

Ep #161: 3 Steps to Body Confidence



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Jill Angie

Ep #161: 3 Steps to Body Confidence

The reason we think we have to hate ourselves so that we can change ourselves, so that we'll be motivated to change is because most of us have never actually seen a fat person just appreciate themselves without apologizing for their flaws.

The media is so full of fixes for our flaws and we just think that's the way it's supposed to be. But if you believe your body has no flaws, you can get to work on accepting it. And then once you accept it, you can decide to change it. And that change is going to be a lot easier, a lot less painful, and a lot more satisfying.

Welcome to *The Not Your Average Runner Podcast*. If you're a woman who has never felt athletic but you still dream about becoming a runner, you are in the right place. I'm Jill Angie, a certified running and life coach and I teach women how to start running, feel confident, and change their lives, and now I want to help you.

Hey rebels. I cannot believe I forgot to mention this last week, but Run Your Best Life just had its third birthday. Three years ago, I had the idea to start a run coaching program for women who never really felt athletic but wanted to be runners.

And my plan was to help them start running, and then combine that with the thought management tools that I know and that I teach so that they could not only become awesome runners, but improve their lives by gaining confidence and stop that inner mean girl chatter.

And here we are, three years later and it has been an amazing journey. And I just want to recognize everyone that has been a part of Run Your Best Life over the years. Thank you. Thank you for being a part of this incredible group and I cannot wait to see what the next three years holds for us.

Ep #161: 3 Steps to Body Confidence

I am still on my mission to help a million women start running, and Run Your Best Life is a big part of that. Now, for those of you who are maybe new to the podcast and you're thinking, how do I get in on this Run Your Best Life fun? Well, it's only open to women who have gone through the Rebel Runner Roadmap program, which is my 30-day start running class.

And the next round of that actually starts in a few days. Registration is open right now at rebelrunnerroadmap.com. This is actually the last time it's going to run in 2020. So if running is something you want to start, the Roadmap is going to help you get through your first 30 days. Or if you've been doing it for a while and you're like, look, I think I could get better at this, the Roadmap will help you refine and also work on your mental game.

And if you like the Roadmap, then you can join Run Your Best Life after that. But again, this is the last time I'm doing the Roadmap in 2020. So you got to get in now if you want to be a runner this year.

Rebelrunnerroadmap.com, registration closes on the 14th.

Okay, today rebels, we are talking about self-confidence and body image. And I want to start by sharing something from a TV show that Andy and I are currently obsessed with. It's called *Dispatches from Elsewhere*, and it's set in Fishtown, Pennsylvania, Fishtown, Philadelphia, which is a neighborhood that we've been thinking about moving to in a couple years.

Anyway, it's kind of a freaky show. We're still trying to figure it out to be honest, but the characters are awesome. And one of them is a trans woman who's really struggling with her thoughts about herself and it's getting in her way of living her best life.

And there is this one moment in the show where she's talking to another woman and I think it might be her aunt, maybe it's her grandmother, I'm not sure. But this woman keeps telling her that keeping her insecurities a secret, kind of holding onto them so deeply is like carrying around a bag of poop and then pretending it doesn't smell.

Ep #161: 3 Steps to Body Confidence

And everyone around you can smell the poop, and they're like, what is the deal? And you're pretending like it's not there. Because you think if you act like it's not there, maybe you just keep it in your purse, nobody's going to notice you have a bag of poop. But of course, when we have big, huge insecurities, they come out in all kinds of different ways and people actually do notice that something isn't quite right. They can smell the poop even if they can't see it.

And way back in the 90s, this happened to me. I didn't have a bag of poop, but anyway, I was super insecure about my body. I had three outfits that I thought were acceptable, that they hid my body shape well enough that I felt comfortable appearing in public in them.

And basically, this was three pairs of like, Eddie Bauer style khakis in tan, black, and navy. And then three sort of work appropriate dressy tank tops and three oversized button-down shirts. And I wore those over the tank tops as kind of a cardigan. And I mixed and I matched them all the time for my work outfits and I figured, oh, this is good, nobody knows. Of course they knew.

