

Speaker 1: There are few things that make people successful. Taking a step forward to change their lives is one successful trait, but it takes some time to get there. How do you move forward to greet the success that awaits you? Welcome to *Next Steps Forward* with host Chris Meek. Each week, Chris brings on another guest who has successfully taken the next steps forward. Now here is Chris Meek.

Chris Meek: Hello, I'm Chris Meek, and you tuned to this week's episode of *Next Steps Forward*. It's an honor and a pleasure to have you with us again today. Our guest is Dr. Robb Kelly. Dr. Kelly is a sought-after recovery expert who believes in treating the causes of addiction and not the symptoms. Frequent contributor to radio and print interviews, his professional credentials include a PhD in psychology from Trinity College, Oxford University, and a PhD in psychology with a behavioral science concentration from the University of Southampton.

Dr. Kelly hosted the *Sober Celebs* show on KLIF Radio in Dallas, and currently hosts the *Breaking Through Addiction* podcast, featuring special guests discussing a variety of mental health issues. Dr. Kelly is currently the chief executive officer of the Robb Kelly Recovery Group, an addiction and mental illness recovery coaching company he created based on extensive research and behavior studies that he has conducted over the past 20 years. Robb Kelly, welcome to *Next Steps Forward*.

Dr. Robb Kelly: Thank you, Chris. Great to be here, guys.

Chris: Thanks for your time. I really appreciate it. We know how busy you are, and I appreciate you not rubbing in how warm it is in Texas versus cold in Connecticut today, so we'll save that for later. Many patients often wonder if the professionals who treat them have ever experienced what they've experienced, and whether those professionals truly empathize with them. You've lived through the highs and lows of addiction as you struggled with and overcame crippling alcoholism. Would you share your journey with us, and not just the chapter involving your addiction, but also your life leading up to that?

Dr. Kelly: I was born in Manchester, UK, guys, as you can tell by the accent, just in case you think I was from Texas. I took my first drink at the age of nine. I was in an alcoholic family, but back in the day, nobody knew that. Nobody knew about alcoholism as a whole, although we trace back generations, and father liked to drink, and grandfather liked to drink, and you can see the pattern there.

I found out, and in my research and studies, that alcoholics are born and drug addicts are made. The alcoholic, which we'll get into later, has a predisposition. Yes, I took my first drink. I remember exactly where I was, because when I took that first couple of mouthfuls into my system, my whole outlook on life changed. It stayed with me all through my schooling. So lucky to get to college. It was a Freemasons contact, guys. I wasn't that clever. I should never have been. I got brought up on the projects. I just about scraped through, but I was drinking all through that, just drinking, drinking, drinking.

Then somewhere, and we'll get into the neuroscience of this later, guys, my head changed, and then I couldn't stop drinking, and that led to horrendous things happening in my house. I was married, two children, and then, obviously, it went

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through this-- I stabbed my wife three times one night because she wouldn't let me finish my bottle of vodka. I was my lowest of the low, and I fled to Spain to come back, and then she left me, and then I ended up homeless. Everybody was just done with me, the promises, the sorries.

I went from this beautiful house with two brand new Mercedes every year for me and my wife, beautiful kids. One and three, they were. Just a beautiful middle-class family to being homeless on the streets of Manchester, where I had to steal and beg for alcohol or food, and I stayed there for 14 months. It was crazy.

I do, at the beginning of the question, this is very, very, very important in my opinion, 30 years being in the industry, over 8,000 patients, is if you haven't been through alcoholism, you can't take anybody else through a program that they can recover from. I'm sorry, guys. I know how much years you've got training, but you cannot. It's as simple as that. Drug addiction is slightly different. Drug addiction is the addictive personality, but they both show themselves the same.

Chris: You wrote a book about your addiction and how it affected your family. Tell us about the writing experience as you came to terms with your addiction. Was it difficult, cathartic, both?

Dr. Kelly: When I first started, I had the bucket, guys. I'm not selling it. Buy it or not buy it. It doesn't make any difference to me. All that money goes out. There's my daughter, and there's me. Yes, I had all these stories and all these things I would tell my wife, and it took about four years to write, because my wife wrote it, and I would give her pieces of information. Then she got this book.

It's amazing how God works, because about three weeks after we finished the book, my daughter, who I'd not seen for maybe 28 years, 20, and I'm not good with math, contacted me on Messenger, and we decided, obviously, "Daddy, daddy, please stop drinking," is one of the last things I said to her. Writing the book and going through, it's a healing process, guys. You never start off thinking of writing a book. No, you have to do it as part of your therapy if you want to fully recover, because things will come to you in crazy moments that would be de minimis in normal life. Jot it down, put it aside, or give it to somebody like I did to my wife, and she created this amazing book.

Now, it was amazing writing it. It was great. It was fantastic. I haven't read it yet because I never watch myself on TV, never watched the podcast. I won't be watching this, and I've never read my book. The reason why is a simple criticism. If I watch that and see all the reaction and everything, I might buy into that BS that I'm this celebrity and stuff like that, and I just don't do that. I can't do it for my own safety and sanity. Yes, very healing. You've got to do it, guys.

Listen, one thing I know for a fact is everyone thinks they have time. You don't have time, okay? Everything I say, we've researched, tried, and tested. Most of the old people that we saw that had weeks, days to live, we would chat to them, and we found out one sentence they would say, "I thought I had more time," and you don't. How many mommas and dads have said, "One minute I'm waving them off to kindergarten, next minute they're at college"?

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It's vital that you understand we don't have time. If you're pondering on writing that book, stop being selfish. Write it, heal from it, and then pass it on to the thousands, if not millions, with the ripple effect that you can help connect and save their life, and it really is that powerful.

