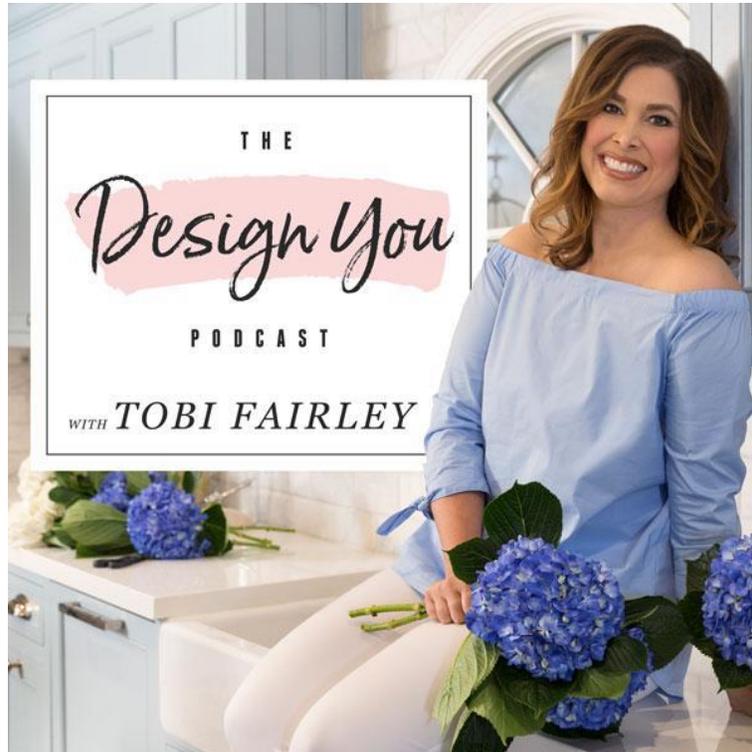


Ep #153: How to CEO for Female Entrepreneurs with Kris Plachy



Full Episode Transcript

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Tobi Fairley

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You are listening to the *Design You* podcast with Tobi Fairley, episode number 153.

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

Hi everybody. Welcome to the podcast today. I am excited about this episode. It's my friend and one of my own coaches, Kris Plachy. She's here to talk to us today about How to CEO. So there's so many of us that are visionaries, and creative, and we're good at our craft but dialing in the whole running the business, leading a business, CEOing thing is a whole other level. And you may remember that my word of the year for 2021 is lead.

And I've really been focusing; I focused all of 2020 of getting myself really set up to be a better leader, training myself as we talk about a lot in the episode. But really thinking differently about how to make my company all that it can be. And so if you struggle there, if you struggle being a manager, if you struggle kind of staying stuck in solepreneur mindset, even though really you want to be a bigger company or have bigger revenues then you're absolutely going to love this episode with Kris Plachy.

So get out your notepad, get ready to have some aha moments because there is a lot of just gold in this episode, okay, enjoy.

Tobi: Hey Kris, welcome to the Design You podcast. I'm thrilled you're here today.

Kris: I'm thrilled to be here.

Tobi: So fun, so we have gotten to be friends over the last year or so because you were one of the fabulous trainers at my master coach training last January, which it's hard to believe that was last year, right?

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Kris: It was last year when we were – well, you weren't, you weren't on the beach but I was.

Tobi: You were on the beach having a great time. I was in hell trying to become a master coach in a room with other, you know, four walls.

Kris: I did honestly feel sort of guilty when I would walk by your classroom every morning. I was heading out to the beach and you were all sitting there.

Tobi: So funny and yeah, that seems like a lifetime ago because it was before Covid. But anyway, since then we've also worked together because you coach female entrepreneurs, help us become better CEOs which we're going to talk about today. But tell everybody what else they need to know about you before we get started, besides the fact that you sat on the beach while I was miserably slaving away on my mind in a room with...

Kris: I didn't have any problem with it at all, at all. So yeah, that was the beginning of my 50th year and I thought this is going to be the best year ever. And it certainly was the most profound year ever, I will say that. What else do you need to know? Let's see. I've been in business for over eight and a half years. I started learning how to coach in 1994. Is the first coaching course I ever took. So I've been really studying and learning coach for the better part of my adult life. And I got my first management role in 1995.

And so my leadership, and management and coaching experience really again sort of runs that whole 20 – it's been about 26 years. And so I've really worked with every kind of leader. I've worked with frontline supervisors. I've worked with CEOs of multimillion dollar businesses and middle level.

And it wasn't until about three, four years ago that I started to sort of just attracting entrepreneurs because as you know most people who start their own business don't have any real management training or background.

