Ep #8: How to Overcome Your First Marathon with Jen Lamplough

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With Your Host

Jill Angie

The Not Your Average Runner Podcast with Jill Angie
Welcome to The Not Your Average Runner Podcast. If you're a woman who is midlife and plus sized and you want to start running but don't know how, or if it's even possible, you're in the right place. Using proven strategies and real-life experience, certified running and life coach Jill Angie shares how you can learn to run in the body you have right now.

You are listening to episode eight of The Not Your Average Runner podcast. I'm your host, Jill Angie, and I have a very special episode for you today. I recently did a live interview with one of the Run Your Best Life community members, who is frankly, an amazing woman. She just finished her first marathon last fall, and I just need to tell the world about how awesome she is.

So her name is Jen Lamplough, and I know you're going to love her as much as I do because she is flat out incredible. And I had so much fun on this interview, we talked all about what it was like to train for a marathon as a plus size runner, as a busy mom, and also heading up a division of a pretty large organization, the Chicago Food Bank.

And meanwhile, while she was training for this marathon, she was also finishing yet another cookbook, because she's a published author. So I have links to follow Jen on all her social media in the show notes, so make sure you check them out so that you can follow her everywhere. She really, really is inspiring, and you can find all of those at www.notyouraveragerunner.com/8.

And without further ado, let's get to this interview with Jen.

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Jill: Oh my god, hi guys, I'm so glad that everybody is joining us. So I'm going to do something super fun tonight in The Not Your Average Runner group, and I'm here, I'm Jill Angie, for those of you who don't know me, and I'm here with the amazing Jen Lamplough, who we have been working together for a couple years, and I coached her through her first marathon last year. And it's just such an amazing story, how everything laid out, and how hard she worked, and just like, what an amazing rockstar she is, that I really wanted her to tell her story to you guys. So we're going to talk about that tonight, and after we're done with the interview, we're going to have plenty of time for everybody to ask all kinds of questions, but for right now, I just want you to see - you should be able to see on the screen, this is literally where it all started. Jen texted me one night, she's like, "I just had a crazy thought about wanting to do the Chicago Marathon, and it was the reason I was up at three in the morning texting her back." And so this was October 10th 2016, right? Yes, so it was a little over a year ago, and so I'm going to stop sharing now, and I want to introduce you formally, so everybody can see you. Alright.

Jen: Hi. Hi everybody.

Jill: So this is Jen Lamplough, and Jen, I'm not even sure where to start, but why don't we start with the origination of that text. Like you said, like, what prompted you to text me like that?

Jen: Well, I was looking at the date, and it was October, it was right after the Chicago Marathon finished in 2016, and a really good friend of mine, Carolyn, has run the Chicago Marathon for like, five years now, for the Ronald McDonald House, and she posted this thing. She was like, "At mile 23 I was going to cry, at mile 24 I wanted to die, at mile 26 I was crying crossing the finish line, I'm never ever doing this again." She was like, "And I got to that finish line and I saw her right there and she said, 'When can I sign up for year?'" And I thought - and I know her really well, so I'm like,
she's done it five years. Like, she and I kind of started running together, like the second time I started running in my whole life, and I was like, "She's done the marathon like, five times now," and I always said, I'm like, "I never want to do a full marathon, a half is as far as I want to go. Full marathon is crazy, those people are crazy." And then that's why I said I had a crazy thought, like thinking we would talk it out, like, "Well, why do you want to do it?" Not, "Oh my god, yes, you're doing it." I was like, "Wow." You're like, "Nope, you're doing it. You said it."

Jill: I think once you texted me, you already made the decision.

Jen: I know, it was like Beetlejuice, right? Like, you say it three times and it's done. So...

Jill: You don't text your running coach and say, "I have a crazy idea," if you don't fully intend to go through with that crazy idea.

Jen: Very true. Very true. I didn't know that at the time when I sent it to you, but looking back, yeah, like, I was like, I think I need to do this.

Jill: So good. I was really happy when I got that text too. I was like, "Oh my god, this is going to be amazing." Because I remember when we first met, we first started working together, you were very clear that there were no marathons in your future. You were like...

Jen: Very clear.

Jill: You were like, "I'm going to train for this half marathon, that's as far as I'll ever go." I'm like, "Alright."
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Jen: And it was literally I think four months later that you're like - after I met you, like, we met in July, and I think that was like, that October. So it was like, it was like your magic. You like, sprinkled your Jill fairy dust on my head and then I decided that I wanted to run a marathon.

Jill: And for the record, I don't think I ever said marathon to you.

Jen: Not once, ever.

Jill: So but let's back it up a little bit, so tell us a little bit about your running journey because you were a runner before we met. And you had actually...

Jen: Yes, twice actually before we met I was a runner.

Jill: You were. You were a runner before we met, so like, bring everybody up to speed, like, you know, in the several years before you trained for that marathon, like, what your running journey was like and just tell us everything.

Jen: Okay, well I - I never was like, athletic, ever. I mean, I was like - you know, I was a pom. I danced on poms in high school. That was like, the extent of my athleticism. I ran from the cops a couple time, from a party in high school. That might have been the extent of my running. But I never - you know, I never really - I never was a runner and I never thought, like, "I'm not built to run, I'm not meant to run. People who run are crazy." You know, just wasn't like - and it wasn't like, a thing like it is now too. You know what I mean? Like, people who were not runners didn't run. It wasn't really a thing. So then like, I would say it was probably around 2001 I started a weight loss journey and I was like, "I'm going to try to run, I'm going to run a 5K." I think that was 2001. It was around there somewhere. And I ran my very first 5K ever in Chicago. It was called the Elvis is Alive 5K, and it was
like, all these people dressed like Elvis. I still - I just wore the t-shirt the other day. It's like, got the greatest t-shirt, and I ran with like, a bunch of my friends and it was like, "Oh my god, I ran a 5K." And then you know, you get sucked into the running vortex, right? So it's like, "Well, I ran a 5K, I should run a 10K." Then I did the Shamrock Shuffle, which I'm doing like, in a month here. It was an 8K. Then I'm sure I ran the 10K, then I was like, "Let's do" - my best friend was like, "Let's do a half marathon." So I was like, "Alright."

So we trained for the Indianapolis half marathon, which runs on the Indianapolis motor speedway, where the Indianapolis 500 is. And that race is in early May, so we trained through the winter. Now, mind you, she worked in a health club at the time, like, part time, like, she's a dietician, so she was like, consulting at this health club. She was like, "There's this trainer there who has this half marathon training group. We should join it." I was like, "Well," I'm like, "They're probably all really fast, I'm really slow and I want like - like, let's talk to them and see if they're slow runners." And you know when you ask people who are fast runners like, if there are slow runners in the group, they're like, "Oh yeah, yeah, you know, those like, nine and 10 minute mile people." I was like, "Listen, I'm like, I'm talking like, 12, 13 minute mile." He's like, "Oh yeah, yeah, you'll be fine."

