

Ep #111: Fear of Finishing Last



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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 111 of *The Not Your Average Runner Podcast*. I'm your host, Jill Angie, and I'm recording this on the day before I fly out to the Ragnar trail relay. I'm so freaking excited for this race.

I mean, I'm nervous and I'm scared too because it's something totally brand new. It's definitely out of my comfort zone but I'm mostly excited. And of course, I've got a long list of things to do to get ready, and what happens? I get put in Facebook jail this morning.

I have no idea why. Facebook decided I did something wrong and now I can't comment or post or even hit the fucking like button for like, 48 hours. I mean, if this is supposed to be punishment for breaking a rule, it's totally not working because I do not know what I did.

So I'm over in the Run Your Best Life Facebook group this morning, I'm like, reading through everybody's posts and the 5K people are killing it with their training and the half marathon people are getting up to their really long runs, and there's questions and I'm like, I can't help them.

I mean, they've got questions, Facebook literally will not let me reply. It will just let me look and just that's it. And it's like when your toddler locks themselves in the bathroom. You can hear them and they're crying to get out and you can't do anything. It is so frustrating.

Anyway, that's what's new and exciting with me. I'm in Facebook jail. My Run Your Best Lifers have started #freejill. They're like, how do we send

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you Facebook bail money? And I'm flying out tomorrow so I can run in the woods at night and probably be eaten by a bear. Life is amazing and it's all a great opportunity to practice my thought work and manage my mind to run all of these very neutral circumstances.

And speaking of mind management, today we're going to talk about coming in last place. The worst thing possible for a runner, right? At least that is what some of my clients tell me. They say it's humiliating; it's embarrassing, it's discouraging to train so hard for something just to come in last.

They believe that coming in last completely negates the accomplishment. And I've even heard a couple women say that they decided not to do their race, not to even show up after all that training because they're pretty sure they'd be last and they would rather not run at all than suffer the shame of last place.

And I'm just like, wow. Now, can you relate to this? Have you ever had these thoughts? I mean, it's funny because I really don't think that way. I think coming in last, it simply means you finished the race. The circumstance is you went from point A to point B. You crossed the finish line. Did the same distance as everybody else. You earned the medal, you achieved the goal. I don't see last place as a negative thing at all.

Because the thing is coming in last is not the actual problem. Last place is simply the circumstance. It is completely neutral. It's just data. And you can make it mean anything you want. You can choose to make it mean that you are a rock star. You can choose to make it mean that you're a failure and anything in between.

There is no shame in being last unless you make it shameful. Now, there is also no pride in being last unless you make it an accomplishment. It goes both ways. Being last is a neutral circumstance and then you get to decide

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whether you want to make it mean something awesome or terrible or whatever.

So again, the facts are you finished a race, you were the last one to finish. Why is that shameful? What is so terrible about last place? I legitimately do not understand. I think there's honor in the last place club. That's how I choose to interpret it. You started a thing, you saw it through. You sought a goal and you achieved it.

One step at a time, one foot after the other. Even though it was hard and even though you wanted to quit. Now, all that stuff I just said, if that was how you thought about last place, that it means you're someone who finishes things, someone who shows up and does hard things, someone who makes a commitment and keeps it, if you really believed all of that, how would you show up differently in your life and in your running?

I think that shift in your thinking would change everything. You'd stop hiding, you'd stop downplaying your accomplishments. You'd show up with a lot more enthusiasm for your training. And the result of all of that is you become a stronger runner, more consistent and committed.

All because you decided to make last place mean something awesome. Now, I know that there are some of you listening right now and you're saying like, yeah Jill, it's all fine and good for me to change my own opinion of myself, but other people will laugh at me. They will think I'm not a real runner. They'll feel sorry for me. They'll talk behind my back, or worse of all, they will say good job, you really tried, when they're really thinking wow, she's pathetic.

I mean, here's the thing. Other people might do that. Other people might think those things. They might say those things. You can't control other people's opinions by running faster. Even if you came in first place, there

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are going to be people who think you're – oh, look at her running in first place, she thinks she's so special.

People are always going to have opinions about you and if you decide that a few people saying dumb stuff about you means you shouldn't run a race, well, that sucks. You're literally handing the reins of your life over to people who are completely unqualified to run it. You're like hey mean person who says shitting things about me, why don't I put you in charge of whether or not I can feel good about myself? Why don't I put you in charge of whether I show up to my race?

When you put it like that, it sounds kind of silly, doesn't it? It's like no, of course I don't want to do that. But that is exactly what you're doing when you consider other people's opinions in your decision-making process.

So I am not telling you how you should feel about your race finishes. If you come in last, you get to make it mean whatever you want. I just think there's no upside to thinking it's embarrassing because when you think that way, you're like oh my god, I came in last, it's the worst thing ever, you feel ashamed and then you don't really show up for yourself. You don't take the action of working harder at your running.

You might avoid it. You hide. You quit. And all of that, because a bunch of strangers ran faster than you. I mean, seriously, think this through. Imagine an alien comes to Earth and you had to explain this to the alien. They'd be like, so let me make sure I have this straight. You decided not to run at all because you're the slowest runner? Why is that important again?