Chris: I can relate to that in a little bit different of a scope. I was at Ground Zero on 9-11, and for my entire career, I've worked within roughly six blocks of Ground Zero. It took me 17 years to actually go back to Ground Zero. Really, one of the things that launched this podcast was I wrote a book, and it was about my-- I self-diagnosed myself with PTSD. I can completely relate to that and completely agree with you, so thank you for sharing that. Let's back up for a minute. How do we define addiction? Is there a specific medical definition?

Dr. Kelly: If you look in the Oxford English or the American English Dictionary, it says one has to be dependent upon alcohol. A dependency is what it states in American to be, but it goes way past that. Dependency, like alcoholism, one who is dependent upon alcohol, it says. That's true to a certain degree, but it's not the whole story. Alcohol has got 1% to do with alcoholism, the same with drugs.

Look at depression, for instance, the definition of depression is lack of serotonin, lack of dopamine. That's what the medical fraternity will tell you. You go to the doctor and you say, "Hey, I feel depressed," he gives you an SSRI, you go home, it builds your serotonin back up. Why isn't anybody asking the question why my serotonin is low in the first place? Why is nobody asking the question that why I can't stop drinking? That was the big question for me, because I was a pretty streetwise guy.

I studied a little, I'm not the smartest guy in the room by far, but I knew there was something different that when people said, "Just stop drinking," and people in my group did that and was fine. Then I found out there's a huge difference between a heavy drinker and the alcoholic. I threw myself into 25 years of study pertaining to neuroscience, the brain, what alcoholism and addiction is, and found out that it goes way beyond. Most people ask me what the gateway drug is. I'll tell you, guys, it's childhood trauma. "Oh, I've never had trauma." Yes, you have. The people that say that usually blocked it out and have the worst trauma. You have to define trauma and then define how it affects you today.

Let's go back real quick to childhood. A girl in an alcoholic house where dad comes home, beats mom every night, drunk, she will learn a couple of things. First of all, she'll listen for the key going in the door. Is it juggling around? In that case, dad's drunk, go and hide. When she leaves the house, she will attract the guy who beats her and ends up being an alcoholic because it's learned behavior. If she attracts a nice guy that treats her well, she will self-sabotage that relationship because it doesn't feel comfortable.

Chris: It's that simple. That's it.

Dr. Kelly: I hate to say it, but I'm an alcoholic and drug addict, but it really is that simple. Many people, there's a lot of work to go back and do to trauma, but you have to understand it's not about the alcohol. When I say alcohol, guys, I mean both. It's not about the alcohol. It really isn't.

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To prove this, I'm outside a liquor store in England when I'm homeless, it's 5.30 in the morning, they can't serve alcohol until 10:00. This Pakistani gentleman, he knows I'm an alcoholic, he knows I'm living on the streets, and he always lets me in at 5.30. I've got a string vest on, a pair of shorts, a pair of flip flops, it's snowing, and I am absolutely sweating profusely. I'm shaking, I can't really talk proper because the DTs are now settling in, which basically means, guys, if I don't get a drink or a hospitalization in the next 30 minutes, I'm dead. That's what it means.

I stumble into this shop, shaking as I put my £10 pound on the counter, and this was the deal breaker for me, this is where it all started. He put the bottle of vodka on the counter, I give him my £10 pound, and this is what happened on this morning.

[unintelligible 00:10:51] Not even open the bottle, I looked at the shopkeeper, looked back at the bottle, and I thought, "Holy crap, it's not about the alcohol." That's what started my journey, it's not about the alcohol.

Chris: From a physiological perspective, what causes some people to become addicted and other people not to?

Dr. Kelly: It's the addictive personality. Two things, it's the addictive personality, to start with, because we've become addicted to things, it's a predisposition with alcoholism, but if you've got kids today that are constantly on video games and you don't monitor that, I'll show you a future addict. The brain becomes addicted to anything that we're doing. When you add in Adderall to 10, 11-year-olds, it's over, their life is over, I'm sorry to say that, but it is. Stop giving kids amphetamine salts so we grab hold of that addiction.

Now, most drug addicts who's recovered are geniuses. They create empires, they create businesses, they go on to have an amazing life. We're the only guys in the addiction world that have two lives in one lifetime. We get the first one, mess up, nearly die. On my occasion I died and they brought me back. You get this beautiful second life. Most of it is the addicted personality, we get addicted to things real easy.

If you don't know what that is, here's the definition, guys, I can't have one of anything. We go into a sandwich store, I go, "Jimmy, what do you want? Sandwich?" "Yes, get me a sandwich." "What else do you want?" "Oh, nothing." "What are you getting, Rob?" "Give me two sandwiches, three bags of chips, one of them drinks, and one of them sweets over there." I can't have one of anything, guys. I'm one of those guys that if I pick up a drink, let's say after this show, one o'clock I pick up a drink, Christmas has to be canceled for me because I can't stop. There's a neuroscience brain, which, again, there's three parts of the brain differ from any other addiction with the alcoholism that makes me drink.

Chris: Are there specific stages in life when we're more susceptible to addiction?

Dr. Kelly: That's a great question. Again, going back to the alcoholics are born, that can take up to 50 years to come to fruition, where the hypothalamus changes around and tells the alcoholic not to eat food and drink water. This one go days or weeks without eating or drinking but to take alcohol in only. Obviously, the video games don't help, with the addicted personality, that can become addicted.

Listen, guys, most of the people that come to me with a staunch heroin addiction started in a doctor's office. If you're going to the doctor for painkillers and you don't have the addictive personality, you're not an all-or-nothing guy, and you're going to take that medication as prescribed. If you have the addictive personality that you can't stop something once you've started, you're going to become a drug addict and you're going to keep taking it till the doctor stops you and you go to the streets. Then you find, if you're lucky, somebody like me. The ages vary. A lot of people will tell you between the age of five and, dah, dah, dah, their brain's still growing, it's got nothing to do with that, guys. It really hasn't.

