

Ep #46: How to Believe in Yourself



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

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.

Hey rebels, you are listening to episode number 46 of *The Not Your Average Runner Podcast*. I'm your host, Jill Angie, and before we jump into the podcast, I just need to tell you how much fun we are having right now in Rebel Runner Unleashed. And this is the training program for the New Orleans half marathon. I know I've been talking about it on the webinars and a little bit here on the podcast, but oh my god, it is off the hook.

So the official training is just getting underway. We're about five months out from race day, training plans are in place, everything's ready to go, everybody's really excited and nervous, of course, and they're getting to know each other in the group as we get ready to really dive into the training at the end of September.

So right now I'm busy planning our very first retreat, which will be in November, right here in King of Prussia, and we are going to be working on visualization, on mindset, on long run fueling, race day planning, we're going to get fitted for shoes. We're going to do all that stuff and we actually have a chef coming to do some demos on how to make your own race fuel and all that kind of stuff. And also, we're going to be having a lot of fun that weekend. So I'm super excited to take everyone through some deep coaching work so that when the inner mean girl voices start up, all of my runners will be prepared to manage them and turn them around. Just so fucking excited about this.

Now, there is still time to get in on this kickass life-changing training program. You can do that by applying at talktojill.com. Just sign up for a quick 10-minute call with me to see if this is the right next step for you

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because I'll tell you what, over the next several months, I am going to give you little snippets of how the training is going and how much fun everybody's having. And if you're like, on the fence right now and you're thinking, I don't know, maybe, maybe not, I don't want you to miss out. I want you to know for sure if this is the right thing, so just go ahead, sign up for a 10-minute call. Talktojill.com, we'll chat. If it makes sense for us to progress to the next level and discuss whether this long-term program is a good idea from you, we'll do that. But 10-minute call, no obligation, we're just going to talk about you and see what's going on.

So that's that. And now it's time for our warm up. So today's quote is from Pinterest, and I - again, this week I don't have an author for this quote but it's a really good one. And what I'm going to do - the reason I picked it is I want to tell you a little story about a moment in my life where I had to do some really hard work and implement this belief system for myself. And so the quote is, "Your reality is a reflection of your strongest belief."

And like I said, I chose this quote for a few reasons because up until my early 40s, I had a lot of beliefs about myself that sort of held me back from pursuing the things I really wanted to do. Like, I've always been someone with a million big dreams and really big fucking dreams, you guys. And sometimes I would take half-hearted action on them. Most of the time I just let them be just dreams, right? Just, oh, it would be nice if that happens someday, but I really didn't have a belief that they were things that I could be, that I could do for myself.

Like, they were basically just pipe dreams, right? They were nice in concept but nothing that I really thought was possible for me. But there was something about turning 40 that really made me start to think a little differently, that sort of cracked open that door of possibility. And I think part of it was working with a personal trainer and hearing the things that she was saying to me about what was possible for me. She was disagreeing with my inner mean girl voice and she talked to me enough about how I

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could change my life and how I could be a different person, I could do those things that I wanted to do. She believed in me enough that I started to think, "Oh, well maybe. Maybe she's not crazy. Maybe she's right, maybe there are things that I could do that I didn't believe I could do before."

So what I decided to do was I signed up for a sprint triathlon and my brain was like, you have no business doing this. My brain had many things to say about it. But I decided there was a little tiny voice in there that was like, you know what, it's possible, you might be able to do this. So I signed up for a sprint triathlon and I had, I don't know, I had like, probably 10 months to train. I had a long time to train, and I just started training.

So here's the thing: it was hard. I am not going to lie to you about that. It was very hard. I doubted myself constantly along the way. I was afraid of so many things. So when I signed up for that triathlon, my brain immediately went to work telling me about all the things that were going to go wrong, all the horrible things that could happen, all the reasons I was going to fail.

