

THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

with Kirstin Sarfde

Ep #372: Binge Eating Success Story – Robyn

Hello! I am so excited to share with you another binge eating success story.

Today, you're going to hear from Robyn, who not only stopped binge eating after doing it for decades but, she did it while in her 70s.

I have heard so many people tell me that they think they've been doing it for too long so they can't change, or that they're too old to change, and if you've ever said that about yourself, then you must listen to Robyn's story.

She was stuck in the restrict/binge cycle for such a long time, trying all the diets, and gaining and losing a lot of weight.

And eating food was how she comforted and soothed herself for almost her entire life. She didn't know how else to take care of her emotions.

But now, she is changed. She is so different. The Robyn I talked to in this conversation is not the same as the Robyn I first met when she began my program.

I'm so excited for you to hear her story, to hear how she's changed, and to hear what she has to say.

So, without further ado, here is my conversation with Robyn.

Kirstin: Hello, Robyn. Welcome to the podcast.

Robyn: It's so great to be with you and thank you so much for this opportunity.

Kirstin: Yes, I'm so excited to have you here. So as we get started, I would just like for you to tell us a little bit about yourself and your background with eating and food and your weight and all things binge-eating related.

Robyn: Okay. Well, I started using food as a comforter or as a distraction or as a sort of a salvation when I was about eight years old. Now I never had a problem with my weight when I was young because I was very active. But I remember stealing a dime out of my father's change and running down to the little local delicatessen where they sold Hostess cupcakes, the ones with the little swirls on them. And I hid in an alley and I ate it. Without feeling it, I just ate it. And I did that many times. My situation was that I was an only child and my parents were both alcoholics. My father wasn't around much because he was working all the time. But my mother, she was mentally ill and an alcoholic, which was sort of a double whammy. And there were all sorts of messages. When you're a child and you have alcoholic parents, you tend to think, "Oh, if only I were more perfect, they wouldn't be so unhappy," because you're egocentric. And my mother would say things like I was her cross to bear, even though I was taking care of her because she was disabled. She was crippled. It was really ugly and uncomfortable. And I didn't know anything else, but I did have friends who had parents who seemed normal. Of course, you never know what's happening behind closed doors.

So the Hostess cupcakes were really the beginning of my sort of drugging myself from the pain and the discomfort that I felt as a child. As I got older, I turned to cigarettes and alcohol and pretty early, like at an early teenage level. And I was always super skinny because I never ate. But when I stopped those two things because I realized, A) I was an alcoholic too, like my parents, and B) they were not healthy for me, those two substances. And all of a sudden, I turned to food.

The food became part of my life again when I was pregnant. So I couldn't drink and I couldn't smoke and my doctor said, "Oh, eat whatever you want." Well, that was not the world's best advice for somebody like me. So I took it literally. And when I went into the hospital, I'm 5' 9" but I weighed 200 pounds. And I said to the nurse, "Please don't say my weight out loud because I don't want my husband to know."

So that was sort of the beginning. I would switch substances to comfort myself. But the point was I wasn't dealing with why. I didn't know that I could even deal with why. I just knew that it was what I thought was saving me was really destroying me.

And then the weight started to come on in my 30s. And I've been struggling back and forth, yo-yoing back and forth with my weight. And I will tell you from my thinnest adult weight to my heaviest adult weight has been 90 pounds in fluctuation. Yes, yes. Thank goodness I'm not there anymore. But I'm telling you, that's how much I've been struggling. Weight Watchers, Jenny Craig, the Scarsdale Diet, you name it, I tried it. Weight Watchers, I must have joined 10, 15 times. So that's sort of my history with food. And it's been a long time. It's been a long time. I'm 74 years old now, so.

Kirstin: Yeah. When did binge eating become part of your life?

Robyn: Probably when I became a teacher. I was a nursery school teacher for 10 years, but I really wanted to teach academics, and I ended up teaching seventh-grade history and English. And it was a very intense school. I loved it to death. I loved my kids. But when I came home, I was so wound up. And so I'd do microwave popcorn, not just one bag, but two bags, or I'd have cookies, or I'd have cake, or I'd have whatever salty or sugary substance I could eat while I'm correcting papers. I wasn't even paying attention to it, but I did know that it soothed me, and it calmed me down. I didn't consider meditation or taking a walk, or something like that. Although I was always very active. I played tennis. I played pickleball. I did a lot of walking, swimming, etc. But the weight was still coming on. It was coming on.