I actually looked kind of awkward and messy and weird, and I look back at pictures of that time and I'm like, what the hell was I thinking? And of course I looked much bigger than I was and it was so obvious that I was trying to hide myself. And one day, a friend of mine said something like - something about me having "favorite" outfits and not wanting to deviate.

And I think she thought I had some kind of OCD because I always wore the same outfits. And I realized that I thought I had been so smooth by mixing them up but people were still noticing. And they didn't know exactly what the problem was, but they were like, something's not right with this girl because she wears the same three pairs of pants all the time.

So what are you supposed to do when you have a bag of poop and you're feeling insecure about something and you don't want people to notice it but

Ep #161: 3 Steps to Body Confidence

it's affecting every single thing that you do? So I mean, that's the thing, you can pretend that it's not there, you can pretend you don't have a bag of poop in your purse, but if you don't deal with it, it's going to keep getting in your way.

My body insecurities kept me from dating, kept me from having healthy romantic relationships, and for sure, this is around the time that I was starting to find running, and running helped me get past those insecurities a little bit, but it wasn't until I started really working hard on my thinking that things started to change for me.

And we've been talking about this topic in Run Your Best Life this month a lot. This is actually self-confidence September in Run Your Best Life. And one thing I know for sure is if you are struggling with self-confidence, it will show up in your running. Maybe it's in how you talk about your running, maybe how you take on new challenges, maybe even your consistency and how much you stick to your training plan.

So I'm going to talk about self-confidence within the context of body image here, but you can apply these concepts to any area of your life where you have a belief that there is something wrong with you, and that belief is keeping you - any time we believe there's something wrong with us, it's a lie. There's nothing wrong with us. But when you believe that there is, it holds you back from doing what you want to do.

So I'm going to teach you these three tools/concepts that are totally going to change how you think about your body and let's just get into it. So tool number one is you got to start by identifying the errors in your thinking. And to do that, we need to understand what body image actually is.

We throw around this term a lot, but what does it exactly mean? So Google says it is the subjective picture or mental image of one's own body. And I really like this definition because it uses the word subjective. This means it

Ep #161: 3 Steps to Body Confidence

is the collection of thoughts that you have about your body. It is not the facts about your body.

And this is great news because it means you can change it. Without changing your body, you can change your body image. And while you might not be able to snap your fingers and have a different nose on your face. I mean, you can go out and get a nose job, but doesn't happen overnight. But you can change how you think about the nose you have, instead of obsessing about how it's too big for your face.

And I actually - speaking of plastic surgery, I actually heard a great anecdote from one of my clients today. She was visiting a plastic surgeon because she was investigating getting breast implants. And she actually decided not to get them, but the surgeon said to her, plastic surgery doesn't result in a better body. Just a different one.

And that's so perfectly said. We think our bodies are full of flaws that we have to overcome in order to love and accept our bodies. We think if I can fix this flaw, then I can love myself. But really, our bodies just have characteristics. The size of your ass, whether you have cellulite or not, the size of your nose, size of your boobs, those are characteristics.

You have thoughts about those characteristics, those thoughts are where you decide if the characteristics are flaws or not. A flaw is not actually a circumstance. It is simply an opinion. So when the plastic surgeon says surgery doesn't result in a better body, it just results in a different one, that's it. You're just changing the circumstances of your body.

You're not erasing a flaw. A flaw is simply a thought. And you may wonder, why do you have those opinions? Because isn't it just generally agreed that thinner is better or stretch marks are flawed or loose skin is a flaw or acne scars, right? No, it's not - I mean, it is kind of generally accepted but the reason we believe that is because we've been told that our whole lives.

Ep #161: 3 Steps to Body Confidence

Primarily from the business who are selling you the solution to the flaws. So nobody is - the people that are telling you that you need to fix this are usually the people who are like, and by the way, give me \$20, here's a potion that can help you fix it. So really think about that.

