

Ep #62: Chasing the Marathon High with Melissa Casey



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 62 of *The Not Your Average Runner Podcast*. I'm your host, Jill Angie, and today, I am speaking with the fabulous Melissa Casey. Melissa has been a member of the Not Your Average Runner Podcast community for years and if you follow that Facebook group at all, you know that she's accomplished some pretty big marathon related goals in the past year, and she's setting even bigger ones, and we're going to talk about all of that today.

She's got some really great stories to share along with some of her tips for getting the same results that she's gotten because she's been a runner for about three and a half years. And in that time, she started with just a couple intervals here and there and she's done multiple marathons since then and she's just getting better and better. So, I'm so excited to share her story with you today and allow you to meet her and be in the presence of her amazingness.

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Jill: Hey rebels, so I'm here with the amazing Melissa Casey, who is a multiple marathoner and all around badass in Not Your Average Runner and we're going to talk about her story today. So Melissa, welcome to the show and thank you so much for joining me today.

Melissa: Thank you for having me. It is truly an honor.

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Jill: I've just had so much fun watching your journey over the past few years so it's absolutely an honor for me to have you here as well. So, you've got kind of an amazing story about running. So I'd love to start out with just having you tell the rebels a little about yourself and why you started running and how long you've been running.

Melissa: Well, I actually had never even considered running before but I had taken some time off from work. I'm a clinical pharmacist, I work night shift, and I'd gotten jury duty summons and had taken some time off for jury duty, and found your book, your first book, Not Your Average Runner, and started reading it and for some reason something just clicked. I thought, maybe I can do this. And the first day I actually was too embarrassed to go outside so I literally did my intervals up and down the hallway inside my house. Realized I could do it, the next day I went outside and the next and the next and just got hooked on it, and within six months I did my first half marathon and a year after that did my first marathon and I just - totally addicted now.

Jill: I absolutely love that, and I feel like when we first met, when we first started coaching, you were like, super addicted already because you were running - okay, so tell me if I'm remembering this correctly because it's been a few years, but I think one of the first conversations we had was you said, "I'm training for this half marathon and I'm basically running 13 miles every other weekend in training, is that okay?" and I was like, "What? Holy shit." Like, you were so addicted already.

Melissa: Yeah, that's pretty much - actually, I think it was 13 miles every weekend, and you're like, no, stop.

Jill: I know. I was like, that's more than is necessary by a long shot. But that just like, speaks to the addiction that you had, which is so great. So talk to

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me a little bit about what running means to you. What does it mean personally to you to be a runner, what do you get out of running, what is it all about for you?

Melissa: It is everything for me. I mean, number one, it's a stress relief. My job is really stressful and I mean, just - there are days that I'm literally driving home and I cannot wait to get into my running clothes and my running shoes and just go and leave it all on the pavement. Plus, it's just really a confidence builder. I love seeing what I can do next and what I'm capable of doing and finding out that I can do all these things that I never would have imagined I could do.

Jill: Yeah, and for you, that's meant - I'm trying to remember how many marathons. I can't even remember how many marathons you've done but I know like, you've got this pretty amazing goal with regard to your marathon. So can you explain to everyone what that is?

Melissa: Yes. So I've got two goals. Big overarching one is to complete the Abbott World Major Marathons, which is six marathons - Chicago, New York, Boston, London, Tokyo, and Berlin. So far, I've done two of those, Berlin and Chicago, but then if you do all six marathons, and there's no time limit on it, you get this really cool six-star medal and you can buy all these t-shirts and stuff that says I'm a six-star finisher. Plus, just getting to go and run in all these different places. I just ran Berlin six weeks ago where the marathon world record was set.

Jill: Oh my gosh, that's right. You were there for that.

Melissa: Yes.

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Jill: I just put two and two together. That is so cool. What does it feel like to be like, a part of history like that?

Melissa: It's - I mean, it's really amazing. I was still on the course. I don't think I was even halfway done when he was crossing the finish line, but just by chance, he was on the medal this year too. So I've got my Berlin medal and he's on the flipside with my time inscribed on it and just to say yeah, I was there is amazing.

Jill: I love that so much. So okay, so let's talk about Berlin and New York and Chicago. I mean, you have traveled to a lot of pretty faraway places because you live in Washington, like, on the west coast of the United States, Washington state, and so you've traveled pretty far to do races, and a lot of times I think you go by yourself. Is that correct?