Kirstin: Yeah, yeah. So it was your comfort, your way of soothing, your way of calming you down. And then do you think that there was also a restriction component in this as well?

Robyn: It definitely was. Whenever I was doing one of these diets, first of all-- oh, I did this ideal protein diet too, which I lost 50 pounds on it, but it was low-carb. And God only knows what chemicals I'm eating for-- the box things, and you had the Jenny Craig stuff too. It was all fake food. It wasn't really dealing with reality. And, okay, so my caloric intake was quite low, but I wasn't learning how to eat properly. And I certainly wasn't teaching myself about feeling hungry, recognizing when I'm hungry, or when I'm full. It was just like, "Stuff away, girl, because it makes you happy."

Kirstin: Yep. Yeah. So how was your eating affecting you negatively? Why was it a problem for you in your life?

Robyn: Well, first of all, I was gaining weight, and I wasn't looking as attractive as I wanted to. My clothes weren't fitting. I'd have to go in and out of different sizes. When I'd come back from work and I'd take in whatever I was taking in, I'd go and I'd lie down and I'd pass out. It was really pretty hideous. And of course, I wasn't fueling my body with nutritious food. I was fattening myself like a goose ready to have foie gras taken-- it was not healthy. And so it affected me mentally and physically in terms of weight, in terms of my self-esteem, which was pretty rotten anyway in some areas, not all areas. I was very confident as a teacher, but as a person, I still thought I was the cross to bear. I wasn't the perfect child. I wasn't the person that one would look up to.

Kirstin: Yeah. And I bet that fed right into the eating, too. When you would feel bad about yourself, then you would probably eat to try and feel better, and it would become this whole cycle.

Robyn: Yes, it's definitely a vicious circle. And I knew it intellectually, but I could not internalize it. I had to keep going back to that crutch. I kept thinking, "Well, I won't do this tomorrow. I'll just do it today." And then tomorrow became today. And it became to the point where I really was gaining quite a bit of weight and feeling uncomfortable and feeling embarrassed and frustrated. And it was almost like a self-fulfilling prophecy in that the negative thoughts I was thinking of myself were becoming a realization.

Kirstin: Yes. So what were you trying to do? Or what were you doing to try and stop all of this? How were you trying to get your eating under control and stop the binge eating and stop all the weight gain.

Robyn: Well, various diets, as I mentioned before. And I also went to therapy. It wasn't with a specialist about weight and eating. I did go to a nutritionist. I think I actually went to two nutritionists. Yes, I went to two nutritionists. So I did everything except go to a witch doctor. I was desperate, but I wanted the quick fix. That's the thing about diets. They give you the quick fix. You lose five pounds the first

week, and then you're losing one to two pounds every week. And before you know it, you're in a smaller size. And I didn't know anything else existed except the quick fix, because, man, it's quick to gain the weight. So I wanted it to come off just as fast.

Kirstin: And then you would fall into that cycle of the quick fix diet, feeling too restricted, then bingeing it back, and then repeat, repeat, repeat. Like you were saying, that one low-carb diet where it's like, yeah, you lose all that weight, but then at some point, you can't sustain that anymore. And that's just not what you want to be doing.

Robyn: And it never crossed my mind until I started listening to your podcasts, that deprivation was one of the major, major reasons why people binge. It's that mentality of, "I can't have it. Well, I want it then."

Kirstin: Yes. Yes. Yeah. So after all this, all those years, did you believe that you would be able to stop binge eating and get all the things that you wanted?

Robyn: That's a hard question to answer, because I think I very superficially believed that. But in my heart, I don't know if I was willing to give up that substance that was saving me from misery, even though it actually led me to more misery, of course. But it's that addictive situation where you just got to have it and then, ugh, you feel like crap afterwards. So I think yes, but I didn't really make it a part of my essence so that I became determined. I just kept thinking, "It's just going to happen without [inaudible] really doing any kind of work." Because quite frankly, I didn't know what kind of work to do besides going some bloody diet.

Kirstin: Yeah. Yep. Yeah. And I think you bring up such a good point where you before called it a crutch, and then you're saying that you just weren't willing to give it up. Because if you let go of the crutch, and you give it up, then what?

Robyn: Yeah, I was sure I was going to fall. And how I was really-- it's like I wanted my cake and eat it too. I wanted to keep it and eat it too. I wanted both. And that just is ridiculous, illogical, and truly impossible.

