

Ep #113: The Power of Questioning Your Beliefs



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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 113 of *The Not Your Average Runner Podcast*. I'm your host, Jill Angie, and this episode is going to be a bit of a confession. So many things that I need to tell you.

So to start with, I have been feeling a lot of anxiety lately, and the Philadelphia Marathon is in six weeks. I've been freaking out a little bit. I don't feel prepared, and I know I've been saying over and over again that I want to show up feeling prepared as fuck, and I still don't feel prepared.

My legs are tired on every run, even the short ones, and that's mostly since coming back from Ragnar. But still, I'm like, fuck, this race is in six weeks. I did five miles the weekend after Ragnar. It was a total slog. Running just has not been fun for a couple of weeks.

I've actually thought to myself more than once, I wish it was just over with so I can lay on the couch for a month and not think about it. And I don't like it when I think that, but that thought keeps popping into my brain. And I know you can relate. I just know you can.

And here's what's so funny. I actually felt this exact way towards the end of training for my first half marathon. And now I am running half marathons as part of my training, and they seem normal. Like, not that hard. No big deal. So it is possible. I'm going to admit that it is possible that my brain is playing tricks on me.

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And so I've discovered a few of the tricks over the past couple weeks and I want to share them with you today. So first of all, did you know that your thoughts create your feelings and your feelings drive your actions? Oh, you did? That's right, because I talk about it every week.

Well lately, I seem to have forgotten that and fortunately, I have a coach who helps me remember. But I keep saying to myself, I'm not prepared enough for this marathon and I'm going to fail. And when I think that way, I feel anxious. And when I feel anxious, I try really hard to distract from that feeling with things that I believe will make me feel better in the moment.

And this looks like scrolling endlessly through Facebook and Instagram or eating an entire bag of white cheddar Cheetos. Seriously, try them some time, they're really good. But also, an entire bag, not so good. So when I feel anxious, I don't like to feel anxious and I try to distract from the feeling.

And the result of that, I don't distract with extra running. The result of distracting from my anxiety is that I don't figure out what I can do in the remaining seven weeks so that I'm even more prepared, and that reinforces my belief that I'm not prepared.

So I'm basically blocking myself from taking action by thinking I'm going to fail. I believe I'm going to fail. I feel anxious. I don't like to feel anxious so I distract by scrolling through Facebook and eating Cheetos, and then the result is I'm not any better prepared. It's messed up.

You would think that worrying about failing would inspire me to get my ass in gear, but it does not. Because thinking I'm going to fail makes me feel anxious and when I'm anxious, I don't take action. I hide, I avoid, and I suspect you do the same thing.

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So all this time, I have been thinking that the problem is me not being prepared enough for the race. But that is not the problem here. There actually is no problem. What? Okay, here are the facts.

I am registered for the race. I have completed over 40 training runs in preparation for that race. I've done some strength training. Everything else is my story about those facts.

Now, part of my story is I haven't done enough strength training, I haven't done enough sprinting, I haven't done enough mileage. That is a story. The facts are I've completed more than 40 training runs. I can't remember the exact amount as of this podcast, but it's over 40, and I've done some strength training workouts.

Not as much as was on my training plan but I've done some. So I am creating a whole story that describes my problem, but my story is not actually describing the problem. My story is creating the problem. So again, the facts are I have a marathon in six weeks and I've been training for that event. Everything else is a story.

When I change my thought about those circumstances to I'm going to do everything I can in the next six weeks to be prepared for this race, I don't feel anxious anymore. I feel committed. And when I feel committed, I show up totally different for my training than I do when I feel anxious.

I focus on my form. I do my strength training. I do my sprints. I do my hills. I stop asking when the fuck will this be over, I stop resenting that I have signed up for this race in the first place, and I start asking alright, what else can I do to prepare? I have six weeks.

Can you see the difference? I mean, I'm sure you can even hear it in my voice. But when I feel committed, I show up a different person for my

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training. And I don't feel committed when I think to myself, oh my god, I'm going to fail. I only feel committed when I think I'm going to do everything I can in the next six weeks to be prepared for this race.

So in the first example, I avoid my anxiety with activities that don't help me prepare. I block myself from preparation. I prove myself right by trying to avoid my anxiety. But in the second, when I have the emotion of commitment, I come at my training with commitment and determination.

Same exact circumstance. I've got a marathon in six weeks and I've done a certain amount of training. Same exact circumstance. When I think differently about it, I get a completely different outcome. And that is because anxiety is caused by thoughts and not circumstances.