Chris: You've mentioned the addictive personality a few times. Are there other personality types that are more susceptible to addiction?

Dr. Kelly: I think the addictive personality is the one. If you grew up, like the kids now on video games, something, dah, dah, dah every single day. It's why children, when they grow up as strict parents about schooling, these are going to do pretty good. The kids that get hit by parents go on to bully. Bully's always bully, and so on and so forth. I don't think there's a definite answer to that. I've not done enough research around that, but yes.

Chris: I know there are different types of addiction, but at its core, is every addiction the same or does each possess its own unique features or quite its own specific treatment process?

Dr. Kelly: Ooh, great question, Chris. Go back to the point that alcohol is 1% and drug has 1% to do with the addiction to the alcoholism. That's so true, do your research, look me up. It's really important that we really understand that and what's going on. It's not the symptom that's going on, it's really what's going on inside my head. I will turn to anything at any age, whatever my brain tells me to do, and start doing that straight away.

Chris: In your experience, what are the most effective methods for treating addiction?

Dr. Kelly: Whoa, damn, Chris, where are you getting these-- [crosstalk]

Chris: We did our homework.

Dr. Kelly: Brilliant. Look, if you're a heavy drinker and if you're a heavy drug user but you're not the addict or you're not the real alcoholic he talks about, get yourself into treatment, stay there 30 days, lock yourself up, and they'll teach you how to relapse prevention and all that BS that they teach you in some treatment centers. I know millions that are fantastic, guys, good job. When treatment centers are taking people in third, fourth, fifth times charging them 50 grand at a time, there's something wrong with that picture.

Best treatment is psychic change of mind. There's neural pathways that'll kill you, there's neural pathways that'll take you to the next level, being amazing. Addicts and alcoholics have more self-harm neural pathways than they do harm good neural

pathways. 300 neural pathways die around each day and then we can create 300 more with repetition strength and confirms [unintelligible 00:16:10]

The psychic change, there's a book out there that talks about this in step meetings. Psychic change, spiritual awakening. I have never seen a true alcoholic and addict who's recovered that's an atheist. I just haven't seen it. I disliked God so much when I was on the streets, but I had a huge spiritual awakening. I would put down to get somebody who knows what they're doing, potential neuroscience, the brain, the mind, which is separate from the brain, and knows about addiction to get you through that, because otherwise, I'm sorry, guys, if you're the real deal like me, you're going to die.

You're going to end up in prison for life or you're going to die. There's no, "I'm going to get help." There's no other way out of this, guys. If there's anybody that could have beaten this, it would have been me, believe me. I was the toughest, most scary guy in the world, a bodybuilder who could fight. We talk about 500 fights on that movie, I've had over 500 fights. I was dangerous, I was horrible, and I [unintelligible 00:17:11]

Chris: On the other side of the coin, are there common methods that tend to not be very effective?

Dr. Kelly: Common methods, again, if you're a real alcoholic, forget anti-abuse, it does not work. It's a chemical reaction and a predisposition, so it does not work. I often see treatment people going to treatment and they relapse on their way home, so some treatment centers don't work. Taking advice of the doctor for alcoholism and addiction is a waste of time. They don't know anything about the disease, guys. Always get a second opinion from someone who's been an alcoholic or addict, otherwise, you're wasting your time.

Talk to somebody, not an idiot, talk to somebody who's good, because anybody else will tell you that 90% of people that go to them 12-step meetings are not the real alcoholic, but they'll give you advice on it. Just be real careful to study. You need to have a full knowledge of your condition. That's from the [unintelligible 00:18:04] but it's so true, you need to know what you're suffering from.

Alcoholism is the only self-diagnosed illness in the world. 10 DUIs do not make an alcoholic, 10 DWIs, warning from the doctor, 10 warnings from the-- Something happens, chemically, pertaining to neuroscience in my brain and my mind that takes it to the next level that I cannot stop. Really be careful what people tell you. Double-check. If you're stuck somewhere, call our office. We'll spend 20 minutes, 20 hours on the phone with you. We're not going to sell you anything. I don't need any more patients for the next 20 years, thank you, but call us for advice. We'll give you plenty of advice free of charge.

Chris: We tend to hear about genetics when the subject of addiction comes up. You've talked about the addictive personality. Is there a certain gene?

Dr. Kelly: Okay. Guys, I've got to go tell you, Chris Meek, best questions ever. Nobody's asking these questions, it's so important. The addictive gene as such does

not exist. Neither does anything passed down in the family. You cannot pass inflammation of the knee to the next generation. Cannot pass heart disease to the next generation. There isn't a gene, as such, when it comes to addiction, although the predisposition to alcoholism, we believe there is because of the allergy that we have pertaining to alcoholics.

What tends to happen in drug addicts and people that are sick with heart failure, whatever, is a pass down from family to family. I believe alcoholics can do that, but I don't believe any other addiction can do that. What we are doing, and Gary Brecha, thank you for this new research that you've done, is, it's a deficiency in the food that we eat. You can't methylize some certain foods. Families from generation teach you how to eat and what to eat, and it's passed down from generation to generation.

Now, alcoholics were born with three parts of the brain that differ from any other addiction or human being. They react different. That's a gene, great, I'll go with that. I don't know, and I've studied it for 30 years. I just know that predisposition. You can trace alcoholism back three generations, and if it's there, and you think you have a problem, you probably do. You can't really trace three generations of drug addicts. There's no pattern. There is a pattern with alcoholism.

I know you're going to get loads of people writing in and talking in, guys, bear with me, do your research before you call Chris and go, "This guy doesn't know what he's talking about." I'm the leading authority that wrote for McLean Hospital, that's Harvard University, pertaining to addiction. I'm the guy that they all call, doctors included. I teach doctors about alcoholism and addiction. This is the latest neuroscience that we have studied and performed and tested and tried over the last 25 years and 10 years with the neuroscience. That's the answer.

