

Ep #58: When Your Day (Or Week) Is Derailed



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Desi Creswell

[The Interior Design Business CEO](#) with Desi Creswell

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Hey, designer, you are listening to episode 58. This is the one where I'm going to be talking all about what you do when your day or week is derailed.

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. I hope you are all doing well. It's a Monday here as I'm recording, even though you're listening to me on a Wednesday sometime in the future. I am getting settled in for the week and getting some of my big to-dos done for the week because I have quite a few calls scheduled later on.

This weekend was kind of fun. We went and my daughter was feeling ready to get her ears pierced. She is seven and she's been wanting to do it for a while and been thinking about it and not sure. She finally decided she was ready, so we booked the appointment six weeks ago and we wanted to give some time just to make sure we were really sure. But I took her to this place in the Mall of America, which is this essentially really giant mall that we have here in Minnesota.

I mean, there's a theme park in the center of this mall, if that gives you an idea. There's a movie theater, an aquarium, I mean, it's just absolutely huge. And I generally try to avoid the Mall of America at all costs because when I go in there I'm just overwhelmed, I'm overstimulated. But all of my mom friends say that this place that we went is the place to go for getting your ears pierced. So that's what we did.

And we went and it was a huge success. She was so brave. And it was so interesting watching her really want to have this done and feeling scared and nervous at the same time, and then coming out on the other side of that

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ultimately being glad that she did it. And then we wandered around and had all sorts of fun looking at the squishmallow store and went and got Starbucks. So it was just really fun.

And then we hit our limits and we definitely needed to get out of this giant shopping center. I won't say that if you ever come to the Minneapolis area it is a must stop, but I guess if you do like shopping a lot, I mean, it is kind of something to be seen here, that Mall of America. And actually not far from where I live is the first mall that was ever created. The first Mall. So there you go, a slice of history right outside my front door.

I guess that us Minnesotans, we've got to figure out a way to go about our lives and get what we need to get done, done inside when the frigid winter comes. So there you go, little tangent, but that's what I was up to this weekend.

Today, what I want to talk to you about is what do you do when your day or your week is derailed? This was inspired by a coaching session inside Out Of Overwhelm. And actually, this is something that happened to me recently in a rather significant way, so I thought now would be a good time to talk about this on the show.

Before we dive in, I do want to remind you that Out Of Overwhelm enrollment is closing next week, Wednesday, December 6th. So when you get the next episode of *The Interior Design Business CEO*, that is when enrollment is closing. Out Of Overwhelm is my signature group coaching program that is four months long. And we're going to be kicking off in January of 2024 and going through April of 2024.

And this program is designed to take you from overwhelmed and stressed to being profitable, in control and being the efficient CEO that you want to be. It's, of course, a full-on blend of mindset and strategy, as I always do. And it's been running for over three years now, which is kind of incredible. And so many designers have joined and absolutely loved it and had it transform the way that they are running their business and the ways they're showing up in their lives in general.

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I've heard from some of you that have been asking about, well, when's the next round going to be? I'm really interested in doing Out Of Overwhelm but now's not the time, I want to do it later. And, of course, I don't know your personal circumstances unless we talk and maybe right now isn't the right time, but I do encourage you to look at is this another way that you're latering? If you want to check out that episode, please do, but putting things off that you know you want to do and know would be of your benefit to take care of now.

I don't know exactly what I'm going to be running Out Of Overwhelm again, probably sometime next fall. So close to maybe a year from now it could be. And I just want to encourage you to think about why put off the changes you know you want to make? Are you going to need to put some time and energy into making those changes? Absolutely. And at the same time, I want you to consider that maybe it's not as much as you think.

And I also want you to picture what could be different when you get your time and projects streamlined. And why would you want to put that off? It's going to result in easier, smoother days for you and your team. And that's just going to end up being a better client experience.

You're going to have more time for you outside of work. You're going to make more money, because of all that time that you can now bill when you've cleaned up all of those inefficiencies on your back end. Your focus is better and you're getting consistent on running your business as the CEO. And you're going to feel lighter and more excited about your business.

Of course, there's going to be challenging times. But also you got into this industry because you love design. And we want to love the way that you're running your business. I personally think there is no better way to start off the year than by joining Out Of Overwhelm. The link to apply is in the show notes, along with a link to schedule a call with me.

So if you have questions or you want to talk through your decision, if it's maybe around timing or is this right for you, I want what's best for you. And so I'm opening up my calendar so that we can get on a Zoom call and talk face to face,

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with absolutely no pressure. And we can talk through that decision so that you know that either now is the time or maybe now isn't the time.

