

## Ep #129: How to Make Running More Fun



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**Jill Angie**

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

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Ditch the intervals once in a while - I can't believe I'm saying this - and try a fartlek run. Now, fartlek is fun to say because it has the word 'fart' in it, let's just get that out of the way right now. But it also, in Swedish, it means speed play.

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 are you this week? I want you to know how much I appreciate you. I love that we get to spend a little time together every week, just you and me, and maybe it's running together or driving together, going for a walk, whatever it is, it's really fun for me, and I hope it's fun for you because I love fun.

It's one of my favorite things. I like to find ways to have fun in every single thing that I do, even if it's a 20-mile training run. I want it to be fun, or it is just not worth doing. So this week, I have been working on creating the core values for my company, Not Your Average Runner, which by the way, this is pretty fun. But it's so interesting too.

So I spent 20 years working for big companies, and they always had a mission statement and core values and we were supposed to memorize them and live them, god damn it. The last company I worked for was GSK and I think theirs were, do more, feel better, live longer, which actually, I can totally get behind that. Who wouldn't? But most of the companies I worked for, I was like, meh, just seemed kind of dumb.

But now, I have my own company and I'm taking a course right now called Entrepreneurial Management, and it is for life coaches who want to grow their businesses to a million or more in revenue. Hello, that is me. So I'm taking this course, and it's taught by these two really incredibly coaches

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that I very much respect and admire, and by the way, if you are an entrepreneur who wants to grow your own business, we'll have a link in the show notes to the class. This is not an affiliate link or anything, it's just I think it's a great class and I really respect the coaches so I want everybody to know about it.

Anyway, one of the things that I've been taught in this class was the importance of having core values for your company. What do you stand for? What are the values you embody as a leader? What values will you expect your employees to live? So I've been working on that this week, and when they asked me the question what will your three core values be for your company, the first one that popped into my head was fun. F-u-n. I just love to have fun.

I'm basically Cyndi Lauper. I want everything to be fun. Now, I used to believe that wanting things to be fun meant that I wasn't serious enough because serious people are the ones that get things done. You have to take things seriously to get results. I'm pretty sure I learned this in childhood. Actually, I know I did, because I was always really silly and goofy.

My mom would be like, why can't you be more like your friend Kristen who acts like a lady and doesn't goof around all the time? Now, little did she know how much fun Kristen actually was behind the scenes. That is why I hung around with her.

But really, the message stuck with me, so I was always feeling guilty for having fun, trying really hard to be serious and then failing, and honestly, it created a lot of frustrating for me. So for a long time, mostly in my 20s, I was like, fuck it, I'm not going to do anything if it's not fun.

But unfortunately, at that time, my list of fun things included going out and getting really wasted and kissing cute boys in bars, or eating a dozen cupcakes, or shopping until I was out of money. And for sure, those things

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are very fun, but they also kind of ruin your life if you do them too much. So I was left with, okay, I guess if I want to have a good life, I got to eliminate the fun and only do boring things, which sucks when your belief is that you are someone who loves fun.

So I would avoid my fun activities as long as possible, and then find myself doing them all at once and feeling miserable and gross because you should never drink an entire bottle of wine and chase it with a pint of Ben & Jerry's. Ask me how I know. Your body will not like it.

So fast forward a decade or so and I found coaching and thought work and now I know that anything can be fun. Anything, because fun is an opinion. A thought. Fun is something we create with our minds. Things are not just innately fun or boring. And that means that sometimes, things that feel uncomfortable or difficult can also be fun.

What? This sounds crazy, right? But fun is simply an opinion. It is not a fact or a circumstance. How do I know? Because if fun were universal, I would enjoy playing video games with Andy because he thinks they are hella fun, and I do not, which is totally cool because I think it is hella fun to get a pedicure and then gossip with my girlfriends for two hours, and he for sure does not think that is fun.

So if fun is not something that's universal, it stands to reason that fun is just a decision we make, which is really great news. And you know what? Sometimes our idea of fun changes over time. This is something I've learned in my 52 years on the planet. I used to think watching football was dumb and boring and annoying, like, really dumb, stupid, awful, boring, I just hated it.

And I grew up in a family that watched football, and I had all these friends who were and still are obsessed with it, and every time they'd start talking of football, I'd be like, don't want to hear it. I'd get so annoyed. And I started dating Andy who loves football. He used to play football, he's very into it,

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and I'm like, okay, alright. Well, maybe I can tolerate it if I know a little more about it.

I was not willing to go to this is fun, but I was willing to say like, alright, if this is a big part of his life, maybe I can tolerate it so I can spend this extra time with him. So he patiently explained the rules to me and I started to pay attention to the game. And you know what? Football is actually interesting. It's really interesting. It's not dumb.