Chris: We all have different DNA. Do we also have different brain chemistry? How does our brain chemistry contribute to addictive behaviors?

Dr. Kelly: That predisposition and allure to the ethanol and alcohol is something that's pretty big. I'm not allergic to alcohol as such, I'm allergic to the ethanol and alcohol, so my brain reacts differently. That's why it's passed down from generation to generation, I believe. Yes, every brain has circuits that are in that system that work normally, like every other human being. A lot of it is family teachings and practicing. A lot of it is learned behavior and traits from our caregivers, including trauma.

Chemically, the only thing that we found is the allergy to the ethanol. Now, no other addiction has the allergy, no other addiction, only alcoholism. Brain reacts different, central nervous system reacts different. Then when the alcohol gets in my body, I get sick if I try and come off it. I can't actually come off it. I can come off drugs, I can wean down, I can come off it. You try the same with alcohol on your own, you will die. You try and wean down, you can't do it if you're an alcoholic.

Chris: Certainly, a variety of other factors, internal and external, contribute to addiction or the vulnerability to addiction. How does psychological or physical factors, such as stress, mental health conditions, or brain injury, contribute to addiction?

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Dr. Kelly: Oh my God, this is the best podcast ever, guys. Unbelievable. Okay. Generational, the surroundings, that can affect us, although it's not a behavioral problem. Alcoholism is not a behavioral problem, it's a neuroscience problem. Yes, if you've grown up in a violent house and there's alcoholism in the house, that contributes. If you've grown up in a strict house where no alcohol is allowed, that can continue. Childhood trauma is absolutely number one. Two, that's the gateway drug, so that also affects.

There's a load of things going on around us. We used to think it was just the alcohol. If you could just stop drinking, you would be okay. There's so many other factors in this deal. Alcohol is not the problem, not the real problem. It's just a symptom, like spots on my chicken pox. What's the real problem? It's all these things. It is environment. It's his learned behavior. It's childhood trauma. It's bullying. It's that addictive personality. It's the allergy to it. It's all this stuff bound in one, driven by fear because of the childhood trauma that happens.

Yes, great question. We could sit here for the next 20 weeks explaining that in depth, but it's not one thing, it's a series of things that's going on. Childhood trauma is so slight. "This is my childhood trauma, Chris. This is my mom, "How many times have I told you, Robert, you can't go to college like your brother, you're too stupid." That was one of my childhood traumas that stayed with me for a long, long, long time and still have flashbacks there when I'm going on TV or going on stage in front of thousands of people. I hear my mom now and again, "You are stupid." Even of all the childhood trauma work I've done, that seems to be the case.

Chris: I think you may have answered part of this next question. We know that anyone can fall into addiction, but to your point, do family dynamics, educational levels, and socioeconomic status create any differences, or is one act the same as another?

Dr. Kelly: Probably the same as the other. Let me tell you, guys, everybody that's-- the guy running Apple, the guy running Google, all them multi-billionaires that are running, they have the addictive personality, but they probably haven't been exposed to drugs. They probably haven't been exposed to painkillers that's taken them to the next level. You can have the addictive brain to do amazing things with your life. In actual fact, when we get clean and sober, like me, from the streets to here, we do amazing things. I've now 8,000 patients have done [00:24:49] exactly the same as I've done. It's not rocket science, would you believe? There's no mystery here. You'd have to look at what the DNA is, ou have to look at your blood tests, you have to look at the way your brain reacts, you have to look at the past behavior, you have to look at the trauma as a whole.

Chris: How do addiction and trauma each change the brain's chemistry? Are those changes similar? Does the combination of addiction and trauma have a more profound effect on the brain?

Dr. Kelly: The addiction does, actually. Addiction and PTSD probably are very similar. Let me tell you why. Anything that disrupts the brain from normal brain patterns, anything that changes the circuitry. You see something in war, or we see a housewife of a man who's a chronic alcoholic. We tested that housewife with a

violent house, and we tested soldiers coming back from Afghanistan. Thank you for your service. We found that the trauma and the way the brain reacts was exactly the same. Nobody knew when they were going to die. Everyone's walking around on eggshells, so on and so forth. Brain chemistry can change. In alcoholics, they're already changed. Then, of course, the three solid parts of the brain that add to that, which we'll get into later.

Chris: How do you create a safe and trusting therapeutic environment and safe and trusting therapeutic relationships with people who have trauma histories?

Dr. Kelly: You have to share your own trauma. You have to share-- That's the first thing I do, is, hey, and I think this is why God sent us for everything. You never lost your kids, check. You've never been homeless, check, you've never been beaten on the street, check. All these things that I've done is checking off. When you sit down in an environment, that they trust you straight away because you've been there, and you sit down and you go through a series of safe modes that we get them in over a period of time, it's the mirroring part of the brain.

If you've been through this and they've come to you, how the mirroring part of the brain connects. It's one of the biggest salesman trick. You got a guy you want to sell to, pop him across his legs, and you cross your leg. He orders fish, you order fish. It's the same thing when we're trying to get well. It's the same thing. It mirrors completely every single day.

Chris: We've been talking to Dr. Robb Kelly, and we'll be right back after a short break.

[music]

Dr. Kelly: Follow Voice America at [facebook.com/voiceamerica](https://www.facebook.com/voiceamerica) for juicy updates from your favorite radio shows and podcasts.

Up from the ashes

Out of the grave

Sweet is the freedom

No longer your slave

[song continues in the background]

Speaker 5: Picture the heart-wrenching anguish a family endures when a child is abducted. Human trafficking is a worldwide crisis that plagues our society. Voices Against Trafficking stands as a voice for those entrapped in the depths of despair. Broken Treasures, You Hold the Key, is a musical collection that showcases the dedication of artists and celebrities who are determined to protect the world's children. There is a way for you to make a difference right now. Visit [voicesagainsttrafficking.com](https://www.voicesagainsttrafficking.com). The proceeds will go towards helping child victims. The power to liberate them rests in your hands.