So I'll give you the short list. The ones I can remember off the top of my head but I promise you there were so many more. First of all, swimming in open water with hundreds of people. That terrified me. Riding a bike, which I had not actually done in years and I didn't have a bike at the time. So I was like, how am I going to ride a bike for - I think it was 15 miles for that particular race. I had to learn how to ride with my feet clipped into the pedals because I was like, well, that's what triathletes do so I got to figure that out. Really skinny tires. I was like, I don't know. Those skinny tires - I weighed almost 250 pounds and I was afraid I would break the tires. I was afraid I would break the bike, to be honest.

My ass was not happy about being on that really hard skinny bike seat and again, 250 pounds, that was a lot of weight to be sitting on that seat. And so I was not happy about that and it hurt like a mother for the first probably

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month or two. I just had bruises on my butt from that bike seat. But I kept at it. I also had to learn how to fix a flat tire, which I did not - I was convinced that I would probably fuck that up. I had to learn how to put my chain back on my bike when it fell off. I had to learn how to - silly little things like learning how to load my bike onto the bike rack of my car.

First of all, I had to go shopping for a bike rack. Like, all of these things my brain was like, it's too much, you're never going to do it, but I just kept saying, alright, like, there's a little kernel in me that believed it. I had to learn how to change gears on a bike. Again, like, I hadn't ridden a bike since I was in high school, I didn't really know how to do any of that stuff and just the whole concept of fixing the problems that you have on the bike, it's like - I was like, well, when I'm training I can just, if I have an issue with like, pumping up a tire I could just ask my husband, my husband at the time, "Hey can you help me with this.?" But you know, if you're on your bike and you're out on the race course, like, you can't call your husband to come get you.

Like, you have two options. Give up and walk your bike back or like, find one of the support vans to drive you back, or fix it yourself and keep going. And so that like, I had to learn all those skills because if that happened while I was on the course, I wanted to be able to fix it myself. I had to figure out how to transition from swimming to biking to running without forgetting something, how to get into a wetsuit, how to get out of a wetsuit. Figuring out what gear I was going to need, how was I going to pack it all in one bag. There are so many logistics to a triathlon, people. There's a lot. And I couldn't imagine figuring out all of that, like, learning how to do all of that and how to swim and cycle and run and do all three of those things on the same day.

Like, my brain was like, this is never going to work, this is a terrible idea, you're too fat to do this, you're too old to do this, you don't know what you're doing, and yet I had this little belief in my brain that was like, no, no,

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you can figure this out. So I asked my trainer, I asked friends who had done triathlons before, I asked my husband at the time, I read books. And by the way, *Slow Fat Triathlete* by Jayne Williams was my bible. Like, literally that book got me through so much stuff because there's so much good information in there.

Because this is really - I researched the internet a little bit but this was before Facebook was like, so popular, before there were Facebook groups, before there was like, all of this online community for plus size athletes that we have now. This was like, 10 years ago, so I was doing a lot of it on my own. So I researched, I read books, I asked people, I had a trainer, and I just practiced and practiced and practiced.

So the thing is like, this belief that I had really carried me through the tough times because I was the only plus size person I knew that was training for a triathlon. The only other plus size person out there that I had as a model was Jayne Williams that wrote the book, *Slow Fat Triathlete*. But she lives in like, California. I couldn't exactly just call her up and say, "Hey, complete stranger, can you help me out?" So I read her book and I read it and I read it and I read it but I didn't have like, anybody that I could talk to and say, "Hey, you've done a triathlon 100 pounds overweight. How did you get through it?" That just didn't exist back then so I really needed my belief more than anything else to get through that race.

And another worry that I had was that I had bitten off way more than I could chew because I mean, I had a lot of evidence that training for a triathlon was a really stupid idea. Not even just because I was overweight but just in general, right? People are always like, "Oh, did you hear about that guy who died during the triathlon two years ago?" And I'm just like, oh, wow, maybe this is a really stupid idea. A lot of people in my life believed that to be true and I was very tempted many times to take on their beliefs and just say, "You know what, you're right, fuck it, I'm not going to do it."

