

Ep #35: From Setback to Bounce-Back



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Jill Angie

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Ep #35: From Setback to Bounce-Back

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.

Hey rebels, you are listening to episode number 35 of *The Not Your Average Runner Podcast*. I'm your host, Jill Angie, and today we have a lot to talk about. First up, I have a really fun story about somebody's first 5K that happened over the past weekend. I'm going to tell you all about that. And then a listener actually reached out and asked if I could talk about how to start running again after failure. And oh boy, if the Facebook comments that I see in the podcast community are any indication, I know that there really are a lot of you out there struggling with this very issue.

For example, if you've ever heard yourself say, "I can't believe how much worse I am than I was a year ago," or, "I told everyone I was doing that 5K and then I came in last and I'm so embarrassed," or if you've ever said, "That was such a crappy run, why do I even bother?" well, this really is the episode for you.

And I also have a first for you. I'm actually going to follow up on one of my latest obsessions that happened in episode 31. So whether you're a brand-new runner, an experienced pro, or maybe even just thinking about it because all your friends are doing it, you are in the right place.

So before we dive right in, I have to tell you a story. This past weekend, my boyfriend, Andy, ran his first 5K. And he actually just started running in January, if you can believe it, and if you've tuned in to any of my Facebook lives in the podcast community lately, you know that he didn't exactly love our first run together. It was really cold and I dragged him outside and made him do some 30 second intervals with me.

[The Not Your Average Runner Podcast](#) with Jill Angie

Ep #35: From Setback to Bounce-Back

And of course, at that point in time, he didn't have any running gear so he was running in like, 40-degree weather in basketball shorts and a pair of really old shoes. And he was pretty miserable but he was a good sport about it. And he loves me, he did it to make me happy, and like, about once a week for a few weeks we would go out and do some intervals together.

And then something kind of weird happened. Pretty soon, he was asking me to go running instead of the other way around. And fast forward to this past weekend, about seven months later, six months later, and he's now running a little over a nine-minute mile and he just did his first 5K without stopping.

I mean, it's kind of amazing. That first run that we did was probably about a 17-minute per mile pace, and he was really miserable the whole time. And now, just a few months later, he cannot get enough of it. Now, he did lose a lot of weight during that time, which definitely helped, but I really think the magic was that he was just willing to go run without any expectations instead of judging himself for not being as fast as he thought he should be, or whatever we tell ourselves.

And believe me ladies, guys do the same kinds of - they have the same kind of negative self-talk that women do. They just - they don't share it as much as we do because they have to put on the brave face, right? So this is one of the things I love about Andy is that he's willing to just not judge himself and really that is where the magic happens.

So he never thought to himself that he should be running any differently than he was in that very moment, and as we're going to talk about later today, judgment really is the only thing that holds us back. So if you can get out of your own way like that, there really is no telling what you can accomplish.

Ep #35: From Setback to Bounce-Back

So anyway, I'm super proud of Andy and his 35-minute 5K, but I do need to clarify something. Because the reason I'm proud of Andy is not because of how fast he is, but because it's something he's excited about and he's proud of. Once he started running and got pretty consistent with it, like, that was his first goal is just to be consistent, and then he decided he wanted to start working on his speed and he wanted to try and run a 5K without stopping.

And it's something that he's chosen to do for his own reasons, and I'm just so proud of him because he has set goals and he works his ass off to make them happen. It has nothing to do with how fast he ran, nothing to do with the fact that he did his first 5K without walk breaks. But everything to do with just the way he is going about achieving it.

Because I'm somebody - and I know I've shared this on the podcast before. Like, I actually love the pace that I run at, I'm really happy with it, I like taking walk breaks, there's really not anything about my running that I want to change. I legit just love doing it the way I do it, which is why I'm always talking to you guys about not being so concerned with your pace.

