

**Ep #57: CEO Transformation:
Isabella Patrick's Journey to Success**



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Desi Creswell

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Hey designer, you're listening to episode 57. This is a really special episode. I have a client of mine, Isabella Patrick of Isabella Patrick Design, on the show today. She's going to be sharing her experience in Out of Overwhelm and also so many nuggets about growing her business and becoming the designer CEO that she is. I can't wait for you to listen.

As a reminder, Out of Overwhelm is open for enrollment now through December 6th. This is my signature group coaching program where you're going to go from overwhelmed and stressed and stretched thin, to being in control of your time, your projects and your profits. And you're also going to enjoy your business.

All you have to do is click the link in the show notes and you can submit a quick form to tell me about you and your business and let me know that you want to join us when we start this January 2024. And now, onto the episode.

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.

Desi: Hello designer, welcome back to the show. Today is a very special episode. I have one of my long-term clients here with me, Isabella Patrick. And I'm so excited to share her with you all. And I'll give her the mic for just a minute here so she can introduce herself.

Isabella, thank you for coming on, welcome to the show. Say hello to everyone and tell us who you are, what you do and where you're from.

Isabella: Hello everyone. Hi, Desi, thank you so much for having me, I'm so excited. I am an interior designer in New York City, in Manhattan. And I run a boutique residential interior design firm. And my team now is three fierce ladies

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who are out there doing just an amazing job with me and for me and I'm super excited about that.

And I've been running this business for about seven years now, and before that I was pounding the pavement and working in the corporate interior design world. And so I'm really excited to have my own studio and to be doing my own work and being in charge of my own life.

Desi: Yes, exactly, which is so important that you say that. Being in control of your own life, being in control of your business. And that is really what I want for every single client that I work with, is that they feel like they get to make choices for themselves, whatever those choices are. So I love that you shared that.

All right, Isabella, like I said, we've been working together for a while and I would love to take listeners on a little bit of a journey. I was trying to think back, I remember our consultation call quite clearly, and you've worked with me in Out of Overwhelm now twice, so I'd love to just know like where were you at that consultation? What prompted you to reach out?

Isabella: I remember that consultation too and I feel like I was, in my business, near tears. I never actually got to the tears part because I found you. But I was just, well, feeling out of control. Now that we've established that it's nice to be in control with your own business, I was feeling very overwhelmed. And just like all of a sudden like I didn't know what I was doing and when I was doing, what was supposed to happen next and I needed to multiply myself and then that would be the solution. If there were like 10 of me, then I could figure everything out. And then that didn't seem like – That's obviously not possible.

So I committed to my business, I am committed to my business, and I knew that I needed to do something. And I had tried other types of – I don't remember if it was other types of coaching or what it was, but just other types of support systems for interior designers specifically. Some of them were groups, I guess most of them were groups, but they were not one on one groups. They were more like a group you join and then you watch a video and then you get some material and then you've got to figure it out on your own.

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Nothing really was landing with me, so I needed something that was going to make me think differently and help me really understand what was going on. Taking a holistic look at everything, I needed help and I reached out to you and here we are.

Desi: The rest is history.

Isabella: The rest is history.

Desi: You shared that now you have three fierce ladies, which is such a fun way to describe that, working for you and supporting you in your business. I was trying to remember, you had one, was it a part-time employee that was supporting you when we started working together?

Isabella: Yes, I had just hired – Because we started in 2020, I think, like during the very beginnings of Covid. And ironically, which is when my business started to get really busy, which I know is the case for many designers.

But yes, I had hired this fantastic design assistant, junior designer. And it was my first time really having somebody like that on my team that wasn't a consultant that was just maybe doing drafting or just, you know, I have an accountant and I have all those other sorts of people that support you. But it was my first time with somebody supporting me in the business as a designer, working with clients, working with me on projects. And that was an exciting start to everything.

Desi: Yeah, that is a really exciting time, when you get to hire someone who has a specific skill set to support you. And also start to build those skills as a leader in your own business as well, which I'm sure we'll talk about as we go on. One of the things that I thought might be interesting to share is this idea of overwhelm and fleshing that out a little bit more.

Some people resonate with the word overwhelm, some people don't. And I thought it might be interesting to think about what were some of the other emotions that you were experiencing in addition to overwhelm? Overwhelm, sometimes can be this umbrella, I think, of emotions. And so do you have any

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insight you want to share on what some of those different flavors were that you were experiencing?

Isabella: Oh, sure. I love words. I love this question. Uncertainty, confusion, doubt and self-doubt. Fear is always like one of the first ones that comes up. And regret sometimes, like why am I doing this? I should have picked a simpler career. I'm like, well, that's never the answer. That's not what we tell our children. If it's hard, you just quit, no. So, yeah, those things.

Desi: And what would you have said that overwhelm looked like? Like if we were to be peering into your office, what were some of the things that maybe you were either thinking or doing that would say, hey, this is not quite right?

Isabella: Do you mean physically on my desk? Like physically what my space looks like?

