

Girls Night #231: What it's Really Like to Work Full-Time and Be a Mom — with Robin Long

0:00:05 - Stephanie

Hey friends, welcome to Girls Night. I'm Stephanie May Wilson and I'm so happy that you're here. Each week, I have a girlfriend over and we talk through one of the biggest questions we have about our lives as women. We're talking about friendships and faith and relationships and self-confidence, about our calling in life and how to live every bit of our lives to the full. Life is so much better and easier and absolutely more fun when we navigate it together as girlfriends, and I cannot wait to get started. So, friends, I'm so excited about today's episode. Today we're talking about how to live a healthy, balanced life when you have both kids and a demanding career. I wanted to do this episode because I know that so many of you are in a similar situation to me, where you're trying to figure out how to be the best mom you can possibly be, while also balancing a career and doing all the other things like laundry and trying to, you know, find pockets of rest here and there. I know there are also women listening who want to have kids in the future, but you're trying to figure out the logistics of how this would work. You're asking questions like how would I find and afford child care, or is it really possible to work and be a mom at the same time? These are really great questions, and my guess for today's episode is going to help answer them.

Today, we've invited my friend, Robin Long, back onto the podcast. Robin is a Pilates instructor. She's the founder and CEO of Lindywell. She's mom of four kids under the age of nine and most recently, she added the title of author to her long list of achievements. Robin is someone I've followed and admired for years. She has incredible wisdom to share about balancing work life and being a mom, because she's been doing it herself for the last nine years. She even has twins. Like me, friends, I hope that this episode is a reminder that you're not alone in this journey. There are people in your corner cheering you on as you go. I cannot wait for you to hear from Robin. You guys, I'm truly thrilled for who we have on the show today. I'm sitting here with my friend, Robin Long, and Robin, this is your third time on the show, is that right?

0:02:09 - Robin

I am so honored. I think so. I was trying to look back on our previous dates and I'm so honored and it's been a little too long I'm so excited to be back.

0:02:19 - Stephanie

It's been too long. It's been too long. I need to brag on Robin for a minute. So we've been long distance friends for a long time now. I feel like we kind of both got started with our little corners of the internet around the same time. I've just been a fan of yours for so long and to this day, whenever I think about.

I had a counselor one time tell me to choose your gurus. It was when my girls were born and she was like you are so overwhelmed, trying to figure out what you're supposed to be doing. Pick a couple of voices that you listen to, and when it comes to health and strength and moving my body and just taking care of my body, like you are truly at the top of my list of gurus. Like you are probably 100% the loudest voice when it comes to taking care of my body in that way, and you have been for years. So, guys, I'm thrilled. I'm thrilled. I'm so honored to hear that. Thank you. So okay, before we dive in, before I get so sidetracked, tell us who you are, what you do and if you have a fun fact I would love to hear it.

0:03:28 - Robin

Okay, so my name is Robin Long, I am the founder of Lindywell and through Lindywell, we have a worldwide community, we have an app and we provide online Pilates workouts, breathwork, nutrition, recipes and support and, more than anything, we provide a unique and more balanced approach to health and wellness, and we'll probably talk about that today, as people often think, oh, you're in the fitness space and I'm like caveat, yes, but not in the way that you might think. And so I recently wrote a book called Well to the Core, which is so fun to have out in the world now, because that is really my whole approach in a book and helps people to see and understand that I'm not talking about fitness and health and wellness in the traditional ways that you will find when you're scrolling Instagram. In fact, I'm digging deeper than that. I'm helping people reframe the way we look at our bodies, exercise, food in a way that really supports true wellness. So not just aesthetic wellness or not just trends or just weight loss, but really wellness to our core. So I'm very passionate about that.

I am also Pilates instructor. If I didn't mention that, I am also now a certified nutritionist. I've been working on that the last few years and I'm a mom of four. So my fun fact is that I am also a twin mama. My twins are fraternal boy, girl, and they're our youngest and they just turned five, and that is another fun way that we have connected over the years. So that's my fun fact.

0:05:02 - Stephanie

It really is. It really is. I was just telling Robin she was like one of the only people only twin parents I knew when I found out I was having twins and there was a book that you really recommended that I totally read and have passed on. They're just like different products that you swore by and I feel like you passed this really awesome twin baton to me and I've gotten to pass on the things that you shared with me to other people and it's a club where, like, can you believe this? This is wild, how. This is a crazy journey, this twin thing, but it's really fun to get to do it together.

0:05:40 - Robin

It is. I love to hear that and it's so true. Finding those people who get it and can help you and say, hey, I figured this out the hard way and you don't have to is gold as you are navigating life with twins. Because it is. It is different. I have others too. I have singletons, as they call them, once you enter the twin world, and there are a lot of work to, but it is definitely different having twins. So I guess yeah, it's a.

0:06:03 - Stephanie

It is really fun getting to talk to people who have twins. You're like, yeah, it's just, it's a. It's a really unique experience and really awesome in so many ways and also like hard in a lot of ways. So, anyway, I love that.

Well, ok, today, over the last couple of years I would say probably since having my girls I have become really curious about how other people, other women specifically, are like putting together the pieces of their lives. There is so much that is that we could be doing. There are so many things pulling at us and a lot of people telling us like the right, like the right way to do it. There's a lot of voices weighing, weighing in on what our lives should look like, what our families should look like, and so I just feel like I want to stop every woman that I see you on the street and go how have you done this? Like what, what did you decide was important? What did you? What have you let go of? Because I know that it's it's a total lie that someone's doing it all, like no one is doing it all.