Melissa: Pretty much all the time I go by myself. Some of the closer ones I'll meet my mom for a girl's weekend, but New York and Chicago and Berlin, all just - I can tootle around by myself and explore.

Jill: So what was the first race that you went by yourself to do?

Melissa: That was the New York City half marathon in 2016. I had only been running for a little over - not quite a year.

Jill: Okay. And so talk us through what that was like. Were you nervous about going by yourself? Were you excited? I mean, you said it was your second half marathon so it wasn't like you'd been running for years and years and it was like, I'm just traveling but everything else is...

Melissa: I was so scared. I had not been on a plane in six years. I was at work at night taking the big boxes of printer paper and separating them 17

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inches apart just to see if I could fit in the airplane seats because I was still very much a plus size runner at that point so I was scared about traveling on the plane and being able to close the seatbelt and how to navigate the New York subway system. So, pretty much I did a lot of research and testing beforehand. But then, you know, I had my plans and I got there and it was being flexible but also doing - like I said, doing the research ahead of time.

Jill: Yeah. Well, and I love that you did the research. I have such a picture of you with like, big boxes of paper like, setting them up like the airplane seat. But I mean, that is a legit concern for plus size runners is not just the race itself but yeah, am I going to be comfortable on the airplane? What are my travel experiences going to be like and so forth. But here's what I love is that you didn't just go to just any old race for your first traveling race. You went to what I like to call the center of the universe, which is pretty much how I see New York City. I live about an hour away from New York myself and I think it's just like, the best place on Earth. But it's not easy to navigate if you are not somebody who travels a lot. There's just - it's like a whole next level of like, complication and things that you have to know. So would you consider yourself to be a super adventurous person or was this way out of your comfort zone at that time?

Melissa: I think I'm somewhere in the middle. It was definitely outside of my comfort zone. I would probably call myself a cautious adventurer.

Jill: I love that.

Melissa: I'm not going to go walking around New York City or Chicago at two o'clock in the morning, but I will ride the subway and forgo Ubers unless it's again, two o'clock in the morning.

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Jill: Which is - I mean, I think even if you're a native of New York, two o'clock in the morning is not when you want to be ramming around the city by yourself for sure. So let's talk this through. So you've done - how many destination races have you done? Because I know you've done several marathons and half marathons, but how many total that you've had to travel to by yourself? Let's list them all one by one.

Melissa: So from the marathons, I've done Chicago twice and I've done Berlin. And then for half marathons I did Denver and New York City and I've done a few in the Oregon area. So most of the time I'm going and meeting - spending time with family while I do that. So I'm still probably in the - round the eight to 10 range but definitely more on the horizon.

Jill: Well, for eight to 10 though, that's quite a few, so what are some of the lessons that you've learned? And if there's somebody listening who's thinking, oh, I'd really love to travel some place to do a race, I don't have a running buddy that wants to do it with me or my husband doesn't want to travel with me, or a family member, whatever, but they want to go and do a race maybe in a distant city, what are some tips that you have for people? Everything from preparing to planning your travel, what are your best tips?

Melissa: I'd say one of the best tips is to find a Facebook group. Almost all of the major races have Facebook groups dedicated solely to them and then even like, in some of the bigger running groups like the Not Your Average Runner group, you can just throw a question out there, hey, is anybody doing this race, and I'd say nine times out of 10 you can find somebody else who's going there so at least you'll know somebody when you get there. Other than that, there's a lot of good travel sites. Like when I went to Berlin, I booked all of my accommodations through booking.com and hotels.com, just looking at reviews and finding stuff that was close to subway lines or the U-Bahn lines. I'd just say research is key and trying to

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find either somebody who's doing the race with you or somebody who's done the race before.

Jill: I love that. So when you take your race trip, you kind of turn it into a vacation? You don't just like, fly in, do the race and fly out. I know at least for Berlin, you were there for several days overall.

Melissa: Yeah, and I would recommend not doing your traveling before the race, which I did for Berlin this year and that was a bad idea because I was walking like, 15 to 20 miles a day on uneven cobblestone streets. So by the time it got to race day my legs were tired and I was already starting to have some problems with my knee. So definitely do the traveling and sightseeing after the race.

Jill: So fly in, do the race, like, the next day, two days after? What's your recommendation?

Melissa: I'd say probably yeah, within - just get there like, a day or two before. Not too long before that the jetlag is really setting in.