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But here's the thing: this quote, "Your reality is a reflection of your strongest belief," I had to nurture that belief that I was going to be a triathlete. I just had to nurture it and let it grow so that it became my strongest belief. To get through that race, my strongest belief needed to be that I was going to finish no matter what, that I was going to figure it all out and make it work somehow.

And there were doubts along the way. There were so many doubts. I've just listed a whole bunch of them for you but I kept coming back to my strong belief, which was that I was going to finish that race even if I had to crawl across the finish line. I had to believe it ahead of time before I could do it. I had to believe in advance that I was a triathlete before I could actually become a triathlete. And I know that sounds so crazy but just bear with me. I promise we're coming to something here.

So that's basically what I did. I just believed it into reality. So on race day, it was really cloudy. The river was a little bit choppy, there was actually talk, like, rumors that they were going to call the race because they were calling for rain and thunderstorms and lightning and folks, rebels, I was legit terrified because that's when my brain really went to work on all the possible disastrous scenarios like, I could get kicked in the head while I was swimming, I could swallow water, I could lose my goggles and like, expose my eyes to the river water, I could get swept downstream. Like, I legitimately was like, I'm probably going to die on this swim.

And you know, or worse yet, because this is Philly that we're talking about like, what if there was already a dead body in the water that surfaced while I was swimming and I saw it, had a heart attack and then I died right there? Like, I went to some pretty crazy ass places, some really, really dark places. And here's the thing: I was in the very last wave, so I waited there in my wetsuit. I racked my bike at 5:15am, and then I had to stay in the holding area for over two hours before my wave got in the water. So I watched every other person get in the water, get in the water, all of these

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really thin, very fit women, and nobody that looked like me. Not one single person that looked like me.

And I had plenty of time to come up with some pretty dark scenarios, right? My belief in myself waivered a lot during that two hours. Probably I like, back and forth, back and forth, this is crazy, no, you've got to do this, this is a terrible idea, no, you've got to do this. I unzipped my wetsuit, I took it half off, decided I was crazy, I'm going to go home, and then I put it back on and I zipped it back up. And then I unzipped it and then I re-zipped it. I was pacing and muttering to myself. I'm sure I looked like a lunatic. I really could not decide whether I wanted to believe my success stories, my like, oh, I'm a triathlete, this is going to happen, or my failure stories because I had - at that moment, I probably had even doses of both.

Actually, probably had more failure stories than success stories. So eventually like, this arguing was just going on and on and it was time for my wave to hop in the water and so I'm like, alright, you can still back out, you can jump in the water and you could still back out. You can jump in the water and then decide. Until that gun goes off like, you still have the option to quit this race.

And so I got in the water with everybody else in my wave and like, literally we had to jump in. So it wasn't like a nice little beach where you walk in and slowly you get in the water. You just go over to the edge and you jump in and then I realized like, crap, my feet aren't even touching the ground. So I was like, okay, I told myself I could hop out of the water, I could like, change my mind once I got in the water and then I realized that that would involve somebody, some poor volunteer on the side of the river like, literally hoisting my 242 pound wetsuited ass out of the river.

Because there was no way for me to just - there was no ladder, in other words. There was just like a muddy side of the river and it wasn't a beach, it was like a drop off. So here's what's really crazy and kind of

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embarrassing as I'm telling you this story: I was on the swim team in high school. I'm a really strong swimmer. When I was 16, I even swam two miles. Like, that's pretty far. I know how to swim, I've been doing it since I was maybe two years old. I mean, really little. There was no reason for me to think that I could not do this 600-yard course.