But if you've been thinking about joining Out Of Overwhelm and you've been on the fence, this is the last week we've got coming up to enroll. So if you've been considering it, get your application submitted and book a call with me if you want to talk it through.

All right, so today, what we're going to talk about is, like I said, something that came up directly in Out Of Overwhelm. And this topic is what happens when your day or week is derailed? Now, in Out Of Overwhelm I teach a lot of specific planning processes, both for short and long-term planning. And one of the things that I always teach is to have margin in your day. Margin is essentially time where you don't have anything planned.

Now I know this might sound a little radical when you're trying to be hyper productive and everyone's trying to tell you to squeeze every last minute out of the day. But let me tell you, margin is a sanity saver. Margin is a gift to yourself. It is there to absorb the unexpected.

I usually have at least one hour per day of margin built into my schedule. When I have this buffer or cushion, I can use it to extend how long I spend on something, maybe because it's not coming together as quickly as normal. Or maybe I have an additional layer that I want to add in that I hadn't thought of before. I get to choose.

It's also really helpful when I get a higher volume of things to review from my assistant that maybe I wasn't expecting that day. Or a technology glitch happens or there's more emails than usual. Or maybe I'm just having a harder time focusing that day and so things just aren't moving as quickly. And sometimes I get a question from someone that I wasn't anticipating or an obstacle pops up that I really do need to address that day. And that margin is there to support me.

This is why I'm always talking about not planning your day like tightly lined up dominoes. You need space for imperfection, because the unexpected is bound to happen. We might as well stop resisting this truth and trying to pretend that it

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doesn't exist, because it does. And with that, sometimes a typical amount of margin is not enough because there's a bigger disruption. And that's what I'm talking about today when we're talking about your day being derailed. Or maybe it's your week being derailed.

This could look like maybe you're at a site for an entire afternoon when you only planned to be there for an hour, because something came up that you had to take care of right then and there. Or maybe you weren't even planning on going to the job site at all that day and you ended up there for the whole afternoon. Or maybe there's a team member who has an oversight, or maybe even it's you who had the oversight, and there's going to be some cleanup required. Or your kid gets sick and all of a sudden you have a co-worker you never asked for.

For me this happened recently and it was a really challenging time because I was preparing for Out Of Overwhelm to launch and there's so much that goes into bringing the program to the enrollment period. Just in the past couple of weeks, my daughter has been home sick for about three days.

And then my assistant told me that she was going to be pursuing her other career. She assists me and some other coaches, and then also has a profession outside of that. And she let me know she'd be shutting down her assisting business and would no longer be able to support me.

So here I am, three days of having a disrupted schedule where I'm operating well below my capacity because I'm home with my daughter. And now, don't get me wrong, I am so grateful for the flexibility I've created so that when someone does get sick, I can make it work. And at the same time, my original plans were definitely not going to plan.

And then on top of that, I was now researching and interviewing for the key position in my business. That is really the one team member that I heavily lean on in supporting me. And I'm wrapping up all of the details of the launch. The new masterclass I had created, I also was marketing that, creating the workbook and working on all the behind the scenes updates to Out Of Overwhelm that are going to be rolled out with this next group.

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Now, definitely not ideal. You could say my week, weeks maybe even, have been derailed. Fortunately, I know how to make it work. And that is why I want to share how to get back on track when you're derailed, because it's bound to happen, we might as well be prepared for it.

When we're talking about the day or the week or the month, whatever it is, being derailed, this is one of those things where we absolutely need to address the mindset along with a strategy. If you go straight to reactive mode, your efforts are going to be so much less effective and you're going to be working against yourself instead of with yourself if you don't first address the mindset.

Let's say your day or week is derailed. What do you do from a mindset perspective to help solve for this? The first thing is you have to notice and then shift your automatic thought patterns. I call this default thinking. It's the thoughts that just bubble up to the surface so quickly you don't even realize it's happening.

You're going to want to stop telling yourself that you're derailed. This thought is going to perpetuate frenzy, both in how you're feeling in your body and then the actions that you take. So notice what you're telling yourself when things don't go as planned. Maybe it's, the day is ruined, or this always happens to me. Nothing ever goes right. I'm never going to get back on top of this. Now I'm even more behind.

Notice how disempowered, defeated and frustrated you might feel when you repeat those types of sentences to yourself. To be clear, I'm not denying that you might feel kind of upset at first about some things shifting. You might feel upset at first when the unexpected happens and you might wish things were different. Of course you do, nobody wants a huge wrench thrown in their plans. And you can totally acknowledge that.

