

Ep #140: Our Diversity and Inclusion Plan



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Tobi Fairley

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You are listening to the *Design You* podcast with Tobi Fairley, episode number 140.

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

Hey everyone, I hope you are having a fabulous holiday season in spite of everything that's happening in the world. I hope you're all safe. I hope you're all healthy. Yeah, it's an interesting year. And I hope that you're also not just trying to enjoy the holidays the best you can but planning ahead for 2021, so many of us have been wishing for the New Year, since about March, yeah, so it's actually almost here. And it's time to be thinking about what you want to do with that year.

And I hope that you're not discouraged by this year because of course we never have any certainty. We kind of might think why plan, you never know now what's going to happen. Guess what? We never knew before either. This year's kind of an outlier, it's kind of unusual. But just so you know, we never have certainty, it's an illusion anyway. So plan away just like you always did, have fun getting into thinking about your goals, and your dreams, and your resolutions for 2021. And that's going to make you have a really incredible year, I know, next year.

Okay, so today I'm going to talk to you about some work we're doing, not only that's impacting this year in 2020, but has a big role in our company and in my life personally for 2021. So this is the work we're doing with our diversity, equity and inclusion coach, Trudi Lebron and really how our plans are shaping up and what we're already putting in place. So I've told you a few times and I did a podcast back in the summer I think. And we'll link that one in the show notes by the way, of really what it was looking like for me to start this journey of antiracism and building an antiracist business.

And now we're several months in and it's been really exciting. And I just want to start to give you some details because you may have heard me interview Trudi just a few episodes ago. If you did not, please go listen to it, it's the episode that came out about a week after the election so in the mid

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November and we'll also link that one in the show notes. But Trudi and I talk about a lot of stuff. And in that episode I tell you I'm going to come back soon and give you more details, so that's today, that's this episode.

So if you are interested in doing this work in your own company then absolutely this is going to be a really helpful episode for you. And if you happen to be a Black, indigenous or a person of color and you want to join me in Design You, my program when we open again next year then you're going to be really excited about this episode because we're launching a Design You scholarship for Black, indigenous and people of color. And I'm going to tell you more about that in a moment.

So let's jump in and let me tell you a little bit more about this journey. So if you didn't hear me talk about it previously I really want to tell you kind of where I've come just in a few months, kind of come from and what we've done, what my team and I have done and kind of how this all came about.

So if you remember, recall back in May just after the murder of George Floyd I did an episode about how I, like so many people, had been awakened to the work in diversity, equity and inclusion that I should have been doing but I didn't really know I should have been doing it. And in some ways I was embarrassed about that but you don't know what you don't know.

And so I had not been intentionally ignoring this work, but I had been ignorant about some of this work. And I had because of that been complacent and if I'm being totally honest, I did know that obviously racism exists in America. I had read a book or two, one in particular called Waking Up White that one of my really good friends that is a Black guy, a Black male doctor had told me to read when we had had conversations about race. So it wasn't not ever entering sort of my mind or my life but I just, I hadn't really made it a priority.

And in a lot of ways it really was unintentional, I didn't know. And I know that frustrated a lot of people, especially a lot of Black people to say, "Seriously, how did you not know, how could you not know?" And that's a great question and that I can't really totally answer. But I'm very glad that I

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know now and that I have had this opportunity to do this work. So I had been complacent, I had been complicit in a lot of ways as we all are and we still continue to be in propping up the systems of racism and white supremacy.

And let's just be honest, we all do that every single day, even people of color, even Black people, because those of us especially living in the US, we live in a country that is built on white supremacy and patriarchy, we just do. And so yeah, we are consistently, accidentally, subconsciously propping up these systems whether we know it or not. And some people are doing it consciously, but for those of us who aren't, for those of us who don't like this conversation and it feels uncomfortable, and we can't stand to be called racist.

And we don't understand the difference between being a perpetrator of racist violence on someone versus the definition of systemic racism. When we don't really fully understand that, yeah, we're just consistently propping up these systems. And so now I'm very aware of all that. I've learned so much and I'm super grateful that I've had this opportunity. So even though I was unaware of a lot of things, my politics had always been liberal. My values had always aligned with loving and supporting all people. I had been exposed to a lot of politics.

I worked in the Clinton campaign in the 90s because he's from here in Arkansas. And so I had been exposed to a lot of things that kind of skirted around the edges of this issue but I don't think until this year, until 2020 when it came to a head in a whole new way. I don't think in a long time we had really had this issue front and center. We've just been consistently getting away with ignoring it and pretending it wasn't here for many, many years.

And so even though I came from a background that was open and I felt like a lot of times sort of on the right side of this, I still had a lot of work to do. And I had a lot of blind spots and let's just say I still do. I mean I'm still just very new to a lot of this work. And we'll have blind spots forever. That's why they're called blind, we can't see them and so we have to work really hard

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to learn, and study, and be willing to be self-aware. So I had a lot of blind spots, I had a lot of misinformation, just like a lot of you probably who are white people, white women potentially.

