

## 5 MINUTES WITH ROBIN WILSON



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**Robin Wilson** has spent the last two decades breaking down barriers and overcoming hurdles to achieve success. Despite systemic racism that excluded her from obtaining financing, she was one of the first pioneers of the eco-friendly design movement. She's the first woman to have a custom cabinetry line sold at 400 dealers nationwide and the second Black woman (after legendary B. Smith) to have a textile line at **Bed Bath & Beyond**. With knowledge that "eco-friendly" can also be beautiful, Robin's four principles of design are sustainability, reusable, recycle, and nontoxic. She is an Ambassador to the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, a former Board member of the Sustainable Furnishings Council, and has completed projects for President Clinton's Harlem Office, the White House Fellows office, the Good Housekeeping

Today, Robin sheds light on her entrepreneurial success story, tackling our #5MinutesWith Q&A with candor and grace:

### MY LIGHTBULB MOMENT:

I started my firm in June 2000 after a corporate IPO windfall. It gave me the gift of freedom to pursue my passion which is real estate development. But I wanted to take it to the next level and change interiors of existing spaces. After working at one job site and wheezing and sneezing all night, I decided to create a 'clean site' protocol for my jobs which was the seed for my design viewpoint and construction projects. Because of my allergies and asthma, I realized that there needed to be products and design/construction focused on hypoallergenic and eco friendly consumers.

### I CAN'T START MY DAY UNTIL:

My daughter and I eat breakfast everyday that we are together. Setting a good example focused on health is important. Another ritual is to make my bed. My philosophy is that it is a gift to my future self. Think about it: when you go to bed that night, it feels like your bed is a "present" you are unwrapping allowing a sanctuary to "rest" and unwind from your day.

### SUCCESS IS:

Feeling loved and being clear about your priorities: spirituality, health, family, home and community.

### YOU'LL NEVER SEE ME WITHOUT:

Water and a smile. Water nourishes your body. Smiles nourish everybody.

**DREAM COLLABORATION:**

I want to find a real estate developer partner who will create tiny-to-midsize homes as part of a community rebuilding so families have a place to call home.

**THE ONLY CITY BETTER THAN NYC:**

Austin, Texas is my hometown. It was a nice experience to grow up there, and very interesting when I return to visit due to its growth and tech company corridor. And it is great to have a place where you can exercise year-round due to the weather. And the food...

**WHEN I FEEL UNINSPIRED:**

We are all faced with challenges to our vision and goals. I always take a quiet moment to thank my ancestors who worked so hard to give me the opportunities that I have – to vote, to walk in the front door, to own property, to have an education, etc. – and it immediately stops the ennui thoughts, and quickly refocuses me. I also believe that using another set of skills can also help on focus – if I switch tasks from desk work to a couch, or take a walk with my daughter, or to simply do a chore at home like cooking a meal will allow another side of my brain to work and later the inspiration will come.

**ADVICE I WISH I HAD 5 YEARS AGO:**

Believe in yourself. Challenges are put in front of you to test your mettle – and you will rarely break. Remember to surround yourself with positive friends in your darkest moments – there are some who will drag you deeper into the sadness or drama. It is critically important that you keep focused on your physical and mental health – and not a situation that is challenging – at the end of the day "you" must remain present and keep giving gifts and thoughts to your future self. It is the only way to keep moving forward.

**IN 5 YEARS, FIND ME:**

With a teenager who will have a work ethic for things that she is interested in – and find me with a thriving company that is bigger than I ever dreamed focused on sustainability, eco-friendly and hypoallergenic products for consumers.

**ABOVE ALL ELSE:**

I believe in love and kindness. And surrounding myself with authentic people who are focused on positive outcomes and being champions for their friends. And my daughter is the most important person in my life – my goal is for her to achieve academic, sport and creative dreams even as we experience a pandemic that affects school experiences of our children.