

Ep #66: Thought Errors



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With Your Host

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Ep #66: Thought Errors

Hey designer, you're listening to episode 66. In this episode I'm talking all about those thoughts that feel so true and so automatic, but are preventing you from feeling the way you want to feel, taking the actions you know you should be taking, and keeping you from creating the results you want in your interior design business. Oh, and we'll actually talk about how to overcome them too. Let's dive in.

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. How are you? It is a wintry, wintry day here in Minnesota. I'm looking out my window and there's these beautiful chunks of snow falling down and Olive, our poodle, is sprawled out on the sofa that I have in front of my office window. And I wish you could see a picture of her, it is just adorable.

She's a, they call it a Moyen size, so it's not a miniature, not a full-size, but a middle-sized poodle. And so she has these really long arms and she's just like completely sprawled. She takes up about half the sofa. It is so cute. She's waiting for her walk. She always gets her second walk around lunchtime, early afternoon. And it's cold enough today that I'm going to need to pull out my heated vest.

My husband got me this last year. No, maybe it was two years ago. If you are into being outside and being warm, you have to check out the Ororo vest, I'll link it in the show notes. I think they have different products like gloves or jackets and that kind of thing, but he got me the vest and I put it underneath my big winter jacket and I push the little button and adjust the heat setting to where I want it to be. And it's so amazing. So anyways, that's what I'll be doing after I record this episode.

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What I want to talk to you about today is thought errors. And if you've never heard this term, don't worry, I'm going to explain it all. We're going to dive into what thought errors are, how they're showing up in your interior design business, and then also how you can overcome them.

Before we do our deep dive into this topic, I want to let you know that this is the last time I'm going to be talking about Create Your 2024 Roadmap on the podcast, we start this Friday. And, of course, if you're listening to this a little bit after the fact and we're still in it, reach out. I could get you the replay if you want to participate that way. But if you want to join us live, we start this Friday.

This is a two-part interactive coaching experience with me where we're going to set stress-free goals. And not only are we going to create a plan for the coming year, you're going to have an opportunity to coach with me on all of the thought errors that come up around your goals, around your business, taking action and more.

And thought errors are what we're talking about today. So it's the perfect chance to get support with what you're listening to on the podcast. It's only \$87 to join us and that's for both the calls and your workbook and it's all included. All you have to do is go to desicreswell.com/roadmap-2024 and sign up to join us.

All right, let's talk about thought errors and why it's so important to recognize them and what to do about it once you have the awareness. Before we go fully into what thought errors are, I want to get back to basics with you and cover what is a thought.

A thought, or sometimes I'll refer to it as a belief, is just a sentence in your brain. It's a string of words, interpreting, judging, or having some opinion or perception about a circumstance that you're interacting with. Thoughts are not the end all, be all truth of the world. We know this because different people have different opinions about the very same thing.

Some people love winter and some people hate winter. You love your best friend, other people find her annoying. You think every interior should be minimalistic and another designer in town thinks that the more layers and color, the better. You could even see this with your own thought processes, thinking

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about when maybe you've shifted your opinion about something. The thing didn't change, your thoughts about it changed.

And understanding that thoughts are optional, that there is flexibility in your thinking, opens up a world of possibilities and experiences for you because you are the creator of your thinking. We cannot control the external world or other people, but we do have influence over ourselves.

If you want to go more in depth with how your thoughts impact your feelings, your actions and your results, definitely check out episode two called Overwhelm Is Optional, we'll make sure to link that in the show notes.

The basics of what I teach in that episode is that there are neutral circumstances we encounter. These circumstances are not good or bad. They just are the facts. They are the thing that happened. They are the words that are said. And then you have a thought about those circumstances. That's you layering on a perception, interpretation or judgment.

When you have that thought, that triggers a chemical reaction in your body that you experience as a feeling or an emotion. And then those feelings drive certain behaviors or inaction. And then, of course, the way you show up, the things you do or don't do, that creates a result for you. This is why I'm always talking about mindset is so important.

The way that we're thinking in our business, the way that we think about ourselves as the business owner, the way we think about our clients, the way we think about the economic market, the way we think about our employees, all of it, that's going to impact the results you're able to create in your business. Mindset is not a nice to have, it is an absolute. You have to have it as a part of your business strategy.

