

Ep #128: How to Think Like a Runner



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With Your Host

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

Ep #128: How to Think Like a Runner

So, how do you think like a runner? Well, that is a good question, and what I've done is compiled a list of thought patterns for you today that almost everyone who identifies as a runner thinks. And if you start practicing these thoughts, you will be amazed at how you start seeing yourself as a runner.

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, what is up? Can I just tell you, I am loving watching my Rebel Runner Roadmap students this month. They are knocking it out of the park. There's like, 500 of them, and they are pretty much an army of rebels. They are located all over the world, sharing pictures of where they're running and how awesome they felt after that very first training run when suddenly they realized like hey, running is something I can actually do. And it makes me so happy to see everybody killing it.

And we have women in that group who are just like, "I have never felt athletic in my life, I've always been overweight, the one who would sit on the sidelines and cheer everyone else on, and now at age 56, I can call myself a runner and I feel like my entire life has just changed because if I can do this, I can do anything." I mean, really, that is what is happening right now in the Roadmap. It is so, so awesome.

And the women in that group, what they're learning is not just the basics of running, but they're learning to embrace a whole new identity. They're going from I can't run or going from running is too hard for me to I am a runner. And I love watching people create new belief systems for themselves. It is so badass.

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So today we're just going to talk about how to do that. How to think like a runner and how to act like a runner because if you think like a runner, you will behave like a runner. You will be a runner. Your identity will become that of a runner.

So what exactly is an identity? Well, the way I define it, I did not look it up on the Googles this time. I'm just going to give you my definition and that is it's simply a collection of beliefs that you have about yourself. These are the thoughts that you think over and over and over. And for most of us, our identities start in childhood with the things we are taught to think about ourselves. People hand you beliefs when you're little.

When I was a kid, my parents were constantly telling me that I was smart, and you know what, I grew up believing I am a smart person and I find evidence for it all the time in my life. And my mom also told me frequently that I was a procrastinator, and guess what else I grew up believing and guess what else I have evidence for everywhere in my life.

So our identities are shaped by the people around us at first, but an identity isn't really hardwired and I think this is where most of us go sort of off-track with thinking like, oh, I'm just a procrastinator, that's who I am, I guess I'm just going to have to suffer with it for the rest of my life. No. An identity is just a collection of beliefs that you've practiced for years, and maybe it was something that somebody else said quite a few times and you were like, oh, alright, I'm just going to decide to believe that person and now I'm going to practice this belief.

It happens all very subconsciously, but that's how it works. And it's kind of important to know that that's how it works because if you believe your identity is set in stone, you're really sort of shit out of luck, especially if the identity you're living with isn't working for you. But if you're willing to believe that your identity can change, if you start practicing new thoughts, and then

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you look for evidence that those thoughts are accurate, you can start shifting right now into a new identity.

And maybe it's becoming someone who keeps her promises to herself, or someone who is willing to do hard things to get what she wants. Whatever it is. If you're willing to believe your identity can change, the possibilities are endless.

Now, whatever it is, it's going to take some time to create, but it is totally possible. Your future identity or in other words, your future self is something you can create on purpose. You decide who you want to be and then practice thinking, feeling, and acting like that person.

Now, right now if you're not running, your identity is of someone who can't do it, right? Maybe it's of somebody who wants to but believes it's too hard or she's too fat or she's too old, or maybe your circumstance is that you ran many years ago and you haven't been running for 10 years, and so you have a belief that it's too hard to get back into it.

And so if those thoughts are leading you to not run, to take the action of not running, those are your identity. Who you believe you are, that identity that you have for yourself drives all of your actions. I mean, it drives your feelings and your feelings drive our actions. But really, your identity is responsible for your behavior.

And again, sometimes we think that identity is hardwired, that it's not something that we can change. But if that were true, nobody would ever start running in their 30s or 40s or 50s or even 60s or 70s. For sure, I did not identify as a runner until I was at least 40. I mean, I did some running here and there, but I didn't really shift my identity to I am a runner and I am an athlete until I was, gosh, I think I was around 42 when it really started to kind of settle in.

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And you know what, that is exactly when I started running consistently. Fascinating how that works, isn't it? So, how do you think like a runner? Well, that is a good question, and what I've done is compiled a list of thought patterns for you today that almost everyone who identifies as a runner thinks. And if you start practicing these thoughts, you will be amazed at how you start seeing yourself as a runner.