So I think my question, more and more, has been what aren't you doing? Like, how did you figure out what to do and what not to do, and so I'm so excited to get to hear from you how you've like not balanced all the things, but how you figured out what to what are your things and what arms. And so, before we talk about like doing all the things, tell us about Lindy Wow. Like, how did this get started? It's it's only recent that it's called Lindy Wow. Right, I just would love to hear your career story.

0:07:43 - Robin

Yes, and I'm glad that you set this question up that way, because the things you're talking about, you know what I'm not doing, what I've chose to do. It it all is really deeply embedded in the story of building Lindy Wow to where it is today and the choices I've made along the way. So I think, similar to you, I started well. Well, first I started as a Pilates instructor, so I was working in a corporate job. I was not thriving. I was at that point in time realizing I'm not really interested in commercial real estate development. I'm really not finding my passion here.

At the time I also started experiencing debilitating anxiety for the first time in my life. I had never experienced anxiety and it was so high. It was to the point where, you know, I could barely function, I could barely make it through the day and it just kind of came on out of the blue, was really intense. A lot of it was actually around health stuff. So I had a lot of fear and anxiety around my health, getting sick, you know, possibly getting sick. What was wrong with me? Like symptoms, lots of fear and concerns.

I was also at the time and this makes sense I was experiencing some mysterious symptoms. So I was having stomach pains, I was having bloating, low energy, some aches, my back was hurting, my neck was hurting, so I had some things going on and doctors kept telling me I don't know what's going on, you're probably fine, you're probably just stressed. I remember one doctor leaned against his desk and he said you're what we call an enigma and you're gonna keep coming in with a new problem and you know just someone with anxiety who seriously

thinks something is wrong. I was like caught in this really tough situation of is it just my anxiety? But no, I also know something's wrong, so that really can be stressful.

0:09:35 - Stephanie

You don't know what's wrong and the fact that you're kind of acting like this is no big deal, and I'm just making it up all about it by just making it worse.

0:09:43 - Robin

You're even higher, right, because now I don't feel heard, I don't feel seen. I'm left to my own devices to figure this out. So that was really heavy in my life. At that time I started seeing a counselor for the first time, but also around that time I started doing Pilates and it was incredible how Pilates helped me through that season.

So I had always been someone who was an exerciser, mostly because and I talk about we can talk about this more in a little bit but mostly because I wanted to change my body. I didn't like my body. I wanted to be smaller. I wanted to look like the covers on the magazines. I wanted to lose 10 pounds. I was never significantly overweight, but I was always focused on trying to change my body. So I had negative body image. I was using exercise as a means to an end, just to try to look better or change my body. I didn't really enjoy the process and a head anxiety, right. So all of these things going on.

Pilates came at a time for me when it helped me with all of that. So not only did it help me start to release tension from my body and help to overcome my anxiety by reducing stress and getting me connected to my body again. It also helped me to get in great shape and build new strength and feel strong, without, you know, working so hard in the gym and hating the process and using it as a tool to make up for food I ate the day before right. It became something totally different for me, so it was a life-changing moment. So long, long caveat there, but that's a huge reason of why Pilates became a central component in my life and career.

So I decided to leave my commercial real estate job and become a Pilates instructor, started building my business in person, but quickly realized that I wanted to start a family someday. I wanted to grow in my career and I had quickly kind of reached my ceiling. I was teaching 10 hours a day. You really can't do that for long without burning out. I had reached my max earning potential right An hourly job and I was like I know we're going to move, so I'm going to have to start to rebuild my clientele every time we move and I want to be a mom someday. So how can I figure out how to make Pilates work for me? So this was about 14 years ago that I taught my first class online and I just recorded it on my iPhone in my little spare bedroom and I created an online program and so I ran that for a few years and it eventually evolved into a membership because our because people were coming back to the programs and coming back and asking for more, and all of this I share because it just was evolving. Really, alongside my evolution is growing our family.

So I always say I've been growing a business and growing a family at the exact same time and as a result, that has really informed a lot of the decisions I've made of how I build my business

and even the pace at which I've built it. I absolutely could sit here and say, gosh, my company could be in a different place, it could be bigger, I could have gone harder, I could have done these different things, but I chose my priorities and my priority was my lifestyle and being a present mom and being a mom first and a business owner second. And that doesn't mean that I spend all my time with my kids. I've learned over the years. That actually doesn't necessarily mean that I don't ever have childcare or I work only during their nap times. I did for years.

Now, you know, then I've had seasons of nannies and I've had seasons where my kids are in school and I have a whole team behind the scenes at Lindy Well, I've had to hire, but all with the priority of caring passionately about my business, wanting to make a big impact, loving the work I do, but also really wanting to prioritize my time with my kids in these young years that are fleeting. So we could probably go a lot of directions with that, but every decision I've made has been a result of that priority and also trying to listen to what does God have for me in this season and how can I honor that?

0:13:46 - Stephanie

Oh, that's so. I'm like. I'm like I have so many questions that, so it's so good, though, and I feel like the first reminder that I'm taking away is, I think one of the things that happens if you, when you have a couple of things that you really care about and you're really working on at the same time, is that I don't know, you feel the push pull of like I really want to, I really want to be present here, but I don't want to lose out on progress here, and so I think half of me feels this like oh, I want to work on this and I want to build this, and I want to write this and I want to record this, and I want to like I have all these ideas and I don't, but I don't have quite as much time as I used to, and so, just like I don't know, just a reminder that you can. You can, even if you're building something and you really really care about what you're building, you've also allowed to build it a little slower if you need to.

