

Ep #12: The Ultimate Guide to Running with Mirna Valerio



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Jill Angie

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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 12 of *The Not Your Average Runner Podcast*. I'm your host, Jill Angie, and I have a very special episode for you today. I am so excited I can barely contain myself. I recently did a live interview with Mirna Valerio, also known as The Mirnavator.

Now, if you've been living under a rock and haven't heard of Mirna, she is the force behind *Fat Girl Running*, which is the blog that started it all. She's been featured on the cover of *Runner's World*, she's done countless ultramarathons, she speaks all over the country, and most recently she's authored the best-selling book, *A Beautiful Work In Progress*, which is the story of how she came to be an ultrarunner and inspiration.

She's everywhere and she's amazing. In short, she's really a true badass and a revolutionary in the fitness industry, and I know you're just going to love her as much as I do. Links to follow Mirna on social media are all in the show notes, so make sure after you listen to the episode you check her out because she's really, really inspiring. You can find all of the links and all of the information at www.notyouraveragerunner.com/12. And without further ado, here is Mirna.

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Jill: Alright, so I am super excited to be bringing you the amazing, the one of a kind, Mirna Valerio, The Mirnavator. And if you are a runner, there's like, no way you don't know who Mirna is. But she is here, she's going to

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spend the next hour with us, telling us everything, and you guys are going to get to ask her tons of questions, and yeah, I guess that's about all I have to say about that because I just want - Mirna, I just want you to like, talk and tell us everything about yourself.

Mirna: I was born in Brooklyn, New York - no, sorry.

Jill: That's so much fun. So tell us like, how did you get started with running, and first of all, thank you so much for being here and for everybody like - actually, let's get one more thing out of the way. If you have not read her book, *A Beautiful Work In Progress*, just go as soon as we're done with the interview tonight, like go to Amazon, go to Barnes & Noble, order it, read it, it's like, it's laugh out loud funny, it's inspirational, it's just extremely well written as well. It's like, beautifully written and yeah, just go get it. So that's it. So Mirna, tell us everything. How did you get started?

Mirna: Okay, well first of all, thank you for having me on your live, on your show, I really appreciate it. And I always appreciate the opportunity to tell my story over and over and over again because I think it's important for people to hear from a normal person, somebody that's not elite, not winning things, because I've never won - wait, actually, I won my age group in a 10K because I was the only person under 40 at the time. But anyway, so that was the only thing that I've ever won, but anyway, so thank you. And it's nice to see you after what, two years?

Jill: Yeah, it's been about two years since the retreat in Philly.

Mirna: When is the next one? Anyway, okay, so actually, I started running back in 1989, which is a really long time ago, when I was 13. I was a freshman in high school and I was trying out for the field hockey team on the very, very first day I got on campus. It was a boarding school. And I said, you know, I looked over to the soccer field, they looked like they were not having fun so I'm like, I'm not trying out for that. And then the field

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hockey people were just standing around so I was like, well, that looks like my kind of thing. So I went to the field hockey field, and the first thing she had us do was to run five loops of this field, which is almost a mile. And I had never had to run that fast, that far before. I came in second to last and then we had a timed mile after that. Again, I had never ever run more than like, the length of my block before in Brooklyn. So this is all new to me and everything, and so like, after the mile and the warm up beforehand, we had two and a half hours of practice. So we're running up and down the field, we're doing suicides, we have a stick and a ball and a mouth guard, and this is all new to me and I'm like totally overwhelmed but I'm loving it. I was so loving it even though it was really painful. So after practice, I decided that I really wanted to stay on the team and to do something new and so the next morning I got up and I was like, there's so much running involved in this sport, I better learn how to do that. I better learn how to run those five loops to warm up. Again, which is like, if you've never run before, if you've never run that far, that's a long way to go. And so I practiced that every morning for a couple weeks, then I was able to run more and more, and then I just started to love it. I loved getting up early in the morning, sometimes it was just me, sometimes it was me and my friend, Christina, from the Bronx, and we'd get out there because we both really wanted to be able to contribute to the team. So that was 1989, we both fell in love with running, and I ran all the way throughout high school, I also played lacrosse, partially four years, and then in college I continued to run recreationally and then I continued to run recreationally as I entered the corporate world. [inaudible0:06:13.1] And so you know, I did that, and I started teaching and I got married, and that is when about a year and a half into my son's life - he was a year and a half old, I decided to move down to Maryland from New York, and that's where all the problems started. I moved down there without my husband, my husband stayed in New York because he had his own job. I had a new opportunity in Maryland, I had to learn how to drive, I had to buy a car, not in that order. And then it was just me and my son alone, and he's - like he is now, gets sick very, very frequently. And so he missed a lot of school, which meant I missed a lot of school, and then I was stressed out, gained a lot of weight, I didn't feel like I

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had time to prioritize fitness activities. I did from time to time, I'd go for three or four weeks, feel great, and then he would get sick again. And so it would be this cycle of starting and stopping and then eventually I just didn't - I was like, let me just focus on my son's health. So things kind of got out of hand from there. You know, I gained weight, I had a lot of physical pain and a two-year long sinus infection, just because I was - when you're stressed out and there's a lot of cortisol in your body, you know, things happen. But I decided to move from that job after three years because it wasn't good for me or my family. And - great professionally, but everything else was - it was taking a toll on everything else in my life. So I moved back up north to New Jersey, two states away. And I'll tell you about New Jersey a little bit later. Anyway, so I moved back to Jersey to an even more stressful job, but at least I was closer to home, and so a year into that I kept all of my sort of clients, my private lesson clients, my piano, voice, Spanish, guitar, even though I didn't really play guitar, I knew my five or six chords that I could teach to people. Anyway, so like, I would do that every weekend. I would leave my job in Jersey, commute down to Maryland, teach a full day, sometimes two days, and then come back up and work. And so you know, that trip back, that's when I had this heart scare that you can read about in the book, and that was the sort of cathartic moment when I started to need to run again. I knew that I would need to change my lifestyle after consulting with a cardiologist and everything. So from 2004 to 2008, I wasn't really doing a whole lot of physical fitness activities, and I was stressed out, and I wasn't eating well for my body. So 2008 was when I turned things around again and I got back on the treadmill and ran that first mile. I mean, ran that first mile. I probably ran for the first 30 seconds and then like, ran out of breath and then walked and then ran. And it took me 17 minutes and 45 seconds, which for me, you know, I knew that I could run an 11, 12-minute mile. I knew that, but - back in the day. So that was disappointing for me. It was really discouraging. But in that discouragement, I said, "Well, I got to do better." And that's when I got into my habit again of running every day, well, most days of the week anyway. Getting on my treadmill, have a goal, meet that goal, and then go on with my life. So yeah, that was 2008. After a couple weeks, I started feeling

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better, started sleeping better, my son - because I was sleeping better, my son wasn't getting sick as much and vice versa, and then you know, I started to lose weight. I was over 300 pounds at that point, and so I started to lose weight. Started consistently - without much of a change in what I ate because I was exercising so much. Because I went from one mile to like, three miles, then it would go to five miles. And I was like, I need another goal, and so I'd sign up for a 10K because I just loved running and I love the way it made me feel, not necessarily in the moment, but afterwards, because in the moment you don't always feel good. So - but you know you're doing something really good for your body. So that's that, and after doing 10Ks and eventually doing half marathons - and of course along the way I was doing a lot of cross training. I was doing yoga, I was doing swimming, cycling, you name it, I was doing it. So signed up for half marathons, got some friends to join with me in my crazy adventures, and then one friend says, "Hey, you know, why don't you sign up for a marathon?" A friend from Jersey, of course, and I said, I was like, "Hell no. Okay, I'll do it."

