

Ep #126: Crush 2020 with this 6-Step 2019 Review



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With Your Host

Jill Angie

[The Not Your Average Runner Podcast](#) with Jill Angie

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One thing that most people do is remember all the shit that went wrong, right? Our brains have a bias towards the negative. It's an evolutionary thing that helps us stay safe, or it helped us stay safe. We remember negative experiences preferentially over positive ones because the negative ones can cause us problems.

Like, oh, don't touch that bush, it's sharp, right? So it makes sense in the context of when and how we evolved, but of course now our brains don't have to worry so much about that stuff. So now it puts those tendencies to use, remembering that one time you didn't finish a race and it forgets about the 10 races you did finish.

Welcome to *The Not Your Average Runner Podcast*. If you're a woman who has never felt athletic but you still dream about becoming a runner, you are in the right place. I'm Jill Angie, a certified running and life coach and I teach women how to start running, feel confident, and change their lives, and now I want to help you.

Hey rebels, how's your 2020 going? I will tell you what, mine has been pretty awesome so far. Andy and I spent New Year's Eve at the Jersey Shore down in Ocean City and we did that for New Year's Eve, and then we did a 5K on the boardwalk on January 1st, followed immediately by a polar plunge in the Atlantic.

And we actually did the same thing last year. We had so much fun. We came back again. This year it was a little bit colder than last year and the big difference for me was we actually had to stand on the wet sand for a little while in our bare feet waiting for them to wave us into the water. And oh my god, my feet. We ran in the water, we dipped, we got that total shock to the system, and then we got that exhilarating rush after we got back out of the water. It was so fun.

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And it sounds crazy but it's amazing and we're totally going to do it again next year. So now we've got a nice New Year's tradition. I kind of hope that next year we can get a nice little band of rebel runners to come to Ocean City and do the 5K and the polar plunge with us, so who's in? Let me know.

So what we're going to talk about today kind of goes against what I have taught you in the past, because I've told you in earlier episodes not to dwell on the past, not to live in what happened before because you can't change it. And today we're actually going to break that rule, but I promise it's for a good reason.

Now, when I was in pharmaceutical manufacturing, I worked on a lot of different projects. And at the end of every one, we did this thing called an after-action review. It's an operational excellence tool and it's part of the lean six sigma process, or at least that's what we used to call it at GSK.

Anyway, at the end of each project we would dedicate time to review what happened and then use that information to improve for the next time. And today I'm going to teach you how to apply it to your life and your goals so that you can level up in 2020 and beyond and achieve your goals.

Now, the reason that this after-action review process is so important is because of kind of how our brains work. So one thing that most people do is remember all the shit that went wrong, right? Our brains have a bias towards the negative. It's an evolutionary thing that helps us stay safe, or it helped us stay safe. We remember negative experiences preferentially over positive ones because the negative ones can cause us problems.

Like, oh, don't touch that bush, it's sharp, right? So it makes sense in the context of when and how we evolved, but of course now our brains don't have to worry so much about that stuff. So now it puts those tendencies to use, remembering that one time you didn't finish a race and it forgets about the 10 races you did finish.

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So you end up thinking everything was terrible because your brain doesn't bother storing the good stuff. That's why an AAR, an after-action review is so great because you objectively look at your year. You evaluate it, then you use that information to create a plan for the next one. And this is not about beating yourself up for everything you didn't do. It is about taking an honest look at what happened, what transpired over the previous 12 months, and then moving into the next 12 months with a plan.

So the way I do it, there are six steps. Now, in a business after-action review, there are four, but life is more than just a team project. So I've added a couple extra things in to make sure we cover things like thoughts and feelings. So we're just going to dive right in. This is step one and this is intentions.

So this is actually a pretty easy step. Just start out with what you intended to accomplish last year. I want you to spend like, maybe five or 10 minutes thinking about what did you set out for yourself as an expectation last January? Did you want to run a half marathon? Did you want to join a running group? Maybe save a certain amount of money or pay off a student loan or have a baby, learn to knit, go rock climbing?

Whatever it was, remember it and write it down. Now, you may not have actually set any goals for yourself last January. You might not have sat down on January 1st and said okay, this is what I'm going to do next year. But I imagine at some point during the year, you thought, "Oh yeah, I'd like to do that in 2019."

So I want you to write it all down. Everything you intended to do, running and otherwise. That's step number one. Step number two is actions and results. So I want you to go through your list, line by line, and write down what actually happened.

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If you had a half marathon on your list, did you finish one? Yes or no. If you planned to go rock climbing, did you go? Yes or no. Now, what did you complete? Which ones did you finish maybe partway, which ones didn't happen at all? Just write it all down without judgment. If you find yourself using adjectives or opinions or criticisms, just stop it. Just the facts please.