0:14:41 - Robin

Absolutely, and you know, for example, the book, right, you're talking about writing. I had thought about writing a book earlier on, but just couldn't justify for me that the timing was right. While running the business because I, you know, have my work is not just writing, it's running the membership and supporting our community and our team um, but you know, I started writing it as my twins got a little bit older, so my youngest were older, and it's kind of amazing how the timing works out is that it launched when they went to kindergarten. So you know, I'm there in school now and there is a different shift and I'm here in my house right now with no kids and they're not with babysitters, they're at school. It's crazy.

And so there are these seasons that will change and I think there's always going to be that push and pull and I felt it at different times.

I really love that.

Our whole team at Lindy Well, for the most part and I shouldn't say our whole team, a lot of our team at Lindy Well is also working moms, so we can also understand with each other that push

and pull and we'll sometimes you'll have a few weeks where you're like, I feel, really out of balance.

I've been gone a lot, or I've been I just feel like I'm not getting that time I want. But then a few weeks later, you know, if you're intentional, then you're like, okay, actually kind of got that back to the place it needs to be, and then a few months later it's going to go off again and then it's going to come back, and so I just feel like letting those ebbs and flows happen without feeling like this is permanent. This is my new life. You know, of course, if you're recognizing a pattern, week after week, month after month, maybe there needs to be a change. But I do find that I have learned to ride the ebbs and flows and recognize that while I might feel more pulled in the business, in the work, during a certain window or period of time, there are other times where then I can lean more into the family and feel like, okay, I've got my balance back, if that makes sense.

0:16:37 - Stephanie

Yeah, I love that idea of balance. I think a lot of times when we think about Doing all the things or being balanced or something like that, it's like a pie, that's like evenly divided and and flat, and so it's always, like you know, I give one hour to this and one hour to this, right now to this, and if I don't, then I feel guilty and I feel like I'm out of out of balance. But I've noticed the same thing that sometimes it's really work heavy, sometimes it's really family heavy, sometimes I just need a lot more rest and sometimes I need, I don't need as much, and but when you kind of zoom out, so I don't know, over a week or a month or you know a year or something, you go, oh no, like I had all the pieces. It just wasn't Like in daily chunks, it was more in like Absolutely, like a kind of even out.

0:17:24 - Robin

I love. I love the way you're talking about that and I talk about that a lot in my book too, because the same is true for our wellness, right, and so this can be related to parenting. It can be related to so many different things. But when we do widen our view like that, to recognize same with same, with health, right, sometimes the healthiest thing for you to do is Exercise more, like you need to get moving more. That is actually the healthier thing for you. Sometimes the healthier thing to do this and I've been in this season, post twins, experiencing hormonal and adrenal burnout.

Working around, working and having twins and two other kids that does a number on your nervous system in your body. Uh, during that season, what was the healthiest thing for me? It was actually not pushing myself and workouts really hard. It was actually prioritizing rest, and whenever I used to share this with people, they'd be like oh yeah, so I, I get what you're saying, like more hikes and walks and less workouts, and I was like, no, no, no, you're not hearing me. I mean like rest, not adding another thing to my to-do list, not trying to be productive in my off hour, like I truly needed to rest. And then now I'm in a season where it's like, okay, yeah, it is actually the walks and different things that actually provide some of those health benefits.

But the point being, it's going to look different for you in every season and it's not going to look like the person on Instagram or even maybe your best friend or your mom or your sister or your husband or whoever it might be in your life that you're kind of seeing a difference in, right, and it can be hard because we feel like we need to measure up or what they're doing is the better thing. But we are all unique. We are bio, individually unique, not only in our body chemistry and actually what our bodies need, but also in our season of life, our mental health, our physical health and capacity, and so we can relate this to work and how we're managing all of those things. Right. How I run my business, it's going to look different than someone who's not in my position, who's not in my day-to-day lifestyle.

I used to be mentored by a lot of single men, which I learned so much from them, but what they were telling me to do was not going to work for me, right? So I had to take that information, filter it through and say, okay, but I'm a married woman with four young kids, so I can take that advice and then I can filter it through what works for me. And so I think that's true in business and life and parenting and even our health, as I talk a lot about, you know, over at Lindy Well, which is a super freeing, I hope, for people to recognize gosh. We can actually honor the season we're in, the bodies we have, the lives we have, and not have to compare to what others are doing so often.

0:20:10 - Stephanie

That's so like you're speaking my language like crazy right now. I love that so much and I'm so glad that you said the comparison thing because, and like that, you broadened it beyond. You know what you see people doing on Instagram. Like that is hard, that is a beast in and of itself. But also, like I think one of the people that I find myself actually comparing myself to the most when it comes to my need for rest is my husband, because he is the kind of person who really is totally fine with like five or six hours of sleep at night and he, like he stays up way later. He always has his whole life and gets up a little bit later, but like he does some of his best work at like midnight, or something which I totally cannot relate to.

Yeah, and there are just times where, like like he can keep going and I need to stop, or I can keep going but he needs to stop and like I don't know. I think I think especially because in this season of life we're carrying so much and we're carrying so much together that there's an element of like I don't want him to think that I'm like dropping the ball, you know, because it really impacts him. It's not even like a pride thing, it just really impacts him. But being able to say you know what, genuinely I'm like an eight to nine hour kind of person, I can get enough sleep, I'm so much better during the day and like he's totally embraced that. But like I can too, I don't need to be, we don't need to like match up, exactly that's so real.

