

Hard Times & Hope

Episode19: Robyn Rose

Jule Kucera 00:07

Hi, I'm Jule. And this is *Hard Times & Hope*, a place for real conversations with regular people about a real hard time. We talked about what it was, how they got through it, and something good that came from it.

Jule Kucera 00:29

My guest today is Robyn Rose. Robyn and I met in the Akimbo podcast workshop, first as participants, and then as all stars. I didn't know Robyn well, but we were on a zoom call with a significant group. And she said something that made me think, "This is a brave and vulnerable woman and I would love to have her on my podcast." However, because we didn't really know each other, I hesitated to ask. And then, unprompted, a friend from the workshop suggested I interview Robyn. So there you have it.

Robyn's podcast is *Love Me Anyway*. It's about extraordinarily ordinary people who found the capacity to love through seemingly unlovable situations. Robyn is also a massage therapist and is completing her realtor licensure. And on top of that, because she gets so many comments on her voice, she's also expanding into voiceover work. How does it go when two people who admire each other but hardly know each other talk about a hard time? Let's find out.

Robyn, thank you so much for being here today. I'm so looking forward to our conversation.

Robyn Rose 01:35

It's my pleasure. Thank you for having me.

Jule Kucera 01:37

What's the hard time you'd like to talk about today?

Robyn Rose 01:41

I think the hard time I like to share is, well, it's not necessarily the hard time in particular, it's the ramifications that came about as a result of the thing. If that makes sense.

Jule Kucera 01:59



That makes a ton of sense. Let's start with what the thing is just so we have some context for it. And then let's go with the ramifications. So, what was what was the thing?

Robyn Rose 02:09

I was inappropriately touched as a child. And I say, as a child, I was somewhere between the ages of 10 and 12. And it was someone I knew. And it wasn't traumatic. So there shouldn't be tears at this point. I felt like I blamed myself for it, because I was old enough to know that it shouldn't happen. And I wasn't courageous enough to stop it from happening. For a long time, I blamed myself. I know I shouldn't. It was an older man. He knew that he was violating, right? He knew he was violating me. And it was so inappropriate. But yeah, I held myself responsible because I should have stopped it. And then I didn't tell anybody. I know that I was insecure for a long time because I wasn't able to separate the experience from myself value.

Jule Kucera 03:04

You let the experience define your self value.

Robyn Rose 03:07

Yeah, I let my decision to not stop it make me feel like I was a bad person.

Jule Kucera 03:14

But you know, it's so, what's so, what hurts my heart about this is when you're 10 to 12, you start to have more of a mind of an adult, you're becoming an adult, but you are no way capable of holding somebody who is an adult accountable for their actions.

Robyn Rose 03:33

Absolutely. And of course, I didn't come to that realization until years later. And I thought, you know what, let's just say hypothetically, and this is a message I want to get across to other people who may be in the same, who may have a similar experience. Even let's just say it was my fault. I know it's not, but let's just say it was. I was 10 to 12. Even if it was, that happened so long ago. And I knew I didn't have what now I know, I didn't have the mental or emotional capacity to deal with that in the right way.

And why would I still be holding myself accountable for that? And you know, let it go, forgive yourself. Even if you were to blame yourself, forgive yourself. You know better now, you'll do better, and just move on. And of course, it's easier said than done. But it just logically...

And now, guilt and shame tend to have no logic, you know, there are times when I still feel some stuff, you know, and I'm very protective of my daughter. But I don't want to be so overprotective that, that I focus on it so much, you know, because what you focus on...

Jule Kucera

Shows up.

Robyn Rose

I don't want to, I don't want to be like that.

Jule Kucera 04:49

How old is your daughter?

Robyn Rose

She's three.

Jule Kucera

She's little.

Robyn Rose 04:53

Yes, she's a little one.

Jule Kucera 04:54

I love those... three, four, five... they're learning so much about life. It's so fun.

How do you forgive yourself when those feelings start to come up again, like, "That happened, I shouldn't have let it."?

Robyn Rose 05:07

One of the things that I had to learn was that nobody is perfect. And that everybody has a story. And really, my story is not much different than other people's, I will admit that the Me Too movement, and seeing how there were grown women getting mistreated by grown men, and they didn't know how to handle it. And so if a grown woman doesn't know how to handle it, I need to let myself off the hook that as a child, I didn't know how to handle it.

And then just understanding that, again, even if that was the case, that doesn't define who I am, I am more than my mistakes. I am more than my past. And the best is yet to come. All those good affirmations that you need to tell yourself, you just have to be reminded of sometimes.