And it's very circular. Then we believe them and then we perpetuate that by telling our daughters that they need to be thinner, they need to fix that or they need to fix this other thing, but it really starts, I think, with the media and the fitness and diet industry telling us that we have flaws in the first place. Here's a flaw, here's how I can help you fix it. It's very convenient.

So really, the fitness and beauty industry overall have us all convinced. They convince us if we could just lose weight, if we could just have better skin, if we could just have shinier hair, if we could just fix all our flaws, we'd be so much happier. Just think about it.

When you see pictures, before and after pictures of people who have had things done to their body, they look so sad before and then they got the new nose or they don't have the acne scar or they put the makeup on to cover their acne or whatever, suddenly they look so happy. But you guys, none of that stuff is a fucking flaw.

You've been told it's a flaw because someone wants to sell you the solution. They have to convince you that something is wrong with you before they can get you to buy their thing. And that concept has become firmly embedded in the fabric of our society over many generations.

So this first concept that we need to wrap our heads around, if you want to feel better about your body, if you want self-confidence in that area, it starts with dismantling the entire belief system that there is such a thing as a body flaw. This is a thought error. It is a glitch in the code. When you're writing computer code and you mess up one line of code, the program doesn't work properly. It gives you the wrong answer. A thought error is the same thing.

Ep #161: 3 Steps to Body Confidence

So identifying and recognizing that the concept of a body flaw is simply an error in your thinking is huge. Because suddenly you're like, oh wait, I was just mistaken. I thought my body had flaws, but actually, it's fine. There are no such things as body flaws. And then everything else builds from there.

So this is the first concept I want you to start wrapping your head around. And it might take a while because you've practiced thinking that you've got flaws that need to be fixed. You've practiced thinking that for a while. But I want you to open your brain up just a little tiny bit that maybe it's possible that your body doesn't have any flaws because the concept of a body flaw is just an error in the code. It's just a thought error.

Okay, so concept number two is now accepting your body as it is. So when you believe your body has flaws, if you think, "Oh my god, my body is flawed but I want to learn how to love it," you have to do a lot of extra work because you have to learn to love it despite the flaws. If you can strip away that belief that there's something wrong with your body, then you can just start getting busy loving it, instead of having to overcome the flaws and then learn to love your body.

So healthy body image starts with believing there's nothing wrong with you and then it moves on from accepting your body. But this is where a lot of people get stuck because then there's another mistake in their thinking. They believe if they love and accept their body exactly as it is, they will no longer be motivated to change it.

And this is a messy thought problem to have. But the bottom line is changing your body from a place of dislike or even hate is not going to end up in you loving your body. It just won't. If you change the circumstances of your body because you hate the circumstances and you think this body needs to be different so I can love it, if you hate your body in the beginning, losing weight isn't going to make you love it. You're just going to find more problems to hate on.

Ep #161: 3 Steps to Body Confidence

Then you're going to lose the weight and then you're going to be like, oh my god, now I've got all this loose skin, I've got another flaw. I got to get the skin removed. Then you get the skin removed and then you have scars. And then you're like, oh god, I'm not going to be happy until I get these scars lasered off.

It's endless. When you make changes to your body from a place of hate, you're saying I'm not worthy of love until I fix this physical circumstance about myself. And you're comparing apples and oranges. You're worthy of love because you're a human, whether or not you have stretch marks or loose skin or whatever the fuck it is.

It's just not true that you're unworthy of love because of your physical circumstances. When you work to accept your body as it is, you learn that you're worthy regardless of whether you're a size two or a size 32. And guess what happens when you start to believe you're worthy? You can decide to make changes simply because you want them, rather than thinking that you have to look a certain way to be acceptable in this society.

And that is huge. I am not saying learn to love your body so that you don't ever have to change it. You can totally change your body. I want you to change it from a place of acceptance and love, rather than hate. But when you fully understand that you don't have to look a certain way to be worthy of love, it's so freeing.

You can wear a bikini at the beach because you like how the sun feels on your belly, or because two-piece bathing suits are way easier to put on. It took me until I was 51 years old, 50 years old, I can't remember, in the past few years is the first time I've worn two-piece bathing suits out in public. Legit never done that since I was 12 years old.