Desi: It could have been definitely your space, the way that you were operating throughout your day. I mean, I look back at what my overwhelm looked like and I have this one moment that I remember so clearly. It was the moment where I was like, something's got to change. And it was, I was literally about to give birth.

I was running off to an appointment with a client whose project had taken too long or longer than I thought it was going to be. I thought I'd be wrapped up before I had a baby. And I was running late, because I was always running late. And I just remember putting our dog, Penelope, dear little Penelope. I had to, like I didn't actually throw her, but I just remember kind of shoving her in the crate and dashing off.

And I just remember that so clearly being like, okay, this is not going to work anymore. So I'm curious if you have just any kind of stories or moments that maybe listeners might identify with?

Isabella: Yeah, so that kind of what it looked like. It looked very similar. I wasn't giving birth, that already had happened twice. But it looked very much like, I always think of it as lurching. Like if you put a little tracker on me and drew a picture, it would be like a Spirograph. That's how I felt. I was just kind of, where

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am I supposed to be? Oh, God, I'm supposed to be there and I'm supposed to be here, I'm supposed to be everywhere. And sort of working in that way too.

And it's kind of scary to say that because I think if a client heard me saying that they'd be like, God, how did you get my project done? You know, that's always that survival mode of like, well, I'm going to get the work done. I'm going to work late. I'm going to work on the weekends. I'm going to figure it out. But it's just not sustainable. You start to just spend all of yourself on that instead of saving yourself for things in a smart way, in a practical way, in a way that you want to be living your life, with your family, with your friends, having downtime.

Even when we plan, like even now when I'm in a much better place, sure I'm sitting and enjoying my free time. But every now and then, of course, work pops into your mind when you're drinking your wine and you're like, oh, I just had a great idea for a project. But it doesn't feel insane. It doesn't feel like, oh, I've got to go deal with this right now. And that's how it was then.

Everything was urgent. Everything was an emergency. And I felt really beholden to everything. Like, oh God, this client is emailing me, I have to write them back right away. Or they're calling me or they're texting me. And just everything felt very urgent and exhausting.

Desi: Yeah. I absolutely love this image of a Spirograph, I think that describes it so perfectly. And when you were talking about how a client would view that, from the outside, if you think about it, the Spirograph has a contained edge. So as you're bouncing around, eventually the circle does form. And that is getting the work done, because designers are master problem solvers. We are gritty when we need to, and we get it done.

And so in that way, yes, the circle does get formed, the project does get completed. But if we look at all of the energy expended going back and forth between the circle, versus having a very smooth circle that we close the loop on, I think that is just such an amazing visual to think about.

Isabella: I love how you just packaged that up and made it feel good.

Desi: Oh, well, thank you.

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Isabella: Yeah, because it's true, you do. In the end it's like you will form that circle, but how can you really do that forever? You can't, right? You don't sit and play with your Spirograph forever, the kids get sick of it and you get sick of it. You're like, that was fun.

Desi: And the ink runs out in the pen.

Isabella: The ink runs out in the pen, the paper runs out and then somebody drops the mold and the whole thing breaks.

Desi: Yes. Yeah, I'm thinking my daughter has one where it comes in a little case that you can carry around and a handle. I was just thinking of all the things just spilling out.

Isabella: Exactly.

Desi: Versus sitting down with your pen and you're going to make a very intentional drawing and then set it aside and move on with your day.

Isabella: That's amazing.

Desi: All right, so curious too, just with getting support in Out of Overwhelm specifically, did you have any hesitations about joining the program or committing to starting the work of taking back control of your business?

Isabella: I wanted to do it, but I had – I feel like the things that I hesitated on was the time. I'm like, oh God, how am I going to find the time to do this? Like, oh my God, an hour every week and then there's a workbook? Are you kidding me? This is so much.

And then also being afraid. I think the biggest thing is being afraid of what you're going to find. Like I am going to discover what a hot mess I really am, and I don't want to know. But then I do want to know. That's why I'm here. I know, intellectually, because I'm a grown up and I've done other types of support work in my personal life and therapy, it's always better to get to the bottom of it and face it and then let it go.

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So that probably was my biggest hesitation. So what I'm going to discover, followed by the time commitment. And, of course, I was like, well, this is an investment, like a financial investment. And I got over that pretty quickly because you look at what else am I spending money on? I was like, well, I've already invested in other things that aren't working. And I want to be in control and understand what I'm putting all my resources towards.

And it felt very clear what that was going to be. Like, I very much understood that you had a program, you had a plan. It wasn't just this join when you can and here's your packet for the week and good luck. See you later.

Desi: Yeah, no. Definitely not that at all because I know what it's like to be in that state of overwhelm or stress or ping-ponging in your head. And that's the last thing you need, is to try and figure it out on your own.

Isabella: Yeah.

Desi: Let's talk about the time commitment because I know that is the number one thing that I hear from people. Well, you probably shared all of the hesitations that I hear from people. But the time commitment, what do you want to tell listeners about the time commitment, reflecting back on it now, knowing that it felt like a hurdle and now seeing the impact of that investment of time?