But if pace is a goal that you have, whatever that goal is, make sure that it reflects what you want and not what somebody else thinks is the right thing to do. Because so often I think we set a goal of, "Oh, I need to hit a certain pace because that's what a real runner does," or, "I need to run without stopping because that's what a real runner does." And I just want to reinforce that a real runner does what a real runner wants to do.

So it has nothing to do with anybody else's opinion, whether it's a magazine or the trainer at the gym, or your brother-in-law that's sitting on the couch and is telling you how you should run when he's never run a step in his life, like, it has nothing to do with any of that and all to do with what you want to do and why you want to do it.

Ep #35: From Setback to Bounce-Back

So I just wanted to share that because I am super proud of him, I want to give a shoutout to him about just how committed he's been to his own success this year, and just to remind everybody that when you commit, when you go all in on yourself, there's just no telling what you can accomplish. So congratulations, Andy, and thanks for showing us what it's like to commit and achieve your goals and do it in a way that feels great to you. Oh, and I love you.

Okay, real quick before we dive into this week's main topic. I need to follow up on my latest obsession from about four episodes ago, and that is Stitch Fix. And I do need to let you know that Stitch Fix is actually sponsoring this episode of the podcast. But as you know, I never recommend anything on this show that I don't absolutely love and use myself.

Because when I love something, I cannot keep it to myself. I have to tell everybody, that's just how I am. And that's why I have a whole section on my show about my latest obsessions. So Stitch Fix is really no exception to that rule. I am legit obsessed with them right now, and I actually just - I've gotten two fixes - fixes, you call them, like, it's called get your fix. So I've gotten two fixes so far, and I have a third one coming on the way.

So I want to talk about what they are and why you're going to love them as much as I do. Now, everyone likes the idea of having something new to wear. Maybe it's trying a new trend, right? But finding clothes that you love in styles that you love, that also fit you and your budget can be tough. So what is the easy solution to style that fits just right? It's Stitch Fix.

Now, I told you a few episodes ago that I used this service a few years back but I was right sort of at the edge of the size range that they offered at the time, and even though I really loved the outfits they created for me, more often than not, the clothes would be too small and I ended up having to send them back.

Ep #35: From Setback to Bounce-Back

But now their sizes go up to a 24 and 3X, so I signed up again and I've already gotten two boxes. I've got my third on the way. I'm going to talk about my first box today. My second box I'm still deciding what I'm going to keep and what I'm going to send back, but I'm going to talk to you about today's box.

But just real quick, a quick overview. Stitch Fix is an online personal styling service that finds and delivers clothes to fit your body, budget, and lifestyle. So this means that you tell your stylist all the details about your personal style, your body size, your proportions, and then you tell her your budget, and she picks clothing that she thinks you will love. So it is super easy because I do not like complicated things. You do it all online.

It takes, I don't know, maybe five to 10 minutes to set it up, and then you tell Stitch Fix when to send your first box, and here's the great part: you can subscribe and have a box come like, once a month, once a week, whenever you want, or you can just go in and request one whenever you want. It's really flexible that way, there's no, like, agreement that you have to get one every so often. It's just like, whenever you want, you can do it that way.

So my first box came last week and first of all, they sent me outfits, which was incredibly fun. Everything sort of coordinated together, everything fit me perfectly. Like, to a tee. And that is a big change from just ordering stuff online from just a store because you know, you don't necessarily know how those things are going to fit. So with Stitch Fix, your stylist knows about your body. She knows how you're proportioned, so she can actually pick clothes that she knows will fit you just right.

So what I got was a really, really cute pair of white crop jeans. I got a dress, and then I got two tops and a necklace. And you can check out my Instagram to see all of them. I love them. So both of the tops went with the jeans, the necklace went with both of the tops, so basically it came - I got

[The Not Your Average Runner Podcast](#) with Jill Angie

Ep #35: From Setback to Bounce-Back

three outfits. I got the jeans that came with two tops, so that was two outfits, and then I got the dress. And the necklace went with both the tops. It didn't necessarily go with the dress, but that's totally fine because I've got a million necklaces. I love accessories.