Kirstin: Yeah. And I think sometimes we can get into this space of being afraid to give it up, but then also being afraid to stay in it. And we just kind of stick with what we know and what's familiar. We might think that letting go of the binge eating is actually going to be worse than the binge eating itself, in some ways. Because then how do we get the comfort? How do we get the soothing? Right? We get so afraid of it.

Robyn: It sort of boggles my mind in terms of why would I want to be self-destructive? But I didn't look at it at the time when I was bingeing. I was looking at it as a way to escape. And I couldn't even articulate back then what I was escaping from. I could not articulate it. I just knew I had to have it. I could almost feel this physical vacuum inside of my core that wanted it. And it was like, I can't beat this. This is too strong.

Kirstin: Yep, yes. So being the age that you are, I've had so many people tell me they're, they're too old, right? "I've been doing this for too long," right? Can't teach an old dog new tricks, like all these things. People use their age against them all the time.

Robyn: Well, first of all, you can teach an old dog new tricks. Literally--

Kirstin: Yes.

Robyn: --you can. In fact, I have so many new tricks now. I'm like ecstatic. And also, I want to look at it this way. I have a limited amount of time left on this planet, and I want to live it the best I can, the healthiest, the most clear-minded I can. So I really looked at this as now or never when I joined your program. And I said, I am not giving up. I am not doing it. No matter how many times I fall down, I am not giving up.

Kirstin: Yes. Anybody who is, I don't know, 40, 50, 60, 70, however old you are that thinks that it's too late, I really hope that you heard what Robyn just said. Because that is it. It doesn't matter. I mean, was there ever a point for you, Robyn, where you did start to use your age against you?

Robyn: No, because I think in some ways, most of us think of ourselves as pretty youthful. Kind of think you have like a 30 or 35-year-old brain. You're still reacting to things, and I still have enthusiasm. And luckily, I have, despite what I've done to my poor little body, I'm pretty damn healthy, and I'm very, very blessed. So don't blow this. It's either now or never. It really is. I know most of your listeners are young, and that's great. I wish that I had had you and this program and your podcasts and all the strategies and tools when I was younger. I wouldn't have had so many decades of yo-yoing and being uncertain all the time. Just being, "How long is this weight loss going to last? Oh, it's back." It's not good. It's not good for your ego. It's not good for your health. It's just not good. So if you're younger than I am, go for it. And if you're around my age or 10 years younger, go for it. And just embrace it. Just embrace it.

Kirstin: Yes, do everything you can, because you may have many, many, many years left. And why not make those the best that you can make them?

Robyn: Absolutely.

Kirstin: Yeah. So what do you think about past Robyn, who was binge eating for all these years, up until you were in your 70s? What do you think about her?

Robyn: Today? I mean, if you'd asked me that two years ago, before I started your program, I would have said, she's a mess. She's a slob. I think I actually talked to you early on and you said describe your body, and I said grotesque. Now, when I look back at her, I look back at the Robyn she didn't know what path to take. She didn't know how to handle this. She kept going down the wrong path. It would be a path that others had taken or that society said or advertised, Madison Avenue advertising, what FAD said, always going down the wrong path, but well-meaning.

Kirstin: I love that. Because, again, many people your age might just be so mad at themselves, think about, right-- and really beat themselves up about it. But what you're describing is understanding and compassion, and really just like forgiving yourself for not knowing.

Robyn: That is a major change in my thinking, though. As I just said a couple of minutes ago, I was very harsh on myself and very disappointed and very frustrated. And I don't look at myself that way anymore. And it didn't happen overnight. This took a lot of time with you and with reading and with thinking and various other practices that I do, to realize that I'm not a bad person, and I'm not a waste of time, that I have value, and that I have a lot to offer, and I have given a lot to people over the years. And now it's time to give to me and to be as kind to myself as I can.

I would imagine a lot of your listeners would identify with this, that when we say just be really kind to yourself, we're terrified of doing that because we're afraid we'll go out of control. "Oh, I'm going to be kind to myself. I'm going to eat this whole cake." That's not it.

Kirstin: No.

Robyn: We got to look at why we have the urge to eat that whole cake and what's going on, and why do we feel this turmoil, as I described it before, this vacuum in my core. That's the ticket. And I did not know that until I started listening to your podcasts.