Jill: And then what about - so certainly for Berlin, the food is a lot different than what you probably have trained with, right? Not that - the food in Berlin is amazing obviously, but what were some of the differences and how did you deal with that? Especially that you were there a few days ahead or several days ahead of time so you were eating kind of off of your normal way of eating, or let me ask you this, did you just spend the last month before you flew to Berlin eating only German food so that your body would get used to it? Because that also sounds like a plan.

Melissa: So I actually did. We have a German deli not too far from our house, so I went and I picked up some foods that I knew that I was going to

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be finding there, like this particular kind of cheese that they have, just so that I knew that there were foods that I would be able to tolerate if I couldn't find my normal stuff. Plus, when I was actually in Berlin, I got an apartment suite so I had a full kitchen so I was able to cook for myself for the few days leading up to the race so I knew that I could have my normal stuff.

Jill: Oh, that's so brilliant. And I was kind of like, half joking about eating German food for the month before but I love that you actually said okay, these are the foods that are going to be available over there, like, let me make sure that I know what my go-to's will be. That's actually so brilliant. I love that so much. You should write a book on like, how to do a race-cation on your own and not end up with digestive issues on the race course and everything. Okay, so that's cool, so that's a great tip. So timing wise, give yourself 24 to 48 hours before your race to arrive and then do the race right away, plan ahead for how you're going to eat, don't just leave it to chance because then you're - who knows? I was in Rome a few years ago and the food was just amazing but like, you go to a restaurant and you're eating like, really, really rich food, and I think the fact that you got a little apartment was so brilliant because then you can go to the grocery store and just buy probably a lot of things that you normally would be eating at home like bread or - actually, no. We should talk about that too. You are - are you full keto or are you mostly low carb? What does that look like for you? Sorry, I'm totally switching gears here but I want to cover that.

Melissa: You know, I actually was keto for a while and then I was just not seeing results and so I went and saw a dietitian and she suggested that I add some more whole grains back into my diet. I was really missing oatmeal and quinoa so I'm actually more low carb now.

Jill: I love that though because a lot of people think, oh, you can't be low carb and be a runner because you have to have carbohydrates to run, and that's actually not really the case at all, which I know you've found. So talk

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a little bit about your experience with running as sort of a low-carb athlete and I know you do intermittent fasting as well. Is that correct or do you not do that?

Melissa: I'm trying to get back to it. The last two months because I said Chicago and Berlin and a couple of races a few hours from home, so my nutrition right now is not what I would like it to be, but yeah, I am trying to get back to the intermittent fasting.

Jill: Because you did your first marathon completely fasted, right?

Melissa: Yeah.

Jill: Tell us about that.

Melissa: Yeah, so - and I still do most of my training runs fasted. Six to eight hours. And it's just - it works out really well for me. I think everybody needs to find the way of eating and when they eat and everything that works for them, but I know what works for me and I really like the fact that I don't have to worry about carrying a belt full of gels or snacks in every pocket because I know that by doing the low carb and doing the intermittent fasting, I can - for my first marathon, I ate the bananas that they had on the course but other than that I didn't need anything until about mile 18, which was just really nice and it's nice going in knowing that I don't need to worry about that aspect of it.

Jill: And you hadn't eaten for at least - what? Eight to 12 hours before the race?

Melissa: Right.

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Jill: I think that's mind-blowing because it really flies in the face of all the conventional wisdom is that you need to like, have your food before your race and every 30 minutes or 60 minutes you should be having a little bit of fuel along the road, and that's not necessarily true if you've trained without that. It's totally possible to do a fair amount of your race without it. But I think the key though is you don't just show up on your first marathon day and expect to do it. You have to train that way the whole time and work out the kinks.

Melissa: Exactly.

Jill: Ahead of time, but yeah, so brilliant. And it's just this uncomplicated things and I also feel like - tell me if you think this is true, but I know a lot of runners have digestive issues and I think that part of that is related to just fuelling in general and I think intermittent fasting kind of alleviates a lot of the need to go to the bathroom while you're out there running because if you're not - if you're eating...

Melissa: The less that's going in, the less that's coming out, really.

Jill: Thank you. That's precisely what I wanted to say. Especially if you're going like, six, eight, 12 hours before your race and not eating. I think it just cuts down on that. So if you're somebody out there who has a lot of struggle with needing to go to the bathroom during a long-distance race, it might be something worth trying. Anyway, I'm digressing. So what were we talking about? We were talking about traveling on your own to do races, and you had some great tips for people. So those were your tips, but what are some of the challenges that you've had being a solo traveler, solo race-cationer, really, what are some challenges you've had or do you have any funny stories you can tell us?