We were taught a lot of things that aren't really right, that are not aligned with antiracism, including things like color blindness. When I was a child I was taught to not see color really in a lot of ways. And I now know that's the opposite of what we want to do. That is continuing to just whitewash everyone when we should be seeing every human for exactly who we are, our gifts, and our talents, and all of the amazing-ness that we are including our race, our skin color, the way we look, all of those things.

And so just like me, you probably had a lot of misinformation. And so again I'm so grateful that one of the very important things that came from the very tragic deaths of George Floyd, and Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery, and all of the things that we've seen happen in such a short span of time this year in the spring and summer of 2020. I'm so glad that one of the things that came out of that for me is this opportunity to become aware and to grow. And so it made such a huge shift for so many people.

And whether it's too late, it's not too late. Whether it's kind of better late than never, then yeah, we can stay in the weeds of what we should have been doing or feel guilt or anything. But what I'm doing is really focused on how I show up now. So in my opinion we're never going to go back to the way things were prior to May 2020 in the world, but especially in business.

And at the time all of that was happening, and especially combined with Covid which gave us so much more time at home, time to think about this, time to see everything on the news. It was like in a lot of ways, time stood still. And I don't think that that probably was by accident, maybe a little divine intervention there. But I believe that it moved us to a time where we can never go back to the way we were.

And in business, in my opinion, and I know a lot of people share this opinion. But in my opinion if you have an online business, a digital business, but truly just any kind of business, but especially those that are

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showing up in the online space, which let's be frank, everybody needs to be if you want a thriving business, digital is where it is.

And so I don't think it's any longer an option to not take a stand and be public about your values and your company's values, what you stand for or your point of view in particular, and specifically on race, including diversity, equity, inclusion, and even potentially politics. And I know people don't like to hear this, they don't like to hear about politics and business. And I've had people tell me, "I didn't come here to talk about politics. I came here for design." And I get what you're saying.

But if you're in business that is political, the economy, policies, making money, capitalism, I mean it's all political. And so to believe that we should keep that separate, I don't think is an option. It's certainly not an option for me. And I think we'll see it less and less as an option for businesses unless you're willing for other people to just decide what they think you stand for. Because if you're not clear, and you're not public about where you stand, people will assume a lot of incorrect things about you.

And yeah, there's the one side of I don't care what people think about me. But in certain instances and a lot of instances I actually do. Now, whether someone likes me personally as a human is not necessarily going to change how I show up based on my core values. But what I do want is I want Black people, indigenous people, people of color, people that are transgender, people who are gay, lesbian, queer, trans, all of the different categories we talk about. I want all of those people to know that me and my business, we are a safe space for you.

And we want to and welcome doing business with you, so that's really, really important to me. And so when I'm not willing to talk about this stuff, if I'm staying in the place that's kind of safe, and let's be honest too, only people who are sitting in their white privilege in my opinion, even have the option of not speaking, of not taking a stance or taking a point of view. That's the only people that can do that. And so we've got to look at that for what it is.

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But for me not speaking up means that I might be perceived to be a racist white supremacist business owner, and for me that's not an option, it's just absolutely not. So I want it out, I want it everywhere, I want it on my website, I want it in my social media. And it's what I think about anyway, it's in my conversation daily at home, with my daughter, with my brother, with my family, we're talking politics, we're talking about all these issues. And so it's really not authentic, it's inauthentic for it to not show up in places like my podcast or my business. It's just, it's not really who I am.

So I no longer am willing to let other people decide what I am. And in fact when all this happened, instantly the day, or really it's probably two days, maybe three days, it's not the day of, but within just a few days. By the weekend of the week that George Floyd was murdered, I publicly took a stand and I did that because I felt like it was non-negotiable. I was sitting in the hurt, and the pain, and the confusion, and the disgust, and all of the emotions that were running through me personally, witnessing that horrific incident.

And I knew in my heart and in my gut that I could not be quiet anymore. And I even remember calling my mom and saying, "This is important to me, I have zero fear of showing up this way in my business. I'm completely okay with anybody who walks away from doing business with me because of any of this. But I do just want to just apologize to you, mom, in case some of your friends or family members, if it causes you any issues."

And of course she immediately, having very similar values to me said, "It's not going to cause me any issues. If other people want to feel that way, that's their business. I'm happy also for them to not spend time with me, to not engage with me on Facebook or even in real life." And so she was really clear and supportive from that moment. She was like, "You do you, but let me just tell you, I feel the same way and this is a non-issue for me, it's not going to cause me any problems."