So how do runners think? Well, the first thing that they believe is that running is worth the effort. They know it's hard and uncomfortable, and they still do it because it's worth it. They love the results, they don't have a lot of drama in their head about it being difficult, and even if they do, even if they're like, oh gosh, this run was feeling really hard today, it's not like, oh my gosh, something's wrong.

It's just like, oh, today's run was kind of harder than usual. So runners just believe that the effort is always worth it and they're willing to do the uncomfortable things to get the result of having finished a run and how it feels in their body and all of that.

And I think that's where a lot of us go wrong because they think, "Oh, running's really hard. It's too much effort for me. It's too hard for me." And that's the difference between a runner and a non-runner. A runner is like, it's hard, so what? Right? So that's number one.

Number two is that runners are always willing to suck at running in the pursuit of getting better. They believe that everyone starts somewhere and that improvement only comes with consistent effort and a willingness to make mistakes. And they know that a shitty run is still better than no run at all.

So this is the truth. This is a circumstance. There are going to be good runs and bad runs. Some runs that feel easier, some runs that feel harder, some run where you'll feel like you're flying, and others where you feel like you're

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running through peanut butter. And a runner is willing to just have those shitty runs in the pursuit of getting better, and they don't make it mean that anything is wrong with them.

They know that to get improvement, to improve, they need to fail. So runners are willing to fail at stuff to get better. And I think a lot of us aren't willing to fail. We're like, if I can't succeed, I don't even want to do it at all. And what we're really saying is well, I want it to be easier than it is. And if I have to put in the effort then I'm not interested.

I mean, that's all fine and good, but then don't sit around and say like, I wish I could start running. Those two things cannot exist in the same space. You're either willing to embrace the failure and embrace the suck so that you can get better, or you're willing to say like, I don't want to do that because I'm not interested in embracing the suck. It's either or. And then a non-runner will sit in the middle and just be like, it's so hard. Stop that. Either be willing to suck at it or decide you're not going to do it.

Here's number three. Runners are proud of what they've accomplished, even if they are the last finisher in a race, even if they're slower than every other runner they know, they take pride in running and getting out there and pushing themselves out of their comfort zone. They know that the real accomplishment is not finish the race, but the person that they need to evolve into to train for the race. The finishing of the race is just the icing on the cake.

So runners are proud of who they become as a result of running, of the work that they have to do to train, that's where they are super, super proud. And then they totally get to be proud of their finish lines as well, but the finish lines aren't the main thing for a runner. The finish line is the celebration of all the hard work that came before it.

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Number four, runners like to hang out with other runners. Even if it's just online. When you identify as a runner, you want to be around other runners because they get you. Somebody who really identifies as a runner doesn't say like, "I run but really, I'm slow, or I run, I do half marathons but I do walk-run." There's none of that bullshit.

You just show up and say, "Yes, I run half marathons. There's no qualification. Or yeah, I do 5Ks. I'm a runner." And you don't talk about your pace. Consider it like, you know how a lot of people are just like, they won't talk about how much money they make? What if that's how you thought about your running? My pace is nobody's business but mine. I don't need to qualify anything.

You wouldn't walk up to somebody and say like, "Oh yeah, I'm a manager at this company but I don't get paid very well." You would never say that, right? So I want you to start thinking about your pace as your own personal information. It's nobody else's business. You don't need to qualify anything when you tell somebody that you're a runner.

And again, when you hang out with other runners, they actually will get you. And so runners like to be around people that get them. We all do. We all do. So if you're kind of like, I don't know if I want to spend time with other runners, they're all better than me, they're all faster than me, they're not going to think I'm a real runner, I want you to stop that right now.

First of all, I want you to join my Facebook community. Go to Official Not Your Average Runner Podcast community. Join that Facebook community because that is where your runners are, first of all. But honestly, runners like to be with other runners and they don't make apologies for the kind of runner that they are.

Runners also cheer other runners on, and they love to do this because they know how powerful it can be to get encouragement, especially when you

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are struggling. So runners are like, hey, I see another runner, good job. You are killing it. We do that. And when a runner hears somebody else cheering them on, they don't make it mean anything shitty about them.

They don't say to themselves like, oh, obviously that person is cheering me on because I'm fat. No. They're like, oh, how great. That person just wished me a good run. Thank you, awesome, you too, go on your way. We don't make it mean anything about us when somebody says good job, keep it up, you're doing great. We just say thanks and move on.

I know there's a lot of you out there that are like, every time somebody cheers me on in a race I get mad because they're just making it worse. Like no, you're making it worse. Somebody's cheering you on, say thank you, or just wave, or just ignore them, but you don't have to make it mean that they are only cheering you on because you're fat, or only cheering you on because you're slow.