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[song in the background ends]

'Cause I'm still the light]

Speaker 6: Voice America programs are now available on your favorite connected device, including Amazon, Alexa, and Google Home. Through streams with Apple Podcasts, TuneIn, and iHeartRadio, listening to your favorite show is as easy as saying the show name followed by the word podcast.

Speaker 7: Hey, Alexa, play *Finding Your Frequency* podcast.

Speaker 6: If that doesn't work, try adding on TuneIn or on iHeartRadio or on Apple Podcasts.

Speaker 8: It's your world. Motivate, change, succeed, voiceamericaempowerment.com.

[music]

Speaker 1: You are listening to *Next Steps Forward*. To reach Chris Meek or his guest on the show today, please call in to 1-888-346-9141. That's 1-888-346-9141, or send an email to chris@nextstepsforward.com. Now back to this week's show.

Chris: We are back. I'm Chris Meek, host of *Next Steps Forward*. My guest today is Dr. Robb Kelly. Robb is a sought-after recovery expert who believes in treating the causes of addiction and not the symptoms. He currently hosts the *Breaking Through Addiction* podcast, featuring special guests discussing a variety of mental health issues. Dr. Kelly is also the chief executive officer of the Robb Kelly Recovery Group, an addiction and mental illness recovery coaching company he created based on extensive research and behavior studies that he has conducted over the past 20 years.

Rob, a number of states have decriminalized marijuana possession or legalized recreational marijuana use. Proponents are pushing to do so in more states or passing national law legalizing recreational use. What's your reaction to that? Are you concerned with creating new addicts or have created new addicts?

Chris: I was there the first time in Colorado. I did a national TV show on radio show on that. Here's my opinion, guys. It's only from my research. I can't speak for everyone or please anybody. We've not seen any marijuana guys smashing shops up or hitting the wife or anything like that. We can't see any long term apart from the smoke obviously that you're taking in with it. Obviously, that's damaging.

I don't mind the whole of America being legal. Just inform everybody, inform the general public what it can do to you over long term. It's where smoking was in the '60's. Tell people what the long effect is, but it's definitely not the gateway drug, guy. I have never seen a person that specifically started marijuana that turned out to be a chronic heroin addict or something like that. I've not seen it

Now, I've now be careful here, I have seen people take marijuana and then end up that way, but the people that don't have the addictive personality, because we've got

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to go back to that again, guys, with anything. We're all-or-nothing guys, but normal people on the street who use marijuana, including my mom when she was dying of cancer, I can see no adverse effects whatsoever. I kind of back it for the right people. When it comes to addiction, stay away from it, guys, because we're all-or-nothing guys. We really are all-or-nothing guys. General public, go for it. Addictive personality, be very, very careful. Complete chronic alcoholic or addicts, stay away, guys, because we have to have something in our brain that changes the way we feel. When we do that, all bets are off.

Chris: You're saying marijuana is not a gateway drug. Are there substances that are more likely to lead to addiction or is it really just back to that personality?

Dr. Kelly: It's the personality, really. How many people have taken speed cocaine when they're going through college, smoked marijuana, go on, never touch it again? They're the guys that can do this. No problems at all. Like I said, just be careful with the addictive personality, addictive family, alcoholism in the family. Just be very careful of anything that changes the way that you feel because that's what we're after. We have a hole that needs to be filled all the time. Just be careful. I'm not saying don't do it, but as for me, if somebody's wants to smoke marijuana, that's your choice. Like I said, my patients, I'll say no.

Chris: I've talked to law enforcement people who say up to 80% of men in jail in their jurisdiction, and sometimes up to 100% of women who have been charged also have a substance abuse problem. In your experience, how does substance abuse impact the legal system?

Dr. Kelly: We are not prepared for the substance abuse that's hit, especially when we talk about the latest out there, but listen, guys, we need a better system. Why? I don't know know prior cases, but the cases we study, why are you locking Johnny up for two ounces of blah, blah for like 20 years or something? You know we're overpopulated as it [00:33:07] is? There's a difference again between the occasional user and the real drug addicts. One needs to go in jail or prison for a period of time, one needs help.

If we were to take these guys away and give them a chance-- There was a judge in Dallas I worked very closely, and we come up with a program that we call it First Chance, and we'd given them one chance, even though they were set for two to four years, they had to turn up every single day. They had to do the homework and then we met once a week to go through what they've done. It's a 90-something percent success rate of people going, "Hey, I'm done with it." I think it's still going as well. It's a phenomenal exercise.

Chris: Are there specific interventions that address both substance abuse and mental health concerns in a way that avoids the criminal justice system?

Dr. Kelly: Without a doubt, definitely. I've seen lots and lots of stuff like this happen, but alcoholism and addiction is a mental health issue. When we start looking at that and treating it like that, we'll get better, but interventions done properly are very, very good, especially if the people doing the intervention have been there and done it.

Again, we're in part of the brain, somebody leading you. Most alcoholics and addicts have lost their identity through the addiction as a whole.

Once you start finding that identity, once you start getting intervened with somebody who gives you hope, a mentor, interventionist, is family, whatever it is, where if you move forward, that can work amazing. We took a girl in Dallas away and she hated going and she didn't want to go and she tried to jump out the car to her three times. We got her there. This was about 10 years ago. I saw her about a year ago and she's doing absolutely amazing. That's real fact. She's this manager in the halfway house and treatments center that we took her to is phenomenal.

Chris: When the subject of crime is discussed, we hear about recidivism, and that is the percentage of people released from prison who become repeat criminals? Do we know much about people released from prison and the return to substance abuse?