Jule Kucera 05:56

Yeah. And I would so love to eliminate the word 'mistake' from your language about that incident. You were just being a kid. You were just there. So now that we have, we have the context, what came about as a result of that having happened?

Robyn Rose 06:19

I was very shy. I was kind of shy anyway. But then I feel like I kind of went into this bubble even more just because I didn't want topics like that to ever come up. I remember, I always wanted to be the good girl. And I felt like I always was the good girl, you know. And when that happened, I felt like, Okay, this is kind of a mark against me, you know, and I don't ever want anybody to see this side. And so then I think I just wanted to be more of a good girl and wanted to be more in everybody's good graces.

Jule Kucera 06:57

One of the things that I learned in a class I took is, girls are raised to be perfect; boys are raised to be strong. So if you're supposed to be perfect, that sets you up to be a people pleaser.

Robyn Rose 07:11

Absolutely. This whole wanting people to like me and wanting me to be such a good girl that no one would ever suspect anything bad was in my past. Yeah, that that made me not try some things, especially as I got older. But being a people pleaser, got me in trouble with boys. Because in my mind, I'm a good girl. And I don't want anybody to see anything but that good image. But in my mind, I feel like I'm tarnished. I'm not so good.

So when a guy comes along and expresses an interest in me and says, he likes me, I'm feeling, like, you like me. And then I feel honored. Right? Well, I feel honored that they like me. And I don't want them to stop liking me. So then they asked me to do things I don't really want to do. But I know if I say no, he's not gonna like me anymore. So I do it. And I do it again. And then I feel guilty about it. Now I'm feeling like I'm even more of a bad person. But they liked me. And they want me to do it again. So I got pregnant at the age of 15. And decided not to keep the baby.

Okay, so now, teenage pregnancy, didn't keep the baby. And I've got the secret that I was inappropriately touched. So shame, guilt, secrecy, all of it was just a burden to carry. And then I felt like I just started feeling so bad about myself as a person, I kept making more mistakes. And obviously, there was a lack of responsibility there. But there was also the shame and guilt that just kind of cause this vicious cycle. Yeah, and I'm a bad person. And then I do bad things.



And the thing about it was this was all in the background. Because I was getting straight A's in school. I was an athlete, I was doing well on the field and on the court. Most people couldn't see this. But I could and so then when I would get involved with a relationship, or get involved with a guy, I had all these secrets, I couldn't really be myself. Because I don't want any conversation to get on pregnancy, to get on sex. There's so many things that can lead to these conversations. I don't even want to touch on this. So I'm quiet. So we're on a date, we're getting to know each other. I don't have a lot to say. Because there's so much hidden, I just couldn't be myself.

And I was 35 when I finally said, "I am who I am. I'm fearfully and wonderfully made. God loves me the way that I am. God has forgiven me." And the next guy that I met, which is now my husband, was the one that I said, "I'm not holding any secrets, not holding anything in, take it or leave it. I'm going to put all my cards on the table. If this doesn't work, I'll have a new friend. And if it does work, okay, we'll see where it goes." I was 35. That thing happened when I was somewhere between 10 or 12. So that whole time, I was just obviously I was getting better. You know, as I aged, I was getting closer to healing. But yeah, that's a long time to feel insecure.

Jule Kucera 10:38

Yeah... feel insecure, tarnished, and like the only person that will be acceptable or liked by others, is the pretend one that you put forward.

Robyn Rose 10:49

Yes. Because if people knew who I was, or what happened, or the things that I have done, they wouldn't want me, they wouldn't love me. And then I got to this point where I was getting secure with myself, accepting of myself loving myself. But I still felt the need to share too much. And I don't know if you're familiar with Dr. Bernie brown and her work.

Jule Kucera

Yes.

Robyn Rose

Oh, my gosh, the gifts of imperfect everything she's done. It's just incredible.

Jule Kucera

The armory, yes.

Robyn Rose



You know, she tells you that everyone, everyone doesn't deserve to know your story. Everyone can't handle your story. But I was kind of, I have this, have this mindset that I need you to know everything now. Because if you're going to, if you're going to walk away from me, walk away now.

Jule Kucera 11:35

Yeah. You quoted one of my favorite Bible verses.

Robyn Rose

Ah, fearfully and wonderfully made.

Jule Kucera

I am fearfully and wonderfully made wonderful are they works and my soul knows it very well.

Robyn Rose 11:45

Absolutely. Can you just imagine? And so part of the reason why I started the podcast that I have, *Love Me Anyway*, is because I knew there were other people out there, even if they didn't have the same exact experience, they were carrying guilt and shame. And they were allowing themselves to be limited by that, you know, you feel like, well, I'm this bad person. People won't love me. And then you don't want to do certain things.