They're cheering you on because they're like damn, look at her go, she's doing something awesome, I'm going to encourage her to keep doing it. That's my little rant for you guys.

Now, runners also don't expect running to be easy. They don't feel entitled for it to be easy. They expect it to be hard. We're kind of touching - runners have a lot of belief around the difficulty of stuff, and they don't tell themselves the story like, oh my god, this is so hard. They just don't expect it to be easy and they're not confused when running feels difficult. They also don't expect to be perfect. They know that there's good days, bad days, and mediocre days, and that that's just all part of the experience.

So number seven is that runners ask for help and feedback on their running. They know that coaching isn't just for elite runners. Everyone can benefit from a more experienced person helping them improve. They don't

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say to themselves like, “Oh, I should be able to figure this out on my own.” They ask for help. They’re open to it.

They recognize there are more people out there that may be able to look at what they’re doing and say, “Oh, you know what, your shoes are tied funny. That’s why your feet keep going numb.” Or, “I’m going to run behind you and I noticed that your foot is turning - your right foot is like, turning in a little bit. You’re a little bit pigeon-toed on that side. Hey, maybe you should work on glute strength on your right side to help externally rotate that foot a little bit. Maybe that would help with your knee problems.”

But they ask for help and feedback from other runners. They’re not too proud for that. And they get a coach. And it doesn’t necessarily mean that they go out and they hire a super expensive coach. Maybe they just join a running community. Running Shoe Store has a group that goes out and they go out and they just ask for feedback.

And then finally, runners know that most of the time - you guys, this is so important. I should have led with this. Runners know that most of the time, they won’t feel like running. A lot of new runners start out and they are legit surprised when they’re like, I don’t know, I just don’t feel motivated anymore. Yeah, none of us do.

Nobody wakes up and says, “Oh my god, I can’t wait to get out of bed and put on my tights and go outside and breathe hard and have my muscles get tired.” No. Nobody says that. Most of the time, we don’t feel like running, and we do it anyway. First of all, because we want to get better at running, or just because we said we would. We like to keep commitments to ourselves.

So runners don’t rely on motivation to get them going. Motivation is awesome when you can create it. And I would say if I waited to go running until I was motivated, I would go maybe five times a year. And on those

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days, it's really funny. The days that I'm motivated to run, I think oh my god, I can't wait to get out there, usually those are my worst runs because I have way higher expectations than usual.

But on those days where I'm like, I don't feel like doing this, my run is almost always better than I expect because I'm not expecting anything. I'm like, I said I was going to go so I'm going to go. So runners don't rely on motivation. They just get up and they go just because they said they would.

So notice that in none of the things I've just talked about that I said runners go a certain speed or a certain distance, or that they don't ever walk. That is not something that is a qualification for being a runner, and that is awesome news because it means you can start thinking like a runner right now.

You don't have to have this belief that like, oh, I'm only a runner if I can do an eight-minute mile. You're a runner if you run. Running is a way of moving your body. It is not a speed. The difference between running and walking is that when you are running, there's a brief moment in your stride cycle where both of your feet are off the ground at the same time. And it may be a half an inch off the ground, but when both feet are off the ground, as part of your stride cycle, that is running.

In walking, there is always one foot touching the ground. That is the difference between running and walking. There's no pace - in general, running is faster than walking, but not for everybody. And so I want you to really start shifting your definition of what is a runner from oh, I go this fast, or I don't take walk breaks, to the thoughts that I just gave you. All of the eight things that most runners have as part of their identity.

And I also want to ask you, if you began to identify as a runner, how do you think that would impact the way you show up for your workouts? Or the way

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you talk to yourself? If you believed you were a runner, would you show up differently for your workouts? Would you talk to yourself differently?

And this week I'm going to give you a little homework. I want you to create your own runner identity. Write a paragraph about yourself as a runner. Like, how you want to show up for yourself, what you'll be thinking and feeling, what you'll be doing. And it might even help if you want to imagine describing somebody else that you know who's a runner, and what do you think she thinks and feels and does that makes her identify as a runner.

You can start there and then sort of adapt it to be your own runner identity. And if you do this, I would love for you to share it in the Not Your Average Runner Facebook group. *The Not Your Average Runner Podcast* community. Let's hear what your runner identity is because I think it's super important to create it for yourself on purpose and then practice it and then watch how it shifts how you show up for your workouts.

Okay? Alright, that is it for this week my rebellious friends. 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.