0:21:43 - Robin

I'm so glad you brought that up because I think more people experience than this, than we talk about, and I even wrote that in my book and I think you're speaking like a true twin parent, but others will understand this too.

Is that it's one thing? Yeah, when you're just speaking up about your needs, I think it's another thing and it adds another layer when you know that need is going to have a negative, or maybe not negative, but it is going to have an impact on someone else. So for Matt and I in my season where I was also needing a lot more rest, like it was a direct impact on him he would get up with all the kids, he would have to make breakfast so I could get an hour you know, an extra hour of sleep. If I needed to lay down in the afternoon, he was on. It totally was like and that layer, it can be harder, because you do know I recognize this is making your day harder, Like I recognize that and thank you. But I think there's an opportunity there for give and take and having just a lot of open communication around it too, because it can be hard because you're both working hard.

0:22:53 - Stephanie

That is. There's a and I'm dying to have her on the show, but there's a book called Fair Play. If you have, are you okay?

0:23:02 - Robin

I have it.

0:23:03 - Stephanie

It's so good, and it's about balancing the load of like home duties and childcare between spouses. And it's about how women, even when women are the higher earner, or even when they're the like only one working full time or something women still carry so much more of the mental and like task load.

And so there's I should say that's actually not true in my family, which is Carl, is amazing but we they have these cards where you can kind of like divvy out and get a visual idea of like who's in charge of what. And we did them because we were finding that there were some tasks where we both felt really responsible for them and we're like okay, that's a waste of energy for us both to be like you know both carrying this and I have no one's sure who's doing it.

And so we like divvied up all these cards and at the end of the thing our load hadn't really gotten lighter because we thought like maybe I'm taking on so much and the other person isn't taking on as much and like I'll be able to give some of my cards away and they'll be like wow, you're so like you know you've been doing so much and we both are sitting there at the end with just this huge stack of cards and we're going what in the world Like okay, so what we're carrying is too much for two people.

0:24:28 - Robin

Like that was the takeaway. That was not actually helping either of us. Well, we need to do the cards. I have them. We haven't done them yet, but I do think that's going to be super helpful because there are things that I think I'm carrying this, I'm carrying that and then I forget of some of the things he's carrying right because I don't carry them. Like, I forget of some of those little things. But also, just fair warning, I was reading that book and Matt was not and I found myself getting really mad at him while I was reading the book and then I realized like this is not fair to him. He was like why are you all of a sudden so mad at me? And I was like I'm sorry, because

the book is calling out some typical things. And I realized I was like yeah, that's right, and getting kind of pissed off at him and that was not fair. So, fair warning, read it together, go in with it.

0:25:16 - Stephanie

I'm not mad at you. I'm mad at men for the history of forever and all of my friends that are carrying too much.

0:25:21 - Robin

Yeah, exactly Exactly. My poor guy is it going to bed? So mad at him I'm like good night.

0:25:30 - Stephanie

I loved, I really loved doing the cards, though, because even though we both even though it didn't necessarily like lighten either one of our loads to sort of redistribute it was really helpful to be like to actively get to negotiate. Like I hate this, please don't make me do this. What can I take of yours that you hate in exchange? And like Carl does all of our grocery shopping and meal prep now, and like I still make the girls lunches and I usually make them breakfast, but like I don't. The question of what's for dinner is like not even something I think about ever anymore and it is so wonderful and it's. But like I have all kinds of things that like he it doesn't even, like it's not even on his radar, because it's on my radar and right anyway, so it was a really helpful thing.

Like how did we even get here? Tell me, how would you define mom guilt? Like I'm just really I feel like no one ever defines it. They just say like oh, mom guilt. And so I was thinking about that. Like I would love to talk about that for a second. Like what's happening? What is mom guilt?

0:26:39 - Robin

When I think about mom guilt, I think it can look different for all of us based on whatever expectations we have set around what a good mom looks like. So I think it can look different based on the type of house you were raised in, the home you were raised in, what you saw modeled for you or whatever you created as a this is what a good mom looks like. When you're not measuring up to that, I think that's when mom guilt creeps in. So I really do think it's individual and that's why you do have some people who really struggle with it if they're a working mom and others who don't, or those who really struggle with it in terms of how their kids look. Do they show up, all put together and queue and clean?

0:27:27 - Stephanie

Mine, do not Mine either, mine either.

0:27:32 - Robin

But so I think in that way I think it's helpful to. Again, it's all unique for each of us, but I think when we feel like there's an expectation that we're not meeting of what it means to be a good mom, that's when that guilt creeps in. So I know for me personally I can speak from my experience. I think the guilt comes in also if I feel at all like I'm letting my kids down. So if I feel

like they need something more from me or want something more from me and I'm not there to provide it or I'm not as present as I could be, or I think that for me is when I will experience that my kids are getting a little bit older so they can communicate, whereas when they're babies it's less clear. It may be more of a feeling like gosh.

I just feel really bad that my kid is at daycare, or is that with a nanny and not with their mom. But I also think it's just so interesting because I was raised by a working mom. I went to daycare. I had, you know, in-home daycare. I have the best memories from it.

I developed such a sweet, special relationship with Sherry she's still, you know, as my Facebook friend today and calling some of my pictures which is so fun, and so I think that really impacts my ability to be a working mom, knowing that I was raised in a home with that and thrived and felt loved and got to see my mom do something that helped her thrive in her life, and so yeah, but I have other friends who really struggle and say you know, how do you compartmentalize that? So that's where it brings up for me. But I think it's something that we also, the more we talk about, the better it is right With our friends or with our communities, because it's something, just like most things that are around, guilt and shame in silence or when you feel alone in them, is when it feels the heaviest and then we can start to make up stories in our head about it. It may not actually even be true.