Did you know this? It actually takes a lot of strategy and athleticism and you have to be pretty smart to excel at football and you also have to be a badass athlete. Those guys do not fuck around. So now I think it's fun to watch football. For real, I like following the game, I like learning about the rules and the different strategies and my friends are very patient because I ask a million questions. Sometimes I ask the same one five different times.

But now I'm very curious, and when I feel curious, I'm having fun. So it's fun to get together with my friends and hang out while watching a game, and here's the thing, you guys. Football has not changed. The reason I think football is fun now is because I decided to stop thinking this is boring and stupid. That was my old thought and I decided to look for things about it that I find interesting and entertaining, and now I'm like, oh, look, there are things about football that are interesting and entertaining.

So this was kind of a long-winded way of helping you see that you can apply this to running. So I've got five things, five tips that I'm going to give you today that are going to help you shift from running is boring, running is too hard, I hate running, all the things that you say to yourself that make you feel the opposite of fun about running, to hey, maybe this isn't so bad, maybe I can find some fun in this.

So number one is - I think this should be obvious but I'm going to say it - stop telling yourself that running is boring or hard. Stop telling yourself that you hate running. When you think those thoughts, because it's not a

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circumstance that you hate running. I hate running is a thought that you have in your mind. That is all. It is not a circumstance.

And when you think that thought, or when you think running is boring, you feel bored, you feel annoyed, you feel resistant, and when you have those feelings, running is the last thing you want to do and you will avoid it. You will reinforce the idea that it's boring. You will reinforce the idea, the thought that you hate it.

So you got to stop saying that shit to yourself because it's not making you like running any more. And you're just like, "Well, duh, of course Jill," but watch yourself and notice how often you say to yourself when you're out on a run, "This is boring." Or maybe you don't actually say this is boring to yourself, but what you are saying to yourself is I want to be done with this, I don't want to do this anymore, when is this going to be over?

Those statements. That's one I've said to myself many, many times. When is this going to be over? When you say that to yourself, when is this going to be over, your brain feels, what? Bored, annoyed, frustrated, it does not feel excited. It does not feel like it's having fun.

And when you feel those emotions, you want to stop running and it leads you to want to quit on yourself. Or at the very best case is you finish your run and it just feels awful because you're telling yourself a shitty story about it. Worse-case scenario is you quit.

So you've got to stop talking to yourself that way. Stop saying it's boring, stop saying it's hard, stop saying you hate it, stop saying when is this going to be over, I don't want to do this anymore, I'm not in the mood. All of that blocks you from enjoying this activity. And if you're trying to be a runner or if you are already a runner, there obviously is something that you like about it, so start there.

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Now, if you think running isn't fun, it is simply because you keep telling yourself that it isn't. That's the takeaway from idea number one, tip number one. But I want you to start shifting into - this is number two. Find things to do while you're running that you do think are fun. Maybe it's a podcast, or music, or audiobook, or go running with a friend. Or run someplace absolutely beautiful where there is a ton to look at.

Start associating the act of running with activities that you enjoy. And very soon, you're going to start thinking that running is part of the enjoyment. So pair it up, and this is from the book Atomic Habits. He calls it habit stacking. Pair habits that you're really into, maybe listening to podcast or listening to music with a habit that you're trying to install like running, and pretty soon, they go together in your mind and then you're like, oh look, running is actually fun because I get to do all these things.

Number three, all you type A personalities, I'm talking to you right now. I want you to slow the fuck down and relax a little, okay? Stop trying to set a PR with every single run, or go farther with every single run. When you think that running has to always be about trying to get faster, go farther, get better, you set yourself up to fail.

Take your foot off the gas sometimes and allow yourself to just run without any goals or expectations to live up to. Maybe run without your Garmin. Horrors. Run without your Garmin, or don't turn on Runkeeper, or put a piece of tape over your Garmin so you can't look at it every two minutes, if you're like, I just have to have the data.

But really, when you believe that running is always about bettering yourself and getting faster and doing more and competing with yourself, or competing with other people, you're taking the joy away from it. You're making it be something that is not fun. Unless you're somebody who, for you, competition is the most fun thing in the world, or pushing yourself really hard is the most fun thing in the world, and if that's the case, you just rock on with your bad self.

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But for a lot of you, it's not fun. Thinking that you always have to be better makes you feel anxious and nervous and frustrated, and when you feel that way, either you quit because you're like, I'm not good enough, fuck it, I'm just going to quit, or you push yourself so hard that you get injured. So I'm giving you permission right now to just relax, slow down, stop focusing on the data and just start looking at running as an activity that maybe you could enjoy.

