want right now is your unwillingness to be uncomfortable.

And the one last thing that I want to leave you with that I really want you to know, and it's so ironic that you're trying so very hard to avoid failure and the discomfort that comes with what you think of as failure, that what you're actually doing is you're choosing to fail ahead of time.

That's right. Not trying it but choosing to fail in advance. If you try something, there's at least a 50% chance that you'll succeed. But if you don't allow yourself to even try because of your fear of feeling uncomfortable, then there is a 100% chance of failure. It's kind of heavy, isn't it?

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I mean, to me it's hugely heavy. Like wow, mind-bending. So are you failing ahead of time because you're not willing to fail? Because if you are, that makes zero sense. Do you see that? I don't want to fail so let me just go ahead and fail on my own terms. That'll feel better than the unknown. The unknown of what failure could be.

But guess what the other flip side of the unknown of failure coin is? Success. You might succeed in spite of yourself. So what will you choose? Will you start today allowing yourself to go all in and be uncomfortable and really take chances? Knowing that you will fail and fail and fail and fail again until you do succeed, but that the only thing failure will bring you when you think a thought about it that's negative is a negative feeling, and a feeling is just a vibration in your body.

If that is the most you have to deal with, which I promise you it is, then anybody can do anything. And when you feel uncomfortable in the failure, if you can remember that, that it's just a vibration and it's not lethal, you can become unstoppable. And I would argue that the discomfort that comes with being less than you know you are capable of being in the long run, that discomfort of failing ahead of time and staying right where you are will be far worse than the discomfort that comes from showing yourself what you're capable of.

It will be a life-long feeling for you of untapped potential, of failure as a human, and that feels so much worse than trying and failing in the little moments all the time. And unless you change your thinking and you do what it takes to get to the other side of discomfort, you will find yourself at some point in your life and likely for sure at the end of your life with a whole lot of regret for the chances that you didn't take, and all along what you didn't know is the only thing you have to risk is feeling uncomfortable and it's no big deal.

Okay friends, so feelings. It's deep work. But it is the work that gets us to where we want to go. So thank you for letting me talk to you about this very important topic today. That's what I have for you. I hope you go get so uncomfortable.

In fact, I hope you get super duper comfortable being uncomfortable because it's the new version of who you are and when you do that, all those successes you're after, all those things that feel like they've been evading you for years will chase you down. They will find you I promise, and it is amazing. So go out and do it friends and I'll see you again right here next week. Bye for now.

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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.