0:29:30 - Stephanie

Yeah, yeah, earlier, you were talking about how, like, each one of us is unique, and I actually really want to go back to that in a second, but that, like you know, you were learning from single men who don't have kids and like the way that they run their businesses is going to be totally different, like they just have different, just a different set of circumstances, and that's true also for things like childcare or like how our families function. It's like every kid is different, every parent is different, every work, every job, has different requirements or flexibilities, or you know things, and so it just like when we're comparing, when we're just like flat comparing you know, this is how many hours my friend's kid is in childcare versus my kid's it's like okay, but we're ignoring so much of the picture as to why those decisions were made and why different decisions could be made but still be the best for everybody involved.

And it is really easy to like, zoom in, like that.

0:30:34 - Robin

It is, and I think it's a helpful question to ask ourselves of like do I really feel guilty about this? Like, do I really feel like this is a problem for our family or a problem for me and my relationship with my kids? Or Am I just putting that expectation on myself because I feel like I should? Right, because I know many Homes and families that work like really different. Or the husband is the primary caregiver and the mom is Working, you know, nine to five, nine to six sometimes in an office, but they feel great about the fact that they're their situation, it works really well for them and so.

But there can still be the temptation from other inputs or other influences it might make you feel guilty. So, taking that and just saying do I really feel guilty here and is this guilt telling me okay, actually, something's out of alignment with my priorities and so, therefore, I want to make a change if I have the privilege to do so. Right, recognizing that we don't always have the privilege To make the changes we may want to make. Or is this something that's like no, that's actually an outside influence that's coming in on me. That's a comparison and that's not really my situation. I'm just, I'm just absorbing that and applying that to myself when I don't need to.

0:31:48 - Stephanie

Yeah, a hundred percent Talk to me. I want to go back because you said something about you said a very impressive science, a term like bio individual or something like. But I actually I'm really curious as to what, because I don't know that I've ever heard. Is that? What did I get that right?

0:32:08 - Robin

You did.

0:32:09 - Stephanie

Yeah, I don't know that. I've ever heard that term before and I'm like I Just I feel like there's gonna be something really interesting there that I would love to like. Yeah.

0:32:20 - Robin

I think, when we consider that we are all Bio, individual, unique. So my makeup is different than your makeup, though Not my, our face, our biological makeup, although your makeup does look good, if you're even wearing any looks fresh, clean, oh, thank you. But our, our biological makeup. So my, what's going on in my body right now, with the hormone levels flowing through my body, my bone density, my muscle mass, what's happening in my digestion right now, the amount of gut bacteria I have, right, all of these things is different than what's happening in your body right now. So we may have, like, similar processes happening, but we all have individual Things happening in our body. So when we remember this and I think this is super helpful again in a world where we have so much information About you should do this diet, you should do this workout plan, you should be fasting, you should be keto, you should be this, all of these you should be. It's the best thing. It none of it applies to every person. So that is when it's our job to recognize that we are unique and and our job is to get to know our bodies and Honor our bodies and consider gosh, okay. So what I know about my body is that I tend to respond better to these types of foods. Or I feel my best when I Eat a big, nourishing breakfast with lots of fat and protein and like breakfast is my biggest meal of the day, actually and I feel my best as opposed to saying, oh, I need to intermittent fast because I want to tell me to do that and then, and then you're not feeling your best, right? There's reasons for that. It's your hormones, it's your body. So, knowing you know even the type of workouts you that are most beneficial for you, knowing what makes you feel your best, based on your season, how much sleep are you getting? How are your hormones right? How are you recovering from an injury? Are you dealing with Autoimmune disease right? Are these things Impact the choices that you make, and I actually think we can use this to be so empowering Because, again, let's remove all of that.

You can go on Instagram or wherever you go, tick-tock today and you can see, literally you can swipe through. We've all experienced this one thing telling you you have to do eat these foods or do this workout and then go to the next one. It says why you should never eat those foods or never do that workout. It's crazy making. So what we get to do is Tune in to ourselves, listen to our own bodies, and so when I speak to that bio individuality, it applies to how we eat, how we rest, how much we choose to exercise and move, and it's actually quite motivating and freeing when you start looking at it from that perspective, instead of what you quote-unquote should be doing. I.

0:35:13 - Stephanie

Love it so much, I love it so much. Um, the question that's coming up for me is like I Feel like that is so freeing until we get to that point and at least, like I Hope not everyone has this in there in their head, but I know that I do. Where I'm like, okay, yeah, but what if? What if the thing that Makes me feel the best like doesn't Like? What if being ten pounds heavier or something is where I feel the best? But what if that's not how? Like my pants don't fit then, or that's not how I'm gonna look.

0:35:50 - Robin

you know Totally and this is a real, real challenge, and I try to speak to this quite a bit in my programs and in my book, because I think there have been two ends of the spectrum and I'm trying to find that middle ground. So one end of the spectrum being Do all the things right, you're, you're Aesthetically trying to look the best you can like, come on, scale is all that matters, your size of your genes. This is why we're working out, track every macro, count every step. You know there's kind of that Extreme camp, right, I'm going to one end of the, the pendulum swinging, and then you go to the other which actually isn't this, but it has kind of become this by accident which is like extreme body positivity, right. So I think body positivity was actually, is actually meant to be able to span both sides of the spectrum that you can appreciate, love and care for your body, whether you're working out and getting in the best shape of your life or whether you're embracing the body you completely have.

