

## Ep #63: How to Stop Worrying



### 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 63 of *The Not Your Average Runner Podcast*. I'm your host, Jill Angie, and in today's episode, we are talking all about worry and how to get past it. So if you're a worrier, if you're somebody who wakes up in the middle of the night stressing out about everything, I promise, this is going to be super helpful for your life and for your training.

But first, I need to update you on the Rebel Runner retreat that just happened last weekend. So basically all of my Rebel Runner Unleashed clients came to Philly last weekend so that we could prep them for their half marathon in New Orleans in February, so they could bond with each other, get to know each other, and oh my god, we had so much fun.

So they had a private shoe fitting at Road Runner Sports, they got custom insoles made, we went axe throwing and Sharla took the grand prize. We made vision boards, learned about race fuel and food prep and really tons and tons of other stuff. It was just fucking amazing.

But here's the deal; I don't want you to just take my word for it. I actually asked them all to tell you in their own words how they're feeling.

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I learned a lot of things this weekend, but one of the most compelling things that I took away was the day we learned form and our pace and cadence running. When I had that set cadence goal and I could apply it to our run

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this morning, perfect. Best time ever. I PR-ed a 5K and awesome, that worked for me. I am so excited for our New Orleans trip. It is going to be so much fun to be back together with all the girls and spending time together again, but I think of course, the half marathon is the goal and I want to be able to take all this that I've learned, be able to apply it and grow and get faster and then get to run my race, and I'm so excited.

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I'm most excited to be around this wonderful group of women again. I've had such a great time this weekend and seeing people on the Zoom calls is so different from seeing them in person. The connections we made were just so much quicker and deeper, and I'm looking forward to continuing that.

I think the actual best thing I learned was that in a group, which I haven't run in a group yet, I went out way too fast in our group run and then I had to walk. I couldn't even finish my whole run. So I think now I know to start working on my brain for that now.

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The best thing that I learned this weekend was about stretching. I was doing stretches but I was not doing the correct stretches, and I learned to do dynamic stretches instead of the static stretches. And also, I just love being around the other ladies in our group who - we could see each other but not really be around each other so that was a great experience.

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The best thing that I learned this weekend is that Jill Angie is as great in person as she is on the website, and Jen is such an awesome chef. That is

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amazing. I am looking forward to running across the finish line with confidence and that feeling of that I got it done and I did all my training, and the gals that I'm there with because they are all awesome.

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I am really looking forward to the whole experience, first of all. I think it's going to be so much fun. This weekend was fabulous to be with everybody together, you know, the online relationship actually became a real live relationship and that was fun. And so now I can't wait to be there, like, all of us together, achieving a goal we set as individuals and as a group. It's exciting, and for me personally, this has been and continues to be an exercise in really reclaiming a part of my identity that I had left behind, and that's the part of the identity called athlete.

I'm really tapping into the strength of my body in a way that I always thought that's fine for other people but not for me. Like, I couldn't possibly do that. But yeah, I possibly could. It's just about making a choice.

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I am so excited about our race-cation in New Orleans. I'm looking forward to a lot of it. The race itself especially, because it'll be my first half marathon back since I broke my foot this year, so I'm really super excited about that and just being with the whole team and spending time together and cheering everybody on, especially the first-time half marathoners. I can't wait to see everybody cross the finish line. I mean, I'll probably be behind them but I'll see video of it.

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So here's the deal. If you want to be a Rebel Runner client, if you're like, I'm all in for these amazing retreats because let me tell you, New Orleans is going to be even better, if you want to have me train you for maybe the New Orleans or the Seattle half marathon next year, we've actually tentatively added the Savannah Rock 'n' Roll half to the roster in November.

If you want to run those races with a group of amazing rebel runners that you just heard talking about how much fun they're having, make sure you sign up for a call with my team to talk about it. Now, you can do that at [rebelrunnerunleashed.com](http://rebelrunnerunleashed.com) or just go to the link in the show notes, but the link is [rebelrunnerunleashed.com](http://rebelrunnerunleashed.com). I hope we talk to you soon.

Okay, let's warm up with a quote from Eckhart Tolle. The quote is, "Worry pretends to be necessary." Now, what does that mean, really? Right? What does that mean? Have you ever noticed that when there's an unknown outcome, there's something going on in your life and you don't know what the result is going to be, that your brain just gets busy coming up with all of the things that might happen? And it goes to some pretty crazy places.