Dr. Kelly: It's very hard to monitor, people might say it's very hard. How do you monitor the millions of people that come out? Do they use, do they not, some might use occasionally what get lost in the system again, we don't know. What I would say again is we need to start treating people that are addicted and people that are alcoholics in prison when they come out. We need a system for them to get in, and I don't particularly mean just a probation officer. We need a probation officer who is also with addiction as a whole because people are lost. People get put back in the world.

There was a girl in Manchester back in the late '60's. She was kidnapped, snatched off the side of the road. 16 years old, blonde hair, blue eyes. There was a huge manhunt. Couldn't find her. A couple of weeks later, they pulled people back, manpower. Nine months after that, there was a police car following another car, back in 1969. Remember, no radios, and he pulled him over for a broken light at the back. You're allowed to search the car, which he did, and found a stolen screwdriver.

Then you're allowed to go back to the house and see what else is stolen. He went back to the house, a few more people went with him, police officers and this, and sure enough, there were lawnmowers, there was all sorts of stuff, drills that he'd stolen. While they're looking, they found this box in the corner, it's like 4 foot high by 12 foot wide, and they say to him, "We know you've got more stolen gear in there."

He says, I don't know anything about that. They smashed the lock off, opened it, and there was the girl that went missing nine months ago. She was alive. She'd get beaten and battered every day, taken out, abused, fed, restroom, back in the box for nine months, Chris. As the policewoman lent over and helped her stand outside the box, what's the first thing she did? She got in the box. That's what people do coming out of prison. That's what people do coming out of treatment center, it seems the easiest way because nobody's out here standing up and showing them how to do it, how to be a father, how to come away from drugs.

I'll tell you why they don't, Chris, because there's no money in recovery. There's no money in getting you well. If they can't give you a pharmaceutical drug, I'll stick you in some sort of psychological treatment center or stuff that nobody wants to know you, so we're lost. When you're looking at treatment centers being about 5% success

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rate and 12-step groups, even less than that, what we are we do in wrong?
Misunderstood what alcoholism and addiction, totally misunderstood.

It should be on the same level of misunderstanding in the beginning as cancer and all that stuff. We have a disease for which there is no cure. Now, there's no cure for food poison or the common cold, but there still is something you can do to make sure you don't get that again, but nobody knows that. We need more people plunging money into this, making a body of people throughout the United States of America with places in each single state to show these guys what's coming on. If we save one life, we've done our job.

Chris: I'm going to go back to something you really have kind of beaten into my head over the show, is that this all comes back to an addictive personality trait. You've referenced a few times kids with playing video games today, but today's society seems to be addicted to something no matter what it is, whether it's social media, whether it's gambling, whether it's, to your point, video games, whether it's booze, drugs, something, and I think COVID sort of accelerated that because we're all cooped up and just look at our computers. Are we an addictive society today?

Dr. Kelly: Oh, 100%. We haven't seen the knock on effect or the final result from COVID either. When you take someone's identity away, put a mask on, and you isolate them, most people on death row, by the time they reach a chair are mentally insane because of the isolation. We're already starting to be **[unintelligible 00:38:46]** Alcohol sales went on by 42% and so on and so forth. Now we have kids on the iPhones, on the iPads, and we're losing communication skills.

I asked one guy, one kid, I said, "You've got any new friends?" "I've got 500 friends on Facebook." I said, you're just plugged into the wall. We talking of about about 500 friends. You ain't got 500 friends. We're losing that. The knock-on effect to come, it's going to be absolutely earth shattering when people are-- This is why we've got all this stuff going on at the moment, of people having breakdowns, people crying in cry rooms at work and stuff like that.

It all starts from the addicted iPhones and playStations and all that. That has to be moderated, with any child. If you are stuck in your room, and I see this in affluent houses, Chris, more than anything else, but if you are sticking your child in a room with a video game just to keep him quiet while you do whatever you're going to do, that's not good enough, and then he grows up to do something silly in the world and you are there going, "Oh, I don't know what went wrong." You are what went wrong. That's the problem. You, your parents, parent your freaking children.

People come to me all the time, "There's a blank checkbook, Doctor Robb, just go and--" No, you can't buy me. Do some parenting for once in the world. You decide to bring them in, not sticking them away and expecting them to turn out normal because they won't turn out normal. Oh, I'm getting excited now, Chris.

Chris: I love it. Just getting to the heart of the show now. Rob, you developed the *Let's Get Back to 98% Recovery* DVDs used in prisons and recovery treatment centers throughout the US. Tell us what that title means and how's that approach different than other treatment plans?

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Dr. Kelly: Everybody wants to focus on the alcohol and drugs. Everybody wants to do that. Percentage goes down because it's not about the alcohol or drugs, it's not about the depression, it's not about it, it's more in-depth. What I was saying is that there's a certain, well, AA group out there with 99% success rate back in Akron, back in 1939, 1940s. We've lost that. The percentage of people recovering, we've lost that because we've come away to what the addiction or alcoholism is. We've come away from that.

I am 62 years old. **[unintelligible 00:40:59]** as if I'm 30. The mission of my life is to change as many people back to a nice life. Alcoholics get two lives, one bad, one good. We get a second chance in life, and addicts as well, we get a second go at this. Everybody can be that 99% success rate. Alcoholism is addiction, I'm a fully recovered alcoholic and addict. Recovered means the game wants health. I'm no longer sick and state of mind. I'm not insane today. The more people we get like that, the more people that see how amazing they are and what the world can do. The more that person is recovered can give back to the community.

You can give an alcoholic a million dollars or he could help a hundred people. He's going to choose the hundred people every time once he gets into that work because it's so fulfilling. I'm direct, I'm aggressive when it comes to this disease, and I'm not going to take no for an answer. The reason why I told you I'm 62 is I'm going to still be at 82 preaching this stuff, because I really think people need to know it because they don't want to know. Oh, yes, because I had drug addiction. In the projects, nobody cared. Then it got to the middle class, it was like, "Oh, we seem to have a problem here."