Jill: Hell no, okay, I'll do it. I love that.

Mirna: And so that's the start of my - I wouldn't call it an addiction but like, my like, pure enjoyment of really long-distance running. That was a really long answer to your question.

Jill: Well, it raised a lot more questions for me because I think one of the things that I know I personally have struggled with and I know a lot of the women that I know struggle with is like that, it doesn't feel good in the moment so how, like, before you go out for that run in the morning, you're thinking, "This is going to suck, this is going to hurt," or, "It's raining," or, "I ran yesterday," or, "I didn't sleep very well last night." Like, what is it for you to gets you out the door even when you know like, this is not going to feel good.

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Mirna: Like tomorrow when I have to get up at 4:30 and run six miles.

Jill: That's exactly like that.

Mirna: You know, after a while, after about - you know, it takes 21 days to make a habit, three weeks, right? So after that, you know, it just becomes habit. And you look forward to finishing even though you know you're not going to - you know, you might be tired that first mile, but eventually, and this happens on most of my runs anyway, eventually, I start feeling better. I wake up. I mean, I'm already awake, I'm a morning person. But I wake up and I just start getting into my groove. For most of my runs, not all. Sometimes I never get in my groove, but I know that I put in the mileage for my training, and for my overarching goal, which is long-term health and wellness, right? So I know that I'm putting money in the bank, so to speak, for that. So like, there's always something that I gain from every workout, even though I don't want to be there, even though I know it's going to be hard, even though I know there's going to be like, billion feet of elevation, elevation gain, or it's raining, or it's like, on Friday, I ended up running in completely darkness at night because I started late and my mom got really mad at me because she looked at my Instagram story, which I didn't think she knew how to use Instagram. "Well, I saw your Instagram story."

Jill: Like, oh crap.

Mirna: "I don't appreciate that you were out so late." I'm like, "Look, I had to get my six miles in, okay mom? And I started late, I had a really long day." But yeah, so you know, you get over yourself. And it is a really, really good practice, and it's very transferrable to other areas of your life. You get over yourself. You whine, okay, let yourself whine for a minute, but get outside. You know, like, we are the only people - most of the time, 99% of the time, we're the ones that stop ourselves. And so like, if you can train yourself to get rid of those voices or to just like, sort of, pummel through those voices in your head because all of us have them. Yours is - is it Winona?

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Jill: Oh my god, it is Winona. You know her name.

Mirna: I read your books.

Jill: Winona, yes.

Mirna: Exactly. You know, you got to be able to talk back and be like, "I got work to do." And sometimes you have to be, you know, you have to - "Let's go, Mirna. Let's go." Sometimes it takes me an hour to get out the door, but I still get out the door. So yeah, you do the work and you - yes, get over yourself.

Jill: Yeah, it's so fun. Here's what I noticed the other day because I've been on this run streak where I've literally been running every single day with no days off for - it's almost three weeks now, and I was like, I kind of challenged myself to do it and I thought, "There's no fucking way I'm going to stick with it." But like a strange thing happened. I started to notice that there were these - like, the same little things I would say to myself at about half a mile in every day, and I'm like, "Look at that, look at me saying the exact same thing." So now when I hear the voice in my head going, "This is really hard, you should stop," I'm like, you say this every day and then 10 minutes later you're like, "Yay." So what happened? It's like, my Winona is like the girl who cried wolf in my head every single day.

Mirna: I get it.

Jill: But it's getting on to your own stories and then recognizing that like, that's all it is...

Mirna: That's all they are. Stories, right? And then you know - so you know that a half a mile in you're going to feel a certain way, but then maybe three quarters of a mile in or two miles in then you'll finally hit your groove. Me, three or four miles. It takes so long, I'm like, why am I doing this? It's the

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same thing. Why am I doing this? Why am I outside in the rain? Why? Why?

Jill: Just why. Just get it like, tattooed on our foreheads. Why? Why am I doing this? Yeah, okay, so here's what I really know from you because I don't think you and I have ever had this conversation about the - like, the ultramarathons that you're doing. And like, what is it about - so what made you - alright, so you did your first marathon, then you did a second and a third, like, how many marathons have you done so far in your life?

Mirna: I have done nine marathons so far.

Jill: That's a lot. Well, if you count all of the ultramarathons you've done, if you count like, the marathons within...

Mirna: So nine marathons and 10 ultramarathons.

Jill: That's a lot. So what gave you - so you did nine marathons, I mean, I guess like, that would give me the - instead I'd be like, alright, what's next? But like, for real like, what made you think like, yes, this is absolutely within the realm of possibility. I'm going to run 50 miles?

Mirna: Well you know, it was really an external thing. It was - what had happened was I was at the end of my first trail marathon and that was three marathons in, I believe. First trail marathon and I was really excited to be done, and really excited to just have completed this amazing thing and my body felt good. I was tired, but my body felt really good and it was only like an hour more than my first marathon time. So I was really proud of myself, but as soon as the race director, who was my friends, puts the medal on me, he goes, "So next year, 50K?" And I'm like, "Hell no. Okay." And that was it. That was it. So at the same event a year later because it was a New Jersey trail series ultra festival where he had a marathon, 50K, 50 mile, 100K, 100 mile. And so I was like, alright. And I went and did the 50K the

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following year, and my family was there, I had a friend there. My friend, Nicky, who was in the book, she came and supported me for that. And that was my first ultra, it was a 50K, and I could not believe that I finished it. Even though like, I knew I could do it physically because it's really only five more miles. It's all mental though, it's all mental. Because you know, at the end of a marathon you're like, "Oh my god, I'm so tired, I can't go on," but you have to, right? And so I did, but there were all these amazing people out on the course, and there was this like, this whole group of Navy SEALs, or Navy something, and they were running in like, single file, looking like robots, but they were like, "Good job."

