

Ep #46: Arrival Fallacy



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With Your Host

Desi Creswell

Ep #46: Arrival Fallacy

Hey designer, you're listening to episode 46. This is the one where I'm talking about Arrival Fallacy, a concept that explains that defeated feeling that often comes after a goal is accomplished.

Welcome to *The Interior Design Business CEO*, the only show for designers who are ready to confidently run and grow their businesses without the stress and anxiety. If you're ready to develop a bigger vision for your interior design business, free up your time, and streamline your days for productivity and profit, you're in the right place. I'm Desi Creswell, an award-winning interior designer and certified life and business coach. I help interior designers just like you stop feeling overwhelmed so they can build profitable businesses they love to run. Are you ready to confidently lead your business, clients, and projects? Let's go.

Hello designer, welcome back to the podcast. As always, so happy to have you here. I'm recording this after doing some behind-the-scenes work on the new five week coaching intensive that I have coming for you. It is called To-Do To Done. It's actually an idea that I've had for almost a year now that I've wanted to execute on, but I have not had the capacity or did not want to increase capacity to accommodate it based on some of the other priorities in my business.

So, if you've ever heard me talk about goal setting, you know that I have a quarterly planning process. So To-Do To Done has been put in my what I call planning parking lot where I put my ideas that I'm excited about and revisit on a quarterly basis to see what makes sense with where my business is headed, what I want to layer in and execute on, what's going to need to wait. And To-Do To Done has been on there for a while, but I finally am moving forward with it, which is really exciting.

I can't wait to bring this to you. Like I said, it's a five week coaching intensive where you're going to be able to take a project you've been meaning to do or putting off, but haven't had the time to execute, and take that project from being on your to-do list and get it done, thus the name.

It's also going to be at a super accessible price because I want you all to learn these foundational tools. Enrolment opens up next week, September 11th. You're going to want to get on my newsletter list, which is Monday Mindset.

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You'll see the link in the show notes because I'm going to be sending out an email when enrollment opens with an early bird discount that you definitely do not want to miss.

We're going to start To-Do To Done at the beginning of October. I thought that would be a great time with those back-to-school vibes. And we will meet consistently for five weeks where you'll have time to get coached by me, get feedback, and also we have consistent work sessions built into this format as well so that you have the opportunity to practice prioritizing this project and having focused work time. I am just so excited to bring this to you and can't wait to work with you inside this program.

If you listened to last week's episode, you know that I talked about honoring your desires, goals and vision for your company as a design business owner, especially in the face of doubt that is a natural part of the process. The topic I want to talk about today is called arrival fallacy, which I thought would be helpful following that episode. Definitely go back and listen to episode 45 on desires and doubt if you haven't, but you definitely also don't need to listen to that one before listening to this one.

Today I want to explore arrival fallacy from two different angles, and of course let's first start out by defining arrival fallacy so we're on the same page. And I'll explain a little bit how I see this show up for interior design business owners.

The term arrival fallacy was originally coined by a psychology expert Tal Ben-Shahar. Isn't that an amazing name? And really, it's this illusion that once we make it, once we attain our goal or reach our destination, we'll have this lasting happiness and fulfillment. The worries, the stress, it'll all be gone and we can finally relax and just soak up and bask in our achievement, which I think we all know is pretty short-lived in reality.

And that's really where we have to talk about this belief that there, wherever there is for you, will be better than it is here. Often I see designers spending a lot of time daydreaming about when your business will be better, when you'll be better, whatever that idealized future is. I really see this show up at every stage

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of business, whether it's a new business or a really established business and the owner is wanting to continue to progress.

The experience that I want to highlight here, and I think this is something that we've all gone through, is that we set a goal, we achieve that goal and then shortly after that we start thinking, so what? Or well I didn't work that hard. Or what's next? You might even feel a little letdown or empty. You thought you'd be flying high and permanently happy after achieving that next milestone, but shortly after you arrive at the goal you find that that is a fallacy. It is not true. It's a mistaken belief.

And what's so interesting about this to me, is that even though we've all been through the cycle of thinking there is better than here, that we're going to be happier, that everything's going to be better when we achieve that goal, and then we find out that that's not true, we don't opt out of that belief cycle. We really continue to participate in it.

