

Capturing Your Confidence

Interview with an Author: Robin Wilson

Interview by [Rachel Tindall](#)
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Our February guest is Robin Wilson.

Robin Wilson launched [Robin Wilson Home](#) in 2000 and created a conglomerate that covers eco-design, licensed products, interior design and real estate development. Her brand has generated over \$82 million in wholesale revenue from sales of cabinetry and textiles. She became the first Black woman with a line of hypoallergenic textiles sold nationwide at Bed Bath & Beyond now in Wal-Mart, among other retailers. Her book, [CLEAN DESIGN: Wellness for your Lifestyle](#) was #1 on Amazon and focused on the eco-friendly design and hypoallergenic products for consumers.

She has worked on interior design for the White House Fellows, specifically during the Obama administration. And on the Harlem offices of resident Bill Clinton. She recently furnished the famous Esalen Retreat with eco-based luxury room textiles, products and furniture. *INC magazine* included Robin in their 2020 Top 100 Female Founders. Robin is an Ambassador to the Asthma & Allergy Foundation of America.

If you would like to purchase Robin's book, *Clean Design: Wellness for your Lifestyle*, you can find a copy on AMAZON.

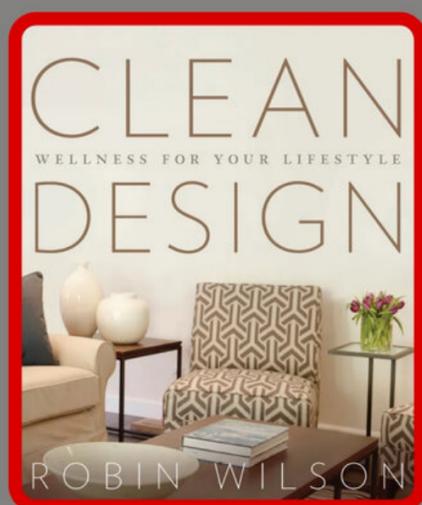
Tell us a little about your writing journey. Have you always wanted to be a writer?

A: After college, I created a bucket list, and writing a book was on the list. Now that I have written two award-winning tomes, it is clear that there is something to making your intentions clear so that you can realize your dreams. My parents told me that I was an early reader, and books have always been a friend, allowing escape and relaxation.

Was there a certain point you remember where you felt empowered to call yourself a writer? Or have you always felt like you were a writer?

What a great question! I wrote stories as a child, and my mom kept many of them and bound them in a scrapbook. As the editor of the junior high school newspaper and a frequent contributor to print publications ever since that time, I have never called myself a writer, but upon reflection, I guess that it is clear that I have a message to share. It is interesting that when I look at the process of writing, it is challenging only because I have so much to say – and then the blank page looms, as one tries to figure out the opening line. From that moment, it flows, but there are always multiple edits and revisions – and I am always my harshest critic. After my second book, *CLEAN DESIGN: Wellness for your Lifestyle* (Greenleaf, 2015) was published, it ranked #1 on Amazon and Kindle. The book started winning awards, it was the first time that I really gave myself permission to be an author!

Clean Design Robin Wilson



"I have always believed in working with young people who are trying to build their professional book and to learn what it takes to be designers. Now, conversely, I did not go to design school. I have not been professionally trained as a designer. I have traveled, however, many, many places in the world, and I have a very good eye. What I'm really great at though, is project management."

— ROBIN WILSON



*"I became a mom, I think that's a simple answer. I know that so many of us who suffer as I do from allergies, and asthma, have to search for information. One day I said 'I'm going to write a primer.' When you read the book, it's not like *The Joy of Cooking*. You're not going to read chapter one all the way to the end. If you have a nursery, you're going to read the nursery chapter. If you have a kitchen issue, you're going to read the kitchen chapter. That's how I tried to set up the book. The key for me is to recognize that one in four people suffer from asthma or allergies - that's 16 million Americans."*

— ROBIN WILSON

You have a successful brand, Robin Wilson Home, which is sold in retail stores like Bed, Bath, & Beyond. What inspired you to channel your lifestyle brand into a book?