Jill: Probably in like, combat boots too, right?

Mirna: No, they were in singlets. First of all, it was like, 20 degrees, and they were in singlets and shorts, okay? I will never get there. But yeah, it was really cool. It was a really cool experience. It was a loop course so it was three 10-mile loops, so that kind of - it helped me mentally because I knew exactly where I was all the time and exactly how much I needed to go. For some people that might be a mental challenge, but I love loops. You can zone out, I know what I'm doing and I don't have to think about where I'm going next. So that was my first ultra in 2012, maybe? No, 2013, I'm sorry. 2013, and then the next one...

Jill: That's only been five years.

Mirna: Has it really only been five years?

Jill: That's crazy.

Mirna: Wait, my first marathon was Marine Corps, that was 2011. Then the next year my friend said, "Hey, let's do two marathons in the same month." And so we - you know what my response was, right? Exactly.

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Jill: You need to get a t-shirt with that. That needs to be like, hashtag hell no, okay. Swear to god, that's got to be the title of your next book, please.

Mirna: And so, yeah, so it was the Steamtown Marathon and then the Marine Corps Marathon because we used the Steamtown as a training marathon.

Jill: I love those two words together.

Mirna: Just like, my Boston Marathon this year, it's a training race.

Jill: It's a training race.

Mirna: It is for my 65K in May.

Jill: This is amazing. But like, in five years, holy shit, you've done a lot.

Mirna: Well yeah...

Jill: I mean, damn girl.

Mirna: But you know, it's all been like - I feel like this is what my body was made for. Like, I feel like - somebody just said to me the other day when I was on this nighttime trail run because of course, it was light when I ran into her and we talked for about 20 minutes on like, a gravel road in the middle of nowhere. And she says, "Your knees don't bother you?" And this is - she's a really fit woman, I used to teach her kid a couple years ago. She goes, "Your knees don't ever bother you?" I'm like, "No. Well actually, my knees bother me when I need to change my shoes. But I don't have any sort of knee issues or anything like that." And she's like, "You know what, then that means that you were made to run." I was like, "That's the best thing I've ever heard. Thank you for saying that." Because I feel like it. I mean, you know, I'm who I am in my body, but I feel like when I'm out there

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I'm doing the most natural human thing that I could be doing. And so you know, I don't know, maybe in a couple years I will have knee problems. I'd rather get knee problems from doing like, really intense physical activity than not doing anything at all.

Jill: Right? Yeah, for sure. For sure. And you do a lot of strength training though. So you don't just run, and I think that is like, a big factor for a lot of runners because that's all they do and then you know, the strength piece of it gets ignored and then they do end up with, you know, issues.

Mirna: Yeah, I do - well, the funny thing is now I had to cut back on my strength training because my coach is crazy and for example...

Jill: Wait, is this coach Mike?

Mirna: This is coach Mike.

Jill: Alright, I'm going to show that text later but keep going.

Mirna: So you know, the first couple weeks - and he is the coach of the team that I'm on for Boston Marathon. It's an all teacher team, sponsored by Hylands, and they are the - they're the leg cramp relief sponsor of the marathon and so they put together this teacher's team and we had an option of training with their team coach. And I was like, I've never trained for a marathon or anything with an actual coach. Let me see how it goes. So the first week I was like, does he think I'm a joke? He gave me a three-mile run, I can do a three mile run. And then the next week it was like, I could do this. And then the next week it was some craziness, and then he had me running - I only had one day off. I was like - so I guess he was just trying to feel me out and see where I was and you know, he knew who I was and everything and knew what kind of races I did. But then he just went crazy. So two weeks ago - no actually, last week was I did - two

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weeks ago, I did a 50-mile training week, which I've never done before. I didn't die.

Jill: Yay.

Mirna: I completely prepared for it, and I feel so strong and amazing and just - this week it's 34. Thank god.

Jill: But what does a 50-mile training week look like? Like, how did that break down on your - across seven days?

Mirna: I'm going to have to write it down. So I had Monday - I missed - sometimes I deal with - I have sciatica issues, and so I'll have to take a couple of days off. It's not muscular, it's a nerve issue. So - but if you do have tight muscles, it sometimes irritates the sciatica nerve, right? So I missed out on my long runs. So in place of my long runs I did a Saturday run of six miles, and then Sunday I did three miles. So I missed - because I missed those long runs, I had to make up some mileage on Monday and I would feel completely fine by Monday. So I did eight miles and then seven and then eight, and then eight, or something like that. And then I had a day off, and then I did - then I do six on Saturday and 15 on Sunday.

Jill: Yeah, damn.

Mirna: And that's 15 and a half miles.

Jill: That's a lot. I mean, that really is a lot for one week.

Mirna: It is a lot for one week but...

Jill: Well, it's a lot for a month, actually. I mean, like depending on where you are as a runner, right? But like...

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Mirna: It's a lot, but like, I cannot believe that I was able to do it. So sometimes - and this is good to know. Sometimes with the longer runs, like if I have an eight-mile run scheduled, sometimes I'll do six in the morning and two in the afternoon, or four and four, or three and five, depending on how I'm feeling, what I have to do. I work in a boarding school so sometimes I'm on duty until 11, 11:30, 12 at night. So I'm not going to get up the next morning, and so I'll do everything in the afternoon, or I'll, you know, switch it up and move around my recovery day so that I'm not feeling crazy and overly tired. So - and I try to be flexible with myself.

Jill: Yeah, it makes sense. It makes sense. And like, I think yeah, as long as - I mean, the long run that you're doing, like, the 15 miles. Whatever is like, your distance run, but the week like, get that in in one spot, but like, as far as just getting time on feet, like yeah, it makes perfect sense to kind of break it up throughout the week for sure.

Mirna: And even sometimes like occasionally and not every time because you do want to have time on your feet for the long run, sometimes it just doesn't work out right, where I can do 15 miles all in one fell sweep. Sometimes I'll have to do 10, go to work, and do whatever, run errands and stuff, and then I come back and do five or whatever. But yeah, I try not to do that too much because it is important when you're doing long distance running, as you know, to have time on your feet.

Jill: So now for a 50-mile race that you're training for, what would be your longest run before race day and then what would your taper look like?

Mirna: What's a taper?

Jill: Alright, well that answers that question.

Mirna: Well, like okay, so let's see. My next ultra is - actually, I'm training for the North Face Endurance Challenge in D.C., 50K, and that's at the end of

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April. So that's I guess two weeks after the Boston Marathon, which I forgot to tell my coach about. Anyway, so...

Jill: Well hopefully he has you on the schedule for 26.2 that week.

Mirna: Wait, let me tell you about this coach real quick. I'm not used to people like, calling me on my phone, like without texting me first.