Anyway, so the jeans, the necklace, and one of the tops were right up my alley. Definitely items I would have picked up off a rack or I would have chosen off online to try on, but the other top of the dress were not pieces I would have chosen for myself, but I tried them on and I was very pleasantly surprised. Especially the Kelly-green top, which is a color I don't usually have in my closet. It's not something I ever pick out for myself, but I was surprised that I actually liked it.

So I loved all of it, I kept the whole box, and because I kept the whole box, I got 25% off, and you can use - I'm going to give you a code to do the same thing for yourself. And the thing is, Stitch Fix carries some pretty amazing brands, including Eloquii, Universal Standard, two of my favorites, and City Chic, and they're always adding more. And like I said, they carry a wide range of sizes. They go all the way up to a 24 and a 3X. But they also go all the way down to a zero and XS. So they really fit almost all bodies.

So if you want to get started with your own fix, just go to [stitchfix.com/selflove](https://www.stitchfix.com/selflove). Tell them your sizes, tell them what style you like and how much you want to spend. And this is my favorite part. You then get paired with your very own personal stylist who takes that information and hand picks five items to send your way. It's all delivered right to your home, you try everything on and you pay for only what you love and you return the rest.

Shipping, exchanges, and returns are all free, and like I told you earlier, there's no subscription required. You can sign up to receive scheduled shipments or you can get your fix whenever you want. So if you're ready to

Ep #35: From Setback to Bounce-Back

up your style game with Stitch Fix, get started today and get 25% off when you keep all five items in your box.

So just go to stitchfix.com/selflove. That's stitchfix.com/selflove. And you can always head over to my Instagram, check out the outfits that I got, and I hope that you'll join me in this latest obsession and do the same thing, and like, post your stuff on Insta, tag me, tag Stitch Fix, let us know how much you love it.

Okay, like I said, this week's topic was a suggestion from April, who responded to one of my Friday love note emails in which I asked you guys what you wanted to hear me talk about. And if you're not getting my Friday love notes, by the way, you can sign up for them at notyouraveragerunner.com/lovenote and the link to that will be in the show notes.

So April asked if I could talk about starting over with running after a failure. And honestly, this topic couldn't have come at a better time because last week on episode 33, we talked about how to coach yourself. So this is just a follow up on the skills that I taught you last week. So today we're really going to talk about failure and comebacks in detail.

So first of all, what exactly is failure? Now, on a purely technical level, failure means you didn't get the result you desired. That's literally all it means, okay? In other words, you decided to try something, maybe do a half marathon, and you didn't do it. That's literally the circumstance here.

Failure doesn't really hurt us. Failure is experimentation. It's what's necessary to do new things. I mean, think about some of the things in your life that you take for granted right now like the lightbulb. So y'all know I was down in Fort Myers, Florida several weeks ago and I toured the Thomas Edison estate down there. And what I learned was that he tried something like a thousand versions of the light bulb before he made one that worked.

[The Not Your Average Runner Podcast](#) with Jill Angie

Ep #35: From Setback to Bounce-Back

It took years. He would try one and it didn't work. And he would tweak it and try again, and it didn't work. And he would tweak it and try again, and it didn't work. And so on for a thousand tries. One thousand. That's some dedication, y'all.

So I'm sure that he got discouraged along the way, right? But can you imagine if he had just said, "Fuck it, I'm no good at this, it will never work. I'm such a loser, the entire world is laughing at me." I mean, not only would we not have light bulbs, but everything that was invented in this world because of his ideas and the data that he gathered from his failures would not exist.

People, we would not have smart phones. I mean, come on. How would we track our runs? But honestly, Edison's impact came not only from all of his successes, right? His impact on the world came not from his successes but from his failures. He actually said, this is a quote of his, "I have not failed. I have just found 10,000 ways that don't work."