Isabella: It was my sort of foray into realizing and understanding what it meant to commit to something on your schedule, you know, to type it in, to see it, and then to look forward to it and to know that it was going to happen. And really looking forward to it, once we started the sessions and the work became easier and easier.

And I made a commitment to myself, I'm going to do this because I know I can make the time to do it. Because right now, I don't know what I'm making time for right now. Like I couldn't go back and track my time in the tasks that I was working on. I do use a time tracker for work, but even that was, you know, sometimes I would forget.

And so I was like, I know, this is the first step and knowing where I'm going to be every Tuesday at noon, in my timezone, and making that commitment to myself.

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And I don't think I missed a single live group because it was so important to me. I knew that, for me, if I out scheduled myself and was like, well, I should really go to the site visit on Tuesday, that was going to be a slippery slope for me. I know that about myself already.

So I pretty quickly decided that. Like I just said, I'm going to do that. And then what that's turned into with all the work that I've done is realizing and seeing when you make those commitments, even if it's like I'm going to do something for 10 minutes, it sets the stage for everything else that you're going to be able to do.

You start to see, what do I actually have time for? Because I'm just telling myself that I can do everything, but I can't. It starts to really become evident that you are just one person, you're not three people, even though you have three of those people working for yourself, or whatever your setup is. You start to understand what you can actually take on.

And that starts to trickle over into, not just my work life, but my personal life as well. And being able to say to myself, I'm not going to get involved in this text thread with my friends right now because this isn't urgent and I have other things to do. I'm not going to RSVP to that until I know that I can say yes or no with evidence that I can do it.

So that one act of committing to those Tuesdays, yeah, had a really powerful effect. And I really looked forward to those groups. I was like, oh my God, I'm so excited it's Tuesday. It was just like it's therapeutic. You're in the safe space and you know if you're having a bad day, or a good day, or whatever kind of a day you think you're having, it's just there for you. You know you can rely on it.

Desi: Yeah, and it's such a nice reset, I think. That's one of the reasons I schedule them on Tuesdays, because we get Monday kind of under the belt and then it's like, all right, now we're going to ground ourselves and we're going to move into the rest of the week really feeling like we've got this.

And I think the fact that you shared about scheduling that Tuesday call and the ripple effect of that, I think, is really profound. And with so many of the types of

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clients that I work with, it does seem like one of the big issues that we're solving for is letting other people make decisions about how you use your resources, time being one of them.

And so I do think that is such a powerful act, to put those Tuesdays on your calendar and say this is what's happening. And then also, on the other side of it, seeing, okay, I was at this call for an hour and everything was fine. Maybe I've got some new emails in my inbox. Maybe there's a text waiting for me. But everyone survived and I was able to take that time for myself. And it made a big impact for me and now I'm going to go on with my day and be a more powerful person in my family, in my work, whatever it is, in my community.

And I love that you shared that. So thank you.

Isabella: It's amazing how everyone survives.

Desi: Yeah, isn't that interesting? We just have to have the courage to give them the chance to survive.

Isabella: Yeah, you can do it. You got this.

Desi: Absolutely. All right, what do you think were some of the most impactful tools outside of, yes, you recognize that showing up for the calls was amazing. What about some of the tools or strategies that you utilized within the program have made the biggest impact for you?

Isabella: The model thinking and understanding the model, which took me some time to really, I wouldn't say master, because I feel like the model is a practice like yoga. You just are always evolving with it.

Desi: And let me just pause real quick, Isabella, for everyone who doesn't know what the model is. It is really a tool to help build awareness of how we interact with our world, with our thoughts, our feelings, our actions, and the results that those create. And it's something that I teach clients to use within the program for themselves so that way, these tools are always at hand and with you, perpetually.

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Isabella: Yeah, it's kind of mind blowing. One of the first things that you say, that I think that you said on like our very first call, also, is that your thoughts are optional. And that concept, that fact, like I noodled on that all the time. And it took me, you know, because it's so powerful. I'm like, what do you mean my thoughts are optional, I just think them.

And realizing that, and then taking that into the model and seeing how you can really flip how you feel about something or how you're going to move forward with something because of your thoughts and changing your thoughts, probably is the most powerful tool that I took away from that. And it's actually, I don't want to sound too dramatic, but I feel like it's been life changing to know that you can choose to think of this differently.

It doesn't mean the wall isn't red or the tile isn't blue, it's just you're going to think about it differently and make a different decision. You have the option to make a different choice.

And I also, like I took away these little tidbits that you shared with us, and I don't remember where they came up. But I think there was a section called, or like a chapter called specificity and simplicity, or there was a moment where we kind of covered that. And another topic that we covered or another concept was that remember, focused is a feeling. And I'm rattling these off because they're taped to my displays on my desk.

Those are two of the four that I have up that I look at every day. Like specificity and simplicity, how can I make this simple? That came up a lot and I use that all the time. Like when you know you're spinning in something and you're like, okay, just hang on a second, how can I make this simple? And just saying that to yourself doesn't always work, and by work meaning you're not like, oh, I get it. Like you have to think on it, but just stopping yourself and realizing that you can make a decision and you can make a good decision.