So it was me, my best friend, who probably ran around the 10 minute mile, and a group of people training for the Boston Marathon. So that was the running training group, so you can well imagine like, my psycho you know, they were literally like, coming back from the training runs and I would be halfway out. And they were like, "Way to go." And I just was like, "Just don't even look at me. Just let me run." You know, they were so nice. Real runners are nice to all runners. Like, people who have like, nasty comments to say about like, how slow you are or whatever are people who don't run, right?

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Jill: Yes, always.

Jen: So real runners are nice to all runners. They were like, cheering me on and I'm just thinking like, "Oh my god, I'm only halfway out and they're on their way back." So like, that was a mental case. And then we - so we train all winter in Chicago, it's freezing right, so we go to the race and it's 90 degrees on the day of the race, and so I just - I totally tanked. I ended up walking probably from mile nine to 13. And just, it was a terrible experience and I'm like, never running again, and I quit running. And so then I, you know, fast forward to - that was probably like 2003, 2004-ish.

Fast forward to 2011, I was like, I'm going to train for a triathlon. So all of a sudden, I just decided I was going to do a triathlon because the town that I live in has this great sprint distance triathlon, and so I'm like, "I'm going to train for a triathlon," and that's how I started my journey again, and I trained for this triathlon in my little town, and I did it. I was dead last, DFL, right? Dead last, and again, it was one of those things where people are so nice, right? So here I come, like, trudging like, last, you know. They're like, "Way to go, way to go," and I just like wanted to disappear. I was like, "Just don't even look at me. I just want to finish." And I did. I finished it and I went on to a weight loss journey. I actually was on like a crazy TV show called Fat Chef, which was on the Food Network, and it was about chefs needing to lose weight, so I like, was on - it was like, I was one of the - there was like, six episodes, I was one of the episodes. And I lost...

Jill: You have to tell us.

Jen: Yeah, it was crazy.

Jill: You have to send me the link and I'll post it on this...
Jen: There isn't even a link to it, it was like one season, there's like no link to it. I think I had a DVD of it. This was in - it aired this time six years ago. It was 2012. March of 2012. But I lost like 60 pounds on that show, I met this amazing trainer in my town, I worked with like, a celebrity trainer, and I don't know if any of you guys know him, his name is Robert Brace. He's based out of New York, he's amazing. So we worked with him on there too, and I lost like, almost 60 pounds on that journey and I was like - like, triathlon, half marathon, I ran like a super - like for me, a super-fast, under three-hour half marathon, like, 2:49. Amazing. I was like, I was super strong, super fit, I was like, right at like a big weight milestone for myself, and I wore a Halloween costume dressed as a roller derby girl and I fell and broke my ankle.

Jill: No.

Jen: Yeah, like, catastrophically fell and broke my ankle. Like, I have like, eight screws and a plate, I was not weight bearing for six weeks, I had to take a whole semester off of work, like, I was teaching at the time. It was crazy. And that sort of put me into a little bit of a nosedive physically and emotionally, you know, and it's like - and I'm an emotional eater, so like, I started drinking a lot of wine, and like, you know, I was just like, I could do nothing but lay around. So that was fall 2012, and I started to tank. And then you know, I got back, I went through really tough physical therapy, I broke my ankle in October of 2012, and March of 2013 I ran a 5K. It was really slow, but it was really hard to get there, and then during that time, 2013 to 2015, my husband and I were going through the fertility process, and you know, doing you know - it's like a really long, awful, arduous process. Lots of hormones, lots of emotional - and I just, you know, I stuck with it a little bit but I probably gained, I don't know, I would say probably 30 pounds back from what I had lost.
But I had kind of pretty much stayed fit-ish in running here and there. Not as super tight as I was, and then we ended up adopting a baby and I just like, pretended like I had him because like, I didn't do anything. I stopped working out, I was like - it was crazy. So like, I gained not only all the weight back that I lost, but another 20 pounds. So I had gained from 2012 to 2015 I gained 80 pounds. Yeah, so I mean, it was crazy. And I have asthma and I, one day was at the beach, my best friend, we were on a beach. This is right around the time I contacted you, and she lived on the beach, but over - you had to like go over a sand dune to get to the beach, and I couldn't do it. And I was like, breathing really hard, and I couldn't carry my son, he couldn't even walk at the time, he was so little. I couldn't even carry him over, like, she had to carry him, and I basically had to like, crawl over the sand dune because I couldn't hike over it, and I was like, what the hell happened to me, and that was like - that was it. And I contacted you and I was like, I have to get my life, my fitness back because it's so important to my health especially.

Jill: Yes.

Jen: It's not even about being skinny or anything like that anymore.

Jill: Right.

Jen: That was a long time ago, but now it's just - my dad died of a heart attack at 53 and he ran like, five miles every other day, but he started running later in life. He didn't start running until he was in his late 40s, and I was like, it's now or never, you know? And so really it was more about my health than anything, and that's when I contacted you and all of a sudden, I'm signed up for a marathon.
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Jill: But you know what's so interesting is I like, I remember our conversation and we really didn't talk about like, "Hey, let's put you on a weight loss plan," like that was not part of the deal. We were just like, going to get you back to running, and then go from there, and...

Jen: I always knew myself, like, when I'm running, that's when I healthiest. No matter what I weigh. Like, if I'm running...

Jill: I don't know if you guys saw my cat just came flying behind me and ran head first into the wall. Sorry. But anyway, yes, I think like, a lot of people think, "Oh you know, I need to be skinny to be a runner, or I'll be more fit" or whatever, but like, it really, like, running and weight loss I think are so independent of each other.

Jen: Totally.

Jill: Right? Like, you can be a runner and be fit without losing weight, and I mean, I think it's honestly - personally, I think it's easier to lose weight when you're not running. Like, I do think that like, running can kind of like, you know, interfere with your metabolism a little bit, but...

Jen: And it makes you hungry. Makes me hungry.

Jill: Yes, it does. So - but I mean, it was really fun that like, we work together, like, weight loss had nothing to do with it. It was like, let's get you back running again. And you trained for a marathon with how many pins in your ankle?

Jen: I have eight screws and a plate in my left ankle.
Jill: Eight screws and a plate. Like, that's kind of amazing. So like, I really want to focus on, like, for the folks that are watching, that have maybe thought, "A marathon is too far for me" or, "Even a half marathon is too far for me" or, "I don't have enough time to do that," like, you are a mother of a toddler, who's the cutest toddler in the world by the way, if any of you know Jen on social media, and you guys need to follow - what's your Instagram handle, because you post the best stuff on Instagram.

Jen: Oh, thank you. It's @fitfoodiechef.

Jill: Okay, yes, everybody go follow her on Instagram. So as you can tell, from her handle, she's a chef. Jen's a chef, and she also said she was a chef earlier, but I mean, how many cookbooks have you written?

Jen: I've written three. One of them is like a second edition, and then I have a fourth one coming out this year.

Jill: Okay, so during this marathon training, so A, you're a plus sized marathoner, which you know, like, let's be honest, it takes longer when you're plus sized to go the same distance, right? So like, what might be a three-hour run for one person becomes like, maybe a four-hour run for you, right? It's just math, right? So you've got that. You're working on a cookbook, I mean, you run an entire food bank, yes? Is that...