And, on the flip side, I want you to know that is not where you need to stay. When my assistant gave notice, I was of course upset. I was disappointed. This is actually the second time this has happened to me right before a launch. The first time it happened, my assistant, who I thought was amazing, took a full-time

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position for another coach who I really respect and admire. And I was very happy for the assistant, but also I was like, oh my gosh, I can't believe this.

And now here it is, it's happening again. A little bit different, but still the same timing, same obstacle. And I found myself thinking, "Again? I'm doomed." I got really dramatic for a minute there. I emailed my husband to say, "Guess what just happened. I need to vent about this." I let myself have the emotions. I was frustrated and disappointed. Totally fine, I'm human too. That's bound to happen.

And I also knew I didn't want to stay in that space of mental spinning, so I had to change my perspective. The perspective that really resonated with me was saying, okay, I thought it was going to go this way. Looks like I was wrong about that. Good thing I know how to course correct. I've gone through this before and so I know what to do. I'll do it again.

I also decided that this really could be an opportunity for me. It could be an opportunity to re-decide what support looks like for my business right now and what's going to unfold in the next year. Would I have rather not been searching for a new assistant right now? Absolutely. And I could see that there was another truth available to me that allowed me to feel empowered.

What I want for you right now is to think about what are the empowered thoughts that you want to take on when things really don't go as planned? It could be something like, I've got this. Or I know how to figure this out. Or the unexpected happens and I am here for it. What is it for you? And then how can you remind yourself of these alternative truths when you know what hits the fan?

Once you've given yourself some space for humaneness, followed by shifting your perspective, then it's time to get into action. And this is where the strategy for a derailed day or week really shines. The most impactful thing you can do is now adjust your plan for the new circumstances that are in front of you. The old plan was based on old circumstances. There are new ones now and you're going to plan for what is reality right now.

As you start to craft a plan for your new circumstances, what I want you to remember is who, what, when, and how? I'm going to go through all of those,

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but it's who, what, when, and how? Let's start with who. This is where you're looking at the to-dos or what was planned or you thought you'd get done. And you thought you were going to be the one to do at all.

This is where you consider what if you were wrong about that? What if you were not the one to do it at all? Or maybe not do parts of it? Is there someone else who could do this thing? Maybe someone on your team you could delegate to?

I was actually coaching a client on something similar recently and she was looking at some of the things she had planned to get done that week, and things were just being too full. And she realized one of the things she had on her list was this drawing that actually was in the architect's scope. And she had just planned to do it because she could. But she emailed the architect and said, "Hey, this is actually for you. Can we get this done?" And they did it. So that was just hours of time right there saved.

You could even look at this from a personal perspective when you're considering who. So maybe you were planning on wrapping up at a certain time to hit the grocery store before you needed to pick up kids. What if you placed an online order and let someone else, a different who, shop for you and buy you some time? You really can get creative here. And I also encourage you to loosen your grip on you being the one who has to do the thing just because that was the original plan.

You also want to consider what when you're replanning. What did you have planned? And what of those things could be deleted or just not done right now? Maybe it would have been nice to get that thing done, but what if you didn't do it this week, or at all?

What I see is that when we shorten our available work time, we can start to see some of the fluff we plan because we think it should be done that way or certain things have to be done, because work expands to the time that we give it. So in a typical week we aren't forced to put things under as much scrutiny as we are when things are derailed. But here's your chance to decide what is actually going to get done and what isn't necessary.

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Next, you're going to look at the when. This is where you're going to check some deadlines. What needs to happen by certain dates? Are there deadlines that you have to meet or deadlines maybe you could extend? You're asking yourself what priorities do I need to shuffle so that I can make this work?

When you're looking at the when, I want you to watch for faux deadlines. Faux deadlines are those ambiguous deadlines that sound like I'd like to get this done by this date. They're kind of like these nice to have or nice to get done deadlines. But they're not as concrete as an actual deadline, say if you've got a presentation to give to your client this Friday.

So watch for those faux deadlines. And don't allow those to cause unnecessary stress and pressure when it's a date you may be consciously or unconsciously set and a date that you could therefore change.

I will say one caveat here. If you're consistently delaying when something is done and you suspect it might be procrastination, that's a different thing, different topic. When you're looking at the when, this is really where you have to check in with the math of your calendar. What time do you now have available and what is realistically going to happen?

