

Ep #123: Stop Saying Failure Is Not an Option



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 123 of *The Not Your Average Runner Podcast*. I'm your host Jill Angie, and I know that you're fucking up and failing all over the place right now. And I want to talk about it.

Now, this is not going to be one of those lectures where I say you have to do better and I shake my finger at you. This is more like, hey, you're failing and I'm so proud of you. Now, here's the deal. I need you to stop pretending that you're supposed to be failing and do everything right and not mess up and have to do things over, try a bunch of times before you get things right.

I want you to stop pretending that failure is a bad thing because you know what? Success doesn't happen on the first try. It doesn't happen on the 10th try sometimes or maybe even the 1000th. How many light bulbs did Edison invent before he got the one that worked?

And if you think that failure is something to be ashamed of, you will never do anything new. That is the truth. You will never run that marathon, you will never apply for a new job, you will never learn how to make the perfect chocolate chip cookie.

And this is a concept I've discussed on the podcast a lot but I really want to devote a whole show to it because it's important. It's important, my friends. So let's just talk about something that drives me crazy. Let's talk about this. I hate that meme that says failure is not an option. We think like, failure is

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not an option, I'm strong, I power through. I don't accept anything less than perfection.

But y'all, failure is the path. Failure is the way. Failure is necessary. We need to stop thinking that failure means something has gone horribly wrong. Failure is simply not getting the result you want after you made an attempt. It's neutral. It's a circumstance.

Try to run a half marathon at Disney, you got pulled off the course at mile seven. You didn't finish. It's a failure. It's a fact. The fact is that you didn't finish the race and that is not what makes you feel bad. Everybody's like, I failed and I feel terrible. I feel terrible because I failed. That's not what makes you feel bad. It is your thoughts about the failure that cause you pain.

Your thoughts like, "I'm so embarrassed. I told everyone about this race and I didn't finish and now they think I'm pathetic," or, "I spent so much money on this vacation and now it's ruined because I failed," or maybe, "I'll never get another chance to do this race. I totally blew it."

When you think those thoughts, you feel awful. But the race and your lack of finishing the race is not what makes you feel that way. You are beating the crap out of yourself with your thinking and that hurts. So failure is a circumstance and it only hurts if you believe that something has gone wrong. If you believe there's something wrong with you because you failed.

We used to fail all the time and never made it mean anything. When you learned how to walk, you didn't fall down and say oh my god, I'm never going to figure out walking. You failed, maybe you cried, but you got up and you tried again.

So somewhere along the line, we're taught this bullshit that failure is not an option, that failure is not acceptable. But here's the thing; success, just like

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failure, is neutral. Success means you got the result that you wanted. It's just the opposite of failure.

But it also doesn't create your feelings. You think you feel awesome because you finished your marathon. You don't feel awesome because you finished your marathon. You feel awesome because you have a thought about the neutral circumstance of finishing the marathon.

Our lives are simply a bunch of neutral circumstances that we have opinions about and those opinions, our thoughts make us feel a certain way, which influences our actions, gives us our results, which then become more circumstances. That is how it works.

So what I'm here to tell you is if you want more success, you got to be trying to fail a lot more because failure is where the growth happens. It is where the learning happens. Now, if you are afraid of feeling embarrassed or disappointed or mad about failing, sure, it makes sense to avoid it because you're like, oh my gosh, I might feel embarrassed.

Somehow, we think that feeling embarrassed is the worst thing that can happen to us, or feeling disappointed is the worst thing that can happen to us. It's not the worst thing. A feeling will not kill you. A feeling is quite literally - starts in your brain and travels through your body. It's a series of neural connections. It's a series of electrical impulse from neuron to neuron. That is what a feeling is. Feeling will not kill you.

Your fear of feeling a feeling will keep you from doing a lot of cool stuff, and then you're left with feeling different emotions like maybe bored or lonely or unfulfilled because you never try anything new. But being afraid of feeling a feeling is not super helpful.

And honestly, I think that's the big reason that most people don't do the stuff in their lives that they want to do is they're just afraid like, I'm going to

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be disappointed or embarrassed or mad. And I don't want to feel those things, so I'm just not going to do the thing and instead I'll choose boredom, lonely, unfulfilled, maybe guilt, disappointment.

We're disappointed in other ways. We might be disappointed if we fail, but if we don't try, we're disappointed because we didn't try, right? So it's so funny. Anyway, it's kind of a tradeoff. So if you're willing to feel disappointed, if you're like, I'm okay with being disappointed - I mean, that's how I felt about the marathon. I was like, I'm going to show up, I might not finish, and I'll be disappointed, and I'm okay with feeling disappointed. I know it's not going to kill me.