The time I have left to do the race and the amount of training I've done is not causing my anxiety. My story about those facts is what causes my anxiety. I don't need more time to train. I need to make better use of the time I do have.

So if that doesn't make sense, I want you to rewind it and listen again because if you think your training is the problem, it isn't. Your problem is always your thinking about the circumstances. And you can choose to think how you want.

Now, if you're spending a lot of time in anxiety and half-assing your training, it's because your thinking is fucked up. Clean that up and the problem goes away. So that is confession number one that I've been indulging in thinking oh my gosh, I'm going to fail, poor me, everybody's going to know. I've had all these thoughts about failure. I've been indulging in them instead of doing the work on my mind to create thinking that drives a result that I want.

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So here's the other thing I want to do. I want to share another model that I've been working on for a couple weeks, and this one is a little more embarrassing to share but I'm going to do it anyway because we have that kind of relationship, don't we? We talk about things.

So this model, it kind of broke my brain a little bit when I saw what was going on, and I actually wrote about this in the Run Your Best Life group with my members there because I wanted to share this with them. When I made the connection of what was going on, I was like wow, this is a game-changer.

So in my daily thought downloads for the past six months, I have been writing how I believe running would be easier if I weighed 40 pounds less, or 20 pounds even. I'm just like, if I could just lose a little bit of weight, then running would be easier and I would be able to finish in the seven-hour time limit.

So the Philly Marathon has a seven-hour time limit, which is about a 16-minute mile. Right now, I'm doing about a 17-minute mile, and so based on that, it's very likely that I will not finish that 26 miles in seven hours.

Now, I'm pretty confident that I'll still be allowed to finish because I know the course and they'll just push us off to the sidewalk, which is totally fine. It's even likely that I'll be able to cross the mat if I finish – I'm thinking I'll probably finish around 7:45 to eight hours. In the past, they have left the mat up past the time limit, so I'm pretty sure that I'll be allowed to finish, cross the mat, get my medal, get an official finishing time, based on what I know about the course and past history.

And honestly, Philly handles back of the packers beautifully. There are so many races that have a time limit and they never enforce it. They just don't because they have a really great setup. But still, when I signed up for this

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race, I knew there was a seven-hour limit and I would like to get pretty close to that.

Seven hours and 15 minutes would feel amazing to me. I would love to have that time. So I have been mistakenly – little foreshadowing there – I've been telling myself this story that weight loss is the easiest way to get faster.

Because god forbid I should do some fucking sprints. I've been telling myself this story that weight loss is how I'm going to get faster, and then not really going all in on losing the weight because I don't know, I kind of love myself the way I am.

And so I've had a lot of conflict in my brain about it so I'll try to lose some and I'll lose a couple pounds and then I'll feel anxious that I'm not prepared and I'll overeat Cheetos and it's just been a big clusterfuck. And I've really been beating myself up about it and the more I beat myself up, the more I get really entrenched in my story that weight loss is the easiest way to get faster.

Fuck doing sprints, fuck doing my strength training. If I could just lose weight, I could get faster. And this thought has been in my thought downloads for months and months, and I have not done models on it until the last couple weeks because I thought it was a circumstance, y'all.

I was like, no, those are just facts. And this is where my brain broke a little because I was talking to my coach Lauren, I'm telling her about my "problem" that I weighed too much to finish the Philly Marathon in time, that I need to lose weight. And she's like, really? And she's just looking at me.

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She's so cute. We do this over video chat and she's just kind of looking at me with her little head cocked to the side, kind of a half-smile on her face. She's like, is that true? The only way to get faster is to lose weight?

And I'm looking back at her and she's really petite and tiny, and I was so annoyed. I'm like – in my head, I didn't say this out loud to her – but I'm like, yeah, it's easy for you to say because you're thin. You don't know what I'm going through. You don't have all this extra weight to lug around when you run.

I had quite a bit of opinions about this tiny little woman telling me that I don't need to lose weight to get faster. And I'm just looking at her like, I'm giving her the stink eye. And she's so patient with me. She said alright, let's look at it this way. Think about an Olympic runner. There's no extra body weight on those people. We've all seen them.

Like, 4% body fat. So if they want to get faster and take the gold medal, losing weight is not an option. I mean really, they're just like, I can't lose any more weight. I'd have to chop off a leg and then I wouldn't be able to run the same way. It's just not an option.

Maybe they can lose a few ounces, but for real, weight loss is not really on the table for an Olympic runner. And they don't just give up and say oh well, I guess that's it. I guess this is as fast as I'm ever going to be, right? No.