Jen: No, I don't run the whole thing, I run a division of a really large food bank here in Illinois. I run one of the divisions.

Jill: But like, you do a lot.

Jen: I do a lot, yes.
Jill: You have a pretty big job. You're - I mean, and you're the mother of a very active toddler, you've got this job, like, you're training for a marathon. So like, talk about what it was like to keep all that on track while you're training for this marathon. And spoiler alert to everyone, she finished her training, she ran that marathon, and she finished it. So it wasn't like you know, I'm just going to train for it and not run it. Like, she went the distance. So share with us what that was like.

Jen: It was hard. And I would complain to Jill a lot. I'd be like, "It's so hard, everything is so hard." And she's like, "Well, why is that bad?" And that made me really think like, "You're right. I can do hard stuff, you know, I do hard things." So it was hard, I mean, it was a lot of time management, and it was really - it's not even about willpower. Like, I really don't think willpower exists. I think it's more like I had my mind set that I was going to do something, and so I just focused as much energy as I could while doing other things on that. I mean, I definitely - could I have trained better? Probably. Could I have you know, eaten better? Probably. But I did the best I could and I think I did pretty well. I mean, you set up an amazing training plan for me, and I mostly followed it. There were a couple, you know, runs that I missed here and there, but I just you know, worked. Thank god my husband is super supportive and understanding, and I had a really good support system with neighbors and friends, so that really helps.

But it was mostly just like, figuring out our schedule. So it would be like, I would get up early during the week and run, I would go to whatever, my boot camp class at night, either, you know, after [Logi0:18:16.4] went to bed, or you know, we would switch off, like, I'm going to go tonight, you have tomorrow night, whatever. And then I always did my long runs on Sunday mornings. So when I had the really super-duper long runs, I mean, we would meet at like, five o clock in the morning because - and it took hours, right? And it's like, you don't just go run 19 miles then go about your day. So I mean, it's like, it's a whole thing. It's like, a whole day because

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you're, you know, tired, exhausted, and I'm like - and you know, it's hard to walk. So chasing a two-year-old was not easy. I will say that for sure, but the good thing about having my little guy is that like, it cut me from sort of like, wallowing in the marathon training, because I just you know, I just kind of didn't have a choice.

So you know, it's like, you have to be a parent and be present and I had to be on it for work and I had to turn in my book, I had a deadline. So it really was just about like, sort of time management and just a fierce dedication to wanting to meet my goal. And so you just have to want it more than you want anything else, right? And so there were days where I was like, "I don't know if I can do this," and we had many of those conversations. And you were like, "Yeah you can." Like, you just never doubted that I could do it. I was like, "Okay."

Jill: I think there were times where I believed enough for both of us.

Jen: You did. I just sort of like lived on your energy and I was like, "Okay, Jill said I can do it so I'm just going to do it." And it helped because other people in our group, like, our coaching group, like Karen who's online right now, she did the Chicago Marathon. Melissa, I don't know if she's online or not. Melissa was training for the same marathon, and I had a running buddy that I trained with so it helped having her, you know, knowing you have to meet somebody at five in the morning and you don't want to leave them hanging. You know, that's motivation. So getting a running buddy really helps.

Jill: So talk to me a little more about those super long run days. So there's kind of two questions I have. One is I know that early - maybe not super early on, but like, in the - maybe in the middle of your training, maybe a couple months out from the marathon, you had a really, really difficult run.
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Jen: Yes.

Jill: And it was like, I want to say it was like, 15 or 16 miles...

Jen: It was 17.

Jill: 17, okay. So I want to hear about that run and what that was like for you and how you kind of came back, because I think two weeks later you did your next long run. So I want to hear about that, and then I also want to hear about what a typical long run day was like for you. Like, how you organized your day, you know, like, how you kind of figured out how to fit 19 freaking miles into your Sunday. So I know that's a lot but...

Jen: No, that's okay. The 17 miler was like a total head game. Like, I don't know what got into me that day but I just - I struggled from the first step to the last step, and it was just - my running partner was like, "What is wrong with you?" I'm like, "I don't know, just like, stop talking to me because I just don't know what - I just can't function." And so it was literally one foot in front of the other for 17 miles, which probably took me, what? What was that? Four hours? I don't know. Was it even longer than that probably?

Jill: Probably was about four hours.

Jen: Four hours? So I mean, it was just one foot in front of the other, one foot in front of the other, and just like, slog, slog, slog. And I remember thinking like, I still have nine miles to go for the marathon, I'm like, there's no way. I just kept saying the whole time, "There's no way, there's no way" as I just kept plodding like one foot, "There's no way, there's no way, there's no way," and it was misery. It was complete misery, and I finished that run and I was like - and I had a great time. Every time I did a long run my time got shorter every time. Remember that? Like, I was shaving

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seconds off every single time, so my time was good, but like, my mental
time was not, and it just - we talked I remember afterwards in our coaching
group, and you were like, "Do you think like, you thinking 'I can't do this'
was helping you along the way?" I was like, "No."

And so you know, you really talked me through sort of the mental part of it
because physically, I was faster than I was when I did 16 miles, so it wasn't
that my body wasn't working, it was all mental. It's so mental. That
marathon was 70% mental, 30% physical because it was all of it, the
training and everything, so it made me mentally strong I think during that.
And then two weeks later I did 18 miles, and I was like, "I love running long
distances," I was like running and throwing like, daisies. I mean, it was just
like, it was heaven. But you asked me, you're like, "Why was it different?"
and I said, "I just changed my mindset. I put my foot down and I said, 'This
is going to go great today', and it did." And I mean, it's just - it's shocking
how truly mental it is. No matter what size you are, everyone I know who's
trained for a marathon or run a marathon has said the exact same thing.
Like, it is all mental.

Jill: Yes, it really, really is. So what was a typical long run day like for you?

Jen: So we trained mostly the longest runs were in the summer, so we
really had to plan well for like, you know, beverages and fuel, and you
know, we're out on a trail basically. Not a trail like a hiking trail, but a
running trail, but that was wooded. That's where we did the majority of our
long runs, so we would have to drop a cooler, so we'd like, strategically
don't drop a cooler that had you know, water and I used the Nuun, I used those,
and we would have like - I would have Larabars, and we would maybe
have - later, later, later, my running partner brought a Coke, like a Coca-
Cola, and I have never like, had a Coke, you know, I've never had a Coke
on a run, right? And I like - it was like, mile 15 or whatever - no, maybe it
was a little less than that. It was 13. I drank like one of those little Cokes
and those last five miles I had to do I was like, "This is amazing." I don't know if it was the sugar or the caffeine or what...

Jill: It's like rocket fuel.

