

**TRANSCRIPT**

# **From Type 2 Diabetes To Diabetes-Free**

How Did She Do It?

# FROM **TYPE 2 DIABETES** TO DIABETES-FREE

How Did She Do It?

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## **Judd:**

Welcome guys. It's Judd from Diabetes Smarts here. Thanks for tuning in.

Today, we've got a very special post-Halloween treat without the sugar. I'll tell you about that in a sec.

First, make sure to subscribe to our channel if you haven't yet. And at the end of this video, I'm going to show you how you can get two free gifts from us.

Right now, I want to introduce you to a very special person.

This is someone I think can really help you guys out there if you're wondering if it is possible to actually reduce your blood sugar and possibly lose weight and even possibly free yourself from diabetes altogether.

That's right. Today, I am speaking with New Zealand native, Rachel Woodrow.

Rachel spent years battling obesity and ill health. She and her husband tried for a very long time for a third child to no avail.

And along the way, like so many of us, she was hit with a type two diabetes diagnosis.

But even though many of her doctors told her that this condition would only get worse with time and that she might never be able to have another child, she proved them wrong.

Rahel has discovered a path to long-term healing and health success. Today, Rachel is living a life completely free from diabetes.

Her story has been so inspiring, in fact, that it led to Fitbit to seek her out and feature her in an advertisement.

And she is one of the start interview subjects of That Diabetes Documentary.

So the big question is, how did she do it?

Well, Rachel's here with us today and she's going to tell us all about it. Rachel, thanks so much for joining us. It's great to see you again.

**Rachel Woodrow:**

It's good to see you too, Judd. It's been a while since we caught up and it's nice to catch up again.

**Judd:**

Absolutely, it is. So Rachel, I think the first question might just be to ask you a bit about yourself and what your life looked like before your diabetes diagnosis.

And maybe you can tell us a little bit about how that diagnosis came to pass.

**Rachel Woodrow:**

Well, for many years I had a pre-diabetes diagnosis, for many years, but I just chose to ignore it and carry on living my life.

I had several jobs and some small children and I, just like most women, just went for it and was Superwoman, did everything I could.

Worked, studied, ate.

Ate a lot. We ate a lot of junk food and rubbish just to get us through.

And I finally had to admit that I had a problem when I went to my sister's house and she had gestational diabetes, so she was pregnant with her child.

And we thought it would be a funny joke to use my blood test for her midwife, because when you have gestational you have to take blood tests several times a day.

And we thought we'd pretend that she'd magically recovered overnight by using my blood.

Unfortunately, when we took my blood, it was much, much worse than hers and the midwife actually freaked out.

And it took us a lot of convincing here that the blood test was actually mine.

And she took me aside and she said to me, "You know how you've been talking about having a baby?" I was like, "Yes."

She goes, "There won't be a baby if you keep your blood levels as high. You're in serious trouble, you need to go and see your doctor."

And so finally I went in and I saw my doctor, and she told me then that I had type two diabetes, of course, which wasn't a big surprise.

And so I immediately set about losing probably around 10 kg and I was probably 99 kg, and I'm 5'2".

So that's almost as wide as I was tall.

And once I lost about 10 kg I was like, "Ah, I'm all good now. It's no worries at all."

And yeah, we had been trying for a baby for 13 years, maybe.

And when I lost the 10 kg I actually got pregnant with Tabitha, and we were just so excited.

But I actually had no idea the implications of being pregnant with bad, uncontrolled diabetes, and that in itself was a whole big issue for not only me but for baby Tabitha as well.

**Judd:**

Sure. So what steps did you take from there to put you on the path that you're on now?

Was it an incremental thing or were there maybe one or two big things that came about in your life that spurred a quicker change?

**Rachel Woodrow:**

Well, when Tabitha was born I was very ill by then, and it was very hard to look after her because I had very bad diabetes. I would sleep all the time.

I was very ill. Diabetes is really exhausting, and anyone that's living with it, I commend them for making it through a day.

It's a very, very exhausting disease.

And it occurred to me at that time that I was not going to have a very long life for this little baby I'd had, maybe not even see another decade through.

And this was confirmed when I went into my doctor at that time and she was horrified and she wanted to put me on insulin immediately. I had been hiding from her till that point.

And I literally begged her then, "No, please. Give me three more months. Three more months."

### **Rachel Woodrow:**

And she was very reluctant to do it, but I just couldn't imagine this being my life forever. And so after that, I went away and I started investigating type two diabetes and reversing it and curing it.