She says this to me and I'm like, oh my god. It was like a light bulb went off. It was more like a nuclear blast of a light bulb went off in my brain and I'm like oh, my weight is the circumstance and I am making it mean that I can't get any faster, which is bullshit. It's total bullshit.

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You guys, I am so embarrassed to admit that I was in that trap of thinking for myself because I help my Run Your Best Life clients get faster without losing weight all the time. I have so many testimonials from people who are like, I just did what Jill said and I took a minute off my time.

Now, it is true that losing weight will likely result in a faster pace. It's just physics. You have less weight to move so you can move it faster. But it is only one way and it is definitely not the only way, and so that means that thinking the thought I need to lose weight to run faster is totally blocking me from getting faster.

When I think that thought, I need to lose weight to run faster, I don't feel motivated. I feel discouraged. And when I feel discouraged, I do not give 100% to my training, and I definitely do not lose weight. But more importantly, I don't give 100% in my training.

Again, I don't want to feel discouraged, just like in the previous model, I didn't want to feel anxiety, so I overeat because Cheetos make me feel better in the moment, or I find reasons to skip my work out because I think well, what's the point? I'm so fat, I'll never be able to get faster.

This is the bullshit my brain has been saying, so I skip my workouts and what happens is I stay the same weight but more importantly, I don't do the work to get faster. And I block myself, and so the result is I'm just stuck. So let me go through that again.

When I think the thought I need to lose weight to get faster, the emotion I feel is discouraged. When I feel discouraged, I don't train as hard and I overeat. And then the result is I don't get any faster. So just like the first example in today's podcast, I thought believing I need to lose weight to get faster would motivate me to lose weight. You'd think that that's how it works.

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But really, check this thought in your own brain. If you've ever had that thought I need to lose weight to get faster, and you think that should motivate you, I want you to just take a moment, pause the podcast, take a moment and really think that thought to yourself. I need to lose weight to get faster. I need to lose weight to get faster.

Do you feel motivated? No. You feel frustrated, you feel maybe a little overwhelmed because losing weight is way harder than doing some sprints. So you can see from my model and you can see from how it feels in your own body, thinking I need to lose weight to get faster does not motivate me to lose weight.

It is a total backfire and it demotivates me to train. It demotivates me to take the action that I can take right now to get faster. Imagine there was some weird thing that happened in the world that caused everybody on the planet to never be able to gain or lose another pound.

And so if I knew that, beyond a shadow of a doubt, this is it, this is the body I've got until I die, what would I decide to think then? I could just say fuck it and decide whatever pace I'm at is just fine. That's always an option. Or I could say okay, losing weight isn't something I can do, so what other ways can I influence my pace.

Let's see. I could double down on strength training. I could add in extra sprints. I could do more hills. I could get really solid on my fueling. I could play around with my intervals. I could spend time every morning mentally rehearsing my run. There are so many things I can do to get faster that have nothing to do with losing weight.

But when I believe that weight loss is the easiest way, again, total bullshit, I block myself from all of those other options because I feel so discouraged. Now, without changing anything but my thinking, here is what happens.

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I start to think that I want to show up as strong and powerful as possible. So that's my new thought. I want to show up as strong and powerfully as possible at this race. When I think that thought, I feel determined. And when I feel determined, I give 100% to my training.

Now, my result is I might get faster, I might not. But I definitely get stronger and more powerful when I do all the things that I know I need to do. So you guys, this is the power of doing the model that I teach. The circumstance, thought, feeling, action, and result model. This is the power of doing that model. This is the power of questioning all of your beliefs.

Because most of you think that you have a lot of circumstances in your life that you can't do anything about. When what you really have is a bunch of shitty thoughts that you mistakenly believe are true. And I'm going to say that again. Most of you think that you have a lot of circumstances in your life that you can't do anything about, or that you need to change in order to get the result you want.

But what you really have is a bunch of shitty thoughts that you mistakenly believe are true. So, this week I'm going to give you some homework. What is one belief that you think is 100% a circumstance that is keeping you from what you want? I want you instead of putting it in the model as a circumstance, I want you to put it in the model as a thought.

See what happens. See how you feel when you think that thought, how you show up when you feel that way, and what is the result of how you're showing up. Then I want you to challenge the belief. Look at all the options. Because I will tell you, my two beliefs, the first one was I'm not prepared enough for this marathon and I need to lose weight to get faster, the seemed like facts.