Desi: Yeah, and I just have to say that I don't think it's an overstatement to say that using the mindset tools that we use in Out of Overwhelm is life changing. I mean, obviously, I'm biased but I wholeheartedly agree. When I look at who I am

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today versus the me of – When would that have even been? That would be over a decade ago.

I mean, I am a completely different person. Of course, I'm still me and the core qualities of my values are still there. And at the same time, I live such a more full and rich life and have so many more experiences that I never would have gone for or never would have thought were possible for me without those mindset tools. And so I don't think that's being dramatic at all.

Isabella: Okay, good, because I have a tendency to maybe be a little dramatic. So it has been life changing.

Desi: Yes.

Isabella: One of the things, I don't know if this is relevant here or later, but one of the things that really blew, not blew my mind – Well, maybe it did blow my mind, was that I remember phrasing something and saying, or it was me or someone else in the group saying, I'm always running late, or like what I just said, I have a tendency to be dramatic, and like setting yourself up for that thing, versus just letting yourself think, are you?

If you say you're always running late, then maybe you will always be running late or not giving yourself this umbrella definition of something like that, that is seen in a negative way and it becomes kind of like a character trait. And I don't know if I phrased that very well. But I pause on that kind of thinking too and I find myself using it and saying it to friends. Like, do you really believe that about yourself? And if so, okay, is that a bad thing?

Desi: Yeah, I don't think any of us are absolutes, where we're this thing or that thing. There's always a gray area. And I do think that's such a great example of the model that you described playing out in action. When you have the identity, really, or repeated thought or belief about yourself that you're always behind, that you're always in panic mode, that you're always feeling stressed, then that is what we will create.

And it's not to say that just by changing your thoughts, you're not going to maybe be overcapacity in your workload overnight. But changing the thought will

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help you then look much more systematically at what you have on your calendar, in your workload, and start to delegate more effectively, get rid of things that don't even need to be done, and hire support. You're going to be able to take effective action from a place of, okay, I'm calm. I'm grounded. I'm in control. There are some things I need to change and now I'm going to go take action to do that.

And I think that's really the first step. And that's why we always start with mindset in Out of Overwhelm because if we don't look at what are some of those beliefs that we have about ourselves, about time, about our business, you can have all the strategies in the world, but if you perpetuate the beliefs that are getting you in overwhelm, or in stress, or over extended, the strategies just won't be as effective.

Isabella: Yeah.

Desi: One of the things I also remember you really utilizing in the program is the written coaching. I always want to try and convey that in my marketing of the written coaching, because I am someone who loves written coaching. I love to coach in the written format and I love to receive written coaching as a client as well.

And I always wonder, how do I describe that better? And so I thought you having used it quite a bit in the program, maybe you could share a little bit about how that works, how it worked for you, and what you enjoyed about that process.

Isabella: Yeah, this is the Slack group that we had, and I know you have it in a different format now.

Desi: Yeah.

Isabella: Yeah. So the written coaching was, yeah, was a huge part of the experience because even though I knew those Tuesday calls were going to happen every Tuesday, it's Monday, or Friday, or even Saturday and I've got this thought or this problem that I really want to write down and get out of my head and just address it before it vanishes and compacts itself into something else.

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So being able to go into that platform and to type it out, also, the act of typing and writing for me is very effective. And then to be able to get coached, not just on my own questions and issues and problems or whatever, but to see everybody else getting coached and reading through other people's written coaching back and forth. And then that whole experience was amazing.

And I tried, I'm like can I copy and paste all of this? Because there are so many topics that come up, like finding a topic from another designer who was in the group, so many times I would read through what they had asked you about. I was like, oh my God, that really resonates with me perfectly, almost like word for word. That's what I'm experiencing, or have experienced in the past but I forgot about that.

And then seeing that resolve itself in the written coaching was amazing. And I'd read through those, I remember finding myself going back and reading through it a few times thinking about it and really sitting with it and taking the time to process it and understand what was happening. And you can do it in your own time, which is really nice. So you don't have to feel like you're on the spot, which it never felt that way.

But you have more freedom in your time that you choose to spend on it and when you decide to go in and do that written coaching. And that was really valuable and felt like it tied the group together a lot, as well. It felt very trusting, everybody was very open and honest and emotional sometimes. And it felt very safe and therapeutic as well.

Desi: Yeah, and that's something that I love to hear because I do think that there are not enough safe spaces to show up as yourself and fully share what's going on with you because I think that there can be a lot of shame in business around, I'm the only one with this problem, or there must be something wrong with me because I haven't figured this out.

And I think that in itself can be really powerful to be in a group and say, hey, this is what's going on with me, I'm taking action to do something about it. And then your neighbor, your virtual neighbor, is doing the exact same thing. And sometimes it's the same, like you said, where it really resonates and it's the

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exact same thing. But sometimes it's something that was not in your awareness at all. And all of a sudden you go, oh, I'm doing that too, right?