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Melissa: Well, I mean, challenge wise, I mean, just if you're in an airport or you're somewhere and you've got all your bags and you need to go to the bathroom, you have to carry everything with you. You can't - there's nobody to watch stuff for you if you just want to run and do something really quickly. Or like, I was taking the train between towns in Germany and I had to switch in this little tiny town and I left one of my bags and it was the bag with my Garmin and my race sunglasses and everything that I needed for my race on the train. And so I found the station master, they were able to call the train, they found my bag, but I had to wait for the train to go all the way to the end of its line, back to this little town before I could get my bag and go onto my next city. So I was in this little town for like, an extra four hours waiting for the train to come back, but again, just the station master was like, go over here and see this castle, because there's a castle everywhere in Germany, and I just walked around the town, I talked to people, and it actually ended up being a totally unplanned but really nice little stopover. I think just being open to experiences and not leaving your bags on the train is a good idea too.

Jill: That too. Well, it's kind of like, the whole - when you're flying somewhere for a race, I always say, always make sure your running gear, whatever you're planning to wear for the race, including your Garmin and everything is in your carryon luggage and not in your checked luggage. So I guess, yeah, and don't leave your bags on the train, for sure. But I love how it worked out for you and I think part of it is because you're just really good at managing your mind around - some folks could have had a lot of drama about oh, my vacation is ruined, my race is ruined, and you're just like, super good at managing your mind and being like, okay, well, what do I need to do?

Melissa: I automatically am like, okay, we're going to try and find the bag, but if we don't find the bag, what's plan B? And then what's plan C? So

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having those backups and being flexible, preparing for the worst but hoping for the best, really.

Jill: What was plan B, just out of curiosity?

Melissa: Plan B was getting to the expo in Berlin and trying to see if I could replace the Garmin and the sunglasses and the things that would have gone missing, or just seeing if I could use my FitBit to do my intervals. Going through all the different possibilities. And just I think it's just more reassuring myself that I had options.

Jill: Right. Because as long as you have your running shoes and the outfit that you want to wear, like, everything else is sort of optional, right? I mean, it would be kind of a bummer to not be able to like, track your amazing marathon on your Garmin, but you could still run the race and use your phone for your interval timer and stuff like that. So were there a lot of people doing intervals at the Berlin marathon? I'm really curious about that.

Melissa: There actually were. The corral that I was in, it was the last corral and it was everybody from the estimated time of four hours and 45 minutes up. So there was just a huge variety of running levels and speeds and everything. One thing I found out is that a lot of people end up doing intervals even if they don't plan on doing intervals. A lot of people think, I'm going to go out and run this marathon, and then at some point they just realize, oh, I have to stop and walk, and then they run again and then they walk again. It's just - that's exactly what I do. I just plan it out ahead of time.

Jill: Yeah, exactly. I think that's so great for people to realize is that most people don't go out and run an entire marathon and like, that's a really elite thing to do. And most people are going to walk at least part of it, and so just deciding ahead of time how much you're going to walk is - I think it takes a

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lot of the drama out of it because then it's not like, ugh, I suck, I had to stop and walk. It's like, oh no, of course, I planned I would do this and so now it's just - now I have complete control over it rather than feeling like I have to run as far as possible and then walk when I get tired, right?

Melissa: When I was in Alaska once, we went to a sled dog - can't think of the word...

Jill: Iditarod?

Melissa: Well no, it was just showing us about the Iditarod dogs.

Jill: Oh, the huskies.

Melissa: Yeah. One of the things that they said is that if you run the dogs past their limits, they'll keep running. But once you let them rest, they'll never get back to that. If you stop the dogs before they get tired and let them rest, then they'll be able to keep going and going, and that's what I think interval running is like.

Jill: That's exactly what interval running is like. Yes, stop before you're exhausted and then you'll be able to recover and go again and it extends the amount of distance and time you can go by like, so much more than just running until you're exhausted. I love that. I love that analogy. The sled dogs are like, on to it already. They're so smart. Well, let's shift a little bit and talk about how you have prepared for all of these races, because you and I worked together - we had a coaching relationship a few years ago and then recently I think you've been working with a different coach, but you've always pretty much worked with a coach in one way or another. So can you talk about some of the benefits for you and would you say that

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most people should work with a coach or is it only for certain people? What are your thoughts on that?