Imagine you're explaining it all to a judge, and as soon as you add adjectives, the attorney for the opposing side is going to yell objection. So if your goal was to finish a half marathon, just write complete or incomplete or I finished it, I got halfway, and then I stopped. We're not going to write down complete but slower than I wanted, or I did it but I dropped out because I gave up on myself. Just the facts.

I finished it or I did 10 miles, or I didn't show up or whatever it was. Now, you may have set a lot of goals last year for yourself that you didn't complete. This is very normal when we don't have a plan in place to make it happen. That's how most of us operate. Let's be honest. I've done that in the past for sure.

We say, yeah, I'm going to do these things, but then if we don't make a plan, if we don't write the actions down that we need to take and get them in our calendar and make a commitment, none of it happens. And then the next year we just repeat the whole thing all over again. Tell me where I'm wrong here. I know you're thinking in your brain like, oh yeah, I've done that before.

But here's the thing; in 2020, it's going to be different because you are making a plan and putting a process into place. So step one is what did you intend to have happen in 2019, and step two is what actually happened. And again, this is just the facts, my friends.

Now, step three is thoughts and emotions. This is when you write down all the things. This is when you're going to do a thought download about

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everything in step two. Again, give yourself maybe five or 10 minutes. Write down what you are super proud of from last year and why you're proud. And then maybe what you're disappointed about and why you're disappointed.

What blew your mind, what frustrated you, everything in between. This is the step where you let it all out. You're going to do a total thought download about your 2019 results. And if you don't know what a thought download is, make sure you listen to episode 33 of the podcast where I go over it in detail.

So you're going to get it all out, you're going to throw a tantrum or a pity party or throw a big congratulations party on a job well done. This is the place to do it. Allow yourself to feel whatever you feel. Take note of the emotions, whether it's frustrated or proud or excited or pissed off. Whatever it is. In fact, write down the emotions that you're feeling as well. I think that's really helpful.

And this is it. So this is your chance to just say like, these are all my opinions about everything that went down last year. The good, the bad, and the ugly. Now, that's step three. Step four is where we ask why and we're going right back to being objective here.

The pity party is over. Take off your party hat. It is time to be a grown up again. So you're going to look through all the things that happened in step two, both what didn't happen and what did, and you're going to explain why. Where did you not follow through and why? Where did you meet or exceed your plans and why?

And notice if you are tending to make excuses like, "Oh, my husband doesn't support me. Or the weather was terrible. Or my boss is an asshole." Bring it right back to the facts. So for example, I didn't complete

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my half marathon training because I believed my brain when it said I had no business being a runner and I quit on myself. That's factual.

What is not factual is I'm such a lazy person, I never finish anything, or something came up every time I had a training run. Those are thoughts and excuses, and they are probably the same ones that got in your way during the year if you didn't get the result you wanted. So be honest and accurate about what happened, but please don't be an asshole to yourself. That does not help you.

It's not going to move you forward. It's going to keep you stuck. You made choices in 2019. Some of them led you closer to your goals and some of them led you farther away. That is all. If you made enough of one kind of choice, you probably got the result you wanted. If you made too many of the other kind of choice, you didn't hit your goal. It's just math.

So I want you to look at the actions you took versus the results that you got, and if you didn't meet your goals, what will you do differently in 2020? Or if you're doing this in 2020, what will you do differently in 2021? What are you willing to change to make it happen?

So you're going to decide what you want to do differently in 2020. This is really step 4B. Step 4A is why didn't it work, step 4B is what are you going to do differently. Decide what that is, write down the changes you want to make for next year that you think are going to give you a different result.

And if there are things that you did in 2019 that worked like gangbusters, make sure you take note of that as well. Keep doing what worked, my friends, and then plan to modify what didn't. And please keep the judgment out of it. Imagine you're helping a stranger do this and you're not going to say to a stranger like, "What's wrong with you? Are you an idiot? Are you a moron? Are you lazy?"

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No, you'd say okay, well this is what you did and this is what you needed to do to get the result you wanted. You keep it neutral. So treat yourself with that level of compassion when you're going through what didn't work and what you want to change. So that's step four.

And then step five is where we start looking ahead. This is the time where we decide what do you want to achieve in 2020. Where do you want to be in one year? So one year from now, what do you want to have listed on your accomplishments roster? Who do you want to be? What kind of person do you want to be?

I want you to write all of that down, and especially with your goals, be super specific. Now, for example, here's something that's specific. I'm going to run the Philadelphia half marathon on November 21st 2020. I'm going to save \$5000 by December 31st 2020. You have to make it measurable.