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They start because they are good at a thing and then they build it. So I love working with entrepreneurs because of the flexibility that you have to make things happen, bigger companies that takes forever. There has to be meetings and everybody has to get onboard and entrepreneurs can just decide what they want to do and they do them.

And I've always worked with women. That's always just been a running theme in my personal and professional life. I led the Women's Leadership conference in the company that I used to work for. I've been doing retreats for the last seven years. I didn't do one this year.

Tobi: I know. I'm sad that you couldn't because what people don't know is your retreats are usually in Hawaii. And I wanted to be on your retreat in Hawaii, but did not happen.

Kris: I think this next time when I run one I might have to do two just because there's some pent out demand for that. So I just am uniquely interested in helping women thrive and really claim their leadership and watch women thrive and claim their space here. I think we need a lot more female CEOs, whether you're running a \$300,000 business, or a 3 million, or a 30 million or what have you, really owning that mindset, and that role in the women's business.

Tobi: Yes, I agree with you. So let's talk about that. What are the biggest kind of things that you see come up that women leaders really struggle with? In my industry kind of what I see a lot of is people just thinking of themselves more as like the service provider and not even really leading, not even understanding what leading is. Is that one of the big problems or are there are other things that are more prevalent than that?

Kris: No. I think that's a great one, especially for women who start a business, like a design business and it's you, and it's your vision, and your design. And then as you grow you hire people to help you. And so I think a lot of times we think of people on our team as our helpers. But we don't

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really think about that we're leading them. And so then we don't cultivate an actual sort of business environment.

It's more just centered around the founder, very solopreneur driven which is me, me, me, which there's nothing wrong with that and there are a lot of women I've met who that's the business they want. And I think as long as it's what you choose that's great. But I think a lot of women want something more but they sort of stay stuck in the solopreneur role because they don't feel confident in really transitioning into that we entrepreneur business that takes on a team, and develops the systems, and the roles, and the decision making that goes with that.

Tobi: Yeah. And several things you said there stood out to me because I think you're right. I think that even when we think we're running a business because we have these other people we are still thinking like a solopreneur mostly, like you said with just some helpers. And again I just don't even think we can comprehend what that we looks like. It's a lot of getting – as you know I've been doing this work now for over a year of getting out of the way more and learning to lead.

And that's a whole sort of practice in and of itself to even define what that means, to really – to be a leader. So what would people be looking at to decide if am I acting like a solopreneur or am I being a leader in my company, what differentiates those two things?

Kris: Well, I think when you're a solopreneur everything really is up to you. So even if you have some contractors who you give work to, that's very tactical. So ultimately you're running it, you're deciding, you're directing the way you want things to go. But it's very much focused on what's coming strictly from you. As you want to grow your business you don't have that capacity to take on all of the strategic direction of a growing business. You have to be able to lead.

And from my perspective, leadership is when you are able to harness the talents, the skills, and the brains of others to achieve bigger and better

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results than you could create for yourself. So the issue I think for a lot of women is they're not terribly uncomfortable with the leadership element, like painting the picture and seeing, most of us tend to be visionaries and very conceptual and creative.

The challenge is the management part that has to go with it, and the conversations you need to have, and the structures you need to put into place and the boundaries you need to have, and accountability. That's a big one. What do I do if they're not doing their job? And so those are the things I think that trip people up a lot. That's when most people come to me.

Tobi: Yeah, I agree with you completely. I think two things that you said there that are the key issues is a capacity because obviously every decision's running through you. There's only so many decisions you can make in a day. So you're holding your business small in a lot of ways, including revenue wise. If you want something bigger you can't continue to have everything go through you.

And then the other piece of that I'd love to talk about and get into is this whole management piece because I struggled with that for years. And then I decided, those great lovely thoughts we have that we think sound smart but they actually shoot us in the foot. I decided well, I'm a visionary and I'm not a good manager. And I'm just not supposed to be a manager. So I'll just have somebody else manage.

And that, I mean to go from your finger in every pie to just complete abdication of some parts and thinking well, I'm not good at this. I was just in the way, I should just hire someone. There's about 50 or 500 steps between those two extremes. And I think that I see a lot of all or nothing in this very thing, either I have to handle it all or I just need to get out of the way and neither of those I think really work. How do you start to move from one to the other?

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Kris: So it's interesting, I was just talking to a client this morning about this. And I wrote this, and I think it was a good visual. So it's going from me, the solopreneur, to we, which is you and them together, learning, developing, building to she or he, meaning them, he or she is in charge or he or she is independent enough. But what I see happen is we go from me to he or she, but we don't do the we part. And that's where we get so disappointed, and frustrated, and why can't they just do it? Why can't they just read my mind? I need to just hire people who know what they're doing.