Jen: Coke on my long run, it was amazing. So - but we would drop a cooler so we wouldn't hit it. We would drop a cooler then meet at the trail head, and then there would be like, five miles to the cooler, and we'd stop if we needed to, and then however far out we needed to come back, and then we'd be five miles from our car at the last stop at the cooler. And you know, we just did our intervals. I did a two and one interval, so two minutes running, one-minute walk, and we just kind of - you know, we would talk - I mean, it was like therapy sessions with the two of us. Like we talked and talked and talked, and there were times when neither one of us wanted to talk, or one did and the other one just listened. It was just like, really pretty and nature-y too, so we would just kind of like, listen to nature, and then like, towards the end when the runs were getting really long, I would be like, "Let's just put on some music," so we would like, just put the music without headphones just so we can hear something other than ourselves.

But we just - you know, we just really stuck to those intervals I had programmed on my watch, and my friend Amy who did it with me, she was like, "I'm just coming along for the ride," she was like, "You just tell me what to do." I was like, "Alright, that's my favorite scenario." I'm good at being the boss, you know, so you know, my watch would go off and I would walk around, walk around, and just really stuck to it the whole time. And it was just really - I mean, it was really regimented. It was funny because at some point I was like, "Can you just like, do a different trail" because I'm so sick of the same you know, because there's nothing to look at really, it was woods. And so we did a different trail and I remember thinking like, this is kind of hard because like, you get used to you know, you know where every little hill is, not that we have many hills here in Northern Illinois, but

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we have a few little ones, and so that sort of like, shook it up a little bit, but it was kind of fun to do something a little bit different, and see a different place. It was just like, it was like a lot of planning. Like, I wore a Fuel Belt too, that carried little bottles so I would fill my bottles before and I would freeze them. So I would put them on frozen so they would kind of thaw as I would run, so they would kind of stay cold, but I mean, some of those days were pretty hot. So by the time we were an hour in or whatever they were pretty warm, but yes, I basically just did the Nuun and the Larabars. That was kind of my fuel.

I made my own fuel for a little while, I made these rice balls. They were that cookbook called Feed Zone Portables, which Jill turned me on to, and if you want to like, make your own fuel, you're not like, into processed food or whatever, it's got some great recipes, so I made these really good rice balls, I did those sometimes, but yes, it was a lot of... So we usually would meet at five in the morning and depending on how long it would take, I would usually be home, you know, by noon...

Jill: And then what was your recovery like for the rest of the day? I mean, did you take an ice bath? Or did you pop some Advil or...

Jen: I would do a little bit of yoga when I got home, so legs up the wall is the yoga move, if you've never done it and you're a runner, do it, it's like, the greatest thing ever. It's like, really good for your hamstrings, it's good to like, get all the - like, my feet would get so sore and tired and kind of hot and swollen, so it would take like all the blood out of your feet. You know what I mean? It just like, really helped your feet recover. So I would come home and I would like, stretch and do legs on the wall, and then I would usually take a hot bath with Epsom salt. I was never an ice bath kind of person. I really hate being cold, so - and I, you know, live in the mid-West, but that's okay. I would usually take a hot bath with Epsom salts, and I would soak my legs in that.

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And then there were you know, there were times when we would do the long run and I just would kind of be done the whole day, then there were days where I would have - we would have something to do and I would just have to suck it up. So I would take a leave - a leave and the Epsom salt bath were sort of like, my go-to’s. Some of those yoga positions. And I could always tell after a long run when I didn't do the yoga or do the legs up the wall, and I'm not talking about a full yoga routine. I did like a couple stretches and then I would do legs up the wall and stay in it for like, 15 minutes. That was the extent of it. But the times when I didn't do that, I really could tell a difference, especially in my feet.

Jill: So what about like, on the week leading up to the marathon and so forth. Did you do any special prep that week?

Jen: Oh god, I just like, lost my mind. I don't know, that week up to the marathon, I just sort of - I had a lot of anxiety and like, a lot of planning and list making, and you know, all this stuff, and I didn't really do a whole lot of anything different. I think I worked out a couple days I would walk, and I would just try and save my feet as much as I can, but you know, I made a lot of mistakes that whole week. And the biggest one I made is I kind of like - I got this plan of what I was going to do the day of, and I kind of like, changed my plan last minute, which was so dumb. Like, I trained with that Fuel Belt the whole time, and I was like, it's a marathon, they're going to have all these stops, I don't need the Fuel Belt.

Well, little did I realize is that we were so slow that they started closing the fuel stops before we got to them. So by mile probably, 12 or 13, most of the water stops were closed. So I had nothing with me, I had no fuel, so thankfully, one of my best friends was like, on her bike, on the route, and she like, went and got us water and Gatorade, and every two miles she would catch up with us and bring us water and Gatorade. But I mean, if we didn't have her, I don't know what we would have done. So that was

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mistake number one. Mistake number two is I needed new shoes, and I got them too close to the marathon. My shoe that I've always worn, they came out with a new version, and I couldn't find my old version so I was like, this new version - because anything - version eight versus version seven, because I was like, anything changed, has the drop changed, anything, they were like, "No, no, no, it's all exactly the same," they weren't the same.

Jill: Yeah, yeah.

Jen: And I didn't train enough in them and I - that really screwed me up. So that was mistake number two, for sure.

Jill: But I do remember the list still. Like, you had like, the most detailed list of - it was like, three pages long of all the things. So like, talk about some of the stuff that was on your list. Because like, I thought - I was pretty impressed with like, how detailed you were. You were like, I am going to leave nothing to chance.

Jen: I know, because I get in my head and then I'm like, "Oh my god, I'm going to forget my sports bra," you know what I mean? So I literally had it down to like, sports bra, running shoes, the right socks, like, I wanted to make sure I had certain socks and certain - you know, my body glide and the moleskin for chaffing, and I had on you know, my fuel, so I brought the fuel that I didn't take with me, like a dummy. So I had my fuel, and I had like - what else did I have on there? Cut thongs, so like, I got - I actually got the wireless - not wireless, but they don't connect to your phone, they're the Bluetooth headphones, so those are like, the greatest things ever because I used - I don't listen to music when I run, but I use that app, that [Motor Go 0:30:59.0] app, where people can leave you messages along the way, but what I did - I did two things wrong at the start. I started my tracker, like my mile tracker app too soon, and I started that too soon, so I was like, a mile
off. So the first like, 5K, I'm like, "Oh my god, we did a 5K in like 38 minutes," and then I realized that my tracking was off, so it was saying I was further ahead than I actually was.

Jill: Oh no.

Jen: Motor Go app was too, so they'd be like, you're at mile 13, and I'd be at like, mile 11.5.

Jill: Like, "No I'm not."

Jen: So that sort of spells the other thing that I did wrong, but yes, so it was like, just bringing all of that and bringing like, all my allergy medicine. So I literally had to list everything because I was so - because I was staying the night in the city and I just didn't want to forget anything. So I had like this super detailed list, it was so funny.

Jill: So what - like, what was race day like for you? Like, because I know most people have race day jitters. I mean, sometimes people even get them for like, people that have run 5Ks forever like, still get race day jitters, right? So it's pretty common, it's like Barbara Streisand still gets stage fright, right, even though she's like, you know, a singer. So it's not unusual to get race day jitters, but I think before your first marathon is kind of like - like, I imagine it to be pretty significant. So what was that like for you and how did you work through that? Because I know we talked a lot about it, but I'd love for everybody to know because I thought you did an amazing job with it.