Jill: It's rude, right?

Mirna: It is rude. So I'm sitting on my couch, eating a burrito, and I guess I hadn't logged my miles for that day but I had done them, so I get this call from - I'm like, why is he calling me? I answer the phone and he said, "Hey, it's coach." I'm like, "I know. Yes?" He's like, "What are you doing? You better be at the gym." And I'm like, "I'm eating my - I'm eating a burrito on the couch. I went to the gym already."

Jill: Oh my god. That's some in your face coaching right there.

Mirna: And I'm not one - I'm not type A, but I do like to be in control of me. You know, I never felt like I needed an accountability anything, but he is like on top. He is like, "You did not log your miles today. Did you split them up?"

Jill: God. I love this guy already.

Mirna: And you know what, I have - I didn't know I could improve so much. Like, and this is an online coach. But he is on top and he knows his shit and he...

Jill: So good.

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Mirna: Oh my goodness, like, I will never not train with a coach again. Like because, and you know, I'm a running coach.

Jill: I know, right? It is so hard to coach ourselves though.

Mirna: It really is. I'm like, I've got the mileage done. I can get it done. It may take a little longer to get it done...

Jill: Exactly. Oh my god. I mean, that's like, a great realization though is that like, even a coach needs a coach. Even a coach needs a coach.

Mirna: And I totally didn't answer whatever your question was, so I apologize.

Jill: I can't remember what it was but I love this story about him calling you and you're like, and I was eating a burrito. I'm like - so I meant to show the text from him at the beginning, I totally forgot. I got completely distracted, but I want to show this now. So while I'm setting that up, like, talk to everyone about this - your next challenge which is going to be 100 miles, yes?

Mirna: Okay, so I'll just list my events. So I've got Boston Marathon mid-April, and then I have another training race, the North Face Endurance Challenge, 50K, and by the way, if you've never run a trail race before and you want to try out running a trail race that's really, really well-supported, the North Face Endurance Challenge is fantastic. They have 5K all the way up to 50 miles.

Jill: And where is that?

Mirna: The one in D.C. is in Sterling, Virginia, and they use the Potomac Heritage Trail. Absolutely gorgeous, and again, very well supported. The

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schwag is top of the line, North Face shirt, I mean, I'm a Merrell sponsored athlete so I'm not supposed to be saying that.

Jill: I cheated on Enell with a Shefit bra, so we're just going to keep that quiet too.

Mirna: Okay, alright.

Jill: Just you, me, and the 5000 viewers.

Mirna: And so I got that, and then that's April. Oh, I have a half marathon in two weeks. I forgot about that. Asheville Half Marathon. Not sold out yet if you want to...

Jill: Oh my god, I'd love to run there some day.

Mirna: Yeah, it's beautiful. I'm also speaking at the dinner the night before. Okay, so there's that. And then May I have - this is one of my goal races of the year, and it is a 65K trail race in the Azores Islands, out in the Atlantic. They belong to Portugal. And so they're flying me out and everything, putting me up, and so I get to do that, and I'll be training hard for that. Then I've got some other things that I can't remember off the top of my head now, but the other big sort of seminal race this year is the TransRockies six-day stage race, which I attempted last year and I didn't finish. I finished 72 of the 120 miles.

Jill: That's a lot.

Mirna: Over six days. Over six days.

Jill: But it was in the Rockies.

Mirna: I have altitude.

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Jill: I mean, come on.

Mirna: So I'm going back because I've written about it, I've wrote about it from outside online. I have some unfinished business and so actually coach Mike is on board and - coach Mike and also I'll be coaching with another coach afterwards. They're all getting me ready for that, so that - you know, even if I don't finish, I would like to finish, but even if I don't, it's such a fantastic event and experience, I just want to go back because it's like running camp for grown-ups. But - and then there's something else that I'm forgetting. I'm going to do JavelinaJundred. 100K again.

Jill: Okay, alright. So this is perfect. Like, let's just show for all of you watching, this is the craziness that is Mirna's life. So I don't know - so those of you that are watching, I hope you can see this text. If you can see this text, let me know. Just drop a little line. But I'm going to read it out. Like, actually, Mirna, please, you read it to us.

Mirna: Okay, so, we were going back and forth about training stuff and so actually this last night I got - this is kind of out of the blue. He goes, "One day, the seed that has been planted in your ultra soul will lead you to 100 miles. I'll be here to get you there." And then I said, "Oh lord, the pressure is real. I'd actually like to do Tahoe 200 one day." And he says, "No pressure, no hurry. Just a seed."

Jill: So good. So wait, I'd just like to point out though that he's not the one mentioning the 200 miles. So like, let the record show, six months from now when you've signed up for this Tahoe 200 or a year from now, or whenever, and you're like, "Yeah, coach Mike made me do it," I'll be like, "Wait a minute, actually..." Oh my god, that's so good.

Mirna: Actually, that's a result of you know, more sort of, runner peer pressure. Because I was at my - I was at one of my book signings, I was at the New York City Marathon Expo, and so one of my friends showed up

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and said - who had just done Tahoe 200, and he says, "Hey, you know, Tahoe 200." I'm like, "Just stop, I'm not doing it. But tell me more." He's like...

Jill: Hell no. Okay.

Mirna: Tahoe 200 has a - the first half event, you only have to keep a 21-minute mile for the first 100 miles. And then the next half of it you only have to have a 27-minute mile. And I was like, "Maybe I could do that." Not now obviously. He was like, "Yeah, you could probably do it next year." I'm like, "I'm not going to do it next year." But like, watch me sign up and do it next year.

Jill: I think this is happening. I think once you say it out loud it's pretty much over. That's pretty much as good as done. But I mean, this does - so I love your story about how you have unfinished business with the 120 miles.

Mirna: The TransRockies, yeah.

Jill: Because I know - I mean, I've talked to quite a few women about that have like, attempted races, longer races, like maybe a half marathon or a marathon, or something longer, and did not finish. And then there's a lot of inner mean girl talk. It happens. So I mean, I know there have been races that you've attempted and that you didn't finish, and like, you just have this amazing like, "Didn't finish, moving on." Like...

Mirna: I don't automatically feel like that because I do beat myself up.

Jill: Talk us through like how you bring yourself around.