So that was really helpful, but I remember having that conversation right before I hit send or post on the first of many Instagram posts and Facebook posts. That I have since shared about all kinds of things that are both

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political and have to do with racism, and antiracism, and social justice, and this whole topic and category.

So as I was saying, in my opinion, we're never going back to the way things were before. And I fully agree that this is a non-negotiable, at least for me, and I think will become that way for many, many businesses. And I also fully agree with this concept that emerged this year, and maybe it had been around for a little longer. But it really came to light this year thanks to a lot of conversation and books like *How to Be an Antiracist* by Ibram X. Kendi who said, "There's really no longer such a thing as just being 'not racist'."

And the not racist stance in my opinion is the one that is rooted in white privilege. I'm not a racist. I didn't attack that person. I didn't call anybody the N word. I didn't do something to harm a person of color, and right. But any longer just being not racist is not enough. Because that means you're tolerating, even condoning other people showing up as racist in your life, in your community, in your family and you're not saying anything about it, you're letting it be okay. And that's what continues to prop up systemic racism in America and around the world.

And so I fully embrace this concept of you're either a racist, or you're an antiracist. And we can switch back and forth from racist to antiracist at any moment. So let's just be clear, just because you decide to start working in antiracism like I'm going to talk to you about in a few minutes, and what we're doing. That doesn't mean you've ever arrived at being an actual antiracist, I don't know that you ever get there. I would say probably not because we all have bias in us, we have prejudice.

And it's really like you're on sort of a scale or a continuum of racist or antiracist. And at any moment you're showing up at some degree of one or the other. And so we're not going to get it right all the time. There's a lot of conditioning that has happened to us in the places we were raised, the families we were raised in, all of those things. And so it's not a place you arrive.

But believing and embracing this concept of you're either racist or antiracist for me is very helpful because it moves me to commit and to be actively

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working to dismantle racism, which is what being an antiracist is. It means you're actively working to dismantle racism. You're not tolerating it. You're not listening to it. You're not turning a blind eye. You're not afraid to speak to it. You're actually committed to that process. And I am committed to being on the side of antiracism, which I believe based on my core values is being on the right side of history right now.

And this is really an interesting conversation when you think about history, because I've thought many, many times. And I'm sure so many of you have as well, that you've wondered if you would have been on the right side – if you're a white person you've wondered if you would have been on the right side of history at some pivotal moments in our, especially in our nation's history. Whether we're talking about Black people, indigenous people, Native Americans, any situation we can think of in history has it entered your mind whether you would have been on the right side of history?

And for me it definitely has, in particular when I think about the 1950s and 1960s, and the Civil Rights Movement, and in particular the Deep South, because I'm from Little Rock, Arkansas. I'm from the place where the Little Rock Nine lived, I literally as I sit here and record this I'm just about seven miles from Central High School. And so this is – it's a part of not only American history but my state's history. And I have thought many times when I've seen those videos, and I've seen people screaming, and yelling, and spitting on people.

And we've all heard all of the horrible stories and lynchings, and things that were happening. It has entered my mind, gosh, I hope I would have been on the right side of that. And I always feel like I would. In my gut, in my core I feel like I know that I would, but how do we really know because we weren't there? It was a different time.

So here's what's really come to me this year that I think is really important and I am so clear and resolute in this. What I know without a doubt is that how I show up right now in 2020, and 2021, and every other year from this moment until the day that I die, that is the answer to what side of history I'll be on, post George Floyd, during and after the Donald Trump presidency.

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This is my chance to show up and to show myself and to answer that question of am I on the right side of history? Would I have been? And whether or not I would have been I believe lies firmly in the how I'm showing up right now. How I'm acting, what I do, what I read, what I learn, what I study, who I spend time with, who I love, how much money I put behind antiracism, and causes, and dismantling white supremacy and racism.

That is my answer, that is 100% how I know that in 1957 I would have been on the right side of history with the Little Rock Nine and with everything that was happening right here just seven miles from where I live today. I mean it almost gives me chills. And so I take this extremely seriously and I don't shy away from it. And I'll get some stuff wrong. Heck, I've probably already said things wrong. I've probably already said things that Trudi, my coach would say, "Yeah, maybe don't want to use that word, or that's not quite how to say it."

But what she teaches me is that at the end of the day as long as I let my values drive me, and I speak the truth and I show up, that is what we're talking about. And yeah, I'll get some stuff wrong. And yeah, I might have to apologize sometimes. And yeah, I might screw things up and I might be embarrassed, and it might feel painful. But heck, how painful has this work and this life been for millions of Black, indigenous and people of color forever? So this is so, so important to me. It's an absolute non-negotiable.

And being a white, affluencies, gingered woman in a very red state, let's just be honest. It would be so easy for me to ignore this work. If my values and my politics weren't what they are, which 70% of Arkansas does not vote like me, and probably doesn't believe like me, and I'm good with that. But it would be so easy, even with my politics as they are, if I wanted to be lazy, if I wanted to just use my white privilege and kind of opt out of this work, I could do it in a heartbeat and most people wouldn't really know.