Jen: Thank you. I was more nervous the day before. Like, morning of it was just sort of like, "Alright, it's here, let's do it." But the day before I had like, you know, I was very amped up and like, had a lot of energy and you
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know, we went to expo and walked around and got our packets and you know, went out for a nice dinner and all this stuff, and I remember just like sitting - we actually were so lucky because my neighbor, who is one of my dearest friends, her parents have a condo right on Michigan Avenue and Randolph in Chicago, so their balcony overlooked the start line of the marathon. Like, it was out of a movie, it was unbelievable. And so I just like, remember just like standing on the balcony just like, staring at the start line, like, "Oh my god, oh my god, I can't believe I'm here, I can't believe I'm doing this."

So it was just sort of this lot of, you know, a lot of tension I think the day before, but the morning of I just got real sort of focused like, "Okay, this is happening. It's a beautiful day, the weather" - because the day before, it was pouring rain, like pouring rain. And I - we never really trained in the rain that much, I'm like, "If it rains the whole time I'm screwed because I don't have rain gear, I don't have like, socks for rain," you know, and it's October in Chicago. It could have snowed or could have been a hundred degrees. So you know, it poured and poured and poured and was cold, and we were at dinner and all of a sudden the clouds cleared and I saw this huge rainbow outside in the city, and I was like, "That is a sign". I was like, everything's going to be okay. And so we, you know, walked back and the morning of was just - I mean, it was a stunning morning. It ended up being a really hot day so it actually was really hard because it was really hot. I think the highest temp, I think it was like, 85 at one point, and it was hot.

Jill: And that's hot for running 26 miles. That's like, that's fine for a 5K, but like...

Jen: Yeah, it was hot. Super-hot. So yeah, so it's like, I had my outfit that I had trained in, like, every long run I wore the same outfit, so I like, brought the same outfit to wear for the race, so I didn't screw that up at least. And you know, we got down there and it's so overwhelming because you're

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talking 50,000 people in a city of however many millions of people. I mean, you literally could like - it was almost like I could like, feel the energy like pulsing my heart. Like, you know when you hear a bass? Like a real loud bass, and like, you can feel it like, in your gut? I could like, feel the energy of everybody and it was super exciting and we were waiting, and you know, I lived in the city for 10 years, so it's like, I love the city so much, I know it so well. And we were in our carrel, we were in the very last carrel, and I just remember thinking like, "I cannot believe that I'm doing the Chicago Marathon. Like, I just can't believe it."

Jill: So did you carry that thought with you throughout the entire race? Because that's an amazing thought to have when you're sitting there waiting for it to start, is to just be like, "Oh my god, I can't believe this is happening."

Jen: I probably carried it the first six miles, and then it started kind of going downhill from there. Because we got - around mile six, we got passed by the sweeper truck, and you can still finish, but you don't get an official time, which I knew that was going to happen, and the official time is six and a half hours, and I had planned to do it in seven hours. I figured like, seven hours, so when we got swept by the sweeper truck, I wasn't that concerned but it was a little...

Jill: You didn't get swept by the sweeper truck, you just got passed by it.

Jen: Passed, passed, yes.

Jill: So in case anybody's wondering.

Jen: Yeah, no, they didn't like, kick us off the course, but it's like, you're past like, official time, which I really didn't care about. And I just - because I

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knew I wasn't going to make it in six and a half hours. So it happened a little earlier than I had planned, so that was a little bit hard. And yeah, it just was sort of like, once that happens, like, they start shutting down the course basically, so you know, everyone - one of the things that I know Chicago so well and I know the neighborhoods, and they're like, "When you're in Boystown all the drag queens are out singing, and when you're in China Town they have the paper dragons, and when you're in Pilsen they have the mariachi bands" and all this stuff.

Well like, the drag queens were like, packing up their heels, you know what I mean, by the time we got to them. Like, they were like, taking off their wigs and pulling off their eyelashes, and we were like slogging through Boystown. So it was kind of a - so I started to get mental. It was like, starting to make me mental. And about mile 10, I really was like, "Oh my god, like, I can't do this," and I kind of started to hit the wall, and that's really early to hit the wall. Usually, people hit the wall in a marathon like, at mile 22 and I was hitting it at 10.

Jill: So how did you get through that? Because you did finish.

Jen: Yeah, I just kind of kept going, I mean - and it was so hot, you know, people were dropping like flies around us. I mean, there were ambulances everywhere, we helped a girl on the course. She was running in front of us and like, I don't even know how to explain it, like, her ankles were turning under, like she's running and her feet are like, turning under like this, and I saw her and I said to my friend, I'm like, "Is she alright?" And we had to like grab her and put her on the sidewalk and like, call for help. Like, thankfully there was a police officer right there and a woman running by us was a first responder because this girl just like, completely tanked. So you know, the jerk side of me was like, "I'm not passing out," that girl was like in her 20s, you know what I mean? So I'm like, I wasn't happy she was passing out, but I got like, "Okay, okay, I'm not passing out, I'm going to be fine."
And it really was just like, it was sort of that like, step by step again. Like, just get to the next - and the thing is they were pulling down all the mile markers too, and my watch was off, so I had no idea where we were. Like, I had no idea what mile we were at, and so - and my running partner, she was like, "What mile are we at?" I was like, "I don't know, like, stop asking me, I don't know." You know, and thankfully we ran into our friends on the course and stuff, and they started bringing us, you know, stuff to drink, and I mean, my boss was there, one of my - two of my best friends, like, it just was like, amazing. But you know, you're also running through the city of Chicago, so there's a lot of pollution, and this was the worst part. When they were cleaning the water stops, the garbage trucks would come through and the sweeper - like, the street sweepers, so we're literally running down on alleyway in between like, garbage trucks and street sweepers. It was like nothing I had ever experienced, and it's like, diesel and garbage, like, everywhere. And I just was like, "This is not fun. This is not fun."

Jill: But it's so fascinating like, that's how badly you wanted it though. You're like, "I'm going to run through garbage to finish this marathon."

Jen: I literally was running through garbage, and I remember we were like, a mile from the finish, and at some point they make you get off the road and get on the sidewalks, and that never happened to us, but we were close to it, and the police officer was like, "Can you guys get off on the sidewalk?" And I looked at him and I said, "No, I can't." I said, "I know where the finish line is," I said, "I'm not going on the sidewalk." He was like, "Alright, keep going. Just go finish." And I was like, "Okay, okay." And as I said that, there was like, a fleet of street sweepers coming at me and I just started cracking up. I was like, "This is like - this is ridiculous out of a movie." I mean, it was absolutely ridiculous. I just started laughing. I was like, "Come on."
Jill: You're just like, "What else? Just bring it. What else can you throw at me?"

