EPISODE THIRTY-FOUR

Design for a Change
With Ashleigh Axios

From designing a new last name with her soon-to-be husband to lighting up the White House, Ashleigh Axios knows a thing or two about creating change. Inspired at a young age to never be satisfied with the status quo, she's used her design chops to seize opportunities for breaking through barriers, challenging the norm, and inspiring others to think bigger about the world around them. Join us on this week's episode as we chat with Ashleigh about bravely harnessing the power of design to be a vehicle for systemic change.

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THEMES & INSIGHTS

1. Design of any kind is about imagining a more promising possibility and then making it a reality. Whether the result is a next-generation ergonomic desk chair or a groundbreaking public policy, design is about improving on what was by dreaming about what could be.

2. We tend to think we'll find joy in self-indulgences: more money, more recognition, more success, more whatever. But nothing brings deeper joy than serving other people.

3. Each of us, regardless of profession or position, can make the world a better place.

COMBUSTION QUOTES

"When folks are saying 'that's good enough' or 'that's how it's always been done,' a good designer will see that as just the status quo to be improved upon and they'll be able to discern issues and really make suggestions that visualize change for direct improvement. And that for me is what design is all about. It's changing something for the better."

"Supporting others through our design efforts releases the most reward hormones, and it's truly some of the most feel-good stuff that we can do. When we bring ourselves out of the picture and support others, we get a chemical release that brings us joy, and I don't think that's how we are thinking about it today."

"If I'm gonna be here in this world and I've got options, I have privileges that I can kinda have some choice in what I do, my career, my path, even as I was kind of learning that I had creative skills, I wanted to use them in a way that was really going to make a positive impact in the lives of other people."

CALL TO ACTION

"The world is in gradual decline, right? It's just how things work. And whether or not you identify as a designer, we all have to do our part to not only counteract that decline but to make things better. And doing that work is rewarding as hell, so why not?"

RESOURCES

TED Talk: How Selfish Design Can Save the World

AIGA Design Conference: The Culture We Make