I mean, even to the point like on social media, I don't share a picture unless it's absolutely perfect. And this is not just with me, this is my kids, like I won't share, I won't post if my if my room is, if the beds not made, if the room is messy, if the mirror is dirty, because I know someone is going to judge me. And my husband is like, "Robyn, you are crazy. People looking at the content." So I still deal with some of that, that perfectionism that is so based on insecurity, you know, I'm still getting rid of some of that. But I have a great story for that.

Jule Kucera

Tell me.

Robyn Rose

My daughter has been blessed with some phenomenal 'almost godparents.' And I say 'almost godparents' because we didn't make it official. We didn't do the whole ceremony. But they're the closest thing to her godparents. And they gifted her this sundress. And she absolutely loved the sundress. And the first time she put it on, she got into our mirror, and her hair wasn't, it was Saturday morning, her hair wasn't combed, our bed wasn't made, but she was dancing in the

mirror. And she just had this joy. She felt beautiful. She felt like a princess. And she was spinning around.

And it was so awesome. I had to get my phone out. And I started recording it. But I didn't send it to them. Because of all the stuff that was wrong. You know, her hair wasn't combed. And our room was dirty. So later, I cleaned her up, moved her to a spot on the wall where nothing was behind her. And I told her to say, you know, "Thank you Uncle, Auntie," you know. And they loved it. But it wasn't real.

Jule Kucera

It wasn't that pure joy, raw emotion.

Robyn Rose

So about a year later, just a couple of months ago, I said I can't do this. I want them to see the joy that they brought into my child's life. So I sent them the video, and we just had lunch with them last weekend. And they said they watched it over and over and over. It brought them so much joy. And they weren't even thinking about my room, you know? So it's that stuff that I still have to work through.

Jule Kucera 14:09

Yeah. Well, we all have a little residual, right? And it's the stuff that served us when we didn't have any better coping mechanisms. And that's okay. We just got to give ourselves some grace.

Robyn Rose

Absolutely. Absolutely.

Robyn Rose

I want to ask the palate cleanser question now because I want to step more into the current time. What's one of life's simple pleasures that you really enjoy?

Robyn Rose 14:38

Oh my gosh. My daughter is three, and there's a big debate about whether your child should still be sleeping in your bed at age three, but mine is sleeping in my bed and just waking up in the morning with her there. She's still sleeping in that just calm peace. Oh my goodness, watching her sleep is such... Or the weight of your child on your chest. When she was a little baby, she would not lay on my chest. So I just felt robbed of that. But then as she got older, she would, and she will now, and she's three and she's just on my chest. And it's just the best thing in the whole world.



Jule Kucera 15:20

That is wonderful. There's a picture of my, my second husband and his daughter when she was probably maybe six months. And it was taken at Christmas time because there's a Christmas tree behind him. But he's laying on the floor on the, on the carpet. And she's just on his chest. And the two of them, they both look so happy, completely content.

Robyn Rose

It's a beautiful feeling.

Jule Kucera

You know what, everybody has just such different things they mentioned for life simple pleasures. And what it makes me think is, there's just so many of them, they are countless.

Robyn Rose 15:56

Yeah, gotta take the time to appreciate them.

Jule Kucera 15:58

Yeah. One of my theories is that these hard times that happen, through no fault of our own, they just happen. They shape us. And in some way, there's something good that comes from it. What's one something good that came from your hard time?

Robyn Rose 16:17

I think over the years, it was probably the need for me to go inside and try to figure out how to get past it. And, you know, I guess, obviously, if it wasn't there in the first place, I wouldn't have had to do that. But the I think maybe the strength, it takes, the courage it takes to be willing to see what's wrong and try to fix it.

And hopefully what will come out of it is me getting the opportunity to speak to someone else who might be going through it and help them understand, life is too short to carry that baggage. First of all, you're more than your mistakes, you're more than your past you, you have so much more to offer than what has necessarily gone wrong. And being able to love people past their pain, past their mistakes. So if I can get past it in myself, I've got to be able to give other people that same grace. That's kind of the message that I want to send, accept yourself for who you are, get past the pain, and then give other people that same consideration, that same grace and life will be a better place, you know?



Jule Kucera 17:34

Yeah. For each of us individually and for all of us collectively.

Robyn Rose 17:39

Absolutely. My podcast is about, it's about unconditional love. And it was something I didn't have for myself. So when I, when I started the podcast, I needed to help people understand that *Love Me Anyway*, is something that is a message I want to get across to people about unconditional love and loving through the hardest times of your life. And a lot of times that's gonna have to start with yourself.