But your brain just sits there and reviews all of the options. This could happen, this could happen, this could happen. And it doesn't actually solve anything. It just goes around and around and around with the same question. What if? What if? What if? And if you asked most people, they would actually say, "Oh, I have to worry. I have to obsess. I have no choice. If I don't worry about my kids, something bad might happen to them. If I don't worry about my health, I might get sick."

But here is the raw truth. Worrying doesn't stop a damn thing from happening. I mean, at its best, it just makes you feel like shit until you find out everything is fine. And at its worst, it takes away the emotional and physical resources you have by spending them on worry so that if something bad really does happen, you're not equipped to deal with it.

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Worry actually seems like the right thing to do in the moment, but it is a complete waste of time, and it really doesn't feel very good either. So what's going on is you're basically pre-experiencing a bunch of negative emotions in response to thoughts that you're having about something that may or may not even happen.

Now, if the thing happens, you're going to feel that emotion anyway. You've just felt it all along while you were worrying about it, then if the thing happens, you're going to continue to feel that emotion. But if it doesn't happen, you've basically put yourself through a bunch of unnecessary pain. Either way, you've put yourself through a bunch of unnecessary pain.

Now, everyone thinks that, oh, if I worry, that really prepares me for the worst. But again, it doesn't do that. The only way to - and I'm using air quotes here - prepare for the worst is actually to stop worrying and start evaluating options and deciding in advance how you will handle various situations, how you will think about them, how you want to feel about them, how you will act.

And while you're doing that, you can decide ahead of time how you want to think and feel about different outcomes. That is preparation. When we worry about things, what's really happening is we're trying to control the future. You can't control the future. The only thing, the only thing you have control over is your own mind, your own way of thinking about situations.

And so really, the only preparation you can truly do instead of worrying is to prepare your mind. Worry is just your brain asking a bunch of shitty questions that have no good answer and then spinning out on some version of what will become of me if the worst happens.

So how does this apply to running? If you're like me, your brain is going to some pretty dark places like when we worry about stuff we think, "Oh, I only worry about the big things." But honestly, we worry about little things too.

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Now, imagine you are signed up for your first half marathon and it's the night before the race and you basically spend the entire evening and night when you're supposed to be sleeping worrying about if it's going to rain buckets all day, or whether you'll be able to finish, or if your alarm is going to go off, right? So you spend all night long worrying about all these things that you literally have no control over, other than maybe your alarm. You could double-check that.

But like, you've lost all this sleep by worrying and you're going to start the next day feeling all stressed out and really, really tired. And the worry hasn't fixed anything, it hasn't prepped you for anything. It hasn't combatted anything, right? Whether it's going to rain or not, it's still going to happen. Whether or not you can finish that race will have to be determined during the race, right? You can't - worrying about it isn't going to fix that.

So really, it's just an entire wasted evening. So let's say you're training for a half marathon. Let's use another example. This is a half marathon that you're about to run but we're going to scale back into the training. And the night before every single long training run that you've got on your schedule, you're agonizing over whether you're going to be able to complete that new distance.

And so again, you just spend all this time thinking, "Well, what if I can't do it? What if I can't do it? What if I can't do it?" Not helpful to give your brain a bunch of shitty questions like that. You're basically letting your brain run around completely unmanaged, and this is not a good look for anyone because as you know, your thoughts cause your feelings and your feelings drive your actions.

So if your thoughts are all over the place, asking a million crappy questions, emotionally, you're going to be all over the place and you're going to exhausted from this. And how do you think you will show up for your training run or for your race if your thoughts and emotions are everywhere?

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You're not going to show up as your best self. That is for sure. You'll be anxious, you'll be stressed out, and it's going to show in your performance. If it's a training run, you're more likely to quit early and say, "You know what, fuck it. I went 10 miles, that's good enough," even though you had 12 on the schedule. Or if it's a race, you're way more likely to go out way too fast, burn out, and then struggle for the last part of the race and maybe even not finish, and I don't want that for you.

Worry pretends to be necessary, but it is not. It is the opposite of that. Worry comes from this place of wanting to control the future because we believe, if I control my circumstances, then I can feel okay. So not ever how it works. If there's one thing I've learned in my 51 years on this earth, it is that the more you try to control something, the less likely you are to get what you want.