My eponymous Robin Wilson Home brand was the 2nd Black brand sold in stores nationwide at Bed Bath & Beyond after the legendary B. Smith collection. Currently, we are in the process of launching our new brand, CLEAN DESIGN HOME™ which is focused on consumers interested in hypoallergenic, wellness, and sustainable products. Stay tuned for stores and online platforms where the brand will be sold! I was a new mother when I wrote the book, *CLEAN DESIGN*, because it was important to share simple tips for maintaining a healthy living environment room-by-room. You should use the book as a reference, as it will be repetitive if you read it cover-to-cover and there is information both about interior and exterior allergic triggers.

Your book, *Clean Design*, has fabulous snippets of standard design protocols and simple tips that readers can start using today. How did you narrow down which information to include & where to place it?

I had a great editorial team and they kept telling me to narrow it down to the top-level information. Had everything been added to the book, it would have been 500 pages. One thing a good editor will tell you is there is always room to do another book.

The book itself is beautiful and clean – much like your brand and decorating tips! Could you tell us a little about what went into the design process of the book?

Until you write a book, you may not know that there are people who actually do book layout – and that there is an art to this type of design work. For example, each chapter start page has the same look and feel in the *CLEAN DESIGN* book. When you work with a good book editor and layout designer, your book will feel cohesive. And it makes it easier for the author to determine what is missing. Working with a team makes you feel a bit more secure so that you can focus on the words. All of the images in the book are from my portfolio of work, so it was also challenging to select from thousands of images.

Describe your writing and/or creative process.

Write whenever you can for at least 30 minutes. The first few minutes allow you to settle into your zone, and then the words flow. Just write. You can edit later – and my rule was one week of writing and one hour of editing. It gives you permission to move forward.

Your design & cleaning strategies are not just allergen- and asthma-reducing, but also eco-friendly. How did the environmental factor become such a significant part of your brand?

I have a lifelong personal medical journey with asthma and allergies. Thankfully, my parents selected a holistic pediatrician who had a mantra, "...raise a strong child, or raise a child on strong medicine..." and his viewpoint was that diet, environment, allergic triggers, and exercise were the four keys to be aware of on a wellness journey. So, that meant the shag carpet went out, and hardwood/tile and rugs came into my childhood home. And we shopped at the early iteration of Whole Foods in Austin, Texas which is my hometown.

*"One of the books that I was very influenced by was Malcolm Gladwell, *The Tipping Point*."*

— ROBIN WILSON



“ We kept the things we thought were simple tips and tricks that people can use on a day-to-day basis. I think that’s the most important thing to know, is that wellness is simple steps. Your home, your style – they’re simple steps. You know, if you look at an Instagram photo, and you’re like, ‘Oh, my house has to look like that tomorrow,’ you’ll be sorely disappointed unless you spend a lot of money to hire a professional to make that happen. But, if you took a simple step, it could be just painting the wall today, and then getting the chairs and floor coverings the next year. Then, your accessories over time.”

— ROBIN WILSON

What was your biggest writing obstacle and how did you overcome it?

When writing *CLEAN DESIGN*, I was a new mother and my writing time became narrowed to the time when she took naps and went to bed early.

What is the part of your published work or writing process you are most proud of?

I am most proud of the fact that the book sold, and the national book tour audiences and corporate sponsors (Mitchell Gold+Bob Williams and FLOR) showed me that there was strong interest in the topic from a broad consumer demographic.

Do you have any plans for another book or writing project? If so, could you tell us about them?

I am mulling a new book right now, but just need some extra time in my daily schedule.

What motivates you to keep writing?

Writing is a wonderful opportunity to share your thoughts and expertise, and most people have at least one book that they could write about themselves or a subject in which they have an interest.

What is the biggest piece of advice you would give to aspiring writers?

Just write. Every single day. Set aside 10-30 minutes to just add to the stories that you start. Within a year, you will have something that you can edit – and maybe it will be a short story, or a screenplay or a non-fiction book. You will be surprised at how a daily practice can yield a focused manuscript.

If you would like to purchase Robin Wilson’s book, *CLEAN DESIGN*, you can visit www.cleandesignhome.com

“ It is as simple as choosing a path”

— MIRA NAIR