But we still have to cultivate that other part. And so that's the part that's frustrating. How do I set expectations? How do I establish my vision? How do I establish the values of my company that are going to determine who I hire, and fire, and job descriptions? How do people know how to succeed and win? And what are the measures that we use to evaluate people's results? All of that is part of our cocktail that you have to develop as an entrepreneur that builds the infrastructure. I call it a leadership operating system.

Everything needs an operating system. It needs a mechanism that makes it go. And if you want to build a large business you have to have these pieces. You have to have your clear vision, your values, your expectations, your job descriptions, your measures in place. And then you're not making those decisions every day because it's already built. And then you're helping them know, this is what you do every day. This is how I'm going to measure it. This is how you know you're being successful.

This is what we're trying to achieve as a business instead of every time all the heavy lifting that so many women do because they don't identify that. And then you can't hold people accountable and you're just expecting people to sort of intuitively know what you want from them.

Tobi: Right, yeah, the mind reading expectation, whether it's spoken or not is just inherent in all of these problems. And the other thing I think I see that one of the reasons personally for me. And I think it's true for a lot of people

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that we skip the we part is by the time we finally get ready or believe we have the money, or the bandwidth, or whatever to get the she or he in there we're already overextended, overwhelmed. And we're ready to just hit that eject button and get the heck out of there.

And so it takes a lot of mind management and being coached to be willing to stay there longer, because you're already ready to go, you're like, "I'm out. I'm done. I'm tired. Let somebody else do this."

Kris: I'm done, yeah, I've already done that.

Tobi: Yeah. But you don't really mean that, you really don't. I mean you mean that you want out but you don't really mean just have somebody do it because then you never like what it is that they do ever, right?

Kris: Especially when you do that without any real direction, and guidance, and oversight, so yeah.

Tobi: Yeah, it's so interesting.

Kris: And the woman I was just talking to just asked that question. She said, "How do you do that? And you're so overwhelmed, you're so over-tasked, you know you have to hire someone. But just the notion of bringing someone on and training them is so overwhelming that it just feels easier to do it yourself."

And I said, "Well, listen, I don't know if you'll love this answer but here is the answer. You have to make a – you're going to deal with the time on one end or another. So you're either going to spend the time, maybe it's an hour extra a day or two hours a day for 30 days. I don't know. Getting this person dialed, on-boarded, their job built, their expectations clear. You're going to spend the time then or you're going to spend it later when you're doing it all yourself or you're correcting all the mistakes they made because you just threw it at them hoping they would figure it out, either way."

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Tobi: Yes. In some ways it feels to me like you can either do it once right now or you can kind of do it three times later. Because first you're going to correct, then you're going to fire them and do it yourself, then you're going to be overwhelmed again and you're going to start over with the same process that somebody new. So it's like do it once or do it three times in the really painful suffering sort of way, right?

Kris: You're absolutely right, yeah. So if you do it once and you document it, and you make Loom videos, and you make all the things that you can make to help people know how to help you in your business, then yeah. I was telling them, it's so fun, it's a dumb story but I made a Loom of how to upload a video onto my WordPress site for a program I'm running. And I hired someone new and I was like, "Oh yeah, I already did that." And I just sent them a Loom. And then they knew exactly what to do.

And we can do those things for very small tactical things and also big ones. With my copywriter, she would send me articles and then I would record a Loom of myself reviewing it and giving feedback. "I don't really like how this sentence reads. I think it should say this." We did that for several weeks when she first started working with me. And now she writes beautifully. She already did but she just hadn't found my voice yet. And now that process is how we cultivated the relationship we have. But if I had just hoped that she could find my voice I would have been very frustrated and so would she.

Tobi: Yeah. And isn't the frustration in that kind of gap between the truth or reality and our expectations? We want to hire someone and we want them to already be trained. And I've heard you talk about how there's a lot of times we don't have the luxury of time or whatever to hire someone that needs to be completely trained. I mean we can hire people that are at a certain level. But there's still a degree of the training them on you, and your ideas, and the way you like things done.

Because you can't skip the training piece of, yeah, but we're not taking little baby employees of whatever and trying that unless you just can't afford

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otherwise for some reason, is not helpful. Because it – I mean it maybe even never is helpful, because there's so much work to get someone from where they are maybe to up to your level of expectation.

Kris: Absolutely. We just interviewed three people just for a virtual assistant, very, very tactical role. And we gave all three of them projects to see how they would do and, again, very tactical work. So when you're talking about training I agree with you, it's like I don't have any problem helping you understand my business, my voice, the goals that we're trying to create, the brand that we use. But we had two people that we gave similar projects to. And the first step was we sent them our LastPass so they could login.