You can, of course, adjust the number of things that you plan to do by reducing them and or you could shorten the amount of time you give a task. That's an option too. Now, I'm not talking about I want this to take 30 minutes instead of two hours and I know that's absolutely not possible, but I'm going to put it on my calendar that way and then blame myself for not being able to do it that fast. Not what I'm talking about.

What I'm talking about is making a reasonable adjustment, something that feels like maybe a little bit of a stretch or a little outside of what you typically do, and reducing how much you do or the amount of time you give to something. So maybe it's that you typically look at five sources for a particular product. But today maybe you're going to do just three and see if that works. Or maybe you're writing an Instagram post and maybe it takes you usually a half hour, but today you're going to try and shorten that to maybe 15 minutes.

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Maybe you're working on redlining some drawings, and typically you need at least an hour to go through that. But you're often finding that you're distracting yourself with your phone or social media. And so today is the perfect opportunity to say I'm going to set my phone in another room and really focus so I can get this done way faster.

Under the category of when, you could also choose to work outside of normal business hours. Meaning maybe you're working a little bit at night or on the weekend when you don't normally do that. This was part of my strategy when I had some of these things happen with my schedule and responsibilities.

And the way that I approached it was I was very clear about when I would do what, what I was doing and how I would be doing it so that it didn't snowball. It didn't turn into, well, I'm going to work on this thing for a little bit here tonight. Oh, well, I might as well start this and I might as well start that. Oh, and I've already worked one night, so I might as well work every night.

If you're going to work outside of normal hours, you want to be intentional about it and be very clear with yourself that it's something you're choosing to do. And you're choosing to do it for a certain amount of time so that it does not become a pattern that you don't want. And also so that you can feel empowered about your choice and not resentful.

Lastly, you want to look at the how when you're replanning. How are you going to get these things done? Maybe you thought it would be done a certain way or maybe you're thinking it has to be done the way you've always done it. But what if the how could change? How could your approach be simplified? Or how could doing the thing be made easier?

Instead of diving right into and trying to force and push your way through how you normally do it, take a quick pause, step back and say what if there's another solution here? What if there's another way I could do this? Maybe you could reuse something you already have. Like with the Instagram example, maybe you could post a different picture with just tweaking the text. Maybe you could buy a template instead of creating your own for something you were going to make.

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Or you could take an appointment that was originally scheduled to be in-person and do it virtually to save yourself some drive time. Or maybe you're asking one of the showrooms to do an initial sort and select for you to save you some of your meeting preparation time. Just, again, start to get creative with how things are done.

As I'm going through these and talking to you here recording the show, you might be thinking, "Well, yeah, Desi, but if I just save like 15 minutes on an Instagram post or have a showroom do a little bit of work for me, that's not going to make up for my whole week been derailed." And you're right, alone it probably isn't.

But once you start to approach your calendaring and your replanning with the mindset of I know how to figure this out, there could be a different way, I might not be the one to do this, maybe there's a different possibility of when I do it, those start to add up. And that's really where you can reclaim the time and get yourself back on track.

What I want you to remember is that even when your day or week is derailed, you have options and autonomy. So the first step is to shift your perspective to thoughts that allow you to feel empowered and in control. Then you shift into the strategy asking who, what, when and how. And watch that compound.

You can, of course, use this strategy too if nothing has been derailed at all. These are all incredible ways to save yourself time and ways of showing up in your business that are going to help you create space. When you practice asking yourself who, what, when and how, paired with remembering that you are in control and that you have choice, the process starts to become automatic.

Instead of your automatic thinking being, "Well shoot, everything's out the window," throwing your arms in the air or stewing in frustration, you start to more naturally and more quickly shift to thinking that allows you to get out of stuckness and move forward. This saves you so much time and gets you in effective problem-solving mode and getting strategies to help get what needs to be done, done a lot sooner.

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It can be a little ironic because when the day is derailed, we are often the ones who derail it even more if we don't practice what I've been teaching you today. Give this a try this week and keep practicing. Your stress is going to lessen. You can approach challenges in your business overall with a more lighthearted approach. And you'll get the most important things done without being in so much mental drama. There really is a better way, and that's what I just shared with you today.

That's what I have for you today. Next week, I'll be back with a brand new episode. And, as a reminder, this is going to be the last week for Out Of Overwhelm enrollment. It closes next week, Wednesday, December 6th. If you want to work with me in Out Of Overwhelm starting this January, click the link in the show notes to submit your application and you can also schedule a consultation to talk to me live. And until I pop up in your podcast feed again, I am wishing you a beautiful week. 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.