I think it's really a great experience being in a group for that reason alone, is that collective experience.

Isabella: I think a lot of people, not a lot, but I think some people in both sessions that I was in, felt more comfortable also writing and maybe not speaking up so much. And that's great, that's fine. And I feel like maybe toward the end of the live sessions they were speaking up a little bit more because they were like, okay, this is okay. Maybe be they just felt like they were a shy person by nature, whatever it was, they understood that it was a safe space.

And sometimes maybe I didn't want to bring something up in the live coaching because I just didn't want to hear myself talk. Like I'm going to wait and just put this in the group.

Desi: Yeah, and there are always options and whatever way that you want to be supported, that's the way that I want to support you and have it feel good for you. And I think that for a lot of people – If you think about this, too, with the nature of the work that we do, we're so used to putting everyone first. And it's the clients, we don't want to inconvenience anyone, we don't want to take up too much space.

And so I do think that there is a layer of that, that you're given the opportunity to work through in the group that then goes on to help you share and express yourself more fully, just as a person.

Isabella: Absolutely. And also to just see your clients as people as well and just see them in a much more human way. One of the things that I really was working on, and I don't know if I – I'm sure this came up during my coaching, but designers love to get together and complain about, I don't know if I'm allowed to say the word bitch, about work.

Desi: Yep.

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Isabella: Desi, am I allowed to say that word? Because, of course, we want to do that sometimes. We just want to, like we know it's not, like I intellectually know that's not going to solve my problems, but it feels good to just be like, oh, that was so annoying, and blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. But not actually seeing people that way, you know?

Being like, my clients are trusting us. They're humans, they're allowed to think and feel the things that they want to think and feel. And my role is to help them understand, maybe when they aren't understanding something and why. And to understand why they might be frustrated, or maybe I wasn't clear about this process or maybe I forgot to mention something and I just can say, oh, I forgot to tell you about that. I understand that must be very confusing. And becoming more patient with that and not just feeling like every time there was a difficult meeting, that I just wanted to complain about it.

Desi: Yeah, and I think that really goes back to the mindset piece because when we understand that other people are out having their own human experience with their own thoughts and feelings that come out however it comes out, and that's not to say you tolerate behavior that you're not okay with. But we have so much more compassion for them and we can see that's them having their own experience and it doesn't have to then make it mean anything about us.

We can see clearly, oh, okay, maybe there is a step in my process that isn't really clear. Or maybe I didn't explain this to them. Maybe it has nothing to do with me, maybe they're just having a bad day.

Because I think it is such a personal business, you're in people's homes, you're in their lives, sometimes you're the therapist for their marriage. And it's easy then to take that personal nature of the interior design industry and apply it to, well, I am my business. Everything that's going on with my client then means something about me, when in actuality, we can create some space there and then also, that definitely lessens the brain drama.

Isabella: Totally. I, years ago, participated in some cognitive behavior therapy for a health issue I was having. And my most powerful takeaway from that, aside

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from it really being helpful to me, was understanding interactions with people that's in any area of your life.

And I believe the phrase that doctor shared with me was people's reactions and responses to you have everything to do with them and nothing to do with you. They choose how they're going to respond to you. You could try to provoke somebody, you could really be trying, but they could still choose to not respond to it. And that was so powerful to me. That was probably my first little nugget that really got me through 15 years of my life until I did this program.

Desi: Yeah, and it's interesting that was your first nugget. The model that I teach is really based in cognitive behavioral psychology. And it's also, I mean, there's so many different lineages where different teachers say the same thing, your thoughts create your feelings, drive actions and actions produce results. But that's really an interesting nugget that you just shared.

One of the things that I also wanted to ask you about is how would you describe coaching? Or how would you describe coaching with me specifically? Because I think that's another thing where you said you've tried some different things and maybe they weren't super effective. But what do you think it is about coaching in particular that has helped you?

Isabella: I think understanding what coaching is and how it can be different if people have tried other types of coaching. And I didn't really know what it was going to be until I was doing it. And you think of a coach, you think of a team always. I always think of a sports team when you think of a coach and kind of telling you what to do. Like, no, okay, now we're going to do this formation or whatever. But the coach of the team also has to understand the emotions of the team and not alienate them. So, can you ask me the question again?

Desi: Yes. This is coming from your comment about venting, actually, because I was thinking about this and I do think that venting to your friends, your design colleagues, absolutely can be therapeutic. Sometimes we just want to say what's wrong because it feels like everything is wrong.

Isabella: Yes.

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Desi: And I also think that's very different from being in a coaching relationship. And don't get me wrong, I vent sometimes, too. But when we're coming to a coaching session, I'm not going to – I'm, of course, going to let you share what's on your mind. And that can be really helpful to just dump it out, dump that junk drawer out. And at the same time, I'm also going to help you get out of the level of the problem and move into the level of the solution.

And I'd love for you to just share what coaching is to you or how you experience coaching and how that is very much different from kind of complaining.