Once we get far enough from that inflated idea of the goal and then the resulting disappointment that the reality of hitting the goal is different than we imagined, we often then just go back to fantasizing about it being better when, insert a new goal. I know I've certainly experienced this. And I can clearly picture myself having this experience when I ran my design practice.

I'd land a big project. I was ecstatic for a few hours. And then I would start worrying about how I was going to get it all done. If I was qualified. Would I be able to ever sign another contract like this? The thing that I wanted so badly would be achieved, and then it was almost like I ruined it for myself.

And I've even experienced this with personal goals. I used to run a lot more than I do now, but back then I had thought it would be great if I ran a 5k because I wasn't a runner at all. But as soon as I ran the 5k I started thinking that wasn't enough and that I should run a half marathon. And then while training for that half marathon, I was setting my sights on how it would be better if I ran a full marathon.

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Then I'd be a real runner. But, of course, we know there's things that are beyond the full marathon. There's the ultra marathon, there's all these different things you can do. You keep moving the goalpost.

This arrival fallacy or really wanting to link our emotional well being and happiness to the achievement of a goal when we can't do that really relates to perfectionism. And I work with a lot of designers who have perfectionistic tendencies. I think these tendencies are really prevalent in our design industry, and that's why I have an entire module on perfectionism in my group program Out Of Overwhelm.

But in my opinion, perfectionism is so closely linked with a tendency to engage with this concept of arrival fallacy. It's believing that when the project is perfect, when I'm perfect, when my business is perfect, everything will be good and I can finally relax. Except it won't be perfect.

When you're in the habit of believing that there is better than here, you're going to also then have the habit of moving the goalpost. Moving on to the next goal very quickly, and never letting yourself actually arrive and enjoy the success that you've created. Which, to me, is so disheartening and really breaks my heart for all of us who are chasing the accomplishment so that we can believe certain things about ourselves or feel better about ourselves. And then not even allowing it when we achieve those things that we think are the ticket to success.

As I said earlier, I see this concept of arrival fallacy showing up at every stage in business. I've worked with a lot of designers who have grown teams, now sell their own product lines, things that designers newer to the field really look up to and aspire to. And these clients are proud of what they've accomplished.

And at the same time, they can look back and see the simplicity of being a solo practitioner and yearn for those times. They've "arrived," but this is such a great example of how we can see that there are both sides. There isn't better than here, and here isn't better than there.

The newer designers or the designers that are solo practitioners that are working on growing their business, they think it'd be better if they were more established, had a huge team, had these other feathers in their caps. And those

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are the designers who are thinking, oh, it would be so much more simpler if it was just me. Or it was easier when I had less projects running.

There's only right where you are, right here today, and you get to decide how much you want to enjoy that and soak it up. And I want to be clear for any of you that are thinking that acknowledging the power of a rival fallacy means that we should settle for mediocracy or not set goals, that is absolutely not what I'm saying at all.

I love to set goals. I work with my clients on setting and achieving goals. I think it's a beautiful thing. But I do think that when we know how to balance goal setting with acknowledging that arrival fallacy exists, it can make the pursuit of goals enjoyable and so much less stressful.

I also think that when you accept that you never arrive in some blissful permanent state, you remove the urgency to escape the present and pursue the future at this really rapid graspy pace. If you're thinking this is going to slow down the achievement of your goals, that is simply not true. The opposite is true.

When you release the urgent, frenetic energy from goal attainment, it actually frees you up to take more effective action. If you know that you can be happy where you are and where you're going, you get out of your head because it doesn't feel like everything is riding on getting to that single destination. I don't think that we're ever going to get rid of the presence of arrival fallacy, but we can learn to work with its presence.

And the first way to do that is simply to notice when you're thinking thoughts like, I'll be happy when, or it'll be more manageable when, or it'll be better when. This type of thinking prevents you from enjoying the here and now and the success you've currently created and seeing the positives of your current reality. And it also has you more focused on what you'll be doing in the future, instead of what you can be doing now to actively create that future that you're spending all that time imagining.