So I'm going to become a runner is not measurable. It's not specific. But I'm going to start running in January and finish my first 5K race by May 31st is very specific. Or I'm going to run three times a week for at least 40 weeks of 2020. That's very specific.

So make sure that each of your goals is very specific and measurable. And now this is where the model comes in again because we are going to work it in reverse. That's going to help you find out what you need to be thinking to get the result that you want to achieve next year.

So first you're going to take the goals you want to achieve and you're going to make a bunch of CTFAR models on a piece of paper. Take the goals you want to achieve and put them in the result line. The R line of the model. And again, if you don't know what I'm talking about when I talk about the CTFAR model, make sure you listen to episode 33 of the podcast where I review it in detail.

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Now, for each one, what are the actions that you need to take to achieve that result? Put them in the action line of each model. And you already went through and decided what those actions are in step five. If there's any that you need to add, you can put them in here. And you're going to have a few different models to work on.

So you've got your results, you're going to work backwards to the action line. What actions do you need to take to get that result, to hit that goal? The next thing you want to do is decide what you need to be feeling. What emotion you need to be having, feeling in your body, to be consistently taking those actions.

And it might be determined, or confident, or certain, or interested. It might be a million different things. But put that in the feeling line of your model. And then the final step to creating your thought model, to achieve your results is what would you need to be thinking to consistently feel that emotion so you can take the action you want and get the results.

This is the reverse model process and I want you to do it for each one of your goals, and then come up with multiple thoughts for each goal because that's what's going to help you deal with all of the situations that are going to come up and get in your way. So I want you to remember that achieving a big goal is not a straight line. It never is.

There are ups, there are downs, there are setbacks, and you will need to be prepared for them. And so that's why knowing ahead of time what you want to be thinking allows you to - when something goes wrong, you're like, okay, this isn't what I wanted to have happen, how am I going to regroup? Alright, I'm just going to pull out the thoughts I know that are going to give me the emotions that are going to drive the actions that I need to take to keep moving forward.

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Because you're going to fail on the way to your goal. Like I said, it's not a straight line. There will be failures and there will be successes. It's all part of the process. The more you fail, the more you learn. The more you learn, the more robust your success is, and the more repeatable it is.

So failure is a good thing. We've talked about that on the podcast, how if you are willing to suck at something, if you are willing to fail as many times as it takes to get the result you want, when you get that result, first of all, it's a really sweet feeling to know that you put all that work into it and you were willing to just fuck it up over and over again to get to where you wanted to be.

And then second of all, failure teaches you so much. So if you succeed the first time you try something, you haven't really learned how to do it. You kind of got lucky. Or you set your bar way too low. So if you fail several times before you succeed, you've learned all the different ways it won't work and you've developed a very robust process for achieving that success, and that is repeatable.

So I want you to be open to failure and remember that a failure is kind of a good thing because it's rich with information, it's rich with data. You can look at that failure and say okay, now I know one way that this isn't going to work. What else can I try?

So next year, what you're going to do is you're going to take all the goals that you created in step six and you're going to perform the review all over again. You're going to take everything from step six, all of the results that you want, and they're going to go in step one of your review next year, and then you're going to repeat the entire process.

And you will be amazed at the difference between how much you get done when you have a plan versus when you just have a wish or a hope. Because a wish, not a plan, is just a wish. It's just like, I don't know, I hope

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it happens. And how many times - we hope we win the lottery, we hope a lot of stuff, but we don't really put plans in place to get most of the things that we want in life, and then we wonder, "Gee, why am I always in debt? Or why am I constantly not getting better at running."

So a plan makes the difference between just wishing for something and actually succeeding at it. Alright, so I hope you try this process. And I think a lot of people say well, I didn't set goals last year so it's pointless for me to try this process. I completely disagree.

You probably did set goals. As the year progressed last year, you must have thought, oh, it would be really nice to do that. If you're listening to me now and you're not a runner yet, I know at some point last year you thought oh, I'd like to be a runner, and your first step was I'm going to go listen to a podcast.

So doing this process and seeing, okay, I had the thought I want to be a runner but I didn't take the action, okay, well maybe next year the first thing you need to change is to put a plan into place into how you're going to do it. So I really want you to try this process. Write to me. Let me know how your goal planning goes and I will see you in the next episode.

Oh, and one last thing. If you enjoyed listening to this episode, you have to check out the Rebel Runner Roadmap. It's a 30-day online program that will teach you exactly how to start running, stick with it, and become the runner you've always wanted to be. Head on over to rebelrunnerroadmap.com to join. I'd love to be a part of your journey.