Kirstin: Yeah. And being kind is not eating all of the cake. That is not kind. That's not kind to yourself. That is not kind to your body. When we talk about being kind, it's the whole story of being kind.

Robyn: Yeah, yeah. If you think about if you have a pet, you wouldn't just keep stuffing it with food and saying, "Oh, I'm being kind to-- " no, I'm hurting them. I'm endangering their health. So you're absolutely right. It's not kind. But we bingers, that's the way we thought, "This is the only way I can feed myself."

Kirstin: Yes. And it's actually the opposite. If we're not kind, then we feel so bad. And then we just give up. And then we eat all the cake, right? It's like not being kind is what causes the behavior, not the other way around.

Robyn: Yeah. But unless somebody points that out to you and the person is willing to listen, you're willing to listen and really start accepting the fact that this is not going to become internalized overnight, that it takes a lot of practice and a lot of time and a lot of talk, a lot of redirecting your thinking. I'm always going to have those thoughts. I don't like how I look in that picture. But then I say, "You know what, Robyn? That's how you look right now. You're losing weight, and you're better off than you were, and you're not going to be this way forever. So just accept who you are now and be happy with it."

Kirstin: Yes. What a difference. What a difference between that and grotesque.

Robyn: And I remember, I remember that conversation very well. I was in Florida in my car. And I remember. I mean, obviously, it had an impact on me.

Kirstin: Yes yeah. So yeah, you did put a lot of work into this, which is why you've seen such amazing results. So why do you think you were so committed to this work?

Robyn: First of all, I really, for the first time, when I started to listen to you about how deprivation and negative thinking about oneself are the reasons that we're miserable, and I thought, "Wait a minute. I do both of those things. If I don't do those things, I'm not going to have urges to binge so much." And it was the first time any weight-related program that I dealt with or read about dealt with those issues. That it was real psychology. It was real analysis as opposed to weigh and measure your food. That's what I was accustomed to. I wasn't accustomed to being asked to think about what's going on. First of all, can you acknowledge it? And if you acknowledge it, what are you going to say to yourself? Are you just going to say, "Oh, let's go eat now to get rid of this funny feeling," or can you sit with it for a little while? What? Sit with it? But you know what? Each time I did it, it got a little bit longer and to the point where now when it happens, when I get an urge or I go-- I say, "I am the master of my mind."

And I tell myself that 100 times a day. I am the master of my mind. My mind is not the master of me. It used to be, but not anymore. And what a difference. As soon as I say that, I go, "Okay. Are you hungry?" And the answer 9 out of 10 times is no. And if I am, I have wonderful berries and fruit and yogurt and all sorts of things if I really have to have something. I save the really, as you call them, joy foods, and I call them that too now. Yeah, I have joy foods, but I don't have them three times a day or even every day. I can live without it.

Kirstin: Yeah, yes. So what did you find to be the most challenging part of this work?

Robyn: Well, the fact that I wasn't going to lose weight right away. Yeah, it was that. I wanted to just start losing weight and that you said, "No, no, we have to deal with the binging first." And I was like, "Oh, can't we do both?" So that was probably the initial difficulty that I had. The other thing, though, was learning to redirect my thinking. That was tough because I had been told so many times of what a disappointment I was. And I so internalized that that it was almost a way of keeping my parents alive. And that was unfortunate. Now when I think of them, I realize that they were flawed people and that they were trying their best, and they had really difficult circumstances. And I'm so lucky that I'm not them. But I think that those were the two aspects that were the toughest for me, redirecting my thinking and the fact that I had to really accept-- if I was going to do this program correctly, really accept that I wasn't going to start losing weight right away.

Kirstin: So let's talk about each of those. So how did you overcome this very strong desire to lose weight?

Robyn: Well, it took a few months, I would say. I would say two or three months. I really inundated myself with your podcasts when I joined your program, and I listened to the videos a lot, and I read a lot. I read intuitive eating. So I kept giving myself the message because it was so foreign and abhorrent to me in a way. So I just kept feeding myself that message until I finally started to accept it. But it wasn't something like you said, "Well, Robyn, let's work on the binging first and then we'll talk about losing weight." And the fact that it was even possible to maybe gain more weight during that time was so scary to me and so antithetical to what I wanted. But I thought, "You know what? Everything I have done in the past has failed. This is different. Maybe you should give this a chance. And so, as I said, I just flooded myself with that message until finally I was at peace with it.