So he was gathering data from all of those failures. So in my opinion, failure is a pretty neutral thing or even something that we want to do, right? But I think so often that we take that circumstance, which if you recall from episode 33 is essentially data or facts that everyone could agree upon. We take that circumstance and we make it mean something.

So for the example of running, you know, if we don't finish that half marathon, we think, "Oh, I'm not good at running," or, "I suck at training," or that other people are judging me or laughing at me or thinking badly about me because I set out to run a half marathon and I didn't do it. So we take the fact of whether or not we crossed the finish line and we turn it into this big thing where we didn't get what we want so we throw ourselves a pity party.

Ep #35: From Setback to Bounce-Back

And it might sound harsh for me to say that, but literally that's what's happening. You didn't get what you want so you throw yourself a pity party. It's not fair, this is too hard, I've lost my mojo, running isn't fun anymore, why do I even bother, right? All of those thoughts that we think when we don't get what we want, when we fail at some sort of running goal that we've set out for ourselves.

And those thoughts really hurt, don't they? Here's the important thing, rebels. My rebels. They're just thoughts. They are literally opinions that you have about yourself. The fact that you didn't finish a race doesn't mean anything but that you didn't finish the race. What you make it mean about yourself is what causes you all the pain.

So failure is the neutral circumstance. You make it mean, I don't know, that the sky is falling because you didn't get what you wanted. Like, when I put it that way, it kind of sounds silly, doesn't it? It is like that pity party, throwing a tantrum. I wanted to run a half marathon, I didn't do it and now I'm going to throw an internal temper tantrum about it and I'm going to quit running because that'll show 'em, right?

So whether you didn't run your race because you got injured or because you didn't train properly or whatever, for whatever reason, it's no big deal unless you make it a big fucking hairy deal. And here's the other thing that I love about failure. We can create failure out of nothing, right? We have a crappy run and we make it mean that we are failing at running, or we come in last in a race or somebody else is faster than us, or we're super excited about our running and then somebody says something like, "You should be faster than that by now," and we decide, of course I'm going to believe this person's opinion about me and we make that mean we're failing.

So this is another tough love episode, rebels. Here it is: stop making failure a bad thing. I mean, this is everything right here. Failure is a step forward. Failure is data. Failure is learning another way that something doesn't

[The Not Your Average Runner Podcast](#) with Jill Angie

Ep #35: From Setback to Bounce-Back

work. You may need to fail 100 times before you're successful. That doesn't mean anything about you unless you make it mean something.

I mean, I would like to make it mean that I'm tenacious, that I do not quit until I get what I want, that I am willing to put myself out there, that I'm willing to fail, that I'm willing to do whatever it takes to get what I want, right? So I mean, we actually try and fail things all the time without calling it failure. But there's something about running that is really powerful and I think the more you want something, if you don't get it, the more you say, "Oh, I failed," instead of, "I've just figured out ways that it's not going to work."

So think about when you're trying to learn a new skill like playing the piano, right? You don't expect that you're going to be great at it the first time out. You practice, and you practice, and you practice, you make a million mistakes. When you hit a wrong note, you don't quit. You don't say, "I hit a wrong note, obviously I should not be playing the piano." No, you just keep repeating the motions, you keep doing the drills, you keep trying the piece over and over again until you get it.

Or babies. Think about when a toddler is learning to walk. It takes forever. She falls down over and over and over. It can take months. Now, if a toddler gave up after falling down a few times, like, if she just like, sat down and cried and just - in her little toddler language was like, "Obviously I'm terrible at this, I quit," she'd never learn to walk and you would have to carry that kid around forever. Like, she'd be 18 years old going off to college, you'd be pushing her around in a giant stroller because she refuses to try walking again because she fell down a few times.

It's silly to think of it that way but that's literally what we're doing what we say, "Oh, I didn't get what I wanted, I didn't get the result I wanted in running so I should probably quit." And that's the whole comeback piece. We think that coming back from a failure is hard, and really, it's just our

[The Not Your Average Runner Podcast](#) with Jill Angie

Ep #35: From Setback to Bounce-Back

thoughts telling us like, "Oh, you should quit because you didn't get what you wanted."