Well, one of the young women didn't know how to use LastPass. And that's a deal breaker because if I have to teach you how to use that, that's – in my mind if you want to be a VA that seems to be a basic thing that you should know. The other woman knew how to use LastPass so she could get into our applications. She just made – we could give her feedback on her choices for how she did what she did versus teaching her a very elementary skill. We have to be very aware of that as the person doing the hiring.

What am I willing to do here? I would not advise that you are hiring people that you have to teach how to do the technology that you use, but if you want to teach them how to use it in a way that you use it in your business that's different, yeah.

Tobi: Right, yeah, that's good. So I think when I talk to all of the entrepreneurs that I coach, creative entrepreneurs one of the questions that they have more than anything else is, "Who do I hire first? Or who do I need to hire next?" And people just seem so unclear on that process. So how do you recommend people figure that out? And is there one particular job that you think people should hire above everybody else first and foremost to get dialed in?

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Kris: I don't know if there's a job. I think, I mean I think a lot of your clients are online, have an online presence, online business. So if that's the case my recommendation is a solopreneur's first hire, not a digital, or a graphic designer, or a photographer, or a podcast producer, those are contract roles. But really your first kind of right hand support is an administrative role. It's an implementation role.

Tobi: So a VA or maybe an executive assistant depending on how much support you need. You dial in, is it business support and techie stuff? Is it all the like support for me?

Kris: Or is it my life on my calendar?

Tobi: Yeah, all that stuff, okay. And you just see which one is most pressing, that would take the most pressure off of you or open up the most bandwidth?

Kris: Yeah. Well, it can be literally another set of hands. So posting things on social media, making sure your email sequences are dialed, you might still write them but they set them up and they do the tags and they do all the things. So you want to bring on hands before you bring on brains.

And then after you've gotten that and you're used to delegating, and you're used to sort of holding people accountable and setting expectations, then we might bring in someone who's more of a digital strategist at a higher level that can start to do a lot of the thinking also, because that's a higher level person to manage.

Tobi: That's really interesting. And I've heard you talk about in your course, entrepreneurial management, the difference between a strategist and a tactician. And that's what you're talking about. Some people are just doers and they're not going to be the thinkers even though we wish they would be sometimes. And then there's other people that are actually going to ideate and strategize, and maybe they still have some level of tactical work too.

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But you're going to let them start playing a role in the decisions and the thinking, right?

Kris: Yes. And for all of the entrepreneurs listening, unless you're running a 10 million dollar business, if you're the 3 to 5 million or below, anybody you hire has to be a producer. So we cannot get in the business of hiring strategists who are unwilling or unable to also roll up their sleeves and put a video on a WordPress site.

Tobi: So good, yeah.

Kris: Yes, because you're not running, most of my clients are running lean, entrepreneurial culture is totally different than corporate culture. And strategists in corporate culture, their job is to sit in meetings and come up with ideas and then have more meetings about the ideas. Their job is not to do the work of it. And I've seen over, and over, and over again, people really, really struggle with this.

So when you hire that first implementation role, that assistant, that executive admin, whatever your tactic is for you, that person nine times out of ten is not going to be the strategist for you. It isn't their skill set and that's okay. There's nothing wrong with that. What happens like you said is we try and get them into a role, we try to promote them, give them more responsibility and they crash and burn and then we end up having to let them go. So as you're growing just keep in mind everybody you hire has to be a producer, everybody.

Tobi: And that just means not only doing things on the task list but you also have to be thinking about making money as well. You're not the only one making money while all these people you're paying. And then they're like, "See you, I'm out of here, it's 5 o'clock." And you're the only one, yeah.

Kris: Well, they have to be involved in the production of revenue, yeah, whatever that is. And I mean sometimes people are a little far removed from that. But it's more I think we tend to, I think a lot of entrepreneurs,

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women anyway, fantasize about having that Director of Operations, that second, you know, that right hand who can manage the whole thing for you. That person when you're ready to hire them needs to also be willing to work like you do which is if you need to get your hands dirty you do.

And I think a lot of times I've watched clients hire these Director of Ops that are too strategic and they can't do it. And then they don't like their job either.

Tobi: Yeah. I think one of the things that surprises me about you a lot is hearing how much of the detail work you are still involved with at least from the inception. So that it, like you said, making that Loom video or whatever, the fact that you're the one in there doing that work to say, "Here's how I want this loaded into WordPress", instead of hiring someone else to do it. I think that surprises me a lot, which is a good thing. But that's interesting because I thought as the CEO you'd be getting out of the weeds of those. But you can't until after the video, right?