The alien would be like yeah, you know what, life on Earth, not so intelligent, we're going to find another planet. So really think about it. And first of all, if you decide not to run at all because you're like, I'm going to be the slowest, I'm just not going to show up, you kind of screwed the person that was going to be second to last because now they're last.

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What if they decide like, I can't be in last place, I got to drop out? Somebody's got to be last in a race. Why the fuck are you so special that it can't be you? So think about it. Next time you're in a race, you're thinking you might be last, just decide in advance what you want to make it mean.

If that thought is going to have you showing up as your best self, awesome. If you decide you're going to make coming in last mean you showed up for yourself, you set a goal and you saw it through, great. And you know what, you still might feel a little embarrassed. You might cross the finish line last place and you might feel a little twinge of embarrassment because you have a thought like it's really not how I wanted this to go, or gosh, it's so embarrassing to be last.

And that's okay. You can feel a feeling. It's just a vibration in your body. A little embarrassment. You're not going to die. You just ran a race. You can feel a fucking feeling. You've got this.

Real quick before we go into my latest obsession, we've just talked a lot about working on your thinking so that you can feel differently about your running. And when you feel differently about your running, you show up differently.

So if you want help with your thoughts about being last in a race or maybe your inner mean girl or you just need to figure out how to stay motivated and consistent, I got you covered, my friend. I've created a very cool event that is part brain boot camp and part run-cation in Savannah, Georgia from October 31st to November 3rd. So it's about five, six weeks from now.

Now, the first two days of this event are brain work and a little bit of body work. You will learn the skills of mind management, goal setting, consistency, stopping negative self-talk so you can be a stronger more consistent runner. We're also going to do some strength training and stretching clinics, talk about fueling.

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We'll do a group run. We're going to pack it in. Enell is going to be there to do some bra fittings, and then on the next two days – so that's the first two days. The next two days you have the option to do a half marathon or a marathon on Saturday or a 5K or a one-mile on Sunday with the Savannah Rock-n-Roll Race Series.

So if you want to race, if you want to come down there and do a race after we've done all this brain work, I mean, it's the perfect time to practice what you've learned. Savannah is just gorgeous this time of year. It's not too hot, and it is flat. It is so, so flat. It is beautiful. It is the perfect running situation.

So basically, you'll come to Savannah, you'll train your brain like you train your body. You'll learn some other really cool stuff, hang out with some really amazing women, run with them, and what's not to love about that? So if you want to know more, get the full schedule and all the other information, go to notyouraveragerunner.com/savannah. All the information is there.

We do have a really cool special running, so if you and a girlfriend want to come down together, we have a girlfriend gone wild – well, you can get as wild as you want, but we have sort of like a girlfriends double ticket special. You can save a little money if you and a girlfriend want to come down together and even share a hotel room.

So I urge you to check this out because if running is a struggle for you, the missing link is most likely in your mind. And so this retreat, this brain boot camp, run-cation palooza, it's the missing link. It's the skill. It's going to teach you the skills to manage your brain so that you can get what you want in running. Okay? Okay.

It is now time for my latest obsession and I got to be honest, I'm not really obsessed with anything at the moment. I've been sort of head down for these past several weeks preparing for the 5K course, launching the 5K

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course, getting ready for the Ragnar, preparing our brain boot camp. And I've just been – I don't think I've ordered a single thing on Amazon in like, 30 days. It's bananas.

The UPS guy is like, I miss you, where have you been? But I have sort of gotten addicted to this one flavor of GU, which is like, I've always thought GU was just the grossest thing ever. But the birthday cake GU flavor is just ridiculous.

So I think there's only a couple GU flavors that don't have caffeine. Birthday cake GU is one of them. And I don't do well on caffeine. It spikes my heart rate, it keeps me up for days. So I just don't do anything with caffeine. And so there's a lot of running fuel out there, which I find a little frustrating, a lot of the Nuun flavors, a lot of the GU flavors and everything, they have caffeine in them.

So I have to be really careful to make sure I read all the labels. So birthday cake GU does not have caffeine. I was out running with Amy, my training partner Amy one day. We were doing 10 miles. And she kind of whips it out at about mile five and I'm like, I sniffed and I was like, what is that? Wait? GU never smells good. What is that?

And she's like, oh yeah, it tastes like buttercream frosting, which is quite possibly my favorite food on earth. So I tried one on my half marathon in the corn a couple weeks ago. Fell in love. Bought a whole box of it at REI and I've packed maybe six of them for Ragnar. I'm going to be running through the woods eating this birthday cake GU in Wisconsin.

So I packed six of them for Ragnar. I'll be using the rest throughout all of my marathon training for the rest of the year. And usually I think GU is gross. I really do, but this one is delightful. It really legit tastes exactly like buttercream frosting. It does not look like it. It's not a very attractive looking substance but don't look at it. You just squeeze it out and you're done.

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So we're going to have a link to that in the show notes. I hope you give it a try. Let me know if you like the birthday cake GU. And okay, my friends, that it is for this episode. Get out there, train your brains. Sign up for the Savannah brain boot camp run-cation and I will talk to you 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.