Isabella: I feel like one thing that came up just now when you were asking me was like a reflection. Like shining a mirror on myself and really seeing everything that I've laid out, perhaps in my question that I've asked you in coaching, like I'm having a hard time with this. And being able to see, through coaching, I love the image of the junk drawer.

What is the junk in this drawer? And what is the thing that I'm looking for? Is it at the bottom of the junk drawer? Is it right in front of me and I'm just not seeing it? And understanding how the emotions that we feel are clouding our vision and really identifying what a problem is or what the problem is or what the issue is that we're struggling with.

And, through coaching, being able to understand what needs to be put aside to be able to move forward and identify what that solution can be. And also the root of why you're experiencing that. Like why that problem arose. Or why are you in this situation? Like, what did I do? Like looking back at yourself and being really honest, like, well, maybe I didn't make that clear or maybe I forgot to do something. Or maybe I, which is always the default, is to blame yourself like, oh, I didn't do this and I didn't do that.

But what was really hard for me that I'm getting, that I'm still working on is being like, no, I did everything that I wanted to do in this situation and I still find myself in this difficulty. And maybe that's okay or maybe there's a new way that I could look at solving for that, solving that problem or moving forward with that issue that I'm having.

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And really looking at it honestly and being willing to say I could have done more, or I did everything that I could do or I'm going to try using one of the tools and just see where it gets me. And not putting a whole bunch of expectations on yourself and knowing that it's okay too. Like, I really hope I can figure out how to feel differently about this issue that I'm having, but I'm not going to beat myself up about it if I don't. If it isn't a huge aha moment, I'm just going to put it aside and just address it lightly, but not let it take over my life.

Desi: Yeah, and I think that is a really important point you bring up, I think we all do have the default of blaming ourselves. And with coaching and self-reflection, the way that I teach it, this is an opportunity to take responsibility and look at how did I create this situation? But we do it from a place of curiosity. Very much open to seeing what's there, what our place in it was, what we could have done differently.

And when we approach it with curiosity, there's a lightness to it. And that's very much different than blame because I think so many of us just spend our lives blaming ourselves for all the things we do wrong, that we did wrong. We, I think, even future blame ourselves sometimes, where we're rehearsing things that are going to go wrong that we're then going to blame ourselves about.

And so I think that's a huge piece of the coaching, is approaching your business with curiosity and experimentation and as an ever evolving process.

Isabella: Yes, the curiosity part of it is huge. And it's hard, it can be hard to suddenly become curious instead of blaming yourself, well, if that's what you've been doing. And if that's what's been done to you, too. I think a lot of people, everybody also is coming to coaching as a human who's lived their life and had the relationships that they've had outside of work. And certainly, I definitely uncovered and touched on so many patterns that I was like, oh, this has been a pattern my whole life. Wow, that's interesting.

And it can be very emotional in a very good way, in a cathartic way, and just to sort of maybe forgive yourself for something from a long time ago and be like, you know what? I'm human, that's okay. It doesn't mean that, you know, maybe I

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did hurt someone's feelings or maybe I did make the wrong, whatever that means, the wrong decision then. Okay, but now I understand it.

Desi: Yeah. And I think, yes, it can be difficult to have those moments of curiosity with yourself and look at what's really going on, where did this come from, and deciding how you want to move forward with it. But also, when we think about the amount of time and energy we spend resisting what has already happened or spending it in avoidant behaviors because we don't want to look at it, I think curiosity and giving yourself space to understand what happened is the path of least resistance.

Isabella: Absolutely, and sometimes with that curiosity what's revealed is like, I'm avoiding something and I'm going to continue to avoid it till tomorrow.

Desi: Yeah, you always have a choice.

Isabella: But now I know it. I'm just going to say it out loud, I don't want to do that thing. It pains me. And I just want to end my day, but I'm going to do it tomorrow. And tomorrow, I'm going to hold myself to it. I know that when I've done it, I'm going to feel great. And then I'm going to celebrate or whatever. You have the choice.

Yeah, I think it's also about, I think people think it's about perfection and being like, everything is going to be perfect all of a sudden. But it is, it's curiosity that brings the awareness. And then, really, you become accountable to yourself. You know, you can really only disappoint yourself.

Desi: Mm-hmm, and even that thought is optional.

Isabella: Yes, and even that thought is optional. Yes, it's true. It's true.

Desi: Yeah. And I mean, again, I think that sometimes we do want to be disappointed in ourselves if we didn't show up in a way that we wanted to. But also remembering that we always are looking at how we frame our own experience.

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Isabella: Yeah, and if you are disappointed in yourself, that doesn't last very long. You're like, well, I don't want that to happen again. What did I do? I'm going to change it. It gives you this like active, you have like this active forward motion always.

Desi: Mm-hmm. One of the reasons I did want to bring you on here was to celebrate your growth, Isabella.

Isabella: Thank you.

Desi: You know I love to celebrate.

Isabella: Yes.