During my training I had done two practice one-mile open water swims as part of my training. I knew what it was going to be like, I knew I could do it and yet I was panicking like a beast. That is how powerful our brains are when we sense fear. You just can't trust your mind in that kind of situation. There's so much nonsense and lying flying around in my brain but in that moment in the water it was go time and I had - this is how my brain positioned the decision: which is going to be worse for you, Jill? The embarrassment of having to get pulled out of the water because you've changed your mind, or the embarrassment of dying in the water?

Legit, this is what I weighed out. I'm like, well, you know, they'll have to lift me up by my arms and like, I'm like, soaking wet and I've got this wetsuit and I'm going to look really stupid and everybody's going to see me and what if like, I'm too slippery and they drop me and I land back in the water and that's going to be horrible. Like, all of that versus gosh, I could drown.

So I chose drowning. I decided I would rather drown than go through the embarrassment of getting pulled up out of the water. So I mean, there was so much drama around it but - and looking around, literally nobody else seems to have this inner turmoil raging inside them and I started getting embarrassed at being such a chicken about it. And what I know now is that I'm sure at least half of those women, maybe anybody there that it was their first triathlon, they were probably having the same discussions inside their head, so that's another way I'm like - now that I know about self-coaching and about the thought model that I've taught you guys, I know that we all have this drama going on and it's just how we manage it. It's not

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easier for anybody else than it is for us. It's just a matter of how we think about it.

But at that moment in time, I'm like, everybody else looks cool as a cucumber and I need to stop being such a chicken, people do triathlons all the time and live through it. So I decided that I was going to go with the belief that I'd given myself all the way through training, which was, I am a triathlete, this is happening, I'm going to do this. I could just - that I believed it all the way through the training, I'd already gotten through several months of triathlon training and used that belief to get there. Like, there was no reason I couldn't continue using that belief. So I was like, alright, big breath, let's do this.

And I really - I kind of wish I'd known about visualization back then because then I would have had sort of a mantra or a meditation or a scenario to fall back on in that moment but I just didn't. I just had to tell my brain to stand down so that I could get busy doing what I needed to do. I had to believe that race into reality.

Now, I was wearing a wetsuit so I knew I was unlikely to sink. Not for sure that I wouldn't sink but it was unlikely, right? So I also knew if I got into trouble I could just turn over, float on my back and wave to one of the many rescue canoes that were in the river. Like, did I mention that there were tons of people in the river like, ready to rescue anybody that was having trouble? So I could just wave to somebody if I was having trouble. So that was literally my plan. I'm like, okay, I'm just going to start really slow, I'm going to let everybody else go in front of me, I'm going to be dead last in this wave, which meant I was going to be dead last in the entire race and I was okay with that.

I was just going to go slow and steady until I got to the exit, the swim exit, which actually was a beach. Nobody had to pull me out of that end. I could walk out on my own power and then I was like, once I get out of the water

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I'll deal with the next part, which of course was going to be stripping off the wetsuit. But I didn't even think about that. I was like, nope. Just like I would do in any training run, I just was like, I'm going to one foot in front of the other, I'm going to take one stroke after another.

And so the gun went off, the starting gun went off, and deciding to believe in myself in that way quieted down all the voices and so when the gun went off I got busy swimming, slowly and surely, one stroke at a time. And then here's where the magic happened: I totally got lost in the moment. That muscle memory of hours and hours in the pool took over and I just stopped freaking out about all the possible things that could go wrong. My training just kicked in, my training took over. I relaxed and I was like, "Oh, I'm doing this."

It was just amazing. And at one moment I remember looking up out of the water and seeing the Philadelphia skyline in the distance and realizing like, holy shit, I'm doing it, I'm swimming in the Schuylkill River, I'm in my first triathlon, I am a fucking rock star. I didn't let myself get teary because I was wearing goggles and I didn't want them to get all wet on the inside, but really it was a moment. And all my doubts disappeared at least briefly as I soaked in that feeling and I would like to say that for the rest of the race I was as cool as a cucumber. I was not, but I had that moment of like, pure joy and elation and just pride of where I'd gotten myself to and so I kept going back to that moment. Every time I had doubts, and there were a lot of moments, right? I had a lot of freak-outs the rest of that race.