I started doing it because I'm like, look, this is a thing that I want to do and I'm just going to do it. And you know what I found out? It is so much easier

Ep #161: 3 Steps to Body Confidence

to wear a bikini than it is to put on a freaking one-piece straightjacket. So right there, just wear a two piece because they're easier, if nothing else.

But you can also just wear it because you think it's a cute suit and you like wearing cute things. When you are no longer restricted by, I have to look a certain way so that I can love myself, boom, the world is your oyster. And I got to tell you a story. I'm going to rant a little bit you guys, buckle up.

Last year, back when we could have pool parties, y'all remember that, right? It was amazing. A woman that I know was talking about how she'd gotten invited to a pool party but she was hesitating to go because she hadn't gotten much of a tan on her legs and she was like, I'm going to have to wear shorts and I don't want anybody to have to look at my pale legs.

She legit framed it as trying to save other people from having to look at her legs, which we all know is just a bullshit way of saying I'm embarrassed about what my legs look like, right? But this is an intelligent, accomplished woman. And that is what she's worried about.

She wasn't going to go to this pool party because she hadn't gotten much of a tan on her legs and she didn't want anybody to have to see them. And I have to tell you, when I hear women talking like this about themselves, I want to fucking scream. It drives me batshit crazy.

Because seriously, in the history of pool parties, I don't think anyone has ever been offended because someone else's legs were too pale. Like, is that really how you want to live your life? But the thing is I'm in the minority here in my beliefs. When she said that, the other women in the group were nodding and saying, oh yeah, I'm in the same boat.

Another woman was like, yeah, I'm going to have to do a cleanse first so I can lose some of the cellulite on my thighs because nobody needs to see that. What? Why is this even a thing? Oh my god, I had to walk away because I refuse to participate in conversations where women are bonding

Ep #161: 3 Steps to Body Confidence

over beating the shit out of themselves over a little cellulite. And it happens all the time.

So please, before I step down off my soapbox, if you say shit like this to yourself, I want you to knock it the fuck off. Stop perpetuating this as a topic of conversation. We are better than that. If someone starts it up with you, you tell them, “I’m going to walk away if you don’t stop criticizing yourself. If you keep saying this rude shit to yourself, I’m out of here.”

I mean it. Because you know what, if we stop normalizing it, people will stop talking like that. It’s like smoking. You’d go to a bar, everybody was smoking. Now if somebody lights a cigarette in a bar, everybody just stops and stares. Like I imagine the music stopping and the whole bar goes silent and everybody’s looking at that person. It’s not a thing anymore.

So let’s make negative comments about our bodies exactly like that. When your girlfriend talks shit about her stretch marks, I want you to look at her like she just lit up a Marlboro Lite in the middle of a restaurant.

The reason we think we have to hate ourselves so that we can change ourselves, so that we’ll be motivated to change is because most of us have never actually seen a fat person just appreciate themselves without apologizing for their flaws.

The media is so full of fixes for our flaws and we just think that’s the way it’s supposed to be. But if you believe your body has no flaws, you can get to work on accepting it. And then once you accept it, you can decide to change it. And that change is going to be a lot easier, a lot less painful, and a lot more satisfying.

Now, I got another story for you. When I bought my first house, I was 29 years old. It was a tiny little row home in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. The woman I bought it from was 82. She’d lived in that house for 40 years. It

Ep #161: 3 Steps to Body Confidence

was covered with shag carpet and paneling and all kinds of outdated fixtures from the 70s. It literally hadn't been updated in almost 30 years.

None of it was my taste. But I spent every last penny buying that house and I didn't have anything left over to replace the carpet or do nothing except a little bit of paint. So that's what I did. I painted a couple rooms. But do you think I spent every evening sitting in my living room being grossed out by the shag carpet and paneling?

Do you think I thought about, oh, I can't be happy in my house until I get the floor done or get new light fixtures? Hell no. I was so damn happy because I bought that house with my own money. It was all mine. I did what I could when I could, but it didn't stop me from loving the shag carpet because it was my shag carpet.