And so you can see if you're having thoughts that aren't serving you, which I'll go into more when we start talking specifically about thought errors, it's going to end up creating results that you would prefer not to have or not be as robust as you would like.

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Now, many thoughts that you have in your life are very useful. There are thoughts that compel you to care for your personal hygiene or look after your kids or pay your bills or show up in your office. That's all really useful thinking. There's also thoughts that you have that generally support you and how you view yourself. Maybe that I'm a good designer or I'm a good friend.

But then there are the thoughts that don't serve you. And that's what I'm calling thought errors. Thought errors are beliefs that generate uncomfortable emotions or those emotions we'd really rather not have because, one, they're just not super pleasant, but also they lead to unwanted behavior and then produce undesirable results.

One of the first things that I teach my clients is how to gain awareness of their thinking so that they can start to separate out what are the thoughts that are serving them and the ones that are not serving them? What are those thought errors? You want to know what these thought errors are so that you can then question them and redirect your thinking towards thoughts that do serve you emotionally, that serve you in the actions that you do or don't take and, of course, then that are serving you and the results or experience you want to create for yourself and your interior design business.

I want to give you some examples of common thought errors and how they play out in your business so you can begin to see the importance of recognizing these thought errors and how they might be showing up for you specifically.

One of the ones I hear all the time is I'm too busy. And if you're thinking I'm too busy or I'm so busy, this creates the feeling of stress and overwhelm. The one caveat I always say with this is, yes, we might have a capacity issue and that's something that we solve for. But thinking I'm so busy, I'm too busy is never going to serve you.

If you're telling yourself you're too busy, you're going to have a lot of resistance to dedicating additional time and energy to a goal. Whether that's a project to improve your business results or time you want to devote to taking care of yourself. You're not going to take action towards those things because you're

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going to believe that you don't have time for it. You're not even going to look for the time.

Another way this will really show up is when you're believing I'm too busy, you're not going to then plan, which planning is the thing that saves you time. So the thought "I'm too busy" is producing a result that is not useful. It's creating more of what you don't want.

Another thought error that I hear a lot of interior design business owners say as they're pursuing new things in their business, which is something we all do as our businesses continue to evolve and grow, is they'll be thinking to themselves, this is too hard or this should be easier. And when we have those thought errors, it creates the feeling of defeat or disheartened or helpless.

And then what ends up happening is we spend time criticizing ourselves instead of finding solutions. Or maybe there's some procrastination that comes from those feelings of defeated and disheartened. Or there's a lot of starting and stopping cycles in your actions or you just give up altogether. Again, not something that you ultimately want to do.

Another thought error is the thought I should have solved for this already. Or sometimes you'll notice it as an unhelpful question of why can't I just get myself to do this? And then those thoughts create the feelings of embarrassment or shame. And when we feel embarrassed about a problem, we're going to shut down. We don't ask for help because it feels shameful to even talk about it. Or we get defensive when someone does try to help us. And of course, then that's only going to prevent you from solving for the thing you think you should have already solved for.

The last example I'll give is if you have a thought error around you, yourself. It sounds like an absolute of "I never do this thing," insert this thing, or "I always do this thing." And that's probably going to create a feeling such as stuck or judged.

And if you're believing that you're in that fixed state, which that thought error is basically what you're believing, that you cannot change, that it's just how you are, you're not even going to try to make a change. Or if you do, at the first sign of difficulty or the first obstacle you encounter, you're probably going to use that

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as evidence that you actually are stuck, that you always do that thing or never do that thing. So why bother?

Once you start to recognize these thought errors for what they are, just thoughts, you can begin to interrupt them, meaning you don't take action from that belief. If you let these thought errors continue in the background without bringing them to the forefront and challenging them, you're going to continue to reinforce the thought or the belief and prove it true time and time again.

So if you're recognizing that some of these examples I just shared are thought errors that you have and that you experience, you can use that awareness to shift your thinking. And I also want you to bring awareness to what are the other thought errors that I have.