Kirstin: Why was it so scary to not lose weight and possibly gain weight?

Robyn: I think because I had this self-loathing and I thought it would all go away if I lost the weight. It sounds ridiculous to say out loud, but I think that's the way I was thinking. If I just lose this way, I'll feel great about myself and I won't have these issues anymore. Not remembering all the times that I lost 30, 40, 50 pounds and it came back on. I know when I had lost the weight, I felt fabulous, but it was a very superficial happiness. It wasn't an internal happiness, which is where I'm coming to now, where I'm at peace with the fact that I had a difficult childhood and I'm at peace with the things that were said to me or that I said to myself that they came from something that wasn't really personal. It really wasn't. I thought it devalued me, but it had nothing to do with me. I would have never come to those conclusions if I hadn't spent the time feeling discomfort and feeling icky and feeling scared.

Kirstin: Yeah. So you would have just lost the weight again, and felt great superficially, but not have felt great about yourself internally. Because losing weight can't fix that.

Robyn: I wasn't dealing with the true issues. And that is what your program is about, is about going beyond the urges and finding what is causing the urges. What's going on? And even if you can't articulate it, at least acknowledge that you feel lousy and that food is only going to take it away for about 30 seconds. So why do it?

Kirstin: Yeah. And I actually remember coaching with you on that, where I think your only homework was to acknowledge how you were feeling.

Robyn: And I had signs on the bread box drawer and in the refrigerator, acknowledge. So I wouldn't forget. Because that's another part of certainly my bingeing life was amnesia. I'd say, "Oh, I'm going to do this. I'm going to do that." And all of a sudden, the urge came and all the things that I planned to do went out the window. It was almost like I was two personalities. It was a little scary that I could just push that aside to the point where I didn't even remember it. But now that's impossible. When I have an urge, I can't not say, "Okay, what's going on?" And I acknowledge it, and I say, "Why what's going on?" Sometimes I can't answer it. Sometimes I can't. It just depends on the circumstances.

Kirstin: Yeah, totally. I mean, we can't expect ourselves to be perfect at this work all of the time and be able to have perfect self-awareness all the time. But we're just looking for better than and the best that we can.

Robyn: Absolutely true. And being the best that you can is pretty damn good.

Kirstin: Hell, yeah, it is. Yeah. And now you're so good at redirecting your thinking, right? The other challenging thing, you've gotten so good at it.

Robyn: But, again, it didn't happen overnight. In the beginning, it was so artificial. I remember you talking when we had that grotesque-- I have a grotesque body. And you said, "Let's look at that. Is that a fact?" And you said, "People on the street, would they say, 'Well, maybe.'" So you neutralized and say, "I have a body," right? And, okay, all right. That took a lot of practice. I think though, if you look at anything, anything that you're going to be good at takes a lot of practice. It just does. Nothing happens overnight. I wasn't a really solid, strong, confident teacher the first year. I remember I was shaking the whole year. And over the years, I became stronger and better. And I had to work at it. And if you look at professional athletes, they have many more failures than successes as anybody who's very successful. Inventors, they don't just invent something right away. They screw it up 10 billion times before, "Whoa." So it's okay to take time. But we live in a society that is so based on, "It's got to happen yesterday, ASAP." And I had that attitude. "I'm going to lose the weight starting day one." We need to step back and realize this philosophy is not a sound one or a helpful one, it really isn't.

Kirstin: Yes. Yeah. And I love how you said that. Yeah, we're going to screw it up so many times. And we have to practice. And we're going to become better at it over time. So many times have people come into my program and think that now that they're in the program, they're never going to binge again.

Robyn: Yeah, well, I'm sure in the back of my little head, I had that hope too.

Kirstin: So many people do. And I tell them that it's likely going to be part of the process. And if it does happen, that's just something to learn from. You're going to become better because of it. And it's so important to see it that way, because otherwise we see ourselves as a failure. We binge, we're a failure, we give up. We binge, we're a failure, we give up, which is one of the reasons why there are people

who don't stop binge eating because they just keep giving up on themselves when they binge. But instead, we need to learn from the binge, take something from it.

Robyn: Absolutely true. And if we could just really accept that failure is a part of success. That's all there is to it. And just don't be hard on yourself and just pick yourself up and go forward and do the very best you can.

Kirstin: Yeah. Yes. So we've talked about how you used to describe your body as grotesque previously. What do you think about your body now?