Mirna: It happens fairly quickly. So for example, when I realized the second day into TransRockies that I wasn't going to finish because we were going up and over Hope Pass, which is at 12,500 feet. We started eight, go up

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12,500 feet, then go back down to around eight in Leadville. I got up and over Hope Pass but it took me six hours to do some - just six miles. It was an hour a mile. And it was the first time I really started feeling the altitude sickness coming in. I didn't know it was altitude sickness, but that's what it was because I saw the medical team afterwards. So I got up and over it and back down, but there were five more miles to go, and I was ready to do it, it was going to be hard, I was really tired, but the med person, the medical person says, "Hey, you know, I'm not going to make - I'm not going to pull you off the course, but I would say you should probably stop because you know it'll take you about two hours. Two more hours to get - to do five miles." And it was, and I was like, "Okay." I said okay. I went up and over Hope Pass, which is a huge accomplishment for me, for somebody my size and whatever, and so I was happy with that but I was also sad that you know, I essentially pulled myself off the course because I didn't want people to wait another two hours for me because they were ready to close up. And I was like, you know what, I've done something really incredible today. But then throughout the next hour or so as I was walking off the course via another trail, I started bawling, and you know, thinking I could have finished. I could have finished, I know I could have finished. But then I would have had to make these people wait and but I could have finished, now I feel bad. But here's the incredible thing. So the guy that I was with, he was a medic, his name was Barret, and he was real cool, real like, into transcendental meditation. Walking and just hearing me just like, chatter away and bawl. And he was like, "You know what, I think we were meant to meet today and to have this walk to the other trail. I just think - I just feel it in my heart that we were meant to meet." And then I don't know, he just said that and then I was okay. And we had a great conversation. He's like, "I know you're really sad but you did a really, really great thing and you have five more days to prove yourself." And I was like, "I love you." But then the other crazy thing - this was the other crazy thing. My mom last year got - she had leg surgery and then I spent - and this past summer I spent a couple weeks trying to get her out and out and about, getting back into like, a physical fitness routine, join a gym and like, show her how to use the machines and everything, and so we did that. And so as

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we get to the trail head and we sit down and we're waiting for somebody to come pick us up, my - I get a message from my mom who was sending me a picture of herself - this is the first time she's ever done this in her life. She took herself to the gym by herself and she was on a treadmill. And I was like, "Okay. I'm fine. I'm fine. I'm fine." As soon as I - this is what this all means. If it is my job and my life's purpose to get people to believe that they can be physically active no matter who they are, no matter what they've been through or whatever, then I'm good. You know, like...

Jill: What if it's not about like, finishing the race or any of that stuff, and just about like, who's watching, and whose life is changed because you stepped up and showed up to that start line.

Mirna: And you know what, and that framed the entire rest of the five days. I was like, you know what, I really want to finish each stage but if I don't, I am not going to beat myself up because I'm going to continue posting on Instagram and stuff and what - my mom went to the gym by herself, that is all - my job is done.

Jill: I flew all the way out here and [inaudible 0:40:36.1] so that my mom would go to the god damn gym by herself. Done.

Mirna: Exactly. And then you know, I had - the next day was pretty tough, it was 14 miles or 24. It was 24 miles, and I finished 14, and I'm like, I don't feel like doing it. And then I was having stomach issues, and like, because that's one of the symptoms of altitude sickness, like, really severe stomach issues. And so I stopped at 10 miles, but the amazing thing - another amazing thing, because there were so many amazing things that came out of this, was that people were like, "Okay, well, you'll start again tomorrow." Yeah, alright. Well, I didn't finish today either. You know, but we're out here, we're having a good time, you know." And it's amazing. So like, I loved those kinds of situations and I think trail running in particular is - the community is really, really good at that. There are other trail races - you

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know, there are so many other trail races you can do so just do your best today and be happy with what you achieve.

Jill: So amazing. And don't you find that like, runners just - that is the spirit of running. Like, I've never met a runner that was like, "Oh, you failed because you know..."

Mirna: Well, there are those jerks out there. There definitely are those jerks out there and many more people that are like, "Okay well, you know, there's another half marathon next weekend, you can try that out." Or another whatever.

Jill: Yeah, exactly. And like you said, I have unfinished business with that race, right? Because that's the whole point. Like, you can always do it again. You can always go and do - you can always show up to another start line, or the same one over again. Just because you missed one time doesn't mean it's not going to happen and like, what was amazing about showing up? Like, what happened as a result of you showing up in like - like you said, maybe it wasn't finishing the race, maybe it was something completely different that happened as a result of that.

Mirna: Yes.

Jill: Right, oh my gosh. I love that. Okay, alright, so here's what I want to do. Because god, I've asked like, three of the questions on my list here, and I know we've got people online that want to ask a million questions as well. So what I'm going to do is I'm going to conclude the interview portion of our program this evening and I'm going to say thank you so much, Mirna, for joining us and sharing all of your wisdom and before we go into questions, I just want to give you a moment, like, how can people find you? I think everybody knows how to follow you, but just in case, how can people follow you? How can they get more of you?

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Mirna: I am on Instagram and Twitter as @themirnavator. I do have a blog, which I am currently in the process of rethinking and reconfiguring, but there's still lots and lots of posts up there. The last one I did was in August, but there will be more, just kind of like in a slightly different vein. Just as I change, as my life changes, and my life will be changing drastically, I'll tell you about that in a minute. And let's see, so that's *Fat Girl Running*.

Jill: Yes, your Facebook group. Tell everybody about the Facebook group.

Mirna: Okay wait, can I talk about my blog?

Jill: I'm sorry.

Mirna: Fatgirlrunning-fatrunner.blogspot.com, so that's the blog. So there's still tons of posts up there that are still relevant to training and like, the stories we tell ourselves and the things that people say to people who are not thin, who love exercise. There's lots of that. So that's that blog. I have a Facebook - two Facebook pages. One that my publicist runs, and that is The Mirnavator-Mirna Valerio - no, Mirna Valerio-The Mirnavator, and so that's my one Facebook page, and the one I run is called Fat Girl Running, but there's also a Facebook group that is absolutely going bonkers in a really, really good way, called Fat Girl Running, all caps. I think it's all caps.

Jill: All caps, all one word, yeah.

Mirna: And it is - it's a closed group, at some point I'm going to make it a secret group. But we - it's two weeks old and there's over 2000 followers, which is crazy to me, and I just am like - right now there's like, 40 people waiting for me to accept them. And so - and it's really cool because like, I have like, really strict rules. Like, we don't talk about - it's not a group where we talk about weight loss, and I understand that people are at different stages of their own journeys and a lot of them are focused on weight loss, but there are so many groups that are devoted to that, I just didn't want it to

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be part of our equation. And so - and people have been very respectful of that and also in reporting people who do talk about these things. But it's great because the guidelines are so clear that people actually read them and they say, you know, so and so like, wrote a questionable post, and I'll communicate with that person and it always opens up a wonderful conversation. And yeah, so people are posting their pics, their wins, their challenges, sometimes I put questions up, sometimes other people put questions up, and it's just a really fun, very, very motivating and encouraging group of mostly ladies. I don't know who two or three men got in there, but whatever. And yeah, and it's really cool, so if you want to join us, I'll also be doing a live this Wednesday, which is the day after tomorrow, all about trail running. And because there are a lot of questions about running trails, what kind of gear you need, you know, why should I run trails, how is it different from road running, that kind of thing. So I'm going to be doing a live at - probably like, at seven o'clock on Wednesday. If you join our group, you'll be able to listen.