Kris: Until it's done, yeah. And so that's what, you know, and so actually it's interesting you should say that because we had our annual meeting, our planning meeting yesterday. And we did just hire this new VA and she's going to support my digital presence strategist. She's really going to be her right hand.

And so I was talking to her about a strategy that I've used for years that I actually haven't taught in a while and it's called Daily, Weekly, Monthly where you sit down and you write out, okay, these are all the things that this role needs to do each day. These are all the things this role needs to do each week, and what day, and what time if it needs to be done. And then monthly, so it's that sort of. And I was explaining it to her and I know she totally understood me. But then today I was I have to create that first so she knows what I even mean in my brain.

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Because I don't even know what, like I just saw it when I was talking about it but I didn't show her it. So just before this podcast that's what I was doing was just making a sample of a daily, weekly, monthly for a technical VA.

Tobi: Yeah. And I think that's so important because I think that that happens so often as visionaries, especially extrovert visionaries like me that we just talk the idea out. And then we're like, "Okay, well, I told them what to do." But there's a huge difference between telling or speaking something and actually showing somebody what you want to do on paper, or video, a way that they can go back to it, they can reread it, they can see it, they can hear it.

And I think a lot of the chaos in our businesses comes between the, well, you said. And then earlier I was like, "I didn't say that." And they're like, "You absolutely said it." But you don't have the documentation to say what really is the task or exercise here, right? Yeah.

Kris: Yeah. And what does it look like when it's done? I think we tend to just think that people will see it the same way we do. And the only way that really can happen is to design it. And I think, I do think a lot of people resent that. They're like, "Why should I have to do that? What am I paying them for?" Well, you know what? Right now you're paying them to deploy and develop your tools and resources to make your vision happen. Over time when you have your business grow you will be able to harness and leverage the experience and knowledge of others but not right away.

Tobi: Yeah. And I think that is the difference. I think that's what you said before of the me, the she, we want it to happen instantly. And we've got to be willing, and the we part might take a year, it might take two years, it might take a month. But it might take longer and we have to be expecting that it's an investment of time in these people. I think that was a big shift for me when I went from the frustration of why aren't they supporting me? To completely opposite mindset of how am I going to invest in them so that they can start to support me?

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And that was a totally different approach too. And it's funny because we think the other one is leading. We're like, "Get out of the way." Boss them around, tell them what to do, we're a leader. The leading is being willing to be in the weeds with them as long as you need to so they can do a good job, right?

Kris: Yeah. I mean we also want to hire people who want to work for us. And leadership is seeing people, listening to people, engaging with them, letting them be seen. I think we get very – women especially, female entrepreneurs are 400 miles an hour. And we all have a different style but we have to be careful that we don't just blow past people because we're fast and we have a lot of ideas.

And that's part of the work that I do in the How to CEO is let's just learn how to meet with people, and coach them, and connect with them. And give them feedback and that will be the long tale here of you growing a multimillion dollar business is that relationship you develop with people. It will not be me writing out my daily, weekly, monthly or recording a Loom.

It will be building a culture of people who I have invested in, who I've built relationships with who are engaged, and committed, and loyal, and excited about what we're creating. And also they know I feel that way about them. It's a mutual exchange. And I think that's a super power that women have if you tap into it.

Tobi: Yeah. But you can't go into that thinking I already have zero time, just get some stuff done and get it off of me because you've got to have space if you're going to invest in people. Because I've done it the other way before where you just get a bunch of people in there and nobody's getting any time of mine. And the overarching story is, "Don't bother her, she doesn't have time." And that does not – I can tell you, that for sure does not reap the results. That does not work.

Kris: It's doesn't work.

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Tobi: Just in case you were wondering, that doesn't work. But I think we're surprised at how much time and space, no, I mean it's helpful if you organize that time and you're strategic about it. But I think that we lie to ourselves sometimes about the time it takes to invest in people.

Kris: Yeah. And I also think we lie to ourselves about how hard it is. I don't think it takes much. I think it just, you know, there's the tactical energy, it's kind of like raising children. And I don't mean that to be patronizing but when your children are young it's physically exhausting. Oh my gosh, I have to tie those shoes and do a bath, I'm just exhausted all the time. And then when they're older it's emotional. And that to me is the same evolution of an employer, initially it's, "Okay, yeah, no, I don't really like that font and can you use a different color?" And it's just so that.

And then as we grow in that relationship it's, "How are you? What do you need from me? Are you enjoying your work? What can I do to support you? Why have you made 12 mistakes this week, what's happening in your brain? Are you overworked? Are you overcommitted?" It's a very different relationship.