Now, the fact that I do show up online, as I was talking about earlier, it's going to be harder and harder to hide from this work, but I can hide for a pretty long time especially in the place that I live, trust me. In fact I stick out

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like a sore thumb. Me and a handful of my friends, we stick out here where we live. But it would be so easy. Or it would be easy for me to just dip my toe in this work, just do the sort of performative part, the optics where it looks like I'm doing things publicly but doesn't take a lot of work to...

I mean it doesn't even really take that much work for me to come on here and say what all I'm doing in this podcast. But when you hear how detailed our plans and programs are, and the things we're doing you'll see it's quite a lot of work. But I could, I could do something that had the right optics, that dipped my toe in the water. And I could appear to be doing the work. I could appear to be an ally but not really be one, it would be easy to do, but again that's not an option for me.

When I lay my head on a pillow at night in my bedroom downstairs, I can't live with myself if I feel like I'm not showing up. This work really is important to me. So thankfully I have this podcast so I can come talk to you guys and tell you, you ladies what I'm doing. And have you be my accountability in a lot of ways, of literally tens of thousands of people who download my episodes every month. I have tens of thousands of people who follow me on social media, that's some accountability right there.

And you can really see that I'm not just giving lip service to this. And that's what's going to keep me, and I love that so much because that's what's going to keep me from doing a little of this and then the new wearing off or getting burned out about it, or anything else. It is going to keep me consistently showing up the way that I want to, the way I say I want to.

So now that we've set that tone and you know exactly how I feel about this work, let me tell you what I've done so far a little bit. And then really get into what we're doing for 2021 and beyond. So first for the stuff I've already done, I've talked about this a little bit on a previous podcast. And we have a resource that shares a lot of this information. So we have a resource, you can find it if you want to see it at tobifairley.com/anti-racism. And by no means am I an expert on any of this. I'm just sharing other experts, and sources, and resources that I have found to be helpful to me.

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So let's just be clear, I am a white lady that just started a lot of this journey. I am by no means an expert, but I do love sharing my process and my journey so you can hear it, be less afraid, have the courage to do this work. And even make it easier for you, if I can just make it easier for you to show up, because I give you resources, that is a win for me. So I've done a lot of things like reading a lot of books, a lot. Let's see what's a lot? Probably five to seven and that doesn't sound like a lot, but gosh, some of these books are deep, deep work.

One of my very favorite I've read so far is *Cast* by Isabel Wilkerson. And wow, every human should be required to read this book. And I have read, oh gosh, many others, they're all on that resources page, *White Supremacy and Me* by Layla Saad, *How to Be an Antiracist*. There's so many good ones. And let me just tell you, because I am also addicted to Amazon there's at least 20 other books about antiracism, capitalism and how it intersects with social justice and the Black community, the Black body.

There's so much stuff sitting on my shelf downstairs just waiting for me to get to it. So I'm probably for as long as I live going to be reading antiracist books because sadly this problem won't be fixed in my lifetime. But I've put all of those on there. I've done all of that. I've watched so many movies, and TV shows, and documentaries.

One of my favorite things I've watched is the Oprah series, of course I love everything she does, it's on Apple TV. I think it's called *Conversations*. And I believe every single episode so far has been about racism and antiracism, really good stuff. She has two episodes with Isabel Wilkerson about the book *Cast*. She has a whole podcast series just about *Cast* that breaks down the eight different areas Isabel outlines in her book. But there's so much.

I have listened to many, many podcasts and podcast series. I have taken courses and all of that is on that resources page at tobifairley.com/anti-racism. And I highly recommend you check it out and we're adding to it all the time. And I will continue to do this, hopefully indefinitely.

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So there's all of that, that's the studying, that's the immersion, that's the really, you know, the work, the initial work that – not the boots on the ground work yet, but the initial work that's helped me decide where I can make a difference specifically. Which parts of this are most important to me, how I want to show up and just really busting through a lot of the white privilege and the ignorance that I hadn't been made aware of. So I highly recommend you start at the very least with that work, but just doing that work alone is not enough.

So that's not really moving to the piece of antiracism that is actively dismantling antiracism. So for that work, this is where I want to tell you more about what we've done this year. So we work with Trudi Lebron as I said. And she is a genius at this work, diversity, equity and inclusion. We work with her one-on-one, my team and I. And we've done that for about six months now and I just signed a contract to work with her for all of 2021 which I'm super excited about, which will be a combination of one-on-one sessions with Trudi.