Jill: Excellent, and your book, *A Beautiful Work In Progress*, we had...

Mirna: This is it. It's called *A Beautiful Work In Progress*.

Jill: It's beautiful.

Mirna: It was supposed to be much shorter, it was supposed to be about this.

Jill: It's amazing though.

Mirna: Yeah, I was only supposed to write 65,000 words and I ended up with 110,000. And that's with a lot of editing. So that's my book, it was published in October. It is a memoir, it's not linear by any means, but there's a lot of, I would say, connected personal essays and stories about my trials and tribulations in running, and how important family - my family

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life has been in my growth as a runner, and as an athlete. And because I think those things are important. You can't really separate the person from all their other life experiences. And it's - you know, it's doing pretty well on Amazon, and I have no complaints. And also, if you like audio books, I did the audio.

Jill: Nice.

Mirna: With all the accents.

Jill: That is awesome.

Mirna: By the way, I had to audition for that.

Jill: For your own book?

Mirna: I had to audition for my own book, yes.

Jill: Well, I'm glad that you got the job.

Mirna: I'm glad I got the job too because it's my book.

Jill: Wait a minute. That's amazing.

Mirna: There's another thing. I also have - in the next issue of Runner's World, I have a piece coming up and stay tuned for March 1st, which is Friday...

Jill: Thursday.

Mirna: Big announcement.

Jill: Yay. Please.

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Mirna: I can't say anything, but big announcement. And it's really cool.

Jill: Oh my god, alright, I'm super excited for that. I'm super excited for that. You are just like, shit is happening.

Mirna: Oh my god, which is why I am actually going to - I'm leaving my job, which is really scary, but thank you J. C. Penny for that one ad because then it allowed me to be able to say okay, well I can go somewhere and pay my rent a year in advance and just do this professionally and try to create other opportunities and try to make it a really sustainable thing without having to come back to school and be on duty in a dorm. Yeah, so...

Jill: Yeah, because I feel like this is what you were put on the planet to do.

Mirna: You know, I'm finally feeling that. I'm finally like, after this summer, I was like, "Oh my goodness, this is what I need to be doing."

Jill: Yeah, yeah, this is so good. Yay. Alright, so you guys, hang tight because we're going to do questions in a minute, but yes, so this is going to - I mean, this has just been an amazing hour. It has been fabulous catching up with you, and you guys, all of you, if you are not already in her group, I know like, probably half of you already are in her group, but if you're not, go join the group because I know she's going to be posting all of her announcements in there and just make sure that you follow everything Mirna does because I think it's going to be amazing, so thank you so much for joining us today. It has been amazing.

Mirna: My pleasure.

Jill: Alright, so it is time now for questions. Okay, so I'm kind of looking through - if you guys have questions, go ahead and drop them in the Facebook live. First one, Stephanie, "Jill, will you post links to all of her

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social media?" Yeah I will, so when this goes up as a podcast, all her social media will be on the podcast page. But for real like, Fat Girl Running, go search that on Facebook, it will come in if you go to - you know like, if you go to Instagram and search The Mirnavator, and where else did you say? Twitter? The Mirnavator as well. You should be able to find them. They're not hard to find at all. Susan said she loved hearing you read your own words, so that's amazing.

Mirna: Thank you. That was really fun and intense.

Jill: Yeah, I can imagine. And so Susan was at the retreat in 2016. Yes.

Mirna: I remember her.

Jill: Yeah, okay. Michelle says, "Does Mirna do any meet up runs for locals?"

Mirna: Well you know, sometimes I do and sometimes I don't really know where I'm going to be running because I usually fly somewhere, whatever, it's hard to put together things because people don't show up and I need to get my training on, and so like, locally like, here in Georgia, I don't typically do that. I have put out things like you know, if anybody wants to come and do a 13-mile or whatever, but those don't always work out because people have different schedules and stuff like that. But in the future, I will actually be doing like, official meet ups through the various apparel companies and shoe company that I work with. So stay tuned.

Jill: Very cool. You need to come to Philadelphia, seriously.

Mirna: I will because I'm actually - I'm moving back to Jersey so...

Jill: You just made me so happy. Where in Jersey?

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Mirna: Central Jersey, near - in Somerset county, like, south of...

Jill: Wait, how close is that to Mercer county? I'm in Mercer county a lot.

Mirna: Okay, alright. Alright.

Jill: I know, we need to get together. So oh my god, this is amazing. Sorry, I'm like, having my little fan girl moment while - all these questions I'm like, shut up, where is Mirna moving in near Jersey. Okay, alright, Yolanda says - oh wait, no, wait. I've missed one. Stephanie Heath, "What is your number one piece of advice?"

Mirna: Take recovery days seriously. I haven't always done that, but whenever I don't recovery properly, my heart rate goes out of control and it's hard to like breathe, and it's hard to just do anything and it's hard to not be tired. So when you have a recovery day, like take a complete recovery day. Everybody talks about active recovery, but if you're training for something heavy, like you really need a day of complete rest, or two days, and don't feel bad about it. And it's hard mentally like, I really should be - I've got a 100 miler coming up, or whatever it is, I don't have a 100 miler coming up yet, but it's really - like, it's really important to rest your mind, to rest your body, to rest your soul and just do stuff that has nothing to do with athletics.

Jill: Yeah. Yeah, for sure. Like, go to the movies, go have brunch with your girlfriends, read a book, take a bath.

Mirna: Right.

Jill: Binge on some Netflix. Yeah, so good. I love that. Yeah because I think a lot of times folks, and I've been doing this myself, like doing this sort of run streak where I'm running every single day, but it's not like I'm running five miles or six miles every day. Like, if I go out and I run half a mile, that

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counts for me. So like, it's like, it doesn't have to be like, a big huge thing every single day, like, you can still, you know, enjoy like, the running without having it be like, too much.

Mirna: Right.

Jill: Sorry, I'm like, trying to talk and read at the same time. Okay, Yolanda says, "I'm a new runner and endurance is a huge thing for me. How do you build endurance for runs?"