That's what you're doing when you say, "Oh, I'm not meant to be a runner," because the first few times I tried it, it was hard. Or it felt awkward. Or you only did it for 15 seconds and then you gave up. You're basically deciding you're going to be a giant 18-year-old in a stroller at college.

So failure is really never the problem. The problem is when you define it as a personal flaw. That if we try something and we don't get what we want, it means something about us. It means something bad about us, right? That people will have opinions about us based on what we've attempted and not done. We think, "Oh, somebody might judge me for trying and failing. They might think I'm less of a person, that I'm less worthy because I tried and failed."

First of all, if they do, they're a jerk. And second of all, most people will be like, "Damn, that's pretty awesome that she tried that and I hope she does it again because I think the next time she's going to make it," right? But we hold ourselves to such a high standard that we only accept perfection and success, and that's really - it's like an all or nothing mentality.

Remember a few episodes, we talked about getting a flat tire and then saying, "Fuck it, I'm slashing the other three." Like, nobody does that. But that really is what going out for a couple runs and it's hard and saying I'm going to quit, that's what that's like. It's perfectionism. And perfectionism is actually a fear of failure. If you can't do it perfectly on the first try, it's not worth doing because you're afraid of how you'll feel if you fail. You're afraid of how you'll feel if other people think badly about you.

So first of all, other people are going to think badly about you no matter what, you can't control that so let's just drop that. But if you're afraid of how you're going to make yourself feel if you fail, you'll never try. So right now,

[The Not Your Average Runner Podcast](#) with Jill Angie

Ep #35: From Setback to Bounce-Back

you think it's not optional to feel like shit if you fail at something. You think you have to. You think that it's automatic, and nothing could be further from the truth.

You're just really good right now at making failure mean things about you that you don't like. You've practiced thinking that way so much that it's automatic. But you can choose differently. This is the good news. If you have a crappy run, that does not make you a crappy runner. It doesn't mean you need to stop running. All it means is that's how you ran on that day under those conditions. Those are the circumstances.

The problem is not that you're not making progress. The problem is not that you're slow, the problem is not that you trained for and didn't finish a race. Like I said in episode 33, the root cause of any problem is always our thinking. It's not the circumstance but the way we think about it that is the problem. It's what we make it mean that is the problem.

So here's what you need to do. Recognize what you are making failure mean about you. Failure is neutral. The fact might be that you haven't gone for a run in six months. It's your thoughts about that that is keeping you from getting back out there. So coming back from a failure is all about your thoughts. So spend some time dividing your circumstances, which again, are the absolute facts, from your thoughts.

And I want to do a couple of examples from you. So this is a common one that I hear all the time. I started the Disney Princess marathon or whatever Disney marathon it is that you went to the start line and you got pulled from the course at mile 16. The fact is, you completed 16 miles and the balloon ladies or the sag wagon, whatever you call it, said, "Hey, you need to get in the van, we're going to take you to the finish line," right?

So you can have any number of thoughts about that. A lot of people think, "I had no business showing up for that marathon, I was undertrained, I

[The Not Your Average Runner Podcast](#) with Jill Angie

Ep #35: From Setback to Bounce-Back

guess a marathon just isn't something I'm capable of, I'm a crappy runner, I'll never do a marathon, I'll never finish, I'll never get what I want."

A lot of people think that way, and you're going to feel pretty shitty after thinking those thoughts. And then here is the magic, or lack of magic I guess. When you think those thoughts and you feel shitty about it, you likely are not going to be enthusiastic about running, which means you're going to run less, you're not going to get stronger, and basically, you're going to prove that you had no business showing up for that marathon in the first place.