Guys, we really need to set up as a society in America, and I'm an American now, I take that very seriously, to stand up to this. Otherwise, the future looks bleak, and it's your kids we're talking about. Don't come to me when your kid does something crazy when you've isolated him and neglected him. No one's been validated, no one's been approved. You need that in the early days. A game won't do that for you. An iPhone won't do that for you. What about the **[unintelligible 00:42:35]** boys? What about **[unintelligible 00:42:36]**?

We look at oxytocin as a whole. Four chemicals in the brain you need every day to be happy. Endorphins, dopamine, serotonin, oxytocin. If nobody's getting them four chemicals, you're not going to be happy in normal childhood and normal adult life. If you take the cuddling away, for instance, and the loving and the kind words and the validation, your kid will grow up better than sticking him in a room with *War of the Worlds* or whatever it is they play these days.

Chris: Are you a fan of community-based initiatives, such as halfway houses or outpatient treatment programs, for people who had addictions and had been released from prison?

Dr. Kelly: Well, again, **[unintelligible 00:43:11]** it's just great questions. I am for the guys that run it properly. I know a bunch of guys running it properly. When you come out, there's a program, there's a set program that you have to do. Now, there's plenty of houses out there that **[unintelligible 00:43:23]** for the wrong reason. You come in and out and in and out, and they love it. They're getting more money every time you

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relapse, and it makes good business sense to them. They're left in a room, some call it **[unintelligible 00:43:32]** houses. You're allowed to drink in the room. It's crazy.

If you get a good house, like a couple of my friends have got, they take prisoners just coming out, they stick them right into a regimented program. The success rate from those guys have not been measured, but it's pretty high, Chris. I would say, in general, yes, unless them guys are in it for the wrong reasons. That's money-making. Therefore, they've got no skin in the game. If you're a fully-recovered alcoholic or addict and you want to give back, it's a great place to start.

Chris: In your opinion, you mentioned regimented programs. Would you prefer that versus a tailored treatment plan?

Dr. Kelly: I do. The basal ganglia's our repetition strength and confirm. There's three parts in the brain that differ in the alcoholic. The basal ganglia, the amygdala, and the hypothalamus. The basal ganglia is our repetition strength and confirmed part of the brain. The more we do something, the more it becomes immediate reactions, like a pilot needs 10,000 hours in the air. He'd go over and over and over, and then run drills, and sooner or later can fly the plane without him thinking about it. It's the same with our behavior. Once we get into that good cycle, then we're good.

What happens with addiction and alcoholism is, imagine a clock face, 10 after we get the car back, 20 after we get the wife back, then the kids, and about 10 to the hour, we self-sabotage because the part of the brain is at default when it comes to the addiction and it comes to the alcoholism. Then you've got the amygdala. That's our trauma. It's like a smoke alarm for the brain. Then you've got the hypothalamus that at a certain point tells the alcoholic to drink alcohol, not food and water. We still don't know why, but it does. Yes, definitely.

Chris: Now, let's get into the science of this. You're a certified neuro-linguistic programming practitioner and also a certified brain-spotting practitioner. Let's dive into both of those disciplines. [crosstalk] What is a neuro-linguistic-- Sorry, go ahead.

Dr. Kelly: Yes, and I know things have been around for years, guys. It's changing thought patterns using devious ways. I say devious with a smile on my face. We've got to use subliminal messages and stuff which we can change thought patterns and rewire circuits in the brain. My daughter, Charlie Kelly, is our lead NLP practitioner in Manchester, England. She's absolutely phenomenal. Lock it up. It's great.

Brain-spotting is new. Brain-spotting has been around about two years. I'm one of the guys that first got accredited when it first came out. Now, what that is in layman's terms, it's a bit like EMDR, but you're more focused. It's a way of getting through. See, the eyes are part of the brain. People think you've got the eyes up to cover the brain. No, the brain pushed the eyes out to the front of the skull where the eye sockets were. It's part of the brain. You can go from the pupil straight into the subconscious brain. You're pulling stuff out from trauma that the person doesn't even know exists.

Everything's kept in this subconscious brain. The way for it to go forward and be successful is to come out of the conscious brain. Every alcohol addict comes back

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from the place where everything's badly stored. The prefrontal cortex has one job, or one main job, and that's to come up with a solution as fast as possible to your problem. The only problem with that is it doesn't have to be the correct solution. It will draw from the subconscious, self-sabotaging behavior part of the brain, which is you're a piece of rubbish, you're annoyed you're wasting time, blah, blah, blah. We act and relapse on that.

The idea is the conscious brain, which is the 24 hours at a time, it's not an AA thing, I was way before that, where certain parts of the brain reset every 24 hours. The idea is to come from here, and not here, is the main thing. Once you start coming from here, change neural pathways, have that psychic change, we talk about, your DNA will change. That's our research, go Google it, DNA changes. That means you're not the same person as you come in and when you go out from us. There's change, you're a different person. The way we treat our mind in the morning with the morning work can serve your day. You can do anything you want to do, guys. Don't ever tell me you can't.

People used to say to me years ago, "Well, I can't be president of the United States." Forget your political views for a second. We have a president somewhere in the country who knew nothing about politics. Don't ever tell me you can't do anything that you want to do because you can. Stop putting the bricks in your imagination. How many times have I heard you can't do that? You're not supposed to do that. That's almost impossible. Forget that stuff that people are telling you and surround yourself with the people that are up there or on the way up there that believe that you can do it.

Chris: Stigma plays a huge part in people refusing to get treatment for mental health issues, including addiction. How can society work to reduce the stigma associated with substance abuse treatment?

Dr. Kelly: Keep talking about it, guys. Unfortunately, the guys we work with are very high profile, A-listers, movies, actors, stuff like that. They won't come out because of the position they're in. Everybody else that I try and get them out. Keep talking about it, it's not a default. It's not a behavioral problem. You are not bad if you have addiction or alcoholism or any behavioral trait or childhood trauma. You are not a bad person. You have got to seek help, get it out there.