Alright, number four. Try trail running. Now, the amazing thing about trail running is it takes you so far out of your head that it's hard to get bored when you're trail running. The amazing thing about running in the woods, or at least not on paved surfaces is that, A, it is beautiful. It's beautiful. There's so much lovely stuff to look at, it feels amazing to be in the fresh air and it just feels good to be on a trail and away from traffic.

So that's A, but B, you have to pay so much more attention to what you're doing when you're trail running that you kind of lose yourself in the activity. You forget how bored you are. It is the opposite of boring. First of all, there's always something to look at, like I said, but you also have to pay attention so you don't trip and fall and face-plant. It gives your brain something to focus on really hard so that your brain isn't off saying oh, this is boring, this sucks, when is this going to be over?

Because your brain is just focused on like, not falling down. But also, the thing I love about trail running is it just feels good to be in nature. And there is something about seeing wildlife when you're out running that's super awesome. There is a gorgeous single-track wooded trail near Philly that I used to run on probably once a week, and I would often come around a corner on that trail and see a deer just standing there in the path looking at me.

It's dead quiet and there's a deer or a fox. I saw foxes a lot on this particular trail. And it just felt good to see that and good to be around that, and when you're feeling good because you're like, this is beautiful, this is



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so cool, oh my god, there's a fox, you're not bored. You're engaged with your environment.

Okay, number five is to ditch the intervals once in a while - I can't believe I'm saying this - and try a fartlek run. Now, fartlek is fun to say because it has the word 'fart' in it, let's just get that out of the way right now. But it also, in Swedish, it means speed play. So instead of running and walking at structured times, play around with different paces.

Walking, relaxed running, sprinting, maybe even skipping, which by the way, skipping is a great running drill that will help you build a lot of power in your butt. But anyway, turn off your interval timer and just simply do what moves you in the moment. If you want to sprint to the next driveway, go for it. If you want to walk for two minutes, go for it. It's perfect. Want to see if you can run for a half a mile without stopping? Do it.

So a fartlek run is where you just go out and you just play with your speed. That is it. Super fun. Highly recommend doing that. If you're training for a race that you're planning to run with structured intervals, don't do a fartlek run with every single run, but maybe like, once a week you can go out and play with that if you want to, if that helps you shift your thinking into hey, maybe running is fun.

So that was one through five and I just realized I have six things, so obviously I can't count very well. I must have been too busy having fun when I wrote this script. So number six is to start your own in-person running group. And I don't mean like, join your local running group that says we are beginner-friendly but then their slowest person is a 12-minute mile and lo and behold, in three minutes you're all by yourself. That's not fun.

You're going to have thoughts about that that's going to make you feel kind of stressed out. So start your own in-person running group with people that run like you. Other people that get you, that have similar running styles.

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And you can do this in a bunch of ways. You can post on Facebook and say hey, here's where I live, who wants to run with this? This is the pace; this is the expectation. We do intervals, we do slow, whatever it is.

Make sure though that you do the work on your thoughts ahead of time because I know what you're thinking. You're thinking, "I don't want to hold anyone back. What if everyone else is still faster than me?" Those thoughts are going to make you feel anxious and when you feel anxious, you are not having fun.

So set some ground rules ahead of time, everyone goes at their own pace, intervals are encouraged, pick the route, plan to start together and meet at the finish line and then all go out for coffee or lunch. And remember that everybody in the group is responsible for their own thoughts and feelings.

If someone is running with you that normally runs faster, you are not holding them back. This applies across the board. Not just in your running group but anywhere. If there's somebody out there that says hey, I want to run a race with you, or I want to do a training run with you, and normally they run faster and you say hey, well this is my pace, these are my intervals, and they're like, awesome, I'm all in, you are not holding them back.

Seriously, so stop saying that to yourself. They are choosing to run by your side because they want to hang out with you, or they want to support you. You are not holding them back. Other people can run faster if they want to. If they're just like, hey, I'm done at this speed, I want to run faster, awesome, see you at the finish line. You're not holding anyone back if they choose to run by your side.

The only way you're holding somebody back is if you're literally holding onto their wrist saying, "Don't go, don't go." Otherwise, they're choosing to be next to you because they want to hang out with you. That's group running mentality 101 right there.

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So you guys, running is fun if you decide it's fun. If you are in it for the long haul and fun is important to you, I recommend figuring out a way to believe that it's fun, otherwise you're going to be suffering every single week, and that is not fun. Okay, my rebellious friends, that is it for this week. I will see you in the next episode. Now go out there and have some fun.

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](http://rebelrunnerroadmap.com) to join. I'd love to be a part of your journey.