Melissa: I think everybody would benefit from working with coach. There's so many positives. I can't even think of any negatives of working with a coach. I see a lot of people who say, "Oh, well I downloaded this Couch to 5K program or I'm working with this program," and the programs out there are really good, but they're kind of a one size fits most and when you're a plus size runner or if you have any kind of special needs at all, those plans might not be the best for you. Plus working with a coach, if you have something that happens in one of your training runs, you can go back to your coach and be like, oh hey, this felt really weird, or this was too easy, this was too hard, and you can change that plan to meet your needs.

Jill: Exactly.

Melissa: And the other thing, especially working with you that you don't get from those plans is working on the mental aspects of it, and I think especially when you get into the longer distances, it really is as much if not more a mental game as it is a physically running game.

Jill: Yeah. Oh, for sure. Once you get into the half marathon and longer distances, there is that - especially if you're a slower - on the scale of zero to 20-minute mile, I guess, I don't know, if you're somebody who's doing a 12-minute mile or more, then your training runs are going to be - we're talking hours and not just 45 minutes or an hour or 90 minutes. We're talking like, two, three, four, and more hours and there is a lot of mental aspect to that for sure. Because the inner mean girl, after about two hours, she starts to have opinions. Many, many opinions.

Melissa: Oh yes.

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Jill: So good. But here's what's so interesting is that you and I worked together in a couple different coaching ways. When you first started, we created more detailed training plans for you and definitely did a lot of the adjusting, and now it's more - because you're a member of Run Your Best Life, it's more a matter of just like, dipping in because you know what you need to do. You've got enough experience to kind of do it on your own. It's just like, dipping in like hey, this came up, what do you think about it? So working with a coach is - it runs the gamut of somebody who creates a detailed training plan for you and oversees every aspect of your training, to kind of having somebody on call that you can check in with when you need it. What are your thoughts on that? How has your approach to working with a coach shifted from when you started to now?

Melissa: I think you hit the nail on the head right there is that before, when I first started, it was definitely go out and do this, do this, do this, and a lot more hand holding. And as I've gained confidence and as I've gone through several half marathons and marathons, it is now - it's just like, oh hey, how do we fine-tune this now?

Jill: Yeah, so fun. It's been really a joy watching you go from the person who was running a half marathon every weekend to train for a half marathon, so brilliant. I mean, I get the logic of that too, like, if you're going to train for a 5K, you go out and you run three miles every weekend. So I understand the logic, but like, seeing you go from that person to somebody who like, really just takes the reigns of her training and then just kind of checks in has been super fun. And just for the record, I think we should share what happened to you as a result of running 13 miles every week.

Melissa: Oh, I get injured.

Jill: So for anybody who's thinking, oh yeah, that's a brilliant idea, no, no.

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Melissa: I think I'm actually literally the example in your book of what not to do.

Jill: You might be. I think I wrote about you in Not Your Average Half Marathon. I was like, don't do this. But that was when you were - it's an example of like, when you're not working with a coach.

Melissa: Absolutely.

Jill: You think that's a brilliant idea and you start doing it.

Melissa: You think more is better.

Jill: Exactly. And so I think it is - you might find out when you work with a coach that you need to do a lot less training to meet your goals and that you're actually - be a lot happier with your performance if you do less training. But anyway, that's one of my favorite stories because like, it just - first of all, it speaks to the level of determination and commitment and yes, addiction that you had in the beginning that you got yourself from zero to 13 miles in a matter of months and then were able to like, continue that. But then when you got injured - was it hip bursitis? It was something with your hip, right?

Melissa: Yeah, I think that was my hip. I've had like, three injuries. In fact, I'm nursing a sprained knee right now but I think that one was my hip.

Jill: Okay, and so I just remember you being so committed to your physical therapy. Like, whatever your doctor said, you just did it, and so you got back to running and were stronger than ever after you recovered from that injury. And so that's another thing that I find so remarkable about you because so many people are like, yeah, yeah, yeah, this is what the doctor

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says I should do but they do the bare minimum, and you just went all in and really committed to your physical therapy and I think it served you so well because you are such a strong runner now and over the years, you've just gotten stronger and faster and you're able to do some pretty incredible things with your body at this point.