Since I was one of her original private clients this year I get to keep one of the slots with her specifically. And then also a lot of other work with her team. And I'll tell you about more of that in a minute. But in this work that we're doing with Trudi, one of the things I love most about her is the way she starts working with your core values. Because she wants everybody's journey to be authentic for them, not just some checklist that she's created that you go through it and do.

Because think about it, it's just kind of like anything else. If someone just gives you a diet but you don't really like it, you don't relate to it, you don't like any of the foods on it, are you going to keep doing it? No. So in this very serious work, that's far more serious in a lot of ways than weight loss. This approach of aligning the work with our core values is very important. And I remember early on thinking of a lot of different things, and talking to some things, and feeling kind of anxious, and passionate and anxious at the same time.

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I remember Trudi saying to me, “Tobi, you cannot control the universe. You can’t fix every part of this by yourself. I get that you’re like, you’re signed up and you’re ready to go. But you’ve got to pick which parts, which corner”, I think she even said, “of the universe that you’re going to make a difference in.” And so that’s what aligning your diversity, equity, inclusion or antiracism work, if you want to call it that, with your core values is so, so important.

So we took the core values I had already been working on actually, it was perfect timing because my team and I had started to write our core values based on the work we’re doing with the book, Traction and the EOS system in our business. And we had a working set of core values and I read them to Trudi and she was like, “They sound corporate and I don’t hear your heart in those.” So we went back to those and we really tweaked them and here’s what we came up with, here’s our five core values for our company.

Number one: always make a difference, at first just to give you the contrast it said always add value. And that’s when Trudy was like, “Yeah, it’s kind of corporate. Do you really always have to be adding value?” And we really shifted that to always make a difference, because always adding value, it almost feels like I have to come somewhere with content every time I show up, value. And to me, always made a difference, it was a tiny little nuance, a little switch, kind of semantics. But it really was just always make a difference.

And making a difference might be holding space for someone, might be listening. So number one core value, always make a difference.

Number two: have a growth mindset. Gosh, this one is so innate in who I am. But talk about growing, growing is the epitome of antiracism work and always make a difference as well. You see already how these are starting to fit into and lay over like a filter of our antiracist work.

So always make a difference, that’s things like using my platform, and my podcast, and my social media to speak up about this, just like I’m doing right now.

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Growth mindset, gosh, that's this whole process, awareness, questioning, being willing to fail at things, being, you know, that whole thing.

Our third core value is honest and direct. So that means honest and direct in tone when anything is written, honest and direct when we're speaking to one another, in our community, with my team, honest and direct even means things like speaking up when things that we see happening aren't right, or being honest and being willing for someone to be honest with you. So me, even be willing for my team, or my coach Trudi, or even a perfect stranger to be able to be honest and direct with me when I'm getting this stuff wrong.

So, honest and direct has always been a core value of mine in the way I show up. And so it is such a perfect core value for this work of antiracism, because you've got to be both honest and direct, you can't beat around the bush. You can't be afraid to tell the truth, both of those things are inherent in this work.

Number four, our fourth core value is a belief in what's possible. That means just believing big things, kind of like go big or go home. But it's a little slightly different than that because it's not just picking giant goals for the sake of them being giant, or believing big things just for the sake of being grandiose. It's believing that something that you're committed to is possible.

And so again, believing ending racism, or even at least having an impact on it, racism and white supremacy, believing that's possible, even just for me and my team of four or five people, that we can make a difference. And there's so many things. I mean this is true for all the things we want to do, belief in what's possible, helping 10,000 people in the next 10 years with our products and services, when you think about that. That's one of our goals as a company and helping 2500 women become millionaires in the next 10 years. That's one of our goals also, creative women actually.

And so when you again use this as a filter with our work in antiracism, making sure that those 10,000 people and those 2500 women that I just said that were part of our goals, that they represent a diverse group of

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people, not 10,000 white people consuming our products and services, not 2500 white millionaires that we've helped create in the creative space. No, a diverse group of people, and we've even put numbers to those goals, 35% of the 10,000 and 35% of the 2500 need to be Black, indigenous, people of color in any of those categories.

And we want another 15% of that to have an additional marginalized identity, which could mean gay, lesbian, transgender, any other marginalized identity. And this is actually written into the goals of our company based on our core values.

And then our fifth core value is revealing beauty in the world. And that really is a great partner to this antiracism work because there's so many ways we can bring awareness to the many, many, many people and creatives who are Black, indigenous, people of color, and how they're creating beauty in the world.

And even just the beauty of relationships, and the beauty of loving other people, and the beauty of helping charities and the beauty of makers and creatives that are Black owned businesses. Or indigenous owned businesses, that is so exciting to me. And all of that fits into number five, revealing beauty in the world. So just in case I lost you, just a recap of our five core values. Always make a difference, growth mindset, honest and direct, belief in what's possible and revealing beauty in the world.