Me, everyone knows of my past. I put it out there. Everyone knows what I've been through. We need more people like me. Now, if you want to keep an anonymity, I perfectly support that, but the more we talk about it, the better we're going to get with normal conversations with it.

Chris: What's your cat's name?

Dr. Kelly: We have three English bulldozers and one cat. This is Ginger.

Chris: I'm laughing because I've got a 30-pound Shih Tzu named Zeke that my listeners often can find out when the UPS truck shows up out front. I just want to welcome Ginger to the show. Dr. Kelly, where can they find your podcast, your book, and your DVDs?

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Dr. Kelly: If you're just listening, guys, I don't know whether you're watching or not, but I spell my name with two Bs. That's robbkelly.com. Stick Dr. Robb Kelly, two Bs, into any search engine, it'll come up, like us, blah, blah, blah, do anything you want. Guys, a couple of things just for this show. If you want a book signed personally, then send me a message. You'll get hold of me. Just send me a message, search me, you'll be good. I'll send you one free of charge. I'll sign it. We'll pay for the posting. If you buy one off Amazon and you don't like it, give it to someone else. I'll send you money back because everything in there is given back.

Also, the robbkellyfoundation.org is helping other alcoholics and addicts' parents to buy suits and stuff like that for court and anything like that. Me and my wife also give \$150,000 back to the community and the world every single year of our own pocket. How to support us, guys, just follow us, call us for any questions. No one's going to sell you anything, and we're the leading authority when it comes to this because we know more than anybody else. That's not an ego statement, that's a really aggressive statement through years of terrible torture to me and my family and years and years of watching people go through this. Come and follow us, guys, we'd love to have you.

Chris: Thank you for that. Again, that's robkelleyfoundation.org, and that's Robb with two Bs.

Dr. Kelly: Correct.

Chris: Robb with two Bs, we have just a few minutes left, and I always like to have our guests take us to the close with something that gives them hope or offer advice to our audience to help them become less stressed, more content, and more empowered. What gives you hope or what can people in our audience do to become more empowered?

Speaker 1: Guys, three things to tell you. Get up tomorrow morning, first thing you do is hold onto the bed, do your breath work. Do 10 exaggerated breaths in, but you only breathe 42% of our lung capacity. The presence of oxygen is the absence of disease. Go look that up, the presence of oxygen-- That's the first thing to do, get the body. No one's ever woke up laughing, Chris. Why? Lack of oxygen. Get the oxygen around to every cell in your body.

Walk to the bathroom, look at yourself in the mirror and say, "I love you," 10 times from six feet away, because when we're near we see our blemishes, so step away six feet. I love you 10 times watching yourself. Let's feed that subconscious brain.

Next thing I want you to do, guys, if you're a right-handed person, is brush your teeth with the left hand one week, right hand one week. Do that for the month, we'll have changed the neural pathways up. I am categorically telling you that if you do this, if you find somewhere, if you want to take a step forward, don't let anybody tell you you can't. Once we make our mind up, that's where the saying comes from, mind over matter, the mind is stiffest on the brain.

You can make your mind up first thing in the morning of what day you're going to have. Be aggressive with that mind because you can set the tone for the day. If you

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get up in the morning and go, "You know something? I stubbed my toe, it's going to be a bad day," it's probably going to be a bad day, guys. I get people all the time coming to me, "Oh, I've had a bad day, Dr. Robb." I'm like, "Did you really have a bad day or did you just have 10 minutes that you strung on all through the day?" Chris, it's usually the 10 minutes.

Stop letting outside influences run your day. Get right with yourself, right with your higher power. Get your morning work done. March out of that bedroom to kill whatever you're going to do. March forward, stick your head up. Even if you're suffering from alcoholism addiction, you start getting out, stick your head up, because why? Nobody's listening to this show by mistake. Everybody's listening because they're a leader and there's a message in this for you.

Yes, I'm speaking to you at home with nothing. If you're sat in the corner, guys, and you think you don't amount to anything, if you think that you'll never do anything and you're a terrible person, two things I want to say. First of all, I apologize because somebody's put that there. Secondly, guys, the biggest one I'm going to leave you with is, listen to this, 214-600-0210 is my personal cell phone number, not my secretary's. If you're in that place we talked about, not if you just want to chat, I love you, guys, but I've got no time for that, but if you're in that place I talked about, you text me and tell me. I'll give you a 15 minute conversation that will change your life. I'm guaranteeing that, I'm promising that.

Anybody can change. There's no exceptions unless you have brain damage. Anybody can change. Compliment three people tomorrow when you go out, guys, and watch your life take off. Be the number one person in your life that walks out tomorrow morning and makes something happen. There's no heroes sat in that comfort zone, guys. You can change, and you can change for when this program, and the morning after when you just start your morning work and go out there, watch your life change. Find me, message me, and tell me how good your life has changed in 24 hours, because it's possible.

Chris: Ladies and gentlemen, that might be the best close ever. Mic drop by Dr. Robb Kelly. That's robbkelly.com, Robb with two Bs, robbkellyfoundation.org. We're out of time. Dr. Robb Kelly, thank you so much for your time and what you've done today. Really appreciate it, sir.

Dr. Kelly: Thanks, Chris, and thanks, guys. Good to see you.

Chris: Thank you, and we'll see you all next week. Same time. Until then, stay safe, and keep taking your next steps forward.

Speaker 1: Thanks for tuning in to *Next Steps Forward*. Be sure to join Chris Meek for another great show next Tuesday at 10:00 AM Pacific time and 1:00 Eastern time on the VoiceAmerica Empowerment channel. This week, make things happen in your life.

[music]

[00:55:06] [END OF AUDIO]

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