Robyn: I think it's a miracle. I am still functioning, and I feel strong and happy, and I'm so grateful for my body. I've lost about 20 pounds now. I feel much lighter. I don't have aches and pains in my knees anymore. When I go up and down the stairs, I'm like 50 years old. It's so wonderful. I'm on the pickleball court. I'm running all over the place without thinking about, oh, don't hurt your knee now. So it is. It's a miracle. And I got myself a pair of jeans yesterday, and I like how I look in them. And I'm liking my body. And I really do see that it is a true miracle. All of our bodies are.

Kirstin: I love that. A miracle. What a great word to use. Now, before you lost the 20 pounds, what were you thinking about your body then? After the whole grotesque thing?

Robyn: Sometimes I would look at it and I would say, it looks OK. And other times I'd say, Oh, you got to work on this. You want to get rid of this. My belly or my thighs being too wide. But I wasn't hating myself. And I wasn't using the word grotesque. I was just telling myself, "This isn't really where you want to be. You want to keep going forward." So yeah, I think that was it. Because as I've said, it's about refusing to give up. Telling myself negative things and hating my body is just going to put me 10 steps backwards. And I want to do that now.

And if it does slip into my head, because sometimes we can't control our thoughts, right, because they're so habitual, I just say, that's not true. That's not a fact. And I go back to something that is a fact, or something that's good about my body.

Kirstin: Yeah. Yeah. I mean, that's how it's going to be for most people, always. Like, we don't just create this perfect relationship with our bodies. Like you said, our brains are going to throw some thoughts at us sometimes. We're not in control of every single thought, right? But we have the ability to call out the BS and say that's not true.

Robyn: Absolutely. It is so true. I think working with somebody like you who points out, is that a fact? Nine times out of 10, or maybe 99 out of 100, it ain't a fact. Your negative thinking or your uninformed thinking that's doing that. And there's nothing factual about it whatsoever.

Kirstin: Yes, yeah. So it's just going to be ongoing checking yourself and checking your thoughts as you go. And I just love the transition that you've made with your thoughts about your body, going from my body is grotesque to it looks OK. And I'm just going to keep moving forward, which is a much more neutral, to now being like, It's a miracle. And I like it. That's so amazing to see. I love that.

Robyn: It is truly.

Kirstin: Yes, yes. And I would bet that the shift in your thinking about your body has actually contributed to those 20 pounds that you've lost?

Robyn: Oh, I have no doubt that that's true. It's not just about what I put into my mouth. It's what I put into my head.

Kirstin: Yes. So what are you putting into your head? What are you-- what do you think about food now? What do you think about yourself now?

Robyn: I'm very, very lucky. I'm about to go on Sunday to Australia and New Zealand. And I'm going to be gone for 34 days. I am very excited, and I'm not even really worried about food. I'm not afraid of food. The answer to your question is, I'm not afraid of food anymore. I have cake, I have cookies, I have ice cream in the house, and it's OK. It's OK. But I'm not afraid of it anymore. I don't think about it 24/7. I don't obsess about it, but I do think about it in terms of, okay, what do I have in the house, and where am I going today, and what will I be eating? So I think that that's the answer to your question is that I don't live in fear of it anymore. It's not the be-all and end-all of my life. Be-all and end-all of my life is enjoying people's company, being kind, and doing things that fulfill me.

Kirstin: Yeah. Yeah. What about the soothing and the comfort? How do you get those?

Robyn: Oh, gosh. Sometimes by doing absolutely nothing. Well, I am a practicing Nietzsche and Buddhist, so I get a lot of comfort from that. I love to read. I love to watch wonderful movies. I love to take walks. I love to play pickleball. I love to walk on the beach. I have a dog. I love wonderful husband that we have a lot of fun with and sometimes going out to eat. But there's so many different ways that I get soothed and relaxed. And those are some of them.

Kirstin: Yeah. And one of them is definitely working on your thoughts, right?

Robyn: Oh, absolutely. Yes. Absolutely. Yeah. I was looking at exterior type of things, but yes. And that will never stop. That will never stop. It can't stop because, first of all, I'm incapable of doing it. Once you really start doing it, it's like you can't un-know it, you know?

Kirstin: Yes, yes. Yep, I cannot stop being an observer of my thoughts. I can't.

Robyn: But that's okay. That's what you want, right?