Melissa: Well, and I think that's - I mean, especially when you have that addiction, it is so hard to say okay, I'm going to stop for two weeks, three weeks. It's really hard to say okay, I'm not going to run. But you kind of have to wrap your head around the fact that okay, I'm not going to run, I'm going to let it heal, I'm going to do the exercises that I have to do to get back, but then also - I'm kind of going through that right now, accepting that when you do start coming back, you're not going to be as fast, you're not going to have the endurance. It is kind of wrestling with that inner mean girl again because you think, oh, I know I'm capable of more and it's hard to reconcile that wait, I am coming back from an injury.

Jill: Right. And I think there's two components to that. I mean, the first is working on like, having the conversation with your inner mean girl that like, this doesn't mean that something's gone wrong or doesn't mean that I'm never going to be where I was. It just means I need to take a break and this is a normal part of running. But also, like, so often I think runners when they're injured, they think, you know, I'll do some of the physical therapy but I really miss running so much, they start back earlier or they cheat on their physical therapy and they do a little bit of running or something just because they miss it so much, and as a result, either their healing takes longer or they don't completely heal. And so how did you get yourself around those thoughts? Because I know we had those conversations about - you were like, I really want to start running again, and it was like, we got to just wait and do it right so that when you do start back, you're not going to be reinjuring yourself right away.

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Melissa: It helps that my husband is very supportive, but also very firm in like, he'll throw himself in front of the door and be like, "No, you can't go out and run."

Jill: Thank him for that. I love this about him.

Melissa: So yeah, having the literal external voice that tells me no, but also I think it is just keep reminding myself that in the long run this is really what you got to do and yeah, it's really hard but ultimately, you're going to be better off and not reinjuring yourself. It could be worse.

Jill: And it's just a hard thing to decide - if you had a child, if you were talking to a child, you would be like, nope, this is what you're going to do and here's why, and the child would just - because as children do, obey. But when it's yourself, it's a lot harder to manage. So I love that you've been able to do that and I love that you are so honest with your thoughts processes about it. So we're actually - we're coming close to the end of our time together but I have a couple questions that I'd like to ask you. First is what advice would you give to somebody who is just getting started with running and they're maybe thinking like, hey, I want to do a half marathon or a full marathon someday. What advice would you give that person?

Melissa: I would say as soon as that thought enters your head, when you go from the, "Oh, I'll never be able to do that," to, "Gosh, I wonder if I could do that," it means you're ready to start looking at the training.

Jill: I love that.

Melissa: And I definitely say if you can, get a coach. I'm a firm believer that having a coach is the best way to get there and just know that it's going to be hard and there's going to be days that you never want to do it again, you

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never want to run another step. You might have two or three runs in a row that you feel like you're the worst runner in the world, but you'll get through it and you'll have a run where you feel like you could go for miles and miles and you're floating.

Jill: I love that. Because it's so true, and a shitty run doesn't mean that there's something wrong with you. It just means you had a shitty run and that is part of running. It's normal. And then the amazing runs where you feel like you're floating, you feel like a gazelle, also normal. It's all part of the process. Okay, so my final question for you is what's next for you? You've got your wish list of marathons, but what's the next one on your list?

Melissa: Well, I will be running the Seattle marathon the weekend after Thanksgiving and if I complete that one - or I should say when I complete that one, it will actually get me my qualifications for Double Agents, which is three half marathons and three full marathons within 90 days.

Jill: Oh my god.

Melissa: Which is truly insane.

Jill: You are truly insane.

Melissa: That was my big goal for this year is to get my Double Agent credentials. So I'm about four weeks away from that and then I've got another half marathon in December and hoping to see if maybe I get accepted to the Boston Marathon in the spring.

Jill: Oh my gosh, obviously you're going to. I cannot wait for that. So Boston's one of the big six, right? And then so you've done Berlin, you've done Chicago, you will have done Boston in a few months, and let's just

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decide that it's going to happen. I feel like it's just much easier that way. Because here's the thing, if you get - so with Boston, you can either qualify or you can sign up as a - to do charity, to raise money. Do you have to get accepted for the raising money or are you talking about are you qualifying?

Melissa: No, I'm still quite a ways from time qualifying. That's one of my long-term goals is actually to time qualify but I've actually applied for a spot with one of the sponsors. They're running a team, but even getting in with one of the charity spots is still pretty competitive.