And everywhere I went, this was quite a while ago now, there was very little information.

And the only thing I came across was dropping calories down to 1200 calories and actually dropping your weight down lower.

And so I thought I'd give that a go. And the response I got from nurses and diabetes people was very, very, I think insulting to diabetic people.

I think people can be cruel to type two diabetics.

There just is an attitude of, "Well, you got yourself into this and now you have to accept it. You made your bed, lie in it."

And as I looked at this small child, thinking that she was going to follow in my footsteps and have all the same issues I had, and I might not even make it to her 10th birthday, I decided to make some changes.

And initially I remember standing at the cupboard and I was just stuffing chocolate biscuits into my mouth.

And I was hating myself for it, thinking, "Why am I doing this? It's literally killing me." And it occurred to me then that I was addicted to sugar.

And so I looked up addictions, and I have people laugh at this all the time, but I honestly believe some people can have sugar and some people are addicted to it.

And I've got a perfect way for you to find out if you are addicted to it, and that is try giving it up for a week.

And you're going to find out pretty quick whether you're addicted to it. So I set about 90 days, going 90 days sugar-free, and that was the first step I took towards it.

**Judd:**

Okay. So once you cut out the sugar, were there any physical changes that you noticed from that, and about how long did that take, do you think?

**Rachel Woodrow:**

Well, yeah. If you happen to be addicted to sugar, as soon as you cut it out you start experiencing things like headaches, racing heart, anxiety, anger, low patience.

But within the 90 days, my health increased incredibly.

I'd already lost a lot of weight within 90 days. Like I said, the three months that I asked the doctor to give me. The improvements were very, very quick.

And initially I didn't even try to lose weight as such.

Everything I do is a step by step. I never try to do too much at one time. So my goal then was sugar.

So my deal with myself at the time was, if I wanted to eat it, I could eat it in 90 days because it's very hard to tell yourself you're never having something you want so badly ever, ever again.

And often if I really wanted something, I'd put it in the freezer till we got to the end of the 90 days.

But I also told myself I could eat anything else in place of that.

And I probably made some unhealthy food choices during that time, but the goal was to get to 90 days sugar-free, and I did that, and already my health had improved dramatically.

### **Judd:**

So after that, after those 90 days, and after cutting out the sugar, what was your next step after that?

### **Rachel Woodrow:**

Everything's been a bit step-by-step.

So sugar, that was the biggest thing. And I think that's what's kept me on track, is that I haven't gone back to that. Steps.

Up to 10,000 steps a day was important.

Eating some vegetables, eating some salad, things I hadn't done in years just to get the body working properly.

And I've slowly progressed through things like I've taken up some

workout videos in the beginning, and I took up more walking.

I ran 5Ks and then 10Ks. I started climbing hills, mountains behind my house. I've done weights programs.

And recently I've taken up karate. So it's a whole world out there. Doors open. As soon as you step through one door, another door presents itself.

It's such an amazing thing to go on this journey and see what's out there.

**Judd:**

Absolutely. And definitely want to ask you more about your exercise regime coming up, but maybe we can talk a bit about going back to, you were talking about eating your vegetables and stuff.

What might've changed for your meals and how you ate your meals?

I know you talked about cutting the snacks and the sugar out. But when it came to your typical breakfasts, lunches, and dinners, did you change anything in terms of the quality of the food and/or the quantity?

How has that gone for you?

**Rachel Woodrow:**

Definitely. Again, it's been gradual. As I've learnt, we've made changes. Knowledge is power, that the more you know, the better you do.

Breakfast cereals, for while, just disappeared from our life because we found out a lot of the cereals contained a large amount of sugar.

And breads, we were eating a lot of breads and white breads, and we took them out of our diet for a long time too, as well and just started leading more fruit, more veggies, lean meats.

**Judd:**

Did you change your portion sizes at all? When it came to how much food you were putting on your plate, has that changed, and how important do you think that is?

**Rachel Woodrow:**

Yes, definitely. What I used to think was a decent piece of meat, now I understand it was a very large portion.

And so I just learned some tricks, like if I wanted a piece of meat, it was like the size of the palm of my hand.

Just little tricks you pick up. And that most of your plate should be full of vegetables or salad, and sometimes both.

It's just getting those little changes and remembering that your stomach is only meant to be as big as both of your hands joined together in fists. Just getting a proportion.

Plus, I track pretty much everything I eat and probably have closely tracked for the last maybe five years.

**Judd:**

Yeah. That seems like an excellent way keep what you're eating in your head so you know, as opposed to mindlessly eating.