But what I see is people kind of feeling like they have to pick one or the other either full body acceptance. I love myself just as I am, even though my genes don't fit and I feel uncomfortable in my body or I need to be over here getting fit, doing all the other things. So I want people to recognize that actually, these things can coexist. So finding, taking care of yourself, getting into great shape, changing your body composition if that's a goal of yours Can be done in a way that is still freeing, still about nourishing your body and truly caring for your body in the best way that you can, not in a way that is About restriction, about guilt, about shame, about needing to fix yourself. In order to be happy, we have to do the inner work as well. Right, you're not going to be a happier person when you lose 10 pounds. Right, you're not going to be a happier person just because your genes fit better. It does reduce an inconvenience in your life.

It is a little distracting, because it is frustrating when your clothes don't fit.

0:38:00 - Stephanie

Yes, it's frustrating.

0:38:02 - Robin

We can solve that inconvenience by either buying larger genes, even for a period of time or for a permanent amount of time, or we can also solve that inconvenience by getting a little bit more. It's focused and intentional on the foods you're eating, how much you're moving and how much sleep you're getting, how your hormones are balanced all these things that impact our body, shape and size. But the biggest thing I want to call out is our bodies are going to change and they are meant to change Somewhere along the way. We got the idea that our body was supposed to stay the same size its whole life. Nowhere in our handbook I don't think we have a handbook, but does it say that a woman's body is going to stay the same size and shape its whole life?

I have had many variations of my body over the last 10 years, many after having four kids, going through a pregnancy loss, lots of fluctuations. I've gained, I've lost, I've been stronger, I've had been weaker, all of these things and that's a part of being a woman, that's a part of having a body and going through different seasons of life. So I also think doing that work to say, okay, how much of my worth am I defining by the size and shape of my body and how my clothes fit. That's the most important work to do first, right that right there matters before you do anything. And then, if you end up saying I am so loving my workouts, I am loving eating more whole, balanced meals and these things and as a result, your jeans fit better, that's okay too. But we first have to focus on how are we seeing our worth and value? Why are we taking care of ourselves, unless on just kind of the outcome at the end, or how the jeans fit or what the scale says, which can trip us up the most?

0:40:05 - Stephanie

Yeah, I am sitting here going like, and now everyone's like oh, this is why Stephanie loves Robin so much. I mean, they knew that from the very beginning, but this is why I really am. For years I've been such a stickler with myself with whose voices I allow into my brain, because there are just a bazillion voices out there and, like you said, people will tell you to do the exact opposite thing and tell you that you're so dumb if you do the other one. You know it's so confusing, but also it's just a really slippery slope in my brain to go from a place where I'm like in a healthy spot mentally and emotionally and even physically, to a place where I may look different but my brain or my heart, they're not in good places and so I'm so glad you mentioned that.

I feel like I'm so glad to have your voice. Your voice is so positive and so helpful with like wellness in all ways and it's just so important. I love that.

0:41:09 - Robin

One of the first things I call out. The first chapter is called Reframe, and it's all about this because we have to first reframe our entire definition of success around what health looks like. Right, because if we keep operating under the same belief system that we always have and that looks different for all of us some of mine, where that wellness always equals weight loss that

was one of mine I would get stuck in the all or nothing mentality. Right, I'm either all on a plan or I'm off a plan. I'm either doing good or doing bad. It's either a long, hard workout or it's no workout at all. These are things that really kept me stuck and I'm glad you called out kind of the slippery slope because, again, we're all unique in this way. But I'm similar to you.

I have to be very intentional about the approach that I take in my self-talk to make sure that I am not falling back into old habits and patterns that I thought were healthy, that look healthy on the outside but for me we're actually internally. I was beating myself up. I'm living in guilt and shame. I'm putting too much pressure on myself to look a certain way. I'm feeling trapped or restricted around food or around what I'm doing for my workouts. I have to be really intentional about that as well, which I think you see coming out in my book or in my work in general, because some of us are recognized that slippery slope and we know we have to be careful around it. Others may not even know there's really a slippery slope there, but I want to help everyone avoid that slippery slope because it starts seeping into your day and you could be the most fit person on the outside.

Aesthetically, you could look like you're on the cover of Fitness Magazine. But my question is always that's great, that's one aspect of wellness and fitness. What's happening on the inside? How's your mental health? Do you feel freedom around food? How is your nervous system? Are you resting? How is your posture? Are you breathing? How is your flexibility and your mobility? There's so much more than just good health.

Exactly? How are your relationships? How's your community? Are you playing? Are you enjoying life? These are all things that actually equal wellness, that need to be considered and they're not often depicted in traditional places. We go to look for fitness advice.

0:43:32 - Stephanie

Yeah, I love it. I love it. I wanted to ask you, going back to doing it all and the fact that nobody does it all, what are some things? That you have a wildly successful business and you have four kids and also you have to floss and actually no one flosses. I don't floss. Maybe you do.

0:44:00 - Robin

I did for years. I finally do Everybody.

0:44:03 - Stephanie

I finally do. Is it worth the?

0:44:05 - Robin

hype. Now I love it. Now I crave it. I used to lie to my dentist all the time oh, absolutely, have you been flossing? I'm now so proud to be like yes, yes.

0:44:17 - Stephanie

I actually am. I hate flossing. That's so funny, but you have so many things going on and so what follows do you drop? What are some things that?