Now, that excludes your brain because if we can control our brains, we're more likely to get what we want. But if we try to control everything else, people, other people's opinions, the weather, you're never going to get what you want. Now, I'm not saying you should give up trying to get what you want out of life. But I promise you that worrying about things is never the way to influence the world.

Worry and anxiety are just another version of fear, and fear is one of those primal human emotions that can really stop you in your tracks. Like, when we think a thought that creates fear, the actions we take are not usually helpful, unless it's fear of being eaten by a bear. In which case, the action of running for your life is very helpful.

But in today's world, we are not usually in imminent danger of being attacked. But the fear circuits are still there, and they get activated by other things. They get activated by things that really aren't life threatening but our brains don't know that and they sort of go haywire, and then worry is the result of that.



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So what are you supposed to do? I know at least half of you are listening now thinking, "Well, that's so easy for you to say, Jill, but I'm just a worrier and I can't stop it. It's part of my DNA." And I promise that I get you, I understand, but worry, just like all of our beliefs and thoughts and opinions is just a habit. Now, you might have started worrying when you were a kid and now it feels so natural that you think it's part of you, but we are not born worrying.

Have you ever met a toddler that sat around worrying when she was going to get her next meal or worrying whether he'd ever learn how to walk? No. They just take it as it comes. They deal with life as it happens to them. We are taught to worry by the world around us, often by our parents, and since worry is a learned skill, it can be unlearned.

Now, this takes practice and commitment, but it is very, very doable. The very first step is to recognize when you are worrying. So if you're doing your daily thought downloads, and we've talked about those in episode 33, How to Coach Yourself, if you're doing your daily thought downloads, you might notice yourself writing a lot of what if questions, or doubting your abilities.

Now, if that kind of stuff comes up in your daily journal, you're worrying a lot. Because worry is almost always a question, by the way. It is completely useless and unhelpful question, but it's almost always a question. Now, if you're not journaling daily, you might notice that you wake up in the middle of the night with racing thoughts about the next day, right? What's going to happen tomorrow? Or racing thoughts about your life in general.

How am I going to pay these bills? Whatever it is. Racing thoughts about your race. This is worry. Those like, uncontrollable thoughts that just keep spinning around and around in your head, pay attention to them because they're almost always some version of, "What is this happens?"

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Now, when you find yourself worrying, I want you to do three things in this order. First thing you're going to do is answer the question you're asking yourself. Like, actually stop and answer the question. And I love to write this out in a journal because it really makes me slow down and go through the process in a very deliberate manner.

So for example, if you're asking, "What if I come in last in my race?" pretend that I'm actually right next to you asking you that question instead, and then tell me your answer. So if you come in last in your race, what will happen? What do you think is going to happen? And write out all the possibilities. Go from the silly to the like, absolute worst.

Write about what that means to you. Are you afraid of what you will think and feel if you are last? Are you afraid of what somebody else will say or think about you if you're last? Are you afraid of something that is irrelevant or something that's relevant? And really think about why it's relevant or irrelevant. Be specific and be realistic too.

You don't want to say like, "Oh, if I'm last, I might get eaten by a crocodile and nobody would know." Like, come on. Unless you live in Louisiana, which I understand is a very real possibility. But if you don't live in Louisiana or like, the Everglades, like, that's kind of a silly fear to have, right?

So be specific about your fears, be realistic about them, and then answer that question, what if I come in last in my race, or whatever the question is that you're asking yourself when you're worrying. Now, just to go back to the coming in last example, you might think that if you come in last you will feel embarrassed and ashamed because you think that other people are judging you. That might be where your brain goes.

Now, I want you to make sure you understand exactly what you think will happen to you if it comes true because it's really important. Because here's

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a pro tip, when you ask yourself the question, which is basically so what if this happens, you might not actually be able to answer the question. And if that's the case, like, if there really is no answer, like, "Gosh, I don't know what would happen, I don't know why I'm worrying about it," why are you worrying about it?

This is a clue that it's really not a big deal. It's just your brain being an asshole and you can sort of drop that question from your repertoire. Now, second, if you have an answer to your worry question, I want you to decide if you really like your answer.

Now, this is a tricky one because so often we believe our thoughts and emotions are involuntary and we have a hard time stepping away to become the watcher of what's going on in our brain. But using the earlier example, say you're worried that if you come in last, you're going to feel ashamed because you're thinking that other people are judging you.

