

Ep #175: How to Make Mistakes Like a Boss



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With Your Host

Jill Angie

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

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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. Well, there are officially two weeks left in 2020 at this point. And every year, right around this time, I start to really reflect on my year. What went well, what I want to do differently, how did I evolve, what things do I want to achieve next year, and then I set my goals and I start making plans.

And I actually usually start this process kind of at the end of November. But this has just been a year. But despite all the craziness that went down in 2020, it was actually a pretty epic year for me. We helped over 1000 women start running in 2020 just with the Rebel Runner Roadmap. Over 1000 women took that class in 2020.

I'm blown away. This fucking pandemic has been such a disaster, but one thing that came out of it is all the people who decided to try running. And then found out that they love it. It makes me so happy to see all the new

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runners. And in my community, literally where I live, I used to see maybe one or two people out running in the morning. Now there are literally dozens every damn day. It is so awesome.

So one of my goals for 2021 is to keep that momentum up and get even more women to take the Roadmap so that they can start running safely and feel really confident and proud. And I hope you're going to be one of them. The next class opens on January 7th and if you sign up for the waitlist right now at rebelrunnerroadmap.com, you'll get an email letting you know when you can join.

So just go to rebelrunnerroadmap.com or you can go to notyouraveragerunner.com and then click on the button that says Rebel Runner Roadmap and it'll take you to the waitlist. And then as soon as it's open for registration, bam, you'll get an email and you can join.

Meanwhile, while we're waiting for all that to happen, let's get you set up for success in 2021. Now as I said, one of the things that I do every December is review the past year, decide how I want to think about everything. I look through all the circumstances of the past year and I say, alright, what do I want to make all of this mean?

And y'all, I make a lot of mistakes. I'm human for sure, and humans make mistakes. But also, I put myself out there a lot and I take risks, I do a lot of things, I do a lot of things I know I might fail at. And I just keep going. In fact, here's my weird little secret. I don't ever want to be perfect. I don't think there's any fun in that.

I would much rather keep it a little messy and see what happens. Actually, did you listen to the episode, I think it was two episodes ago, number 173 about half-assing that I just did. That is part of my philosophy for sure because half-assed action is still action. It is still progress.

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But anyway, I know that one thing that holds back some of my clients is they don't like to make mistakes