Kirstin: That's exactly what I want. I want to be aware of what I'm thinking, and question what I'm thinking, and start looking at other perspectives and ways of thinking. Why would I not want to do that? So often, when people start doing this work, they're like, "Oh, my God, it's so much work." And I'm like, "Well, just as we talked about before, the more you practice, the easier it's going to get, the more natural it's going to become. And then you're going to be so grateful that you have this skill, because it is life-changing."

Robyn: It is important to remember, when you're first starting, you can really only do one thing at a time. I think what happens to, and it happened to me, it certainly happened to me because I remember typing out a list of all the strategies and tools that I learned from you. And I was like, "Well, I can't do these all at once. I can't even do three at once." And it was like I got myself overwhelmed. And so you said very wisely, just focus on one, two at the most. And not just even for a week, maybe two or three weeks or a month. Just focus on that. And then those baby steps become longer and longer and longer. You get there, you get to the same destination, but it might take a little bit more time. But as we were talking earlier, you have to accept that time is an aspect of this.

Kirstin: Right. And it's actually not going to take more time. People think it's going to take more time, because it's like, we're going one at a time, taking our time with each of them. But if you try to tackle that entire list all at one time--

Robyn: You go crazy.

Kirstin: You go crazy, and then you get overwhelmed and you stop. Right? I always bring it back to this. It's the tortoise and the hare thing. It is slow and steady wins the race, being rushed and impatient - and I know you and I talked about being impatient on more than one occasion - that's what actually stops you because you keep getting impatient and then you just stop.

Robyn: That's right. You're saying, "Oh, this isn't working because I'm not having enough time." Years ago, I went heli-hiking in the Cariboo Mountains in Canada. And they would put you in a helicopter and they'd land you someplace. And then the guide would show you where you were going to go. And it was like, "Oh my God, I can't get all the way up there. It's just hiking. It's not like--" it was like a snake path. It wasn't a direct path. And I said, "Oh my God, this is going to take forever." I have to tell you. Before I knew it, we were up at the top among all these beautiful wildflowers. And I took a picture of my husband and me in the helicopter. And I put it on my desk because when I started the year of teaching, I think, "Oh my God, I have so much to teach them. I have so little time." And I'd remember it's one step at a time and you're going to get there. It's going to happen. Do not worry. Believe. And I really have incorporated that way of thinking into how I deal with food. And it's all because of this program. It really, really is. Weight Watchers, Ideal Protein, Jenny Craig, Scarsdale Diet, South Beach diet, none of them taught me this.

Kirstin: Yeah. And, look, it, one step at a time, got you to stopping binge eating and losing 20 pounds.

Robyn: Yeah. Yeah. And I'm continuing to lose, you know?

Kirstin: And you're continuing. You're doing great.

Robyn: Yup. Yup.

Kirstin: So awesome, right? We didn't have to rush to get here.

Robyn: I know, but we Americans like to rush.

Kirstin: I know. Even non-Americans, trust me. I've worked with plenty non-Americans as well who are also in a hurry to get there. And I get it. I've worked on myself in different areas, too where I'm in a hurry as well. I get it. But we have to step back and understand that rushing is not the most effective way.

Robyn: And once I accepted that, I was much calmer. I had some anxiety about it. And once I've really said, "Okay, you're going to forget about the losing weight. You're going to really focus on taming this binging." And I felt almost like a load had lifted off my shoulders. So anyone who's listening, do yourself a favor. Do it sooner rather than later.

Kirstin: Yes. Sooner rather than later, and be patient. So what would you say your life is like now compared to what it was like before? Your life, your relationship with yourself, what's different?

Robyn: I'm calmer. I'm happier. I'm more at peace. I find that I'm more patient with myself and with other people. I used to have enormous impatience and get very easily frustrated, "Well, why can't you figure this out? What's the matter with you? What's the matter? You don't have a sense of direction? What do you mean?" I kind of accept everybody is who they are. That's huge. And because of that, I don't get as irritated and anxious. Like I said, I'm more at peace with the world. I'm more accepting. It's not to say that I accept everything. But the things that I can't control, I'm pretty good at saying, "All right, I'm going to let that go." And things that I can control that I'm not successful at, I walk away from, and then I go back to it, including even something like a crossword puzzle. Or if I'm trying-- I was trying to put a chain inside a hole in my birdhouse. And I couldn't do it. And I couldn't do it. I just walked away from it. An hour later, I went back and whoop it went right through the hole. So I started to laugh because I said, "You just got to let it go. When you start to go cuckoo, let it go. Just walk away." And I didn't eat, didn't even think about eating. But I was [inaudible]. So I just have to say that, and this is what I wanted at the end of my life, is to be at peace with myself and with my environment. And while I wouldn't say it's 100% and it never will be 100%, it's so much better. I mean, it's really like night and day.