What you're doing is you're taking what was previously unconscious and making it conscious. When you do this, then you can use the prefrontal cortex, that smart, evolved part of your brain to observe the unhelpful thoughts and actually manage them and redirect them to something more useful.

The meditation teacher, Pema Chodron, who's really amazing, we'll link her in the show notes. She describes the mind as being like the sky and your thoughts being like the clouds. So hopefully let's just take a second to visualize that, the mind is the sky, that beautiful blue sky, and the thoughts are the clouds. So the clouds are layered over the sky.

Your mind is that clear, present and consistent open space ever present. And the clouds, your thoughts, are going to come and go. They're going to change shape. Some days it's going to be cloudier than others, but the clouds are never the sky and the sky is never the clouds. You can begin to start to watch your thinking just like you watch the clouds. This is how you become aware of what your thought errors are.

And I say create awareness around it because the point isn't to eliminate your thought errors. I think that's a real misconception around mindset. It's not that we only do positive thoughts or high vibes only. What we're talking about is using our mind to support us.

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As you practice creating that distance between you as a person or the mind and the thoughts, the thought errors really become less intrusive and you're going to begin to react to them less. And over time, they're probably going to become less frequent.

But what I want you to remember is that if you've been thinking something for a very long time, that's a really strong neural connection in your brain. So that thought error might be a little persistent and that's totally okay. You can notice the thought error without believing it and taking action from it. I like to kind of think of it as the thought passes by like that cloud and then you're just gently brushing it away. Kind of like when you brush a piece of hair off your face.

With the image of the sky and the clouds, you can see that the sentences or those thought errors are just that, it's an error in thinking. They are not you. The thought isn't you and the thought isn't your truth if you don't want it to be. Like I said, some thoughts we have really serve us and we're going to want to keep those or they're going to align with our values or align with our belief systems about what we do want to believe is right or wrong in this world. But you always get to decide what your truth is. And it starts with recognizing that there are options of the truth.

The other way I like to release or overcome thought errors is by asking myself, how is the opposite of this true? Let me give you an example of how this might work for you. If you recognize that one of your thought errors is, I'm too busy, what I want you to do is ask yourself, how is the opposite true? Start to look for evidence that that is false.

When do you actually have free moments in the day? I guarantee that you do. Or you could ask yourself, how do I actually have the time to do the thing I say I want to do? And an interesting one with this thought error of I'm too busy is sometimes we find that we do have the time, but it's not a priority. And we're using "I'm too busy" to cover up for, I think I should do this thing, but I don't actually want to do it or it's just not important to me right now. And so, again, another space for honesty and seeing you're thinking clearly.

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Another example might be if your thought error is something like, I should have figured this out already. How is this not actually true? This question of how is the opposite true is going to help you release the judgment and get you into a solutions-focused mindset. Maybe you just haven't done the research that you needed to do. So of course you shouldn't have figured it out, you don't have the information you need. Or maybe you had some outsized expectations on yourself, like figuring it out on the very first try. And in reality, no one figures it out or masters it that quickly.

Recognizing your thought errors is giving you perspective and perspective is power. This week, I invite you to look for what your own thought errors are. What are those common ones that are on repeat and producing feelings, behaviors, and results that you no longer want, either personally or professionally?

When you see these thought errors, I want you to really consider if you looked at them just as errors, sentences your brain is used to popping up on your virtual computer screen and not necessarily the truth, what could shift for you?

How would your actions change? How would your feelings change? How would your results change? What would open up to you if you didn't believe that thought error? Maybe use the image of the thoughts being the clouds and your mind being the sky and just start to play with some separation between you and your thinking.

And once you have that level of separation, once you have some distance, challenge your thought errors by asking, how is the opposite true? When you notice those thought errors and can really take that 360 perspective on them and practice the tools to release or shift them, you can create more of what you want in your life and business. More of the emotions you want to feel and more of the results you want, whether that's more ease and confidence or more money or more consistency in your days and projects, it's available to you. And it starts with recognizing your thought errors.

I hope you enjoyed this one. I'm going to be back next week, as always, with a brand new episode. I hope to see many of you this Friday for part one of the

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Create Your 2024 Roadmap planning sessions. And until then, I'm wishing you a beautiful week. I'll 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.

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