Jill: Oh my gosh, okay, well it's obviously going to happen. So that will be number three out of the six. What's number four going to be?

Melissa: Number four, I would love it to be London. Actually, it'll probably be New York because I think I'm going to do New York next year as well.

Jill: I know New York is a lottery. Is London a lottery?

Melissa: London is a lottery. Everybody except for Boston has a lottery system.

Jill: Okay, wow, even Tokyo. That's awesome.

Melissa: Yeah.

Jill: Okay, so Boston and then New York next year and then 2020 will be London and Tokyo.

Melissa: Yeah, hopefully.

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Jill: Alright, let's just plan on that. I love it. So I have a funny story about the New York marathon. So my cousin - this must have been like, 15 years ago. My cousin and his wife decided that they were going to run for it and she's always been a runner. He had not always been a runner. He's one of those like, typical guy like, "Oh, I can run a 5K, I'll train for the New York marathon in six months, it'll be fine." She had been a long-distance runner for many years. So they both got into the lottery and as expected, he was miserable the entire time. They ended up not running it together because she was so much faster than him, but because she was so much faster than him, that was the year that Puff Daddy ran the New York marathon, and so she was like, behind Puff Daddy and his whole security detail for the entire race. And so she got to like, run with Puffy while my cousin was way in the back of the pack, which is totally fine, but yeah, she said it was really cool. So interestingly enough, Puffy's security detail - so he had bodyguards running around him the whole time but they didn't run the entire race. They would like, switch each other out so there was also fresh bodyguards running with him. She's like, behind them going, what is happening? So that's - I thought that was kind of a funny story that apparently if you're a huge celebrity, you can hire bodyguards but they are only going to run like, five to seven miles at a time with you and then fresh bodyguards come in and take over. I don't know how they work that out. If they have to run with race numbers, I never asked her that question. That was many years ago. So who knows? Who knows who you'll see at the New York marathon? Because I think some pretty famous people have run it in recent years. I want to say Julia Roberts maybe?

Melissa: Yeah, there's quite a few out there.

Jill: Yeah, I wonder if you're really famous if you have to get into the lottery or you just call them up and be like, hey, I want to run and they say okay, fine.

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Melissa: I'm pretty sure it's probably the latter.

Jill: Yeah. Doesn't seem very fair but okay. Alright, well thank you so much for joining me and for sharing your experiences. And if people want to follow you because I know you're pretty active on Instagram and Facebook, where can they find you?

Melissa: My Instagram is impracticalrunner and I have the link there - I'm trying to get my blog going and Facebook page just more dedicated to running and not so much to my cats.

Jill: Oh, I love that. Alright, so we will have - for those of you listening, we will have links to all of Melissa's social and blog and stuff in the show notes, and then she's also a member of Run Your Best Life, so if you're a member of that group or if you want to join that group, first of all, because it's a group where you can actually get life coaching with me, get some of the same results that Melissa's been getting, but also you can actually connect with her there because you know, I love it. You're always posting like - what did you post this week that cracked me up? Your costume from your last half marathon, and explain to people what you dressed up as.

Melissa: I dressed up as Wednesday Adams from The Adams Family and a black polyester dress and a wig were great when it was like, 40 degrees and raining out but at mile 12 when the sun came out, not so good.

Jill: Just FYI, leave the costumes maybe for the 5Ks. I saw that picture and I was like, oh, what an amazing costume. Damn, she ran 13 miles in that? So good. But yeah, so you can connect with Melissa in Run Your Best Life as well, and she's also in the free Facebook Group, Not Your Average Runner Podcast community and I know - one thing I love about you is that you're so generous with your - with helping some of the newer runners

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basically do what you've done, to kind of talk them through what's going on with - what might be going on with them if they have questions or you give them lots of great suggestions. So you can connect with her there as well. And that's it for us this week, and my cat has literally just jumped on my desk to join us so this call is officially over because Maddie has called it. So thank you again so much for joining me today and yeah, I can't wait to keep watching you excel at running because you're kind of a rock star.

Melissa: Thank you, and thank you for - I mean, I would not be where I'm at if it weren't for you.

Jill: Awesome. I love it. I'm so glad I could help. So alright, thank you very much and we'll be back in a few days rebels with another podcast. Bye.

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Hey rebels, I hope you enjoyed my chat with Melissa, and if you want to find out more about how you can connect with her, all of the links are going to be in the show notes at notyouraveragerunner.com/62. Until next week.

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.