And I know that has helped for a lot of people.

When it comes to... I know you've talked to me about this before, but you've mentioned that you tend to cook different things for your family than you do for yourself.

Since you're a mother on the go...

Which I'm sure so many parents out there probably are wondering, how do they healthfully eat and keep their families fed when it gets complicated, when someone might need to eat something different than someone else at the dinner table? How do you navigate that whole situation?

**Rachel Woodrow:**

I do a lot of meal planning now, which I never did before either.

And it makes things easy. My husband does a lot of hard manual work, so there's no way I need to be eating what he's eating.

I know it's a bit un-PC. There should be only one meal made. And I think I challenge that a bit because we're all different people doing different things.

He is good with pasta and heavy meals. He needs those calories. But I certainly don't need a big piece of bacon and need pie.

**Judd:**

Are there any tips or tricks you might have for when it comes to shopping for this kind of cooking? How do you deal with maybe at the time crunches and all that kind of stuff?

Is that tricky or do you have a plan when it comes to your weekly meals?

**Rachel Woodrow:**

Usually on a Sunday we get together and we make a few meals for the rest of the family.

And my meals, I know a lot of people get joy out of cooking, and I think my family would tell you that I'm not one of those.

So when I cook for me, I virtually heat up vegetables and have some lean meat, and that's that, whereas everyone else would have...

I've probably meal prepped three or four meals. And initially that was actually really hard. I couldn't understand people doing that because it took me so long to follow the recipe and to do these things.

But it's just like anything else, practice. Just the practice, and it just gets easier. I never would've thought of making three or four dishes in one day, and now it's just a breeze.

I've got three of them going, and my meal's something completely different. It's just a lifestyle. Just a change.

**Judd:**

Yeah. And in that regard, is there one thing that you can look back at when it comes to those changes that you could point to and say, "This was the one major thing that has changed for you now versus

maybe those years ago?"

**Rachel Woodrow:**

Well, I think there's just a few. The first one is, I bang on about it, I'm sorry, but sugar.

I think giving that up was the number one thing that has helped me stay on board here. And secondly, learning to meal prep has definitely been a good thing.

Thirdly, exercise. I exercise every day. I do have rest days, but still I usually have a casual walk during that time. And exercise is much like cleaning your teeth.

You just get up and you just do it. And ironically, I do it in the morning because, I tell everyone, I don't actually wake up to do it, I just do it.

And there's no time to argue with myself because I'm still half asleep.

**Judd:**

Right. Maybe we actually can talk a little bit about your exercise now since you've mentioned it a little bit.

I know that many doctors and nutritionists might say that when it comes to losing weight and fighting diabetes and obesity that they think of it as it as 80% to do with your diet and 20% physical fitness.

I know there's a lot of other things come into play as well. But in your mind, what's that balance for you in terms of the importance of keeping good health between diet and physical fitness?

## **Rachel Woodrow:**

I think physical fitness... I agree. Diets are best done in the kitchen, and that's something I had to learn the hard way.

You can't outwork a bad diet. And I tried. I tried.

It doesn't work, because you would be surprised at the small amount of calories you burn compared to what you put in your mouth.

And if you can get an idea of what you are putting in your mouth calorie-wise, you will start understanding how long you have to exercise to burn that off.

But on the other hand, I think exercise is essential, especially for prediabetics or type two diabetics, or anyone in general, because you're building a lot of lean muscle, and that helps your body burn and work better.

So a good muscle structure behind everything just gets your body working better, plus it makes you feel better inside.

The whole joke about, "I don't want to go for a run," or, "I don't want to do this." And halfway through, you're like, "Oh, I really don't want to do this."

And then when you're finished doing a workout, anything at all, a run, a walk, you're like, "Ah, I'm a super hero. I did this," and you feel good.

And that was definitely a saving grace over lockdowns and COVID, is I still carried on with that routine, just like brushing my teeth. And yeah, makes you quite cheerful.

**Judd:**

Great. Okay, so getting back to the history of your relationship with diabetes. At what point did you go in and did your doctor say, "Listen, you don't have diabetes anymore."

What did your doctor say, and what point was that?

**Rachel Woodrow:**

It was relatively, in the scheme of things and how long I haven't had any diabetes symptoms.

It was pretty early on, maybe 2016, maybe the start when all the blood tests, they didn't just come back pre-diabetic or anything like that, they came back brilliant.

They were really, really good. So if you think of diabetes and your blood sugar levels being an acceleration and a car previously, mine were so high I was just running in the red zone.