Desi: Much to my clients' chagrin. Guys, we have to create celebration, that is part of this process, and eventually everyone gets on board. But it's really fun to look back at that consultation that we had and you feeling totally at your wit's end. And I remember you feeling very tentative around even just having that part-time employee, and now describing your team as three fierce ladies. And you have grown so much individually as a person, and also your business has grown so much.

I've seen you get published. I've seen you hire. I've seen you move offices. So much has happened. And so I do want to celebrate you.

Isabella: Thank you.

Desi: Yes. And I'd love to know, how do you think that the work that you did in Out of Overwhelm, you did it two rounds, how do you think that has contributed to that growth?

Isabella: Entirely. I think I would have imploded if I hadn't. I mean, I think I would have imploded is also a big statement. But that's what it felt like, I wasn't going to be able to sustain what I was doing. And so having been part of the program and starting to implement the mindset, and while we were starting out my first round was really challenging. And what I found was it was really an incredible

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experience that kept sort of evolving after I finished that first session of Out of Overwhelm.

And it started to really, like little by little, play out in how my business, how I was able to think about my business and feel confident about making a decision. Because anytime I felt uncertain or anytime I felt those feelings that brought me to the coaching in the first place, I knew that I had to stop and use a tool and I had to stop and look at what was really happening. And it's just like all these baby steps of growth, which I like that process.

It's not instantaneous, you know, you wake up one day and everything is solved. You have to do these little bits of work that build upon each other. And that's what I was able to do it. Figuring out, well, which tool am I going to use today? How am I going to think about this problem today? How am I going to set myself up for success today? And really just being like in that moment and trying to capture really what was happening in a realistic, in a digestible sort of scope. Little by little it was really powerful.

And I feel like I had this sort of moment where I was like, oh my God, I feel a change has happened. I feel like the way I think and approach everything has changed forever, and I was blown away by that. I was like, oh my God, I wasn't expecting that to happen. This is incredible. And I know in my family, in my home life, my husband was like, you're like a different person. You're so much more present. I can tell you're not coming home with the stress. And that wasn't immediate, but little by little.

And so all these little big things started to build upon themselves and that's when I was like, I want to do the program. I want to do this program again because now I'm in a much different place than I was, you know, I think it was a year and a half between doing the first session. And then, for me, the second time I was in the group I was so curious. I'm like, what am I going to discover if I do this again? Like I'm already here, but I'm not done. I know that I need more support.

And one of the things I had talked to you about that you know that I loved about the group was that it was a group. I really enjoyed the group aspect of the

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coaching and I was nervous about that. I was like, how is it going to be to feel vulnerable, or to maybe feel vulnerable, but just to be baring your soul, essentially, in front of all these strangers. And it very quickly doesn't feel that way at all.

And it really is very much a huge support after you've been in this and had this experience in Out of Overwhelm. I always think back to just the screen of like 16 others, or however many other people were in there. I'm like everyone is going through this together, so I'm not unique in that way. I have my own unique problems and my own unique life and my business, but I know that there's this whole network out there of others that are supporting me, even when we're not physically holding hands or giving each other a hug or talking to each other.

In both groups that I participated in, I connected with a few other designers off-group. Like we would email each other or message each other on Instagram and sort of stayed in touch and started to even support each other on social media and celebrate each other, even though I've never met any of them in person. Then you feel like, oh, I have all these new colleagues. I have all these people. Like if I'm ever in Chicago, I'll reach out to so and so. Or if I'm ever in wherever I'll get together with that designer.

And now I have a group with a couple of the designers from the second group where we just have a message chat going on.

Desi: I love that, that's so fun.

Isabella: Yeah, it's just fun and you keep your eye out for them. And you continue to celebrate them, mostly on social media. You're like, yeah, that was amazing! Because you remember what they were struggling with, too. And I feel like I've seen so many of those fellow designers just grow so much, get published and just like, I don't know, I also like to imagine that they're also just feeling great because they have grown in the group.

Desi: Yes, of course. And I think that is one of the things that keeps me on Instagram, actually. Because I stopped posting content on there, but it is so cool to see how the work that the designers start, yourself included for sure.

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Isabella: Thank you.

Desi: That they start in the program and things that I coach them on. And then I start seeing it come to fruition in the things that they're posting. And it is just such a delight when I open up someone's story and they've been published or they're hiring or they're announcing a new team member or they're on vacation. I love it, it is so fun.

Isabella: Yeah.

Desi: It's one of my great joys and it is really fun to know that all of you keep in touch with those that you connect with most.

So we looked back at where you were. And now what is it like looking at yourself right now, here in the present, seeing how far you've come?

Isabella: It's kind of incredible. It's personally still a challenge for me, just from the person that I am, to be like I'm doing so great. But it is something that I say to myself, and I'm like, wow, I am here. I just rebranded my logo, which I haven't shared yet, it's not quite ready. But I feel very proud and very excited about what I've done. I feel like I have control over it and that I'm excited. I'm excited by it and I am in awe of it too. Like I can't believe I did this. Like I did this? What? That's crazy. What else can I do?