And when you write your core values it needs to be really probably three to five at the most. And they need to be something that are so heartfelt that you can remember them. I don't have to get out a sheet of paper to read those because I know them. They're committed to my memory and they're all very, very heartfelt for me. So we used these core values in working with Trudi to really start to create our antiracist policies and goals. And we broke that antiracism work into five categories.

And let me just say, I didn't decide this on my own. I didn't decide those core values on my own. Yes, me as the head of the company, they are definitely built a lot around me because I'm the face of the company. But they represent all the people on my team. And we worked closely with

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Trudi on this work. We worked with some of my other life and business coaches on this work. And then Trudi and the team played into also these five categories that we identified where we want to make a difference. So I didn't do this on my own.

And so here are the five categories we identified that we want to do our work in at least in the next year, well, this year 2020 and into 2021, all the way to the end of 2021. And of course we may add to these, we may tweak these, but here's the categories.

Number one, HR, which includes hiring, training and support, number two, sales and enrolment of our programs or products, number three, operations and finance, number four, culture, and number five, marketing and branding. So let me go into some details now. And I know this is a lot you all, and we've been working on this for months. But as you can see, this isn't a dipping your toe in the water of this work, we jumped in to the deep end of the pool. And I'm so excited that we did. But here's what we've got in place.

So I'm just going to talk to you about some of the bullet points for each one of these categories. So first, HR which is hiring, training, and support, so over the next year have a business coach that fits into – and I hate, I don't personally love the acronym BIPOC, and I know a lot of people don't even like the term people of color. But it's hard to talk about this without using some of those terms.

So forgive me if any of that offends you, but it is, it's hard to talk about this because we're not just talking about Black, we're talking about Black and brown, and I can use those terms too, Black and brown people. But hiring over the next year one business coach which we just hired Trudi and her team again for all of 2021. And at least one internal new hire should be a Black or a brown person in the next year. And really want more than that, but that's the minimum. And just so you know, I'm investing a lot of money in this work.

So just the work I'm doing with Trudi and don't let this blow your mind, but I love to be transparent, is about \$1500 a month. Now, that's not the only

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price option for doing this work. So if you're like, "Oh my word, I could never afford that." I'm doing really aggressive work for my whole team here. But Trudi also just launched her membership and I think it was like \$97 a month or something, less than a 100 bucks. And there's a lot of other great people doing this work. So, there's a lot of affordable options, we're just doing some very intense hands-on work and training here.

So we're working with Trudi this year and next year at around that price range. And then the other thing we're doing in the HR department is we're doing the groundwork to find a Black and brown applicant pool that we have, a whole pool of people that we can consistently mine for new team members.

And so we have started this process and right now one of the first hires we're working on, which would hit that at least one new internal hire in the next year is we are looking at a virtual assistant that's a person of color. And hopefully really a full-time person, but at the very least it's about 30 hours a week, so it's almost full-time or a full-time person. And then we're also doing things in HR and hiring that impacts our own teams, not only the way we look, but our health and wellness, and our learning, and our education.

So we're doing internal team education on specific topics that help us with our antiracism, that help us with mental health and wellbeing, other things that are important to us. And we're getting a lot of this work, especially the antiracism work through Trudi and her team, get trainings that she provides as part of our package. And the whole team is required to do this work. And so our goal is to learn to speak about antiracism in our work, and antiracism, not to center ourself, this podcast is not to be like, "Yay, look at how amazing Tobi is", not at all, no.

Again, I'm going to get a lot of this wrong. It's not that at all, it's not about being self-referential or self-promoting. It's to be an example to show you what it could look like, kind of like a case study. And so that we can learn to consistently get better and better about speaking about this work, and sharing it, and influencing other people to do it, especially other white

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people clearly to do this work anyway. It's not about me at all, but it's about the work.

Another thing we're doing is we're giving each of our team members, eight hours a year for volunteerism, and that goes along with the WELL AP exam I just passed. That's one of the criteria that fits in one of the categories of wellness and mindset in the WELL AP. And I love it for this purpose, because not only is it wellness and not only is it good for people to be paid, they get paid time off to volunteer.

We're trying to coordinate this as much as possible. We live all over the place, but we're trying to pick some coordinated causes and places we want to volunteer and make a difference. And doing it together, even doing it on the same day when possible, and asking other contractors, vendors, members in my membership, we're going to talk about this openly. So that we can encourage as many people as possible to do this with us.

And then twice a year we're going to have a wellness expert come in and do mini sessions, like a mini retreat for our team, really all about, I mean it'll include some of this because especially when we have people on our team that are Black and brown there's a lot of trauma, there's a lot of micro aggressions, there's things happening all the time. And sometimes there's also less access to mental health and the ability to access enough for this for all kinds of people, including Black and brown people. So this is important to us.