They seemed so true. But they were really just opinions that I had, and they were creating the exact reality I was trying to avoid. So you guys, I cannot

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stress this enough. You have got to do this work. When you are a runner, if running is something you want to do, if you want to run a 5K or you want to run a 100-mile race or whatever, you are not going to get very far without doing the work on your mind.

This is what we do in Run Your Best Life. We do so much mind work because the act of running is pretty natural for people. We know how to run. We are born with the wiring to learn how to run and sometimes we forget about it in our 20s and 30s and 40s, and we start again in our 50s, but you're born knowing how to do that.

You can refine your running, you can refine the physical part of it, you can do the strength training and all that stuff, and you should be doing all that, but that's just a tiny little part of how you're going to be successful as a runner and how you're going to change your life through running. You have to do the mind work.

Alright, so speaking of the mind work, I want to invite you to a free webinar that I'm doing next week. And it is all about how to keep your body and your mind in great shape through the holidays and throughout the winter. It's called Winterize Your Run. It's on Thursday, October 17th at 1pm Eastern.

Now, all you need to do to sign up, to be part of the webinar is go to notyouraveragerunner.com/free-webinar. That's notyouraveragerunner.com/free-webinar. Or you can just go to the show notes for this podcast, episode 113. Go to notyouraveragerunner.com/podcast and find 113, click on that.

Now, this webinar, we are going to help you create a strategy for staying on track with your running throughout the holiday season, for keeping yourself in great shape throughout the winter. Now, the webinar is not just for

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people who run in the snow, by the way, because a lot of us take the winter as a downtime even if you live in Florida.

You might keep running throughout the season but it's a nice time to sort of power down a little bit and focus on other things. So we're going to talk about strength training. We're going to talk about other things that you can do to care for your body so that when spring comes around, you are ready to get out there and really run strong.

We want you to be set up for success in 2020. And so we're going to talk about winterizing your run, we're going to talk about winterizing your brain. Actually, that sounds kind of weird. We're going to talk about how to make your health a priority even while you are going from party to party to dinners and all the things are at your office to eat because everybody's bringing their leftover cookies in.

The holidays, people think the holidays are crazy. I'm going to help you think differently about it so that you can stay on track. So Winterize Your Run. Go to notyouraveragerunner.com/free-webinar, or you can go to the show notes for this podcast to sign up. It's on Thursday, October 17th at 1pm Eastern. I hope you are there because as always, if you show up live, there's going to be some fun stuff for you.

Okay my friends, so this week's obsession is a cookbook. It's another cookbook. I think I've done a couple cookbooks. This one is called Cook Once, Eat All Week, and my Run Your Best Lifers turned me onto this. And I bought a copy, it's by Cassy Joy Garcia.

Oh my god, so basically this is a book where she gives you a little clump of recipes and she tells you okay, this is everything you need to buy to make all these recipes, and on Sunday, this is what you're going to do, or whatever your food prep day is.

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This is what you're going to do. You're going to cook this chicken and you're going to shred it and divide it into two and you're going to cook these vegetables and divide those into two. And she gives you basically – you do your prep work on Sunday and then the rest of the week, Monday through Friday, she gives you all the instruction to take everything you prepped on Sunday and really quickly assemble them into incredibly yummy meals.

And so we just did our first week of meals from this book, *Cook Once, Eat All Week*. Every single one of them was awesome. Awesome. So I highly recommend it. It's also – I'm going to read from the front cover. It says 26 weeks of gluten-free, affordable meal prep to preserve your time and sanity.

And so I'm not gluten-free. I eat gluten, but this is not a low-carb cookbook. It's just gluten-free. Apparently, she's the author of *Fed and Fit*, which I'm unfamiliar with. I've never heard of this person before and now I'm kind of obsessed with her.

So the book is called *Cook Once, Eat All Week*. We will have a link to the book in the show notes and I highly recommend it. It's super fun. And as you know, chef Jen, coach Jen in *Run Your Best Life*, she's a chef and she actually did a webinar for us recently in *Run Your Best Life* on food prep and gave us a whole bunch of tips.

And I was just like, oh my god, this is amazing. I love this. Jen taught us all of the basics of food prep and now this book is giving me all the recipes that I can use to take what I learned from Jen and put it into practice. So again, *Cook Once, Eat All Week* is the name of the weekly obsession.

And don't forget to sign up for the *Winterize Your Run* webinar, Thursday, October 17th, 1pm Eastern. Go to noryouraveragerunner.com/free-webinar. And that it is for this week, my rebels. Go do your thought work. Your life will be better for it. Have a great week and I'll talk to you soon.

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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.