0:44:27 - Robin

you just do not do so many. I just told you before we responded to this podcast that we started recording this podcast, that I texted a friend who I hadn't talked to in a very long time and was like I'm sorry, I've been such a bad friend for the last few years. I have been having twins and trying to keep my life afloat and four kids, and so the reality is and I talk about this too in the chapter about connection and friendship, which I love your focus on, by the way, I think you're such a great resource in this area but definitely I've had to be really selective with my relationships and friendships over the last mostly, the tipping point was going from two to four kids Really had to be selective. I can't. I couldn't do all the social things If it wasn't one of the people closest to me that meant the most, that it was a relationship I was really trying to keep going and keep close. I just couldn't. I didn't have time or capacity or bandwidth and it was too hard and added too much stress. So I got really clear on the few relationships that were really important and spent time on those and let the others go, and that was hard and could feel a little lonely at times, to be honest, but knowing that I couldn't keep up and I was feeling a lot of. So, speaking of mom, I was feeling a lot of friend guilt in that time and so had to really let that go. And it's just been interesting to see gosh. Now they're five again. Now I have a little more capacity, I you know, and so recognizing those seasons is super helpful.

I don't bake, I don't bring like homemade baked goods or things like that. I'm the mom who loves to sign up for paper plates and paper napkins for the school parties. I'm not ashamed to bring a box of cookies from the grocery store that are not homemade. No shame. There I'll usually do the easiest thing I can, but I love to be at the event if I can right. So it's again, I'm not gonna be able to bake the cookies, but if I can be there in the classroom, I'm gonna be there. I you know.

I have the privilege and the ability to pay for someone to help clean our house. That's a game changer. I have had childcare. That's obviously a privilege as well. What else don't I do? I don't do a lot of things. I don't have a lot of hobbies outside of work and caring for my kids and taking care of myself. I read, but that's about it, and people say what are your hobbies? I'm like, who has time for that right now? Yeah, and so yeah, I could keep going, but there are so many things I don't do. You could even ask specifics if you want to, and I'm totally open. I think it's really important for people to recognize that, that you have to let a lot of balls drop.

0:47:20 - Stephanie

Yeah do, you guys travel a lot we do.

0:47:25 - Robin

I think for the size of our family. I think a lot of people would do it less than we do, but we have all family on the town. So you know it's kind of a but I don't know. I love it. I love traveling with our kids. I love it.

0:47:42 - Stephanie

Yeah, that's so awesome, that's so high on my list as well. And I know people who will say like you know, if we don't go anywhere, like I can't believe you would want to, if that sounds like such

a hassle, and I'm like, well, yeah, totally it's a hassle, but like I can't think of anything else, I'd rather do.

0:47:59 - Robin

We love to do that and our kids love it too. So again, I think, different personalities, different things. We actually find that sometimes we do better as a family when we're out and about traveling and on the go. So it just kind of depends on your kids, your makeup and also sometimes their ages.

0:48:17 - Stephanie

What do you guys do? What is your? What has your child care journey looked like? Like? How have you figured that out over the years? My friends and I are super in the thick of it Like, and we have been for several years for like, do we do this or this, and how does anyone pay for it all? And you know all the questions.

0:48:35 - Robin

So it's so tricky and this was the kind of thing I was always asking other people to, because there's a lot of stigma around it and also you're always trying to find the right answer. And here's one of the best things that I have experienced is that it changes so much so there is never a perfect situation. Or if you do find a perfect situation, it's probably for about six months and then there's going to be another change, a hidden need in your family. That's not always true, but we have noticed, at least with four kids, that every six months our families needs kinds of change based on our work schedule, based on the ages.

So early on, you know, with my first little one I had like no child care, couldn't afford it, didn't have any money to pay for that so I would work during nap times. In fact she was a good sleeper and after she was in bed at night and I'd wake up super early, like 4 30 AM, drive to the coffee shop, do my work before she would get up for the day. But I loved it, I was really enjoying that. I had like one friend who would watch her for like two hours at a time, but that was Max. So that was my first. At a time I had my second. She was kind of in preschool and then I would have someone come like two mornings a week for like four hours. So I just got a little bit of help and time and so I was still doing the nap time thing and the bedtime thing, but making it work with the budget that we had. Then we had twins.

0:50:01 - Stephanie

The nap time thing I feel like I have to say is I love that we're talking about this because I think that we make up stories in our head of what this looks like for other people if we don't know the details and what you're talking about. About working after bedtime or working during that time, like I go the second they're down for a nap. I am so ready for a nap the second they are down for bed. Like Carl and I like collapse on the couch and it is so hard to get yourself to work during that time. Or like yesterday morning it was picture day at school which they turned out hilarious, oh I bet they're so cute, totally going to buy them.

So it was picture day and they were coming off of being sick and they hadn't been to preschool in a while so they were nervous to go back and they were cranky, and so getting out the door and then getting everyone with brushed hair and cute outfits and stuff, I was like this is a mean thing to do to parents. And then I had to be at a meeting so soon after we dropped them off and so we finally got them into the classroom. We finally left and just kind of collapsed in the car and I'm like this is the trickiest part of all of it. It feels like one of the tricky parts is that when people talk about successful mornings they're like, well, I do a plunge pool bath thing and I read and I meditate and I do all this stuff and I'm like I wrestled two toddlers into cute outfits and they really got them out the door and that does not seem like the proper way to fuel up for the day.

And so, anyway, what you're talking about is really hard. But also that was the sacrifice that you decided to make during that time was like I'm going to give up sleep because this is important to me, or I'm going to give up getting to just hang out for a second during nap time because this is so important to me, but also it wasn't forever. So, anyway, keep going. I interrupted.