And by the time I had the last two blood tests I had related to diabetes, I was right down in the green. So not even in... They were amazing figures, and I was really proud and the doctor was really proud.

**Judd:**

That's fantastic.

Now, I know you've said in the past that not every single doctor had the best outlook.

Maybe you can talk a little bit about some of the naysayers that you've come across over the years in maybe the medical practice or other places.

**Rachel Woodrow:**

Well, I definitely have come across so many people. Like I said, at the beginning of my journey I think I got offered to join a diabetes walking group.

And I was like, "I don't want to be a part of your walking group. I want to get better." And they were like, "No. No. And don't worry about losing weight. We've got you booked in."

We'll look at your eyes and look at your feet and these things will happen for you." And I was like, "I don't want that." And there was not much help out there.

That's why I really appreciate meeting you, Judd, is someone out there saying, "Yeah, come on everyone."

And I don't understand the mentality of doctors saying, "You can't get rid of type two diabetes. It's impossible."

Because, look, if you say you can't get rid of diabetes or you can't reverse it or live symptom-free, I am definitely... How sad is that?

I think, what's the worst thing that can happen? You give people hope that they can do this. They take some steps in their life.

They get some control back, they feel like they're back empowered.

And the things that they gain, they gain a better quality of life. Regardless as to whether all your symptoms go away, you're

improving those symptoms majorly and very quickly.

And they get to spend more precious time with their family. And honestly, I was so scared of leaving my family early, and it can happen.

Diabetes is deadly, type two. And chances are that they'll reduce the amount of medication that they'll need.

These are the worst-case scenarios of me giving people hope about my diabetes is that they'll try these things themselves and they'll get all these outcomes of less medications, spending time with their family, being around longer, and opening some doors and seeing some major new things.

### **Rachel Woodrow:**

What's the harm in that? I don't have symptoms. It's funny because I've just had another organization contact me in the last few weeks.

And their attitude was, "Well..." I have been taken off the diabetes register because I don't test with diabetes anymore.

So I don't get tested for diabetes very often. I would only get tested if I had symptoms, which I definitely do not.

So they kind of said to me, "Hey, about lockdown and COVID, did you rush out after and get a blood test to see if you had diabetes back?"

I was like, "Why? Why would I do that?" And they were kind of like, "Well, how are you going to prove it?" I'm not here to prove it, I'm here to say if I can come this far, anyone can come this far.

There is so much out there for you. And type two diabetes just seems such a scary diagnosis, but you are in control and you can take steps to improve every part of your situation.

**Judd:**

That's exactly right. And that's great to hear.

I think in that regard, one thing I wanted to ask you is, when it comes to, I think the optimal word being sustained, sustained success, were there any specific real mind tricks you did on yourself?

Anything that keeps you going and keeps you motivated to this day? Because I know so many people probably feel exactly as you do and may have gone a certain ways.

And I can say myself, I fall into that category sometimes of being motivated for a time, doing certain exercise routines for a time, and then inevitably falling back into my old habits.

And it's something that I work with myself every day. Are there any things that you did for yourself to keep you on that right track? Any sort of secrets to that kind of sustained success?

**Rachel Woodrow:**

Yeah. I would say no one stays motivated doing the same thing over and over again. There's a million diets out there for you.

There's a million things you can choose to do, and there's a million sports you can take up. When you're bored and it's hard to find motivation. Motivation, it's fleeting. Motivation is fleeting. What you

need is consistency.

So like I said, I get out of bed every morning that's a workout morning and I work out. And I've planned what I've done, what I'm going to do, and I just go and do it.

And the problem is, and this is the problem with general dieting, is that you can reduce all your calories back and you can do all the exercise in the world, but eventually your body adapts to that.

So it adapts to eating 1200 calories and you can't lose a lot more weight.

So you become stuck, and this is often when you start eating your normal food again.

Your weight not only goes back to where it was, it rebounds and you usually end up at a higher weight. And this is really distressing for people, I can understand. So I was down to 1200 calories, still doing that five years on.

And I was running about 10K a morning and I was working out and I wasn't dropping any more weight. And we haven't really got a choice of you're passed type two diabetic or anything like that.

I don't want to go back there, and I'm not going back there. So the question is, what do you do? Well, I'm working with a trainer in Australia called Chris from Limitless Training.

And he's taught me about reverse dieting, which means you slowly, instead of putting on a lot of weight, you slowly increase your calories up again.

So you put on virtually no weight but your body starts balancing out eating more calories, which is important because we still need nutrients.