Tobi: Yeah. And I think also when I learned to acknowledge that people that I'm kind of developing in my company are going to have the same fears and emotions I do. And I haven't acknowledged them. And I'm like, well, of course they're afraid of failure. Of course they're afraid to put themselves out there. Of course they don't want to get things wrong. And so if that stuff impacts us at the level that we need major life coaching or mindset work, of course they need that too. And are we acknowledging that and investing in that I think which is huge.

So I want to talk before we wrap up today about accountability because you mentioned it early on as an issue. I think it's a huge issue on both sides of the coin. I think there is the accountability of having people follow-up and you check in with them, like delegation and making sure things are done well. But what I see also so much especially with creative entrepreneurs is

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us following through and doing what we say we're supposed to and showing up like an emotional adult in our own business.

And so are those related? Are they completely different? And can we speak to – and you can take whichever one you want first. But I think that there's two parts to that accountability piece, us being responsible but also us being honest, and direct, and asking for what we need from our team.

Kris: Yeah. Okay. So that's really good. I love that. So accountability to me is, I break the word up, it's my ability to account for your ability. So accountability has gotten a bad rap because it tends to mean, a lot of people use it to mean when things don't go well. But really what I'm doing is I'm accounting for your ability which requires my presence. So if I'm not paying any attention to you it's very hard for me to hold you accountable and to have a conversation about your results. And that's really all we're talking about.

And I just – I don't know if you can see it but there's a model behind me that I did with a client today, that her thought is she's making me look bad.

Tobi: Her team member.

Kris: And so the founder's feeling is shame. And her action is to hide from the employee. And so of course the result is she's making her own brand look bad because she's not holding this employee accountability because she's so in her own feelings story. So accountability, it sounds so easy, you're absolutely right. Just look back and ask them why they did or didn't do something. But we have so much loaded in there about I don't want to hurt their feelings. I don't want to create conflict. I mean you name it, there's lots in there.

So courage and emotional maturity are part of the secret elixir to be creating an accountability structure and culture in your business for you to them. Now, the other side of it that you said is, "I'm used to working all by

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myself and I don't want to have to tell anybody what I'm going to do and by when." This is a common female founder.

Tobi: So true, yeah.

Kris: I'm a creative, I'm a creative and my podcast lady she's divine, she's always, "Do you have a podcast?" "I don't feel it yet." But that's not how we run a business Plachy, how about we just have four by the 15th of every month and then everybody knows what their topics are going to be. So that's us growing up and recognizing we don't have a jobby. And everybody else, now we have 12 people working with us, 10 people working with us, their work is dependent on your work.

Tobi: Yeah. They don't get to just show up and be like, "I'm not feeling it today." You'd be like, "What in the hell, you better be feeling it because what am I paying you for?"

Kris: Exactly. So it is, I love that you said it because I think it's all about emotional maturity, and structures, and the thoughts you have about if you're a creative, I know, I've just recently had this conversation because I'm going to start writing a blog again. I haven't done in years and I'm resisting, but what if I don't feel inspired? How am I going to write? And of course I've got Steven Pressfield in my mind.

Tobi: I was going to say, yeah, totally, yeah, write anyway even when you don't feel like it.

Kris: Yes, inspiration has to find you working. So yeah, so I think you're spot on. And I think what's great about leadership to me which is much like raising a family or being in a serious relationship with a partner is it just teaches you what you need to learn about yourself. And for the willing and the self-aware, if you're willing to demonstrate humility and recognize, okay, I'm not doing that right, I probably should fix that.

There's so much, I certainly would say running an amazing team, having an amazing team is right up there to me to having an amazing family. Working

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with people who all know what they need to do, who love what they do, who are engaged and committed, that is magic to me.

Tobi: I love it, yes.

Kris: And all worth it, it's all worth it when you get there.

Tobi: And I want to just circle back quickly because I agree with you so much. That gives me the warm and fuzzies to think about my people that way. And I think so often we're not because we're getting frustrated or we're mad. But I think to build on that I just want to just restate what you said about accounting for your ability. Because what I took from that that I hadn't really heard before and I think you're so right is that we use accountability to mean they're in trouble or they did something wrong and I need to go get onto them.

And how do I do it without making everybody feel uncomfortable? Which that's a piece of it, but what wisdom I took from that that's so helpful is if you're accounting for their ability all the time, the good and the bad, especially the good, then I think it would be a whole lot easier to just say, "Hey, and we fell short here, let's look at that." But if they never hear from you until they're in trouble or you want something then that's not going to really create that kind of relationship you're talking about.

So I love this idea of focusing on accounting for their abilities, especially the things you want more of, especially the things that you really liked or that they did really, really well. And that's a shift in the really kind of definition of accountability to me and that's so good.