Desi: Yeah. And that was my next question. We've looked at just a few short years of your own transformation personally and both your business transforming. What do you think is possible for you in the next couple of years?

Isabella: Well, one of the things that I sort of worked out more recently, like following the recent group that I was part of, was sort of like the kind of business that I want to run and the kind of projects that I want to do. And I feel like I've really gotten a grasp on that. And just understanding that, and that's translated into this branding that I worked on.

Like I see myself now in that brand mark. And understanding sort of where I want to go is still kind of new. I'm excited that I figured that out, that I'm not trying to fit myself into a template that I thought I was supposed to be in. And so it's

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very freeing and I'm not really sure what's next, except better projects. And by better, I always don't want that to mean anything about a client or anything, but just a better fit for me and for my team.

And the balance that creates in life, knowing that I'm spending my time working on projects that are a good fit and being able to support my team is probably the biggest challenge for me right now, because when the business grows, you start to have to invest all this new time into supporting that. And so it's definitely like a daily conversation of like, okay, should I be doing this? Or should I be doing that? Okay, let me figure this out. And it's just there's more of a loose feeling about it, like that it's going to be okay and it's going to be great.

It's going to be okay and it's going to be great. And it's also going to be hard, and that's okay. Because the sort of figuring out where you want the business to go, I think, has helped me find the people that I have on my team and even the vendors that I want to work with. And sort of really much more, I'm making much more personal to the business choices.

Desi: Yeah, and that's why the CEO vision that we cover in *Out of Overwhelm* is so important because having an understanding, even if it's not a picture perfect, clear view of where you're headed, having that next iteration of the business in mind gives you so much clarity on the decisions you make in the present.

Isabella: Yeah, it really does. It's definitely hard, especially this is something that I was coached on, for sure, it was just all of the – We're exposed to so much content. Like it's not just magazines anymore, it's social media, like everywhere, every time you open up you're like, there are so many designers doing so many things. How do I figure out what I'm supposed to be doing? And should I be like that person? Or should I be like that person?

And you really do think that, or I really did think that for a long time. And then I was like, no, I'm not any of those people, I'm just me. What does that mean? Let me figure that out.

Desi: Yes, and your ideal clients want to work with the real you.

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Isabella: Yes. And that's when I can do my best work, when I'm being me and not trying to be somebody else. It seems simplistic to say that, but it's not. It's big.

Desi: It is, it is. Well, I'm certainly excited to see how things unfold in the next couple of years.

Isabella: Me too.

Desi: We never know exactly how we're going to get there or what the exact path is.

Isabella: No, but we know we're going to get there.

Desi: But we know we're going to get there, yeah. Wonderful. Well, thank you so much, Isabella. Is there anything else that you want to share with the listeners about coaching, about Out of Overwhelm, about really any kind of insight or nuggets you want to leave them with?

Isabella: It really has been a powerful experience for me, as I think I've conveyed. And you definitely have to do some work on yourself to make it successful. You can't just let the words exist without thinking about what they mean. And I think that can be difficult, but pretty amazing when you realize that you can make so many things happen for yourself with the tools that you already have kind of available within yourself and learning how to use them differently.

So it's definitely an experience that, I mean, I don't know that I think about it daily, but all the time it's with me. And like I've said, it's trickled into my life and I have become a little bit of a preacher about it to my friends and family, hopefully helping some of them understand a little bit that they have some choices they didn't realize they have. And that's just something, personally, that I want to do for those people in my life. But it does sort of, it does touch upon your life holistically in that way.

Desi: Yeah, it definitely does. Can you please tell everyone now where they can find you? I personally am just going to give a shout out to your Instagram account, I love looking at your images. And it's also really fun, everyone, to

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follow Isabella around New York. Let me just say she posts the best projects of like, she's starting to project. Oh, this is the entryway of this really cool building I'm in. And it's really fun to follow her around New York.

So tell us where you can be found on Instagram and anywhere else you might want to direct people who want to check into your work a little bit more.

Isabella: Thank you, I'm glad you're following me around New York. That inspires me to post more stories. So on Instagram you can find me at Isabella Patrick Interiors. And also on my website, isbellapatricdesign.com. And I am on Facebook, which just is an auto feed from Instagram, but I believe it's also Isabella Patrick Interiors. But I'm not really actively on Facebook posting, so Instagram is really the place to find me.

Desi: Amazing, I hope everyone goes and follows you immediately. And I'm really excited about this new branding, so I'm going to have to keep an eye out for that as well. But I can't thank you enough, Isabella, for you being you and for sharing your experience with everyone and for being one of those clients that is just delightful to watch grow and evolve.

Isabella: Thank you so much, Desi, that means so much to me. I might feel a little emotional about that. I feel so grateful that I've been able to be a part of this experience and that I have you in my life. And I know that I'm going to be working with you forever. Forever and ever.

Desi: That works. That works. Yep, yeah. Wonderful. Well, thank you, have a wonderful rest of your day. And as I always say at the end of my episodes, wishing you all a beautiful week and we'll be back next week with a new episode.

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