And bodies can't stay on 1200 calories for whatever.

So going forward, what happens is I'll build up those calories, which I have been doing, and then I'll slowly drop them down again and I've got room to move.

But previously you back yourself into a corner where you can't lose any more weight and you can't exercise anymore, and often it leads to...

And I have to say that at 1200 calories after five years I was having some issues with bingeing where I'd stick to that and then I'd just eat a lot of food, and that would visually undo it because my body was used to 1200 calories.

So what I'm doing now is just educating myself more on being able to sustain this longterm without that rebound back and keeping my basal metabolic rate higher so that I can get nutrients out of food too without jeopardizing my health.

So that's exciting. And I was very, very scared to try it in the beginning, as you can imagine, I was like, "I'll get huge and I'll get type two diabetes back."

But I understand the panic and I understand the panic I had, but we need the next step. And the next step is maintaining this forever. And this seems to be the way to go.

## **Judd:**

That's fantastic. Wonderful words of wisdom there. Do you have any other final pieces of advice that you might say to someone who possibly was just having a real rough time of it.

Might say, "Well, I can't exercise. I'm just too heavy or my health is not good enough to go and jog several miles," or, "I would eat better but it's just too expensive."

These barriers that might be real or perceived that seem to be keeping so many of us back. Is there any final words of advice you might have for that?

**Rachel Woodrow:**

Absolutely, because those are all my excuses that I've had over the years. Absolutely. Just small steps. I started carrying the washing from the washing basket across the yard to the washing line to get my exercise up.

So it's just small steps, and you'll find that you get more energized and therefore you'll do more. I'm definitely not saying, "Whip out and take up and an aerobics class," and all these things.

But just natural progressions. And as for healthy foods being more expensive, that was one of my big things that I used to say. But, blatant honesty here, at the counter of the cashier on a daily basis I used to buy, "Get four chocolate bars for \$5" or something.

And, "I'll make them last a week." No, they didn't last. And when I added up all those things that I used to buy like that, they actually came to a lot.

Christmas shopping for us, and Christmas was coming up everyone, so we would buy a lot of junk to celebrate Christmas.

And it's not something we deny ourselves, but now that we're not into it, it tastes different and we don't have that huge shopping bill at

Christmas.

It's amazing. So yes, healthy foods can be expensive but if you put that against how much you're spending on stuff you really shouldn't be putting in your body, it does sort of work out.

And my last thing I'd say is I'm not an incredibly motivated person. I am not some ex-bodybuilder. I did very little exercise my whole life.

And as for food, I always ate badly. I was always busy, too busy to cook. But if I can make these changes, anybody can, because I'm not Superwoman, I'm just anybody. And I'm happy for anyone to contact me if they need some motivation.

And the answer really is the food you're putting in your mouth and getting some exercise. And I know that's not everyone's favorite. If I heard that, I'd be like, "Ugh, that doesn't sound fun."

But it is actually fun. And I love karate now. And I did running for a while, but a bit like Forrest Gump, I sort of want to go home. But try it. Give anything a go. And with Christmas season coming up, try anything.

Join on to anyone. If your friends are saying, "Hey, I'm going to go and climb a hill, say, "I'm coming," and just go because you'll love it.

And take selfies up there because you'll look amazing. You'll look really good up there. So I think that's about my suggestions, is if I can do that, you can too.

## **Judd:**

That's fantastic, Rachel, and I'm sure plenty of people would look at your story and say, "Well, she is a bit of a Superwoman."

But I think your story does show that real lasting success can be

achievable. It takes some hard work, but it definitely seems like that hard work has paid off for you and is totally worth it.

So I just want to say thank you so much for joining us, Rachel. Thanks for being so open about your story and your struggles. It's really inspirational and I'm sure many people will hear your story and feel the same way.

If you do want to hear more of Rachel's story, you can check her out in our eight part series, That Diabetes Documentary, which is actually one of our two free gifts I was mentioning at the start of this video.

To see episode one of that diabetes documentary and to get our free new book called Super Foods for Diabetics, all you have to do is click the link in the description below.

Rachel, thank you again, so much. It's been wonderful chatting to you and we really appreciate you giving your time and telling us your story.

### **Rachel Woodrow:**

Thank you so much for me, Judd. It was great to see you again.

## **Judd**

Wonderful. Well, once again, guys, if you haven't subscribed to Diabetes Smarts, make sure to do that and make sure to like this video as well.

Well, that's going to do it for us. We hope you have a happy and healthy day.