0:52:00 - Robin

Yeah, no, no, no. I think that's just a great point. I can count on one hand the number of nap times I haven't sat down and just opened my laptop, and just. That's a choice I made and, for better or worse, it worked for me and I did enjoy it and was motivated by it, but it was like it would have been nicer to not have to do that at times, for sure, but yeah, just.

I could go on and on about child care, but I think that the important thing is then we had twins, then we had two people tag teaming and I was off Tuesdays and Matt was off Fridays, and it was just. How do we do this? And I think my biggest takeaway from that is one child care is hard, it's expensive, it's complicated and you'll probably go through some misses before you find some hits. You might put them in a preschool or something that actually you don't feel great about. And then you find another one that's like oh, I actually have so much peace when I leave here in the morning and it feels like a good fit.

You may hire a nanny or a babysitter. That same thing is just like oh, I feel stressed, this is actually not helpful to me and then you find one where you're like I can actually relax and focus when they're with this one and don't be afraid to make the change and don't be afraid to change it for each kid. I've had multiple changes and needs for each kid and know that it's just kind of fluid, so you can make the changes. Nothing's permanent and probably it will look different in six months or a year and just keep adapting.

0:53:38 - Stephanie

It's like I like that nothing's permanent in the fact that just because you make one decision doesn't mean that this is like your kid's whole childhood. It's like, ok, they may be at this place for a couple months or something.

0:53:53 - Robin

Absolutely, they're going to be OK. We've done that.

0:53:54 - Stephanie

Yeah, but then also it's like, ok, just buckle in for the ride, because, yeah, I want to get everything exactly set, just right, and then just leave it.

0:54:05 - Robin

But it's like whatever situation isn't going to be the right situation from now until they're five, or whatever, it's just got to buckle up, I guess I think trying to find the freedom in that too, to just like OK, it doesn't feel like freedom when you don't have a good fit, that's super stressful, but knowing that it's not going to be permanent like that forever. And my kids look back and they have so many memories of different things, different babysitters or different preschools or different times being with Matt and I, and there's not one pervasive experience of their young years.

0:54:44 - Stephanie

Yeah, yeah, I am so glad that you said the thing about being able to really relax when you drop them off or when you leave them, because I've never heard anyone else say that. But that's been such a feeling for me is that there have been like we've had a couple different situations, like since the girls were born we've had a couple different nannies and they're in preschool now, but there was a time where they were at a preschool just for a couple months and every time I would leave I just didn't feel like I could really relax and there just is something that changes when you know that, I don't know. It's just not all created equal, absolutely.

0:55:25 - Robin

I've been there as well and had to make some changes, and then, when you find a good fit, it's totally different. Yeah, yeah.

0:55:34 - Stephanie

OK, I want to ask you just last thing Tell us, in the midst of your crazy busy life and all that you have going on, what are some, just a couple practical ways that you've been taking care of yourself. Yeah, if you can do it, then we can do it.

0:55:52 - Robin

You know my Pilates practice has been central for me. That's probably a expected answer, but in the last few years my goal has always been 10 minutes, literally 10 minutes of Pilates, which some people roll their eyes at and they think, oh, is that going to do anything at all? 10 minutes is going to do something for you. It's going to absolutely get you into your body, get you grounded, get you breathing, help you feel less tense. You can build strength in 10 minutes. But more than anything, what it's done for me is it's allowed me to make it happen, because if it was any longer or any more overwhelming feeling, it just would not have happened the last five to 10 years. So 10 minutes, literally. Sometimes I will just set a timer on my phone and that's what I do. I've done it in my bathroom, I do it anywhere I can close the door. I'll do it during bath time, when the kids are bathing, if they don't yell at me to stop, because sometimes they're just opinionated like that.

0:56:50 - Stephanie

I just bossy like that yeah.

0:56:53 - Robin

So that's one. And again, that doesn't have to be an hour, it doesn't have to be an hour and a half to yourself to go to the studio and get coffee and come home. I mean that would be lovely, but really what we mostly have is 10 minutes. So, starting there, going for walks this has been huge for me lately. My walks are helping me so much. I work on Zoom a lot, I work on computers.

So getting out, getting fresh air Right now, I'll do it. When they were younger I'd have them in the stroller sometimes. Now, if I can do it by myself, that's great, but if not, I might just grab one and then I get a little quality time with one on one, which is hard to come by with four kids. So, finding ways to make that, and I'll also take meetings on a walk, so I'll say hey, instead of Zoom, do you want to just do this on a call and both go out for a walk? And that's been a huge, huge way of taking care of myself right now. And then, lastly, prioritizing sleep to the best of my ability. So trying to get off my phone, unplug and be in bed as close to nine as I can reading a book. That's my goal. I don't know, I rarely hit it to a tee like that, but that's always my goal.

0:58:05 - Stephanie

I love it. Robin, I am so grateful for you. I just adore you. I'm in your corner like crazy and I just am so, so glad to get to say, like Robin, these are the girls, girls, this is Robin, you guys just go follow her, do all her things, I'll be there, I'll be there too.

0:58:25 - Robin

Oh, thank you. I'm so grateful for you and feel the same way about you.

0:58:31 - Stephanie

You guys, isn't Robin amazing? I just love her and I loved her story. Don't forget that. If you ever want to find the links for anything we talk about in our Girls Night episodes, you can always find those over in our show notes. Just head over to girlsnightpodcast.com and you'll find links for everything, including links for Robin, so you can pick up her book and follow along with all the great stuff she's doing.

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