Jule Kucera 18:03

How has your hard time shaped you into who you are now?

Robyn Rose

I'm more forgiving. I'm more patient. And I got to tell you this, I sat with a counselor. And he made me go through this. He took me through this exercise. And he said, I want you to tell me your vision of an ideal woman. And it was Claire Huxtable, okay, *Cosby*.

Jule Kucera

Oh! Okay.

Robyn Rose 18:39

So, you know, here's what makes her a perfect ten. You know, she's beautiful. She's classy, she's intelligent. Her and her husband have this great relationship. She's ambitious. She's a partner in her law firm. She plays with her kids. I mean, just she's just, yeah, perfect woman.

Jule Kucera 18:54

She's Claire Huxtable!

Robyn Rose 18:55

She's Claire Huxtable. Enough said right? And so he said, okay, she's the perfect 10, where are you? And I said somewhere between four and six. He said, Okay, I want you to write down every good thing, every good quality about yourself. Did that. I want you to write down every bad quality, everything you think is bad about yourself. I did that. And he told me to go back to the good stuff. He said, I want you to give each one of those a number between one and 10. Now he didn't ask me to do the same thing for the bad stuff. So when he looked at all the good stuff, you

know, I'm kind, I'm, I'm considerate. I am generous, I'm you know, blah, blah, blah. All of them had numbers like between seven and nine. He said how is it that the average of all this good stuff is between seven and nine, yet you rate yourself between four and six, like it doesn't even make sense. And he helped me realize that I was weighing so heavily the bad stuff that it just took down the average, so to speak, and I had just put so much weight on the negative stuff in my life that I was not even allowing myself to see the good in me. And I think I had always had some of those qualities

I've always been kind of generous. But now it's intensified. And I'm also seeking that in other people. I am seeking the good in other people. And the hardest time I've had with that is with my own kids. Sure, I have two teenage boys, and there have been times when I just feel like you're doing this wrong, you're doing this wrong, you're doing this wrong, and I haven't given them the grace to see the good, and to let the bad go. But I was still dealing with a lot of that and myself. So I wasn't able to let go of it wasn't able to let go of their stuff yet, because I hadn't like let go of my stuff. So it's getting better.

Jule Kucera 20:49

Yeah, I heard somebody say once, it's something like the hardest thing for children, or the biggest pressure on children or something is the unfulfilled dreams of the parents.

Robyn Rose

Or the unresolved issue, unresolved issues, man.

Jule Kucera Yeah, that's the hardest thing for children's the unresolved issues of the parents. You know, what I found interesting about the Claire Huxtable story is when the counselor asked you, who's the ideal woman? You don't name a real person.

Robyn Rose

I know. Right?

Jule Kucera

So just as you were pretending when your life to be perfect. You picked a pretend person.

Robyn Rose

Yes. How jacked up is that?

Jule Kucera



Yeah.

Robyn Rose 21:33

So you're going through life trying to be this fake person? Yeah, that's exactly what you're going to accomplish. You know, I still appreciate *The Cosby Show* and all that it meant. Yeah. But yeah, I no longer look at Claire Huxtable to be the role model.

Jule Kucera 21:54

Yeah. Is there anything else you'd like to say about hard times, or hope, or anything?

Robyn Rose 22:01

There's this concept that, you know, God will never put more on you than you can bear. And I feel like, he does put more on you than you can bear—alone. I think dependence on him is what allows us to carry what we have to carry. And part of what I try to do in my podcast is give practical resources that will help people get rid of their guilt and shame or work through that guilt and shame.

Religion was it for me, I was in church all the time, regularly, attending Sunday services regularly going to Bible study and learning as much as I could, because I understood that I was, I am a child of God. And He loves me unconditionally. And so I was taught, learn as much as you can about God, and about Jesus and His love for you. And when you start to understand how much he loves you, how could you not love yourself? And I just felt like I have allowed insecurity to hold me back for too long and I'm, I'm tired of them too. I'm ready to I'm ready to break free live my life. Be all that I'm supposed to be. Be all that I can be. Without letting guilt and shame stand in the way. Everybody who needs to know the stuff in my past knows, and they love me anyway. And that's all that matters. That's it.

Jule Kucera 23:44

Thank you for listening. That was Robyn Rose. Robyn's podcast is *Love Me Anyway*. You can listen to it wherever you get your podcasts. For the resources we mentioned, see the show notes. I'm Jule Kucera, host of *Hard Times & Hope*. If you think someone might like to hear this episode, please feel free to share it. My website is [Jule Kucera.com](http://JuleKucera.com), that's J-U-L-E-K-U-C-E-R-A.com

Take care. Take heart. See you next time.