Kris: Yeah. And it's hard, a lot of people have a hard time remembering that, to acknowledge what's amazing and not just that way. You're so amazing. Every now and then that's fun. But be substantive. That thing you wrote was really, really stunning. I am so impressed with, whatever, be really specific with the feedback, it goes a long way. And you're absolutely right.

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We were talking about accountability in the How to CEO program and my team was on the call. And so we were talking about it and their feedback was the way they experience it in my business when things don't go well is it's always a learning opportunity instead of a scolding thing. Okay, so this didn't go the way we thought it would, what do we know now that we didn't know?

And I think a lot of us – I don't have this which is I think part of why it's easier for me to coach women. A lot of women have very, very low thresholds for mistake tolerance. And I'm not usually that bothered by mistakes. Every now and then something might really get under my skin. But for the most part I don't lose my mind over mistakes. I know some women are afraid they're going to lose their whole business if there's a mistake. Working in that environment is paralyzing.

And that's why so many employees are so dependent on their boss because they don't want to fail. So they're so afraid that you'll be mad that they made a mistake that they will come to you and ask for your opinion on everything. And you can't get away. So that intolerance you have for mistakes is a paralyzing effect, had a paralyzing effect on the whole business.

So that's again another reason why women have got to do some work as you grow because you're just going to keep getting invited, that there are going to be so many freaking mistakes that get made as your company grows.

Tobi: Yeah. I would say that's the single biggest shift I made in my business in my 20s and 30s when I was already a business owner, a low tolerance for mistakes, fly off the handle. Somebody was always on the shit list or in trouble. And it was exhausting to everyone. It is a recipe for burnout. And then when we consciously created Project Fail in our company and learned how to...

Kris: I forgot about that.

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Tobi: Yeah. We've consciously, we did, and it wasn't me failing, I was pretty good at failing myself of course because then I just would clean it up. But letting someone else fail, that was an unheard of thing. So when I consciously chose to do Project Fail and we've created a culture now where it's okay to fail, not just silly stupid fails because you didn't try. But it's okay to try something and get it wrong and then be willing like you said, to look at the feedback. In fact it's welcome because it means that not only are we growing, we're having other people besides me try and do things.

A total game changer, so I think that you're exactly right, but I like the way you articulated it because I don't know that I've said it exactly that way before. And I think it's helpful for people to ask themselves what their tolerance level is for mistakes, even just kind of on a scale from one to ten, where do I fit? Because that in and of itself, that being in that discomfort and letting other people fail at something and not making it the absolute end of the world.

I mean literally we would drive three hours to an installation and leave the lampshades at home and I would act like someone should literally go to the guillotine for that.

Kris: I was just going to say, guillotine. Why did we both want to say the same thing?

Tobi: "Are we that effing stupid?" This was in my 20s. And now I'm just like, "Can we just have those shipped up here tomorrow? What does that cost? Okay, cool." Yeah, we're humans; we forgot the damn lampshades, okay, yeah. But it's such a difference.

Kris: And you know what I will tell you, it's really interesting is the clients I have who have that can be really intolerant even of mistakes that I make. And so I'm always intrigued, I'm like okay, this is so – it's not just with your team. So yeah, I mean, and the person that suffers is the person with the intolerance, to your point. Oh my gosh, it was just a little mistake. Can you let it go? I'm laughing over here and you're losing it. It's just not useful.

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I remember, this was years ago, I was in a Weight Watchers meeting, Aunt Mary who was our Weight Watchers gal and she was amazing. And she said, “Listen to me, if it’s not death or disease”, she had a southern accent, “If it’s not death, disease or divorce, let it go.” And I’ll never forget it. I was like, okay, that sounds good. I’m stealing that, death, disease or divorce, okay, and even the divorce thing, I don’t know [inaudible].

Tobi: And it depends on whose death, if it’s yours then you just get to forget all the worries anyway so that’s all good too.

Kris: Yeah. So we all need a little perspective. And I like to think of it the other way, look at this; you built a business that you’re making money in. And you get to go to work and do this thing in the world that you love and get paid. And then other people will come and you’ll pay them. And it didn’t exist but for you. I mean that’s just freaking magic.

Tobi: It is.

Kris: I mean that’s magical. It’s ridiculously magical. So you know what? If the emails don’t go out on time or the initials on the thing are the wrong – really, come on. But there’ll be people who fight to keep that level of perfection and I feel bad for that. You don’t have to do that, and thrive and be successful in the world.

Tobi: I agree. My favorite, just as a quick wrap up story and then I want you to tell people where to find you and all the brilliance you do. But some of my favorite moments of you coaching me are when I’m arguing to keep something and you’re laughing at me. You’re laughing while I’m mad and arguing to keep something. And then you’re probably like, “Okay, well, if you want to hold on to that, be my guest but I’m just going to tell you, it doesn’t seem too helpful.” And then of course I’m just like, “Fine, Kris, fine, I’ll let it go.”