I didn't sit there staring at it thinking, oh I can't have friends over because my carpet is so ugly. Fuck that. I had friends over, we hung out, we laughed, we talked, we played cards right there on that stupid carpet. We made great memories, not despite the shag carpet, but maybe even because of it.

That carpet didn't make me love my little house any less. It was part of that house. But just because I was okay with living with the gold shag carpet for a while didn't keep me from changing it later on and that's how I want you to think about your body. It might not be exactly what you want right now, but you can still love it and appreciate it while you work on changing it.

You think that hating your body is what motivates you to change it, but the opposite is true. When you think your body is gross or parts of your body are gross, how do you feel? What's the emotion you feel? It's dislike, it's shame. And when you have those emotions, how do you show up for yourself? Definitely not with love. Definitely not as your best self.

Ep #161: 3 Steps to Body Confidence

You're most likely trying to starve yourself thinner like some kind of get skinny quick deal or lose 10 pounds in a week or whatever, or you're overexercising and getting injured. So that's what hate gets you. But when you think about your body as your home, as the only one you get, and you decide to care for it so you can live your best life, you feel love, you feel motivation. And those emotions will inspire you to change your body.

So you can't really hate yourself thin, but you can love yourself to a different body. Now, tool number three is practice. And here's the thing, my rebellious friends, you did not learn to hate your body overnight. You weren't born that way. Nobody comes out of the womb thinking, oh my god, look at those thigh rolls. No, you learned it over decades and decades of listening to and watching others take their thoughts as your own and then reinforcing them by thinking them again and again and again.

So while you may have been nodding your head though this whole episode, you're like yeah, fuck yeah, that's right, I'm all in, you're like, yes, I love my body. Tomorrow you're going to catch sight of yourself in the mirror and you're going to think, I hate my stomach so much.

That's completely normal. It's your habitual thinking showing up. Your brain is operating exactly as designed. So I want you to practice thinking about yourself differently on purpose, and also, when you catch yourself going back to the old ways, remind yourself, nothing has gone wrong here. I've practiced this so much, of course that's how I'm going to think about my body.

You're just going to redirect and redirect. So when you catch yourself thinking shit thoughts about yourself, bring them back around to different thoughts, but here's what I really want you to do. I want you to spend time actively every single day appreciating yourself and observing without judgment.

Ep #161: 3 Steps to Body Confidence

Normalize what your body looks like. Actually, look at your “flaws” and I’m doing air quotes around the flaws here. Whatever it is about your body that you think is terrible, I can’t live with this another day, I want you to just look at it and just notice it as a characteristic. Not something that needs to be erased. Not something that is standing between you and your happiness.

And this is going to take practice and it’s going to be uncomfortable. I promise you, it’s worth it. The more you do it, the easier it will get. Okay my friends, please don’t forget the fall session of the Roadmap is open for registration right now and this is the last time I’m running it in 2020.

So if you enjoyed this podcast, if something in this episode resonated with you, I want you to know we cover negative self-talk in detail in the Roadmap because here’s the thing; I can teach you to run, but if you’re talking smack to yourself, you’re not going to follow the program. So we got to get the smack talk out of the way as well, and that’s why I include it in the Rebel Runner Roadmap.

So you can join at rebelrunnerroadmap.com. And again, this is the last time I’m running it in 2020. I can’t say this enough because I know there’s going to be some of you that email me in October and go, “Okay, so when is the next round starting?” And I’ll be like, oh, it’s January and you’ll be like, that’s so far away.

I’m telling you now. Just go to rebelrunnerroadmap.com to sign up. Do it right now before the next podcast in your playlist starts playing. Now, get your ass out here and run and I will see you next week.

Oh, and one last thing. If you enjoyed listening to this episode, you have to check out the Rebel Runner Roadmap. It’s a 30-day online program that will teach you exactly how to start running, stick with it, and become the runner you’ve always wanted to be. Head on over to rebelrunnerroadmap.com to join. I’d love to be a part of your journey.