Do you like that reason? Is that a helpful thought for you to be thinking? Now, spoiler alert, it's really not. And this is where you get to prepare for what you will do if you come in last, and by prepare, I don't mean like, physically what you're going to do. I mean mentally. I want you to decide in advance what you want to think and how you want to feel.

So you might decide your place in the pack is irrelevant, first place, last place, same difference. You might decide that you're going to be proud of finishing, proud of all the training you did, proud of showing up for yourself. Now, these thoughts are going to create way different emotions than thinking other people are judging you or worrying about other people judging you.

But I want you to like, go through this exercise and figure out why you're worried about something and then when you see why you're worried about it, decide if you like that reason. Because so often we think, you know what,

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like, I actually don't want to worry about this, it's silly, it's not helpful. So decide in advance, prepare your mind in advance so that when - if x, y, or z happens, the thing that you're worrying about, you'll know, I'm deciding ahead of time how I'm going to think, and then how you think drives how you feel about it, and how you feel drives your actions.

And so you're going to act a lot more deliberately, you're going to respond a lot more deliberately to your worry concern situation if you decide in advance how you're going to prepare. And doing that naturally takes you out of the act of worrying and into the place of using your brain, using your brain powers for good instead of evil, basically. Because deciding how you will think and feel is the only thing you can control, so that's where I want you to put your energy.

And now, so the first step is to answer the question. The second step is to decide like, your answer. And then the third step is to practice what you want to be thinking. Because here's what's going to happen; you're going to go through steps one and two, you're going to feel awesome about it. You're going to change how you want to think about it, you're going to be like, "Yay, I've got this."

And then you'll wake up in the middle of the night again all worried and your brain will be going crazy and you'll think something's wrong with you because your brain went right back to where it was before. And that's just because it's a habit and it takes time to develop the skill of recognizing and eliminating worry. It's just a new skill that you're learning.

So when this inevitably happens, you're just going to practice steps one and two again. Write them out in your journal. Do a thought model on them. Do that CTFAR model from episode 33 on them. Be deliberate. The way to combat worry is to question it and take it apart and then decide on purpose how you want to think. This is going to make a huge difference for you in your running and your life, I promise.

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Okay rebels, it is time for my latest obsession, and now that it is cold out, I have become obsessed with this material from Skirt Sports called Wonder Wool. That sound a lot like Wonder Woman, which makes me super happy, and honestly, if they made a Wonder Woman outfit out of Wonder Wool, I'm pretty sure that I could just die happy.

So what it is, what this material is is a super lightweight but still very warm fabric that isn't itchy, it breathes really well, it comes in pretty colors, it's very soft to the touch. I actually have a butt load of stuff made out of Wonder Wool now, and most notably, my favorite outfits are - and I have them in two colors - it's basically a running skirt that has full length tights underneath it and the skirt is made out of the Wonder Wool and the tights are just regular lightweight compression material.

But they're full length and then they come with a long-sleeved matching top also made out of the Wonder Wool. Oh my god, seriously, you guys, this stuff is amazing. It feels so good on the body, it looks really cute, it's super flattering, and the best part - this is the funniest part is - so last week at the retreat, I actually brought down my Wonder Wool stuff and a couple other pieces too for the girls at the retreat to try and Jen, our director of nutrition and client education, she was like, I have to have this outfit.

And I said, "You know what, why don't you test drive it tomorrow on our group run and see if you like it?" And she fell in love. She went home and she ordered some for herself. So speaking of ordering some for yourself, here is the best part. I have a 20% off code for you guys so that you can stay warm, look great, and save money.

So go to the Skirt Sports website, [skirtsports.com](http://skirtsports.com) and then enter this code - NYAR20. Enter that at checkout. It's NYAR20 and that'll give you 20% off your order. And if you can't remember this or if you're not someplace where you can write it down, the link is in the show notes for the code. The link to the [skirtsports.com](http://skirtsports.com) website is also in the show notes. And also, if you

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belong to our Facebook group, there - go to the pinned post there with all the resources. The code and the website are in the resources as well.

Alright rebels, that is it for this week. Everything I mentioned in this episode can be found in the show notes at [notyouraveragerunner.com/63](http://notyouraveragerunner.com/63) and I'll talk to you soon.

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](http://www.notyouraveragerunner.com) to download your free one-week jumpstart plan and get started running today.