Kirstin: That's amazing. That's amazing. And I see such a difference in how you talk about yourself and treat yourself now compared to previously. I could imagine what you would say to yourself when you're not getting that chain in and put so much blame on yourself.

Robyn: Oh, yeah. I would say I did it all wrong and blah, blah, blah. I mean, if I were really out of my mind, I'd even break the damn birdhouse, you know? But now I know that I'll get it done, but maybe just not now.

Kirstin: So so much more at peace with yourself, so much kinder to yourself, so much more accepting of yourself.

Robyn: Yeah.

Kirstin: So what would you say to someone else, who is your age or maybe a little bit younger, who has been binging for as long as you were, doing it as often as you were, and maybe has a lot of doubt that they'll be able to stop? What would you say to them?

Robyn: First and foremost, do not give up on yourself ever. Even if you can't believe in yourself right now, fake it and go for it. Don't give up. You will make it. And I do think it also helps to have a program like yours and a coach like you and a podcast like you. I do think that doing it alone is a slippery slope. So I do think, if you can just accept the failures and just keep being tenacious, just keep doing it. You will get there. You will get there.

Kirstin: I couldn't agree more. Very well said. So lastly, you have given so many words of wisdom. Are there any other words of wisdom that you would like to share that you haven't already?

Robyn: I would just like to tell each and every one of you that you are valuable, that you deserve respect, and you have dignity. And please, please believe that. It took me a long time to believe it, but I know it's true. And everyone I deal with, you may not like some of the things people say or do, but we all are valuable. And there's a reason why we're here. And let's make the very, very best of it.

Kirstin: I'm kind of speechless because the Robyn that I first met probably wouldn't have said that.

Robyn: No, I don't think so either.

Kirstin: Or she may have been able to say it to the people, but not mean it for herself.

Robyn: I was just going to say that, is that you could give me a card to read that, and I could say it because I was an actress for many years. And I could say it with meaning, but it wouldn't be true. It wouldn't be real. But I do feel this very, very deeply in my heart now. And that's what I mean. It's a great place to be.

Kirstin: Yeah. Yeah. So this isn't just about stopping binge eating and changing how much food you're eating. There's so much more.

Robyn: The binging is a symptom of something that you need to look at about how you think about yourself. And binging is making it worse, not better. And you're just a great person. You're a great person, and you have a lot to offer, and you've given a lot already. And give yourself that credit.

Kirstin: Yes. Amazing. Amazing. Thank you so much for everything you've shared, for this conversation that I'm sure will be very enlightening and inspiring to other people. Thank you so much for being here, Robyn.

Robyn: Utter pleasure. And thank you. And thank you again for all your help. It has been truly a gift.

Kirstin: You're welcome.

Wow, right? Like I said in the intro, so many changes. So many changes in how she's thinking about herself, her body, food, all the things, and what a difference it has made for her.

And what an inspiration she is.

And, she's still going. She's moved into the weight loss phase, after learning to be patient in the stop binge eating phase, and she's making steady progress toward her goal. I have no doubt she will get there because she's doing it in a sustainable way and has worked on her mind so much which really is the most important part. She's doing new things she hadn't even known to do before and that's what's helping her to be successful.

So awesome.

So, if you want to be like Robyn, and get the help she got, and make the changes she made, and make the progress she's made, then I encourage you to come work with me in The Stop Binge Eating Program.

Registration for the next round is opening in just two weeks, on October 1st of 2025. You can join the waitlist now so you can be notified as soon as it opens by going to coachkir.com/group. And if you have any questions that aren't answered on that page, you can email them to info@coachkir.com.

Stopping binge eating can change so much for you. It's not just about eating less, it's about feeling better emotionally, physically, and mentally. The effect that it will have on your life is priceless, so do everything you can to make it happen. It's worth it, and you're worth it.

So, I hope to work with you personally very soon, not just through this podcast, and I hope you enjoyed this conversation as much as I did. I'll talk to you next time. Bye bye.