And once you have that awareness of those thought patterns, then commit to interrupting them and not using those types of phrases. Words matter. When you stop saying things like it'll be better when or even just thinking them, you

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stop reinforcing the belief for yourself. When you stop reinforcing the belief, you're going to create a different experience for yourself emotionally and take different more effective action towards your goal.

Decide what you want to believe instead when you start thinking those, "it'll be better when" thoughts to beliefs that are more useful and keep you grounded. It will be totally fun to achieve that thing and you can be really proud of where you're at right now.

The other thing you can do to balance out the presence of arrival fallacy is to look for pieces of your future vision or your future self that you already have or already embody. There are glimmers of that future that are here right now, and you're missing them. And that means you're missing opportunities to then amplify the evidence you can use to increase your daily satisfaction and happiness and continue to motivate you to move forward.

When you look at your future goals, or the future version of you who has created that goal, there are going to be things that are different and there's also going to be things that are the same. And so you can look to your future self and see what you think will be different, but also what's going to be the same. How are you already that person? How are you already acting in that way, even if you don't have that exact result?

This last way that I'm going to share with you how to work with arrival fallacy really is a concept that has radically transformed how I relate to challenges and goals. And that is knowing that life and business is always going to be 50/50. And what I mean by 50/50 is that there will always be positive outcomes and there will always be negative outcomes when you arrive at that goal or destination.

Just like there are results and circumstances you have today that you would deem good or bad, there's going to be the same blend of that when you get to that goal. It's just going to be a different flavor. There's that saying new level, new devil, I don't personally love that saying but it does get at where I'm going.

With new results will come new challenges. As a one designer shop, you struggle to wear all of the hats and get it all done. When you have a team you're

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going to encounter the obstacles of management. When you start out your overhead is relatively low. As you grow your business you tend to need to invest to keep growing and that comes with more responsibility and weight.

When I recently found myself wishing it wasn't 50/50 when I came across some obstacles in my business, I had to remind myself that honestly I would be bored if I really just set the goal, achieved it automatically and then coasted forever.

The growth of goals and all that entails is really what keeps things interesting. Knowing that there will be challenges, obstacles and problems at any level, that is your opportunity as the CEO to decide which problems you want to be solving for in your business. And also enjoy all that is going well, because there's always both.

What I want you to hear loud and clear today is that if you're waiting to reach your goals to start living, working and feeling the way that you want to, I want that to stop. The joy, the fun, the satisfaction that you crave is not dependent on your goal, it's here right now. It is here for you to take now and in the future.

When you start generating these emotions now and allowing yourself to feel what you think you'll feel when you do arrive at that destination, you will actually make more progress and create more abundance, both in how fully you enjoy your experience of running your business, but also tangibly in what you're able to achieve. It is so fun to show yourself what you can do and what you're capable of. And you can also do it without hanging your hat on the fallacy of arrival.

If you want to enjoy your life and your business while pursuing growth in your interior design business, and you want a high-touch holistic coaching experience, be sure to click on the link in the show notes to learn more about private coaching. Everything we talked about today with setting goals, feeling confident in your goals and enjoying the process is something we can dive deep into with this fully customized coaching experience.

When you go to the link in the show notes, you can learn all about the private coaching experience. And you can also schedule your complimentary

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consultation where we can get on Zoom live and I can answer any additional questions and ensure it's really a great fit for both of us.

That's what I have for you today. And in the next episode, you're going to want to listen because we're going to talk about how to stop procrastinating on that thing you've been putting off. And I know that there is something that you've been putting off because it feels like there is always something more pressing. Until then, I'm wishing you a beautiful week and I will talk to you in the next episode.

Have you ever wished I could be your coach? If so, keep listening. For a limited time when you leave a rating and review for the podcast you'll be entered to win a one on one coaching session with me. I can answer your questions and coach you on your unique challenges.

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Just click the link in the show notes to submit your review so I know how to get in touch. I can't wait to select a winner and it might be you. I'll talk to you next week.

Thanks for joining me for this week's episode of *The Interior Design Business CEO*. If you want more tips, tools and strategies visit www.desicreswell.com. And if you're ready to take what you've learned on the podcast to the next level, I would love for you to check out my signature group coaching program, Out of Overwhelm.