And then like an hour later I’m like, “God.” How do we get so – we get so attached to some of these things, I think it’s so interesting that...

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Kris: Well, that is the myopathy of an entrepreneur because so many, you know, that's what's great, that you coach and you have to get out of your space. Whether you're in the coaching program or a mastermind, you have to get out of your world because as entrepreneurs we think we are the super special, super different. You don't understand, I'm in the interior design industry, you don't understand, I'm a nurse, you don't understand, I'm an architect.

Tobi: All the special unicorns, there's so many special snowflakes, all of us, and unicorns and all things.

Kris: Yeah, every single client will at some point hint at that, "Well, you don't understand." People are people. Humans, you hire humans, it doesn't matter what your business is. It's the same dynamics that we all run into. So yeah, we can have our little tantrums and we survive. Your tantrums take about 15 to 25 minutes.

Tobi: You've timed me. At least I'm efficient at my problems.

Kris: Yeah, I mean you get there, you do get there. But I've just learned, okay, she wants a fight for this for now so I'm just not going to try until we're ready to like...

Tobi: Until you see a little crack, a little bit of light filtering through and you're like okay, now I can go in.

Kris: Yeah, it's fine, I'm impossible to coach. So I get it, listen to me, I need to be thumped over the head with a club.

Tobi: It's so good.

Kris: Yeah, when we're locked in we're locked in.

Tobi: That's so funny. Well, if people want to be thumped over the head by you.

Kris: On purpose.

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Tobi: Yes, if they choose to do that and to pay for it how do they find you? And tell them a little bit about that.

Kris: Yeah. So we offer a program called How to CEO for female entrepreneurs. It's a 12 week deep dive where you create your CEO blueprint for your team leadership. So we start with your CEO mindset, then we build your leadership operating system and then I teach you my coaching process, my delegating process, my hiring process, my firing process. And we talk a lot about accountability.

And then we have office hours, coaching hours where you can come and really triage those things you're dealing with in your business while you're also applying the tools that I'm teaching you through the blueprint. So that's a live 12 week course that we start several times a year and you can find out everything you want to know at howtoceojoin.com.

I do also do private as you've referenced, private coaching and you can learn a lot more about that either on my website krisplachy.com and that's Kris with a K. P.I.a.c.h.y.com. And then I'm also on Instagram, Kris Plachy Coach, that's it, right? Yeah, I know, it's terrible.

Tobi: I think so. I don't know. I just follow you.

Kris: I think that's right.

Tobi: But yes, they'll find you. And you have a great podcast that if people aren't quite even ready but they want to know more about your philosophy. You talk a lot about this weekly on your podcast, right?

Kris: Yeah, and that's called Lead Your Team. It's all about the team, so yeah. And everyone that I work with are female entrepreneurs. And the How to CEO program, I used to only work with women at seven figures in their business, but with How to CEO we've now been able to make that work so we can support women who might just have one contractor.

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And then we have different coaching office hours for women based on where they are with their business size. So that's been really great too because I know there's a lot of women who are at like 300,000, 400,000 and they've got two people that help them out and they're really struggling with how to take the next steps. And I would much rather meet someone there. I just started working with another client who's at 10 million and hasn't done any of this work. And it's a lot of work to do.

Tobi: How do they even get to 10 million without doing any of this work, just a lot of hustle and suffering.

Kris: Yeah, and a couple of good people, you can make it work. But eventually it just can't be scalable and it does wear, it just wears people out.

Tobi: Yeah, awesome. Well, not that that's awesome. It's awesome that you're working with. So, well, this was so fun. I always have fun with you, always fun. Thank you for being here.

Kris: Me too, yeah.

Tobi: Yeah. And Kris and I would love to hear from any of you out in the world of Instagram, we're on there.

Kris: Yes please, tell us that you listened and share it.

Tobi: Yes, please do that, alright. Well, I will see you. That's it, bye.

Kris: Okay. Thank you. Bye.

So good, I always learn so much from Kris and she's just fun and as she says, doesn't really take things too seriously. I mean she's obviously a serious business woman that she doesn't freak out about the small stuff, which is one of my favorite things about her and about working with her. So we told you all the great places, you can find her at krisplachy.com, at her

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podcast. I highly recommend listening to her podcasts. You can follow her on Instagram, and check her out because she is really, really great at helping people be better CEOs, helping women be better CEOs.

Okay, so that's what I have for you today. I will see you back here really soon with another episode of the Design You Podcast. Bye for now.

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