Jen: Yeah, it totally sucked. But yeah, it's like, how can you get to that point and not finish? I mean, how can you get there - I understand the medical stuff or something happens, you get dehydrated, all that stuff. I know Karen, who's on here right now, one of our group, talk about badass. That girl had to go to the medical tent and get like, cooled off, and she still finished like, an hour before I did. Like, talk about a badass. Like, it was when she told me that story I was so like, my insides were swelling with pride. I'm like, "Yes!" She's, you know, a couple years older than I am even, so I mean, it just was amazing.

Jill: Yeah.

Jen: Yeah.

Jill: So what was the moment like when you crossed that finish line.

Jen: What finish line?

Jill: Alright yeah, when you finished 26.2 miles, right? Because the finish line was gone, but you still got your medal.

Jen: Well, the finish line was still up, but we couldn't cross it. They made us get off from the sidewalk and finish like, to the left of the official finish line, and there were still people there...

Jill: They removed the timing mats already?
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Jen: Yeah, they moved the timing mats over and there will still people there handing out medals, but you know, I didn't get to cross the big finish line, and that was really hard for me because when we first started talking about this, that was October 10th or whatever when I texted you. Then we had our running retreat in Denver, remember? In that October. And I remember we were doing some sort of exercise and we were all standing in a circle and you asked us to like, visualize something. Do you remember this? And you were like, "What do you visualize?" I'm like, "I visualize myself crossing the finish line at the Chicago Marathon." So that was always like, my - that was my carrot every time. Like, chasing the carrot was that finish line. And then I didn't get it. You know what I mean? So it's like, I still got the medal, I still crossed the tracking mat or whatever, but I literally - like, it was like, the big finish line was here and I finished on the sidewalk next to it, and that was really - I still like, am getting a little chugged up thinking about it.

Jill: I know that's still bothering you, like we spoke about it a couple times. But what's so interesting is because you're getting another chance to cross that finish line.

Jen: Yeah, not the marathon one, but it's literally the exact same finish line. It's for the Shamrock Shuffle, just this huge race in March in Chicago again, it's like 40,000 people, it's an 8K, and the finish line is the exact same spot as the Chicago Marathon finish line.

Jill: Yeah, I love that. I feel like that's your second chance. But so, what I think I'd love to have you share is how like, you managed your way through the weeks after that, after you finished. Because I know a lot of folks, like, they train for a marathon, they run it, and then they're like, depressed afterwards, right? They really struggle and the think, "Gosh, you know, I ran this marathon because I thought it was going to make me feel so happy and so proud, and I don't feel any of those things, and I don't want to go running, and frankly, I'm not very happy about any of it." Right? And it's like, 

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even like - and for you, I mean, for sure, there was the finish line thing, like, I've known people that have done their first marathon and exceeded their expectations, like, ran it faster than they thought, and then they still cross the finish line and then they're like, they have this sort of letdown afterwards. So can you talk about like, people coming up to you saying, "Oh, I'm so proud of you" and inside you're feeling the opposite. Like, how did you work through that?

Jen: Yeah, I totally get that. Because it was such a hard experience and you know, the sort of disappointing finish line - no, I took Monday off because I couldn't walk, so I took Monday off, but the next day after that when I came into the office, my staff had like, decorated my cube, and they made like a paper - like, a crepe paper finish line, and they were like, "Oh, run across the finish line" and I was like, "No thanks." I like, literally like, I couldn't even be happy about it. I was like, I was grateful, I was like, "You guys are amazing," but I was so like, I just was really struggling inside and my family was there at the finish line, like not at the finish line but like, a quarter mile before the finish line, and like, my sister's boyfriend was there and every time I see them he's like, "I still can't believe you did the marathon." I'm like, "Can we just stop talking about the marathon? Like, I don't want to talk about it." You know what I mean? Like, I just didn't feel great. And so I've had to do a lot of work on my mind with you, about like, focusing on the fact that I did 26 miles. Yeah, I did it in seven and a half hours instead of seven hours like I planned, right? I didn't get to cross the official finish line, but I still did it. So I still struggle with that. I still struggle being proud of the fact that I did it. I'm more proud of the training than I am of the actual marathon.

Jill: Well, and honestly, like as a coach, I know that the training is always harder than the race, right? It's so funny because it's like, the race is exciting and it's like, you're showing up. I always say it's like a catered workout, right? Like you've got people handing you water, you've got

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people giving you medals, and giving you free bananas and cheer you on, and there's none of that for your training runs. And so that's where the real grit has to come in is you know, how hard you have to like, motivate yourself over and over again to do your training. And so I always think people should be prouder of the training than race day. But race day is like, to me, it's the celebration of the training. It's basically your reward for all of the stuff that you did, and yeah, it breaks my heart a little bit when I see people that are like, "Yeah, I did this amazing thing and I feel shitty about it."

Jen: I am really working on being proud of it. It took me a long time to sort of like, talk about it without like, getting teary, quite frankly, and I didn't like stop running afterwards, but I kind of like, got into a slump a little bit afterwards, and I didn't run as much, and I haven't been running this much this winter because I - it's been so cold and so snowy here like, I just haven't been training, you know. And I don't have like, the fear - I always call it the fear of the marathon is what was part of my motivation. You know, because I wanted to be well trained. So I have been struggling a little bit with my running. I've been doing other workout stuff, I just haven't been running as much. But it really takes a toll on me because I really know that it is, for me, it's one of the most important things that I do in my life, that I go running.

Jill: Yeah. But it's normal to take breaks from running I think. Even if it's you know, just taking a month off after a marathon, or dropping down to once or twice a week after a big event like that, because you know, I think we go through phases, our bodies and our minds, and sometimes we just need a mental break from - training takes a lot out of us. Like you said, 70% mental for you, right? So training takes a lot out of us physically, but I think it takes a lot of mental energy as well. So yes, I mean, I think it's great that you've taken this time off. But would you run another marathon?
Jen: Right now, no, I wouldn't. But I know myself and I know that I'm probably going to need to have a redemption marathon at some point. It's not going to be anytime soon. But you know.

Jill: I love that though, a redemption marathon.

Jen: Yeah.

Jill: What advice would you give to somebody who's kind of in this position you were in a year and a half ago, when you were like, I have this crazy idea. What advice would you give to that, or what advice would you give to yourself?

Jen: Don't text your coach on a whim at 10 o clock at night. Step number one.

Jill: Keep it a secret.

Jen: Yeah, exactly. No, actually, I would say like, there's always going to be an excuse not to do it, right, because we're all busy, we all have something, right? There's always going to be an excuse not to do it. And I hate to use the word 'excuse' because that's like, a really negative word, there's always going to be a reason not to do it, right? I don't have time, I'm too busy at work, I can't physically do it. You know, I weighed 240 pounds when I ran the marathon. You know, I mean, it's not - you don't have to be a skinny, you know, super-fast runner. I mean, you really can do it, and I would just say like, if you even think there's a chance you want to do it, just try. I mean, it's like, you're going to do more trying to do it than just thinking about it, right? So it's like, you know - it's like, setting a big goal, right? Something that's crazy, you're probably going to end up doing 10 times more than you would have trying to reach that big goal if you had scaled it
back, right? So I mean, I would say, you know, just go for it. Go for it. I hate to be cliché, but it's like, if you even think you want to even consider it, just do it. Like, pick one that's - give yourself a year. I mean, that's what I did. I gave myself a whole year.