If you're willing to feel disappointed or embarrassed or shame or mad or any other number of emotions, if you're willing to feel those ahead of time, if you're willing ahead of time to feel them, I should say, you can weather failure. You can do some really cool stuff if you are willing to fail and deal with the emotions.

If you're not, if you're like, nope, sorry, can't do it, then you get to stay right where you are and you always wonder what could have been. But if you want to do something new, if you want to live a different life or change parts of your current life, and I quite literally do not know a single person on this planet who's not interested in at least changing one single thing about themselves, if you want to do that, you've got to be willing to fail.

You just have to. There is no other way. It's either stay where you are or evolve. And evolution is just a series of failure after failure after failure. Fail, learn, grow. Fail, learn, grow. Fail, learn, grow. You fail forward. Every time you fail and you learn and you grow, you're a little bit farther down the path.

Now, if you want to stay put, if you're like, you know, it would be nice to change things but it seems like a lot of work, I just want to stay put, that's

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totally fine. I'm not saying everyone should be trying to change themselves. There's nothing wrong with staying the same. It's totally a choice.

But if you are listening to this podcast, my guess is that you do want to change at least something about yourself. And that is where failure comes in. And so you might be wondering, right now I'm all in with my belief that failure is the worst thing that can happen. You're like, I've been taught that, my parents drilled it into me, and it's just part of who I am. I just believe that failure is the worst thing that could happen and I absolutely have to avoid it. How do I just stop suddenly believing that?

Okay, I get it, because you're like, what if I fail at thinking about failure? But first of all, I want you to just open your mind up to thinking differently about failure. Just a tiny little bit. Maybe just be willing to fail and feel awful. Just be like, I know I'm going to feel awful about this, I'm willing to feel awful to just try this thing and see what happens. I'm willing to feel awful while I learn to think differently.

I mean, learning to think differently, like, shifting your brain, sometimes it's like turning the Titanic. It just takes forever. It does not have a very tight turning radius and you can hear the whole thing creaking and groaning and you're trying to turn the boat around and it's like, will I ever get there? You might not feel great while it happens.

But you have to do it incrementally in that case. So maybe you start by practicing thoughts like I'm willing to fail even though I'm going to be scared and even though I feel like I want to barf. Or how about this one? This is one of my favorite thoughts. I kind of refer to it all the time. Failure is just a neutral circumstance and can't hurt me.

And so then I know okay, I might fail but it can't hurt me. I did not finish the marathon. That was a failure. It really didn't hurt me. I was disappointed. I lived. I lived to tell another day. I didn't have to wallow. I didn't wallow for a

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second because I was just kind of like, I did the best I could do. Yes, I'm disappointed because I didn't get what I wanted, and no, I'm not going to stop.

So being willing to fail, it's just another thought. So I want you to practice it. I want you to start by practicing - you don't have to believe that failure is a good thing. That might be too far for me to ask you to go right now. I just want you to be willing to actually try it and prove to yourself that you're not going to die.

So I'm actually challenging myself to have 25 epic fails in the first three months of 2020. Now, I have - in addition to my running goals, which are also very large and barfy - I have a huge motherfucking goal for 2020. I'm a little nervous just saying this out loud on the podcast. I have a lot of beliefs and thoughts. Maybe I'll talk about them on another podcast.

But I have a revenue goal for Not Your Average Runner to earn a half a million dollars in revenue in 2020. I want to be that badass woman who creates a super successful business from the ground up, helping tons of women become runners and live better lives as a result, and prove that success like this is available to anyone.

I want to evolve into that version of me that runs a half a million-dollar business. And then of course, the next year I'll probably double down on that revenue goal as well. But it's so important and so meaningful to me to prove, to be an example of what is possible to other women who maybe want to start a business for themselves, who want to run a company.

I want to show that - I'm getting teary just talking about it. I've been crying a lot on this stupid podcast lately. But I just want to be an example to every woman out there who has thought, you know what, I just can't quit my job and start my own company, or I'm too fat to be a runner, or I'm not smart enough or whatever bullshit story you have.

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I want to be an example of you can have all the negative thoughts about yourself and you can work on them and change them and you can become a different version of yourself. You can become your future self, like we talked about last week on the podcast.

And so one of my measurements of that goal is a revenue goal. So I want Not Your Average Runner to earn half a million dollars in revenue in 2020. I want to be that badass. And I want to be an example of what happens when you are willing to fail upwards until you get what you want.

And you guys, this is a really scary goal for me. It's scary just to say it out loud. The only other person I've really said it out loud to, other than my besties and the Not Your Average Runner team are the folks that were at the Savannah retreat. I told them too and I was like, my stomach was all flip-floppy.