And in the future I can't wait to really offer more in that area. What we're probably going to go ahead and start. As soon as this next year is having one of our own on staff life coaches offer at least a once a month one hour life coaching, mindset type of coaching session for all of our employees at my expense. So that's the kind of stuff we're looking to do for our people. So HR, it's about hiring our coach, hiring other Black and brown team members and then creating opportunity for education around antiracism, education around health and wellness, mental health.

We all know how the toll that Covid has taken on all of us, but it hits especially hard Black and brown people. And so just having that support,

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that wellness support, the coaching, the mental health support is huge and really important to us, not just in this pandemic but ongoing. I know this is kind of a long episode but this is important, so let me get through the other points and then we're going to kind of going to have a picture of what we're doing.

Sales and enrolment, so one of the main things we're doing here first is our scholarship. And it's going to be ongoing indefinitely in the future, but it's going to start right now. It's going to expand in number, get bigger and bigger as our Design You program grows. And it's going to expand in categories, besides just Black and brown people in the future and bring in other marginalized identities. But for now it's just starting with Black and brown folks and then perhaps in the future it's going to apply to other products and services that we have.

But for right now, the way the scholarship's going to work, and again if you are a Black or brown, if you identify as Black, indigenous, people of color, any of those categories, go to tobifairley.com/scholarship. And it's a partial scholarship on purpose, because we want serious businesspeople. We're not just trying to give away something for free. And we developed this in conjunction with Trudi. Trudi's going to sit on the team with my leadership team to make the selections of who gets the scholarship. And it will take the \$297 price for Design You down to around less than \$100, about \$97.

So it's for one year, if you get awarded the scholarship you get a one year membership at that rate every single month. And we're committed to bringing on five to ten people for the year of 2021, so that'll start here in January. And so if you're interested in this, go to tobifairley.com/scholarship. The scholarship for this year is going to close in just about a week from when this episode comes out, so by December 11th you've got to have your submission in. So head over there now.

And if you are interested in general of knowing when Design You opens again, scholarship or not, get on our waitlist over at tobifairley.com. So you know when we open soon, because we've gone to a closed membership. And we just open once or twice a year now.

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Alright, so besides the scholarship we're going to keep expanding things that we can do in the sales and enrolment area. But for now the scholarship's our first initiative in that category.

Next, operations and finance, so we're doing a couple of things here that really matter. We're doing a 100%, what we call a 100% coverage. But a 100% follow through of asking every other company we work with in any capacity, asking them what their values are and if they have a DER policy, or program, or stance. We want to know, every single person and it's going to take us some time to get through everybody.

But we especially are asking for people that want to be on my podcast, that we would like to be on my podcast, or anyone who invites me to be a speaker at an event. We want to know their policies, if I'm going to be on a panel or be a speaker I want to know about the make-up of this event. How many people are speaking that are Black or brown? How diverse is it? If it's just a bunch of white speakers, no, the answer is no. We are supporting people who are committed to this work.

So part of this process is also we're outlining right now exactly how to handle the no's, what we're going to do. And we're most likely going to, if I say, "I can't do this, I would like to offer my spot up to a Black or brown person instead", is likely the first stance.

And then we're also going to share our antiracism policy and our resources most likely. But we're getting all of that cleaned up right now. So that's a 100% coverage on asking other companies starting right now all the way through, well, indefinitely. But for 2021 we want to get through all of our vendors and get really clear on where everybody stands.

The other thing we're doing is within two years we want to have reached a 35% mark of our expenses, the money we spend with other companies, 35% of that money needs to go to vendors who are Black or brown. And so we want 35% Black or brown and we want an additional of that 35%, we want at least 15% of the 35% to hold one more marginalized identity within two years from now. So that means 35% Black or brown owned

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businesses, another 15% of that 35% are gay, or maybe differently abled, some other marginalized community, which this is super exciting to me.

So for year one we want a minimum of 10 to 15% of our expenses for 2021, really we're kind of in year one right now, we've started moving towards this. But for 2021 at least hit that 10 to 15% mark being spent with Black or brown businesses, and then by the end of 2022 our goal is to hit that 35% mark. And we've already started this process because when I look at the businesses we do business with, very white, extremely white group of people. Not that we don't have any Black or brown owned businesses that we do work with.

But we're looking at everything, not just things like our design business, who we buy design fabrics and products from, not just people who hang wallpaper for us or that kind of thing. But the software companies that we use, the different equipment we use, where we buy books. When I read so many books, where are we buying those from? All of the places we're spending money in the business.

I'm very excited, we just hired, and I just signed a contract with Tiffany Tolliver at the EmmaRose Agency to redo our website design which starts in January. And I'll start working with her initially in January, but we really get started primarily in March, and that's going to be really fun. So that's a first big hire and it's a Black owned business. So really exciting, but that's a big commitment. And you have to pay attention, you can't just say, "Yeah, let me just buy this thing, we need it." It takes research, so again, favorite businesses, favorite software, vendors, charities, any of that stuff.