Jill: Yes. And here's the thing though. What's the worst that could happen, right? Like, you show up on race day and you don't finish. You still trained, you still tried, like, it doesn't mean anything about you as a person if you don't finish that race. It just means that you need to go again. You need a redemption marathon, or whatever. Like, it's like we make it mean like, all these crazy things about ourselves when we don't reach our goal on the first try, rather than just saying like, "Oh, that was just my first attempt." Right? Like, when you're trying to learn how to ride a bike, you fall off it a million times, or my friend Susie's on this call, her kids are into unicycles, like, how many times do you have to fall off a unicycle before you learn how to ride it, right? So you don't like, make it mean anything terrible about you if you fall off. You're like, "No, I just need to practice more." So yeah, I love what you said, like, just go out there and like, shoot for the stars and see what happens.

Jen: That's why I like - like, I don't want to feel the way I feel about not crossing the official finish line because that doesn't mean anything, right? I mean, it really doesn't. It doesn't - it means something because I made it mean something in my head. So like, I tell that story not to scare anybody away from doing it because I looked - I mean, there are people who took them 12 hours. They took 12 hours, and they did the marathon. I mean, talk about grit, my god. I mean, it's like, you just have to do it, and I mean, and if you don't finish, you don't finish. You try again or you don't try again, but you probably put in a hell of a lot more miles trying to get there than you would have otherwise.
Jill: And let me ask you this. I mean, what are you making it mean that you crossed - because the circumstance here is - the true fact is, you literally crossed, finished the race, six feet to the left of where everybody else finished the race. Like, that is the absolute fact. So what are you making it mean that you finished the race six feet to the left of where everybody else did? And what could you make it mean so that you can...

Jen: Yeah, what it should mean is that I crossed the finish line. It doesn't matter if it was the official one with the big red banners on it. Like, I crossed the exact same finish line, it just wasn't under the banners or whatever they are, the awnings, you know? But you know, in my - at the time, and for the last - what has it been now? Five months? You know, I have made it mean that I failed. It's like, how could I possibly say that I failed after all the training I did and doing that race. It really - it's been a really like, tough thing to get out of mentally.

And you and I have worked through this, and I always like, remind myself, and I try to - this isn't like an official - like, somebody gave me this sweatshirt as a prize because the official t-shirt from the Chicago Marathon - this is women's extra-large t-shirt, like fits my left boob. I mean, I put it on and it's like a half shirt. I was like - so I mean it's like, fits my left boob, so I can't really wear the official marathon shirt yet, but I mean, it's like, everything I did was official. You know, I mean, I have a medal and I have the poster, and I have the memories, I have photos. You know, I just don't - I let it consume me and it's been rough. It's taken me a while to get my brain out of it, but it's like, I used it as - I'm now using it as fuel to be like, "You ran 26 miles, you can do anything." Does it matter if it ends the way you think it's going to end? It's going to end the way it's supposed to end.

Jill: I mean, what if it's even better that you finished differently? Right? What if you make the way you finished mean something amazing about yourself? Like, yeah, I didn't finish - like, I wanted this so badly I ran

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through garbage and I crossed my own finish line to get that damn medal. Like, you can make it mean whatever you want, and making it mean that it's a failure doesn't feel very good for sure, but you have the option to make it mean whatever you want. I love that you're using it as fuel. Do you have your medal? I should have asked you to bring the medal.

Jen: Oh yeah, I'll have to - let me - hold on. I'm going to yell to my husband. Hey babe, will you bring me my marathon medal? Would you bring me my Chicago Marathon medal please? Grab the medal from the marathon? Sorry.

Jill: You're like, specify the Chicago Marathon.

Jen: Yeah, yeah. He just yelled, "Which one? There's so many."

Jill: Love that. I love that.

Jen: He actually made me a medal rack and it's by race distance. So it says 5K, 10K, 15K, because I did the Hot Chocolate, 13.1, 26.2 and tri. And so the medals that I get - he's out here, he's walking out wearing my medal.

Jill: Awesome.

Jen: Yeah, so it's...

Jill: It's beautiful.

Jen: Yeah, it was the 40th anniversary of the Chicago Marathon, so it's...

Jill: So good.

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Jen: Yeah, with the pretty skyline.

Jill: So good.

Jen: Yeah.

Jill: I'm so proud of you Jen.

Jen: Thank you.

Jill: Like...

Jen: I appreciate that.

Jill: Yeah, it was super inspirational to watch you go through the process. It was an honor to be a part of the process. I mean, frankly, like, you were just amazing, and I'm kind of like, I can't believe I know her.

Jen: That's really sweet. Well, I wouldn't have been able to do it without you and our team. I mean, Karen and Melissa, and Melinda and Tara and Amanda and Nancy, like, our team, like, some of the most amazing women I have ever met in my life. And I just - I seriously can't believe like, how my path took me to you and to all of them. I mean, it's just - I mean, it's really, truly remarkable.

Jill: Yeah, super fun. Alright, well I want to thank you very much for joining me today and sharing your story with everybody. Do you have time to like, answer some Facebook questions?

Jen: Yeah, definitely.
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Jill: Alright, so for you guys that are watching on the Facebook Live, if you have questions, go ahead and type them in the comments, and then I'll read them out for Jen. And there's a 20 second delay, so if you type something in it might take a moment or two for it to come up. But while we're waiting for questions, I'm going to read some of these comments.

I don’t know if you can see them or not Jen, but Ellen says, "Thank you for being real. You're quite an inspiration." Amanda says, "Jennifer is the reason I did my marathon." Karen Bowen says, "Amanda, me too." And Karen Bowen is the Karen that we've been talking about, and I'm going to be interviewing her in this group as well, because you have to hear her marathon story, and they were there on the same day. Susie Rosenstein says, "Can you believe you're saying that? Can you please bring me my Chicago Marathon medal?" Kathy Cunningham says, "You just said that out loud." Karen says, "You're a warrior and an inspiration." Also Kathy says, "You're an inspiration." Amanda says, "I'm proud of you also." And Amanda just ran her first marathon in Disney a few weeks ago. Jen McAllister says, "You are the business, Jen."

Jen: I love that.

Jill: Yeah. Oh my gosh, okay. Do we have any other questions for Jen? So while - I'm going to give you guys a moment to add some questions in there if you have any. Meanwhile, Jen, tell us where folks can find your books, and I know we told everybody they can find you at @fitfoodiechef on Instagram. Is there any place else that people can like, follow you, or are you on Twitter?

Jen: I am, yeah, I'm on Twitter at @fitfoodiechef, but I hardly ever use Twitter. I have a Facebook page...

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Jill: Do you follow me on Twitter? I just started.

Jen: You're on Twitter? Okay. I hardly ever...