But it's a scary goal, not because I'm scared of achieving it. I'm not scared of having the goal. That excites me. Thinking about the achievement, I'm like, damn. When I step into my future self, I'm like, damn girl, look what you did. What makes me feel nervous and barfy is because of the evolution I'm going to need to go through in the next 12 months to make it happen.

There's so much evolution. Right now, I mean, if I was the person who had the thoughts that generated \$500,000 in revenue, I'd have that right now. Those are not the thoughts that I'm thinking on a daily basis right now, so I have to figure out what is my future self that has this result, what is she thinking, what is she willing to do, what is she willing to fail at, what failures does she accumulate along the way so that she can get there?

I have a lot of beliefs that are going to need to change so I can get the fuck out of my own way and make this happen. And it's scary and barfy and exciting too. But really, it's going to be a collection of failures. And so my goal for quarter one, January, February, March of 2020 is 25 epic fails.

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I promise you, many of them will be public. Some of them will be behind the scenes, some of them have already probably happened. We just had some epic fails in the business last weekend. All good. Most of them were my fault. But many of them are going to be public and you're going to know about them. I'll talk about them on the podcast.

Here's an example of an epic fail that I had just recently. I didn't finish my marathon. I know I talk about that all the time but it was a pretty epic fail. Thousands of people knew I was running this marathon. Like, literally thousands of people. It's pretty fucking public.

And I mean, I could have made that mean I didn't finish, I could have made it mean I'm a terrible coach, I'm a terrible runner, I should shut down this business immediately, people are going to run screaming, and I was like, making it mean that is not super helpful. It does not result in me becoming a better version of myself.

So instead, I decided to make it mean I'm just not done yet. I'm just getting started. It was the first try. I'll train differently and harder and also, I will learn how to run in wet socks. I feel like that was my biggest failure on that day.

But really, failure is just the circumstance, you guys. Success does not happen in a vacuum. Failure is the path. Failure is the way. Failure creates the evolution that is necessary to achieve success. And I also love this concept that I've been playing with a lot with my Run Your Best Lifers is the goal is not actually the goal.

The thing that I want, the 500K in revenue is not the goal. For me, the evolution into that woman that created that result, that is the goal. Because that is something I can take to the bank. That once I know how to create that result for myself, boom, done, nothing else I can't do. That evolution

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into that person that has such a rock-solid belief in herself is so valuable because it translates everywhere in my life.

And I bet you this; I'll hit that 500K revenue goal and bam, marathon will come right afterwards. For sure they are very, very much tied in my head because I know that part of my marathon failure was me not 100% believing in myself. I'll be honest about that.

I definitely did a lot of work. I believed myself all the way to 20 miles. I didn't quite believe myself into 26. Because if I had believed in it rock solid, that rain, those wet socks, I would have finished that race. Bloody feet and all. I would have finished the race if I 100% believed I could do it. I obviously - I was probably like, 75% of the way there, and then that little part of me was just like, you know what, you don't want it that badly, let's just finish.

I mean, it wasn't comfortable running on blistered feet. I will 100% admit that. But if I'd had to go another 13 miles, if my life depended on it, I would have made that shit happen. And so I think it's so interesting because I know that when my belief is 100% there, that I will have the result I want.

But failing along the way, maybe I failed because my belief wasn't 100% there. Now I know. That's what I learned from this particular event. And I just think when you think about failure differently, instead of making it mean that, oh my god, this is the worst thing ever, you just break it down, do a deconstruction, I don't know what they call it in corporate world anymore, but really do a post-event review, and break it down and figure out what can I learn, what went well, what didn't go so well, what am I going to change for next time.

Make it neutral and learn from it. You become unstoppable. So there was something else I wanted to talk to you guys about today. No, we talked about the goal not actually being the goal, and for me, like I said, the evolution is the goal. If I hadn't decided to train for that marathon last year,

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even though I failed, I also would not have evolved into a person who can do a 20-mile run.

Because now I have that rock-solid belief. I can run 20 miles no problem. I mean, for real. That 20-mile run would not have happened if I hadn't set a goal that was much longer, much farther ahead of that, and then pushed myself to evolve. I created such a shift in my brain because I set that big goal for myself and I decided I'm okay with failing until I get there.

Now, there's something that I think I need to clarify on this. I don't believe that you should be failing on purpose. And when I mean fail on purpose, I mean like giving up on yourself. This is getting really hard; I'm going to quit and come back tomorrow. That's giving up.

So skipping a training run because you're not feeling into it, you're like, I'm not having fun, I'm going to quit, that's not failing. It doesn't count as a fail. That's a quit. Or more accurately, I guess it's like failing ahead of time. But really, that's just giving up on yourself. I mean a failure where you really give 100% and you still don't get what you want. Girl, that is the sweet spot.