Mirna: Slowly. It takes a long time to reach a point where even three or four or five miles is a comfortable distance to run. You know, it took me like, me personally, it took like a whole - almost an entire year before I started doing 10Ks, and I really, really, really - I just focused on the 5Ks, I focused on getting better at the 5Ks, for me that was getting faster and beating my last time. Not each time, but you know, just, you know, improving my mile, or improving my two-mile time or my three-mile time, or whatever. Feeling better, making sure - like, one of my goals was to feel like I was completely recovered or to recover more quickly. So there are all these different goals that I achieved before I moved on to the next distance. And you know, take time. Like really, really, just take time and be patient with yourself, and follow a plan. Plans are really - you know, there's so many great plans...

Jill: Well yes, there are.

Mirna: And you know - but, I mean like, look online, read Jill's books, like, there's so many things that you can do and they're all very smart in terms of bringing you very slowly, there's that 10% rule, which doesn't apply to everybody because some people can handle a little bit more, but I say it's a pretty good frame of reference for that. And just you know, be patient with yourself and be kind. You'll get there. And then when you reach a day where it's like, oh my god, how am I going to get over 10 miles, or five miles, or six miles, you just do it. I mean, you have a lot of talk in your head

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like we talked about earlier, there's a lot of stories that we - you know, I don't know, I can't imagine myself doing 10 miles. You get to 10 miles and then you do another mile. Then it's 11 miles, and then you've done it. Oh my god. You know? So stop telling yourself stories about how you can't get to the next mile because you can. Physically we all can. Most of us can anyway, so like, it's a matter of mentality.

Jill: Yeah, for sure. And also I think you know, for beginning runners who are listening to this thinking, "Oh my gosh, I have to run 100 miles or I'm not a real runner," like, stop. Just stop right there, right? Whether you run a tenth of a mile or 110 miles, like, you're still a runner.

Mirna: You run, you are a runner.

Jill: Exactly. Some people don't love the long-distance stuff and there's nothing wrong with you if like, a half marathon is not on your bucket list, or a 100-mile run isn't on your bucket list. It doesn't make you any less of a runner. It's just a matter of what you enjoy, like, what brings you joy about running, and for some people it's just like, going out for 30 minutes a few times a week and that's their sweet spot. And some people it's doing 100 miles in a week and that's their sweet spot.

Mirna: Yes.

Jill: Some people have a t-shirt that says, "Hell no. Okay."

Mirna: I'm writing that down right now.

Jill: Seriously, it's got to be your hashtag.

Mirna: Okay, got it.

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Jill: Okay, Jen McAllister says, "Hi Mirna, how much time elapsed between that first 17 mile run on the treadmill and your first road race?"

Mirna: My 17 minute 45 miles I was just talking about?

Jill: Yes, I think that's what she's talking about, and I read that as your first road rage, and I'm like, wait, did we talk about road rage?

Mirna: I'm a New Yorker.

Jill: I know, it's possible. But road race.

Mirna: Let's see, that was in - I restarted running in 2008, and the whole heart attack scare where I thought I was having a heart attack, that happened in July of 2008 when I was in grad school. And so - and working and doing everything else. Let's see. So I really like - it was at the end of July, so really I started back on the treadmill in August. And I did my first 5K in April of the next year.

Jill: Oh wow.

Mirna: So it was a long time. It was a long time. And after that 5K - because you know, I got back to a point where I could do three miles again, and it was easier and easier for me so I was like, "I really need a goal because I want to see how I'm doing compared to before." And so I did that first 5K in a park in central Jersey and I was very disappointed. But then I was like, "Okay, well, I got to do another one because that wasn't great, so I need to do another one." So yeah, it was a couple months.

Jill: Yeah, yeah, I mean, so that's - I think that's good to know because I think a lot of time people are like, "Oh, I started training, I should be able to do a 5K." Like, if you do the Couch To 5K, they're like, "Oh, we'll have you running a 30-minute 5K in six weeks." It's bullshit.

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Mirna: Well you know, for some people that already have a certain level of athleticism, that's fine. But if you are starting from, you know, just from jump, like, it's really - you really have to take a lot of time I think, and so that you don't quit. You know, and you have to know that it's going to take a really long time to get to a point where even a mile is easy. But you have to stick with it. You know, it's like, I know it's going to be difficult, I know it's going to take probably six weeks for me to get to a mile from where I am now, and that's okay. You don't have to - don't judge yourself against anybody else. Everybody's DNA is different, everybody's level of athleticism is different, everybody's motivational levels are different. You know, you do you, do your own thing, let your body do its work because it will if you want it.

Jill: And you hit that - the nail on the head right there too. It's like that whole comparing yourself to other people, like, it's always a lose-lose. Like, you are never going to come out the winner in that because there's always going to be somebody faster, there's always going to be somebody stronger, there's always going to be somebody better, so why even bother? But just do you, just like what you said. I love that. Okay, Yolanda asks - Yolanda Parr, "I ran 10 minutes on the treadmill last week and started crying on the treadmill. I was so proud. I know they thought I was a crazy lady." Oh my gosh, have you ever cried on the treadmill?

Mirna: I've never cried on the treadmill.

Jill: Or have you ever cried while you were like, running? Out for a training run or something?

Mirna: Only after races. Like the first time I like, cried, was after my first half marathon in Rehoboth Beach, and you know what the cool thing was - like, something cool happens every run, but so it was - again, my first half marathon, I was chaffing everywhere. Like, that was the first time I'd experienced chaffing. I was in so much pain, my feet were hurting, I had

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the wrong kind of shoes on, but I was finishing and as I came into the finishing shoot on my iPod, that song, the Black-Eyed Peas song, I got a feeling that tonight's going to be a good night, and I was like, yes. And I'm not a crier, I don't like, cry except for on the trail. And so yes, so that was like, really cathartic. So like, when - you know that was a huge accomplishment, so like a huge accomplishment, whatever it is, you know, that definitely causes one to be emotional I think, and like, just to life, feel all the feels, and there's nothing wrong with that.

Jill: Don't you feel like there's something about running that it just releases emotion or like, keeps us - like, I think we go through our lives a lot of time resisting emotion, like, "Oh, I have to put on a brave face, I can't feel this emotion right now, I just have to power through," and then there's something like when you're running, that all drops away and so raw and real, and that's like, the only time I cry is when I'm running. It's so funny.

Mirna: It is really funny, like, it happens for me at the end of some races where I know that I've struggled to get to that point but I've also put the work in and it just feels - it's such a release to accomplish it. But I also get that feeling when I'm doing yoga. It's so weird and you know, I think there have been some studies on this, like, there's a connection between the physical release and that emotional mental release and so like, when I'm doing a yoga in a class, not by myself because I never like, get that deep - but like, when I'm in a class like, I always reach a point where I'm like, I start tearing, and I'm like, "What's happening here?"

Jill: What is this salty liquid on my face that's not sweat?

Mirna: Absolutely. You know, when you feel like you've accomplished something big, you know, of course.