But taking the first leap into the water put me on the path to finishing. It was sort of like, okay, we're going to do this. Like, when you get into a rollercoaster and they strap you in and you're like, like, once that car starts moving, you're not getting off the ride, that's what it was like for me. So I was like, alright, I'm just going to believe I'm a triathlete and I'm going to finish what I started.

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So then it started raining on the bike as I was flying down a steep hill and I had literally never practiced riding in the rain because you know, who goes out for a bike ride in the rain, right? So mental note for you if you're listening to this, if you're going to do a triathlon or if you're planning to run a half marathon or something and it's a rainy day when your training ride or run is scheduled, get the fuck out there and do it anyway because you're going to need it. You might need it on race day.

I had no idea how to ride in the rain so I was terrified flying down this hill, it was pouring down, the roads are slick, I had no idea how to control my bike. I just hung on, tried to relax, but it was quite frankly terrifying. And then later on I actually had to get off my bike and walk it up another hill again in the rain. There were course volunteers that are like, "Are you okay? Do you want to quit? Shall we get the van?" What do they call it? The sag wagon? Anyway, I'm like, no, no, no, I've got this. Like, in my brain I'm like, I'm a triathlete, triathletes finish what they start.

So when I got back to the transition area after the bike to put on my running shoes, of course they're floating in a puddle of water because the rain was coming down so hard. Like, everything was soaked. My gear bag was soaked, everything I'd laid out so nicely on the towel in my spot was basically soaked and starting to float away. I mean, I was legit concerned that my gear would float away including like, my car keys and my cell phone, which were in a Ziploc bag, but I was like, they might disappear. Who knows? Who knows if they'll be back there when I come back from the run?

But again, I was like, triathletes - I'm a triathlete, I'm doing this, I'm going to finish what I started. So the run, it started out, my legs are really tired from the bike. I had to walk for quite a while, probably a quarter of a mile before I could start any run intervals because my legs literally would not do what I wanted them to do, and it was pouring rain. By the last mile, there were only two of us left on the course and I knew that because a volunteer

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helpfully supplied that information to me as I was about a mile from the finish. Somebody was like, "Yeah, you're the last one," or, "There's only one person behind you, you've got this."

I'm like, wow, thanks so much for that completely unhelpful information. I was like, miserable, I was shivering, I had - at that point, I had actually stopped doing my run intervals. I did them for like, the first - I didn't do them for a quarter of a mile, and then I did like, almost two miles of run intervals, but I was so, so tired by that point. Everything hurt, I was cold, I was feeling very sorry for myself in between moments of like, you've got this, and then I would go right into self-pity.

But once I knew there was somebody behind me, I stopped, I waited for her, and it turned out to be my friends, Kathy, which was awesome, so we ended up crossing the finish line holding hands in the pouring rain after almost everybody else had gone home. Fortunately, there was still an announcer there to announce our names because this was women only triathlon. At the time it was called She Rocks. It's owned by another company now but they had a rule that they don't pack up until everybody's crossed the finish line. So there was somebody there for us to announce our names but like, almost everybody else was gone home.

So I - honestly, I'm getting a little teary reliving this moment because this was supposed to be a podcast about the Rebel Runner Formula today and how to find running buddies to help you be successful, the importance of community. As I started telling this story I kind of got off track a little bit but like, I'm emotional remembering this because this was a pivotal moment in my life where I realized if I believed in myself enough I could do fucking anything I wanted to do.