And heck, we'd love to hear yours, if you have any of those things, favorite Black or brown owned businesses of any kind that might be relevant to us, you don't even have to – you can just send them. We'll decide. We can help you decide if they're relevant because you probably don't even have any idea where all the places we're spending money. But software, all kinds of stuff, we want to know, DM those to me in Instagram actually.

And then the last two things, marketing and branding, and company culture, we're still working on a lot of these. But marketing and branding's

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going to involve things like identifying where we can be more diverse and antiracist in those categories, like having more guests on our podcast, which we committed to and have been doing all of this year every third or fourth episode, if not more often is a Black or brown person. We will continue that.

We're trying to then move that same policy into any Facebook Lives or – well, not the ones I do by myself obviously, but like Instagram Live interviews, that kind of thing, also paying attention to that. And then as I said earlier, promoting Black and brown vendors, creatives, makers, and we're committing a certain amount of time. And we're working on those numbers right now, of putting stories in our social feed, inviting people into our main feed, highlighting people and businesses we love, all of that is what the marketing and branding's going to look like.

And then culture, it's kind of everything. So it overlaps a little bit with marketing and branding because it's going to be things like the content we create, when I do a webinar. I noticed when I started doing this work that all the stock photos that I used in webinars were all white people, like white, white, white. So now we have brown people, Black people, differently abled people, indigenous people, all kinds of sizes and shapes of people. And so we're really attentive to that now.

But also even the content itself, does it take into account all the things we need to really help people that are Black, or brown, or indigenous, or from other perspectives, who have had other life experiences? Because yeah, I'm a really good business coach, and I'm a really good interior designer, but I'm also a white one. So I need other perspective there.

So one of the next hires we're going to work towards after our new VA is hopefully hiring a Black coach or brown, Black or brown coach in the Design You coaching program when we're ready to add another coach, because we added coach Carrie this year, she's white. And I'd love to add a Black or brown coach who can work with any of our members who identify with these categories, these – was that even the right term, Black

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or brown person, these identities? And so having some perspective where I might not have perspective. So that's really exciting to me.

That's part of company culture, a lot of the stuff we talked about with HR that also overlaps with company culture. So just all the different ways we can show up in the world, the way we think, the way we believe, our values, there's a lot we can do with our culture, not just for Black and brown folks. But starting to move even after 2021 into focusing on some other identities, other marginalized identities.

So our main focus right now is antiracism and Black and brown folks because we want to not spread ourselves too thin as Trudi told me. I can't change the whole world at once but I can pick which corner of the world I want to change first. And this is where we're starting. But we have big plans, and dreams, and visions for what this looks like. And I'm really, really excited about it.

So there you have it. I didn't know this episode would be so long, but gosh, I had a lot to say at the beginning and we've done a lot of stuff. And I wanted you to know all about it. So there you have it. There is a lot of the work we've done. There's a lot of stuff we're going to be doing as you can see. And we are both highly committed to this work, but also very excited about it. And it really does feel like my chance to be on the side of history that's important to me.

So if you have any questions at all, and again, I'm not an expert, so if you have a question about is this equitable or is this appropriate? I'm not your girl for that. But I can direct you to the people who are. But if you have questions like how did you get started? How did you find people? Do you have a recommendation for what book should I read first? What person should I hire first? Any of that, if you're afraid of this work, if you're afraid to show up and do this work, if you're afraid to speak out about it, any of that stuff I would absolutely love to hear from you.

So message me on Instagram. Now, if you have hateful or ugly things, and you don't agree with any of this, no, I don't want to hear from you. That's not the work we're doing. I'm doing the work to help those people and

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encourage all of you who want to do this work. So message me, reach out. I'm so happy to hear from you.

I will be glad to be kind of a peer, a colleague that's moving alongside you in this work because the more of us who know that we're doing this together, the better job we can do, especially when things get hard, or scary, or we get complacent, that accountability is great too. So I would love to hear from you. And again, if you want to apply for our scholarship, be sure and do that by December 11th, we usually say 11:59 Pacific time for those. And we want you to get your application in. And you do that by going to tobifairley.com/scholarship.

And that's what I have for you today. That's what I have. And don't forget, all the stuff I've given you, scholarship, and our antiracism resources page and you can DM me. There's just so much for you here and I hope you love it. I encourage you to do the work. You don't have to start even a tenth as big as me, it is totally okay to dip your toe into it at the very beginning to get started. And don't be intimidated by the work, it is scary at times but it's also so worthy and so valuable. And when you really get into it in my opinion, it's so much fun.

Okay, so again, happy to share this with you, can't wait to hear from you. And I'll be back here next week, same place, same time, any time you want to listen. But that's what I've got for you today, so bye for now friends.

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