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Jill: And if that big thing - like, and it doesn't have to be like, completing a marathon, right? Sometimes your big thing is like, I fucking showed up to yoga today, right?

Mirna: Everything going on in my life, I made it here. Like, absolutely, of course. And if you've never been able to run before, if you've never been able to sustain exercise for even five or 10 minutes and you do that, you know how huge that is? Like, again, don't compare yourself to others, everybody has their own level of whatever it is, and your accomplishment may not be the same as somebody else's accomplishment, but guess what, they're both accomplishments.

Jill: Yeah, exactly. I love that. They're both accomplishments. So good. Okay, Susan Alb - I hope I'm saying that right - says, "Not running related, but if you are ever at any east coast World Language Conferences, I would love to meet you. I'm a Spanish teacher in North Carolina."

Mirna: Well, who knows what's going to happen next year, I mean, I might not be teaching Spanish anymore. It's my plan not to have to.

Jill: I am beyond excited to hear whatever the announcement is on Thursday and find out what exciting thing is going on in your life now because like, just in the two years since we've known each other, like, I've just been watching your star rise and like, it's just - yeah, it's super fun. And I'm ridiculously jealous that you've met Jessamyn Stanley because I have been following her for years. I am like - I have such a girl crush on her. I just, yeah.

Mirna: She is amazing. And humble, and so fucking smart, and yeah. I have an intellectual crush. She's amazing, she's - you know like, just like, when we're doing - we're shooting a whole day in the snow, and it was just so cool to be next to her. So when I - I put this on my Instagram story, I was

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like, oh my god, you know, she's right next to me, I'm like, oh my god. She's like, oh my god, like...

Jill: Isn't that fun? So cool. It's like, mutual girl crush. So good. Yeah, I was like, watching all of those like because I mean, I'm seeing it on her story and I'm seeing it on your story. The best. So good. That's so fun. Okay wait, we have a couple more questions, and then I know. I know it's 8:30 so you probably have to...

Mirna: Well, I got to get up at 4:30 in the morning tomorrow.

Jill: Alright, alright, so we got two more questions. We're going to take a question from Yolanda and a question from Stephanie. Yolanda says, "There's a half marathon in the Smoky Mountains in September. Would I be crazy to think that I could do it?"

Mirna: Absolutely not.

Jill: What do we say to that?

Mirna: What is it? Hell no, okay.

Jill: That's so good. I love it, Yolanda. Okay, and then Stephanie - wait, what?

Mirna: Tons of time to train for a half marathon in September.

Jill: I know right? It's September. Like, this is just the start of half marathon season. Like, this is like, pre-training. So yeah. Stephanie asks, "Do you have any go-to mantras?"

Mirna: I have a couple. Some are really boring. One is, "Do the work, Mirna. Do the work."

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Jill: I love that.

Mirna: Or, "Get it done, Mirna." I talk to myself in third person.

Jill: I love that.

Mirna: "Get it done, Mirna." There's Relentless Forward Progress, you know, the title of Bryon Powell's ultramarathon training book, which is an excellent, excellent book if you are training for your first ultra. Step over step, that was one that I put in my book I think, and step over step comes from the childhood fairytale, Rikki-Tikki-Tavi. No, TikkiTikkiTembo. It's TikkiTikkiTembo, it's a Chinese fairytale, and they have to do this like, this old guy, the grandfather, and this little kid, they have to make this long journey to rescue the little kid's brother from drowning in a well, and - yeah, it's a really scary...

Jill: Wait, so they're walking this long journey?

Mirna: So the kid, his brother is drowning in a well basically, so he runs to his grandfather, he's like, "Grandfather, we have to go save my brother because he's in the well," and so they make this long journey and his name is TikkiTikkiTembo - no Sarembo-Chari Bar Ruche-Pip Pembo, or something like that. That's his name. And so they make this journey and so the grandfather, they're both getting tired and the grandfather repeats, "Step over step. Step over step," just to get them to their destination. "Step over step," so that's one that I employ all the time, sometimes at the beginning of a race.

Jill: But it sounds like it probably calms down the anxiety too, right?

Mirna: Yeah because it's very meditative and very you know, just this repetitive, "Step over step, step over step, step over step."

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Jill: All you have to do is see the next three feet. Who was it? I think Martin Luther King said, "You don't have to see the whole staircase, you just need to see the next step."

Mirna: There you go.

Jill: Which is like, yeah, that's it. It's like, just another step, that's it. So amazing. Okay, alright, just one more comment that I want to add, and then we are going to close for tonight. Jennifer says, "When I talk to myself in the third person I calm myself doll face." I just needed to share that.

Mirna: That is amazing. You know what, that's - doll face, you are amazing. I know that's second person. That is cool you know because I also do the same thing. I say that, you know the movie, The Help, which I don't really like, but there is that part where one of the maids says, "You is kind, you is smart, you is intelligent," or whatever, so I say to myself, now this is second person, I say, "You is strong, you is powerful, you is fine."

Jill: I love this. I love this, right? Like, whatever it takes. That's amazing. I really can hear you saying that in my head from now on. So good. Oh my gosh. Okay, alright, so it is 8:30, we've been - I know, it went so fast. Any final words that you have for anybody that you think they need to know about you, about running, about anything?

Mirna: Do you. Like, do your own thing. Do what's good for your body, and not what's good for anybody else's body. You know, so whatever that means, if it means running a 5K, or running two miles, or working on yoga, or whatever you need to do for your own sanity, your own physical and mental wellbeing, you do that for you. Yeah, that's it. I would say that's all you need to do and then like, things will happen. Your health and sanity will come when you focus on yourself.

Jill: To thine own self be true.

Mirna: Amen.

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Jill: Alright, thank you so much for joining us. It's been a pleasure, and I can't believe you're moving to New Jersey, this is just going to be epic. So alright, so have an amazing evening. Thank you to everybody who joined us - just double checking, I don't think we have any more questions. So yeah, have a great night. Bye.

Mirna: Thank you. Bye bye.

Hey there, I hope you really enjoyed my chat with Mirna. It was so much fun to speak with her and just get her wisdom and hear her stories, and it is always a pleasure. Again, links to follow her on social media and check out her book, and all the other places that she's appearing are all in the show notes.

And real quick, before we go, I want to invite you to a very special event coming to New York City next month. It's the first ever *Not Your Average Runner* meet up, and it's taking place on April 6th. You can get all the details and sign up to be there at www.notyouraveragerunner.com/meetup. And if you're listening to this after April 6th, or maybe you don't live in New York City, go to the site anyway because I'll be listing out where the future meet ups are going to be and you can sign up for them there as well.

It has been a pleasure being with you this week. I'm so glad you were here to enjoy my time with Mirna, and I look forward to seeing you next week on the podcast. Take care.

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.