So we're going to cover the community topic next week on the podcast. I'm just going to finish my story. So I just want you to know like, I believed my way across that finish line, right? That race was hard as fuck for me. There

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were plenty of moments on that course when nobody would have batted an eye if I said, "You know what, fuck it, I'm done, I've never ridden my bike in the rain, there's hardly anyone else out here, it could start thunder and lightning at any time, I'm scared, I'm tired, I'm way too fat to be doing this." I could have said any of those things and nobody would have said, "Oh, don't be such a chicken." People would have said, "Yeah, you know what, you're right. You can do it again another day. You can try another time."

But I mean, when you believe in something that hard, when you want something that badly, you just keep going. So I want you to know, this week's quote, "Your reality is a reflection of your strongest belief," I really want you to take this to heart because you become what you believe. If you believe you are a failure, you will be a failure. If you believe you're an athlete, you will be an athlete. It is literally that simple.

Now, I know that you're saying to yourself right now, "Yeah, but it's hard to believe those things when I don't have anything to back it up," and that's why I told you this story today. I'm telling you that the belief comes first. Then you get the evidence. Yes, it sounds crazy. I had no evidence that I could finish a triathlon until I fucking did it. I had to believe it in advance. I had to. There was no other way that was going to happen.

And that's how it works with everything, right? Everything we have on this earth is there because somebody believed it into existence. iPhones, right? 20 years ago, that was not something on anyone's radar. Somebody had the idea. Steve Jobs had the idea, I'm going to create this thing, and he created it. He had no evidence that an iPhone could exist. He had to believe it into existence. Cars, automobiles, planes, I mean, seriously. We had zero evidence that we could build something that weighs many many tons, launch it into the air and that it would stay in the air long enough to get you to another destination on the planet.

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Like, that's fucking crazy. Somebody believed that into existence. I believe it was the Wright brothers. So there were two of them. They had enough belief, they ponied up two people's beliefs to make it happen but think about that. Everything we have, the fact that I'm doing a podcast for you right now is because somebody had an idea that there was this thing that we could do called a podcast and they believed it into existence.

So if you believe you can do a 5K, if you believe you can become a runner, if you believe you can do a half marathon, a full marathon, a triathlon, whatever it is, you can do it. I know it sounds trite and I know it sounds like just a silly Pinterest meme but that's how the universe works. So I want you to really think on that. Think about what in your life that you are saying, "Oh, that's not for me, I don't have any evidence that I can do it. I need evidence before I can start," think about that and what would happen if you just believed right now that you could do it without the evidence. Like, really put yourself in that place. That's what I want for you.

And of course, if you have a half marathon on your bucket list, especially the New Orleans Rock 'n' Roll half next year and you're just like, look, I kind of half-heartedly believe it, I need some help believing it all the way, let me know. Set up a call with me. Let's do this thing. This is probably the biggest service that I provide to my clients is helping them believe in themselves in advance so that race day is just a done deal.

And it doesn't mean there won't be doubts along the way, it doesn't mean that there won't be times when you're like, am I crazy, this is a terrible idea, but like, that belief, if you craft it deeply enough, if you believe it hard enough, it will happen. So if you want help with that, if you want to do this half marathon, if you're like, this is the time, I want you to set up a call with me. Talktojill.com. We'll talk for 10 minutes, we'll decide if this makes sense for you right now and then we'll go from there.

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And here's the thing: do you want to be a year from now looking back on everything you accomplished and saying holy shit, cannot believe what I just did, I can't - I'm so proud of myself for just starting for like, taking that first step, or are you going to look back on yourself a year from now and say, wow, that year that I could have been training I spent arguing with myself and not believing in myself and now it's another year gone, another year down the road. Because that time is going to pass anyway, so what you do with it is up to you.

That's what I have for you this week. Alright, my friends, we don't even have time for my latest obsession, which is amazing, but I will be talking about that next week and you are going to love, love, love it. Alright rebels, that is it for this week. I hope that you are really thinking hard about your own beliefs about yourself and where you can really take things to the next level by upleveling just your thinking and nothing else. And I will be back in your ear in a couple days with a really fun interview. That's it for now. 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.