Jill: All of y'all should follow me. NYARunner. Anyway, sorry, I didn't mean to interrupt.

Jen: No, that's alright, that's alright.

Jill: Such a shameless plug.

Jen: I'm on Facebook.com/fitfoodiechef. That's like, my professional page, which I also don't do much with, but I'm on Instagram a lot so @fitfoodiechef on Instagram, and then my cookbooks are actually published by the American Diabetes Association, so they are cookbooks for people with diabetes, and you can get them on Amazon or diabetes.org, on the ADAs website or any book store usually. And then I also write recipes for their website called - oh my gosh, I'm tired - recipes for healthy living, so it's if you Google recipes for healthy living, the American Diabetes Association, it'll come up. And I do all their quick and foodie recipes, and budget friendly recipes, and that's like, what our new book is going to be based on. So some of those recipes plus some new ones, so that's going to be hopefully coming out in June.

Jill: Awesome.

Jen: And then I'm working with you to do some cool recipes and so I basically, I specialize in like, special needs diets really, sort of like, special diets for people with diabetes, special diets for people who have like, food allergies, or who are on really specific - like, if they're vegan or vegetation, or keto, or paleo, or whole 30. Like, I really sort of specialize in those

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because I think especially with those ones that are really specific, it's easy to get stuck in a good rut. So I really try to like, mix it up with cool ideas for people with those kinds of diets.

Jill: Okay, I love that. Okay, I'm going to read you a couple questions now. So Susie asks, "What was the main thought that you kept thinking to propel you forward during all of the training?" And then she has a second question, "Was there one thought?"

Jen: Yeah, I have a mantra actually that I use, and I still use it. And it's - I actually use it when I run, I use it - I say it every morning when I wake up as part of my morning routine, and I stole it - if you've ever read the book by Jayne Williams who wrote Slow Fat Triathlete, she is amazing, that book is hilarious. And I always think Jill that you need to write a triathlon book too. Not Your Average Triathlon. Anyway, just add it to your list of things to do, but I stole her mantra and it's "I am strong and I kick ass. I am focused on my task." And it's like, got a really good cadence, and I used it when I ran, I did it in my first, like, when I came back to running with you I did a 10K in February last year, like this weekend last year, and it was 14 degrees and snowing on the Chicago lake front the entire 10K. And I literally said that mantra from the first footfall to the last, the entire time. "I am strong and I kick ass. I am focused on my task." And I said it for the full whatever it took me to do it. Hour and 25 minutes.

Jill: Love that.

Jen: And so I say it every morning, and then in the morning when I say it, I also add on to the end, "Today is my day."

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Jill: I love that so much. That is - that's fantastic. Yeah, and I just think like, mantras that you can kind of like, getting them stuck in your head like an earworm is powerful, right?

Jen: And anyone, feel free to steal mine. I stole it. I'm sure Jayne Williams would be happy to hear where people are using it. But it's really a powerful one for me because for me, this is all about strength. It's not about anything else really. Strength and health, so it feels very like, strong.

Jill: Yeah, and it is like - that mantra is like, reprogramming your brain. Okay, Ellen has a question. "Are you happy with your two and one running breakdown?"

Jen: Yes, I am. It took me a while to get there. I was doing like, one and one, 90 and 30, I did three and 30, three and one, like, I don't know if you remember Jill, I kept kind of going back and forth on what I wanted to do, and I finally settled on two and one. Because I had this crazy thought that one minute was too long to walk, but it was perfect, and it worked out great for me, and I really like two minutes. Every time, like I said before, on my long runs, I took time off every time on those long runs, which is kind of crazy. But yes, to me, that two and one, I still do it to this day and I don't know if I'll ever not do it because it's perfect.

Jill: It's a nice rhythm.

Jen: Yeah.

Jill: Really nice rhythm.

Jen: One and one feels too like, fast of a change for me, like, it was too - it felt frantic, one on one. So the two on one felt like I was running, you know,
I was running enough, and it never felt like the one-minute walk was a break from the running. It just felt like a natural progression.

Jill: I love that, and that's when you know that you've found the right interval for you, is when it just feels effortless. By effortless I don't mean like, there's no effort going into it but that doesn't have a - you know, it's not too fast or too slow. It's like, I call it the sweet spot, and you just know it when you get to it for sure.

Jen: Yes.

Jill: Alright, do we have any other questions? I'm going to - I'm checking through it, I don't think we have any more. So yes, I mean, Jen, do you have any last words to add?

Jen: I just - I'm so grateful that you wanted to interview me for this. I, you know, I think the world of you and meeting you has changed my life, and I'm just so grateful. I mean, it really is like, I needed you. You know, there's a saying that says, "When the student is ready the student will come." And I was ready for you. So thank you.

Jill: I am grateful that I've been able to bear witness to your journey for the past two years, like, it has been a privilege and an honor.

Jen: Thank you.

Jill: Yes, I'm super grateful to have been a part of it all and to be able to call you my friend. So thank you for that.

Jen: Thank you, the same. And everyone in our running community, I mean, The Not Your Average Runner running community, the Run Your
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Best Life are unstoppable women, I mean, our whole - like, the women that I have met through you have been some of the most amazing - I have great, like amazing friends, and I mean, they're hard to compare to because they're so amazing and then I come into this group and I meet all these unbelievably cool women, it's just - it's been a real privilege.

Jill: Yeah, I'll tell you what, it has been. It's been a wild ride. It's been a wild ride. Okay, so I'm going to put in a little shameless plug for the group, the coaching group that Jen is in, because if there's anybody listening to this that wants to, you know, get those kinds of results, if you're interested in, you know, joining the coaching group that Jen is in, you can find it at runyourbestlife.com, and there is some amazingness in that group, let me tell you. So anyway, Jen, thank you again so much for sharing your journey with us, and yes, you guys, go follow her on Instagram. You can see her running shenanigans there and her food shenanigans, and yes, I hope you guys get some inspiration from this because I sure as fuck did.

Jen: Thank you.

Jill: You know I couldn't make it through an interview without dropping the f-bomb.

Jen: I know, I was excited. I was waiting for it.

Jill: Alright, thanks to everyone that's been watching us live and asking questions. Thank you so much to Jen. Have an amazing evening. Bye.

Jen: Bye. Thank you.

Hey there, I hope you enjoyed my chat with Jen Lamplough, and again, links to follow her on social media and check out all her books. They're all

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in the show notes at www.notyouraveragerunner.com/8. And if you'd like to be a part of the coaching group that Jen is in, the one that she talked about, all these incredible women that she's met, and if you want to be a part of that community as well, check out runyourbestlife.com where we coach live a few times a week.

And I mean, these women in this group are doing some really amazing things. So I hope you join us there and I hope you loved meeting Jen and that you are inspired to run your own marathon perhaps. That’s it for this week, and I'll see you back next week on The Not Your Average Runner podcast. Bye.

Thanks for listening to this episode of The Not Your Average Runner Podcast. If you liked what you heard and want more, head over to www.notyouraveragerunner.com to download your free one-week jumpstart plan and get started running today.