Because our thoughts create our feelings and our feelings drive our actions. So if you're thinking shitty thoughts, you're going to take shitty actions, or you're going to avoid taking action. Now, you can also have thoughts like, "This is attempt number one and I'm willing to do whatever it takes to cross that finish line someday. I made it to mile 16 and that's farther than I've ever gone before in a race. I'm going to figure out why I didn't finish and I'm going to learn from it for the next race."

So when you think all of those things, you feel differently, you feel better, you might feel encouraged, you might feel determined. That's going to lead you to keep running and keep improving. That's going to lead you to come back after failure. So it's all about your thinking.

Okay, here's another one: let's say you told your sister you were going to run three times a week. And then the fact of the matter is, for the past 10 weeks, you've done that twice. Now, again, you have a million thoughts available, and you can think something like, "I always quit on myself and I never follow through on my commitments, or my sister thinks I'm a failure because I didn't do what I said I was going to do." You could think those things. You're going to feel awful. Maybe embarrassed, maybe ashamed, maybe discouraged.

Ep #35: From Setback to Bounce-Back

And when you feel that way, you're far less likely to keep running, right? But when you think to yourself something like, "I did two out of those 10 weeks, that's a start. I wonder what went right on those weeks that I can learn from and I wonder what happened in the other weeks that I can adjust." That puts you in a place of figuring out how to make something work instead of feeling shitty because it didn't.

So the bottom line is that starting over after failure happens because of your thoughts. Your thoughts create your feelings and your feelings drive your actions. Starting over is an action. So if your thoughts create feelings of shame, discouragement, frustration, you're going to stay stuck and you're not going to start over. Or if you do start over, you're going to do it kind of in a half assed way and you're not going to get the result you want.

So we need to think thoughts that create feelings of motivation, of curiosity, of determination. These are feelings that drive the action of starting over. So managing your mind, managing your thoughts on purpose is the single most important thing you can do to stay consistent with your running. And I know I told you about this before, but consistency is one of the key pillars of the Rebel Runner Formula. Without consistency, it doesn't - nothing else matters. You have to run to get better at running.

But motivation is not a life force. It is not something that comes down from the heavens and somebody touches our head and says you get to be motivated today. Motivation is a feeling created by your thoughts, which means you are in control of your motivation. So you need to think thoughts that create that motivation and you need to think them on purpose. And this takes practice, just like any skill.

So in case you've been hiding under a rock, I know you haven't but I also know that you've got a lot of information coming at you and so I'm just going to repeat one more time. I want to tell you about Run Your Best Life. This is a coaching group that I created, that I run where we use a lot of the

[The Not Your Average Runner Podcast](#) with Jill Angie

Ep #35: From Setback to Bounce-Back

tools. Actually, all of the tools that I teach in this podcast, plus a bunch more.

And one of those tools is managing your mind in this way so that you can get the fuck out of your own way and start running. I use these techniques with my clients in Run Your Best Life every single week live. We do this on live coaching calls, and it has been life changing for many of them. They're more consistent with their running, they're able to shift their negative self-talk to a much nicer place. In other words, they're able to stop being assholes to themselves.

So I really - I invite you to try it and see it for yourself because honestly, managing your mind - like, your brain is the most important training tool, the most powerful training tool that you have, so let's leverage it. So check out Run Your Best Life at runyourbestlife.com. Join us, see what it's like, and I swear, it's a big fucking deal to be able to manage your mind and I'm going to teach you how to do all that in Run Your Best Life. So join us there, and that is it for this week, rebels.

Everything that I mentioned in this episode can be found in the show notes at notyouraveragerunner.com/35, including the link to get 25% off your first Stitch Fix box. And again, that link is stitchfix.com/selflove.

And if you have decided that you are ready to get started with running, if today is the day that all of my just constant talking about it has tipped you over the edge, I want you to grab your free jumpstart plan over at notyouraveragerunner.com/start. Until next week, rebels. I'll talk to you later. Bye.

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

[The Not Your Average Runner Podcast](#) with Jill Angie