That is where you can say okay, what's next? How do I regroup and try again? What can I do differently? What can I try next? How can I fail at something else? What's the next thing I can fail at so I can see what works and what doesn't? Failure is magic. It's magic, I tell you.

One last thing. This has turned into a bit of a rant today. But one last thing I want to cover. I have heard people saying lately, "I'm just failing at life right now. Everything sucks. I'm failing at life right now." And they say this when things aren't going their way. And mostly when they're like, I keep fucking up everything. That's what they mean when they say I'm failing at life.

So if that is you, I want you to stop saying it. Because first of all, you're alive and so by definition, that's succeeding at life. Let's be very factual. But

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secondly, if you're not getting a result in your life, you're not getting the results that you want, maybe, just maybe it is because you keep whining about how you're failing at life.

When you think that thought, I'm failing at life, do you feel enthusiastic and motivated? No. You feel overwhelmed, defeated, and full of self-pity. And how do you show up for yourself when those are your emotions? You're like Eeyore. You're like, woe is me, I'm Eeyore. I don't even know what Eeyore sounds like but I imagine that's what he sounds like.

But what happens? You show up for yourselves when you're overwhelmed and defeated and full of self-pity, you create more of the same stuff for yourself. So girl, I want you to pay attention to what you're saying to yourself because your brain is listening at all times and acting accordingly. Your brain is constantly eavesdropping on all the shit you say.

It's like, oh, we're failing at life, we must want more of that. Let's go fuck something else up. How you define failure is everything. Stop making it mean that something has gone horribly wrong and start realizing that failing is still forward motion, even if it feels like you're standing still or even going backwards. If you listen to failure, if you pay attention, if you learn from it, it's still forward motion.

Andy has a saying that he uses when he runs. Forward is forward. And I define a failure as forward motion, as long as it's a worthy failure. It's like, I went all in, I fucked it up, and I broke it down and said this is what I'm going to do to move myself forward. It's still forward motion.

And speaking of forward motion, I am going to be teaching the Rebel Runner Roadmap students how to fail forward because they're going to be learning a bunch of new stuff in this class and they're not going to get it right the first time. I know. And if you have signed up for this class and

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you're a perfectionist and this is news to you, I'm so sorry. You're going to make some mistakes.

Maybe one time, maybe 10 times. And that is awesome. Because I think the longer it takes you to succeed, the better you learn the lesson. If you somehow get lucky and nail it the first time, you don't find out all the ways it doesn't work. And then if you do fail in the future, you're like, oh my god, what do I do? I don't know what to do.

But if you failed a bunch of times along the way, before you succeeded, you're like, I know exactly what happened and I know what to do here. So for sure, we are going to talk about failure and success and everything in between in the Rebel Runner Roadmap. And the Roadmap class is for you if you want to become a runner or if you want to get better at running.

And seriously, you guys, you can get coached by me in this class. You are going to get on video, I can give you truth bombs about yourself. But really, what we'll do is we'll talk about what's going on with you and how to get yourself where you want to be. Like, figuring out why you're struggling so you can start shifting into that future self version of you that is killing it.

I mean, how I see it is you can keep doing what you're doing, which is avoiding failure so you never have to feel bad, and then of course feeling bad because you always seem to have the same old issues over and over again. Or you can keep hoping you'll magically succeed without having to put in the work. You can totally keep doing that.

Or, here's option number two. You can figure out exactly why you're quitting on yourself and start doing the work to change it. Now, which do you think is more likely to get you where you want to be? If you chose figure out why you're quitting on yourself, figure out why you're not willing to fail and start doing the work, join me in the Rebel Runner Roadmap and let's play. Let's get busy.

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The official class starts on January 6th but the Facebook group is already rocking and rolling. If you join me there now, you will get access to all of the Facebook Lives and the coaching that I'm doing throughout the month of December for everyone that signed up early. And it's going to be some good stuff. It's going to set you up for success in January.

So if you're in, I want you to go to rebelrunnerroadmap.com right now to sign up. rebelrunnerroadmap.com. The link is going to be in the show notes as well. And my friends, I want to know how you're going to fail. Tell me. Write to the show and tell me. What are you going to try? What are you going to be willing to totally crash and burn at? Epic fails to get what you want.

What are you going to tell yourself when you fail? I know what I'm going to say when I fail. I'm going to say what did I learn? What can I do differently? Bring on the next one. Alright my friends, I failed at getting you an obsession this week. I don't have anything new other than me being obsessed with all the ways I'm going to fail in the first quarter of 2020.

But that is it for this week, so I will see you in the next episode, which is - oh my gosh, it's almost the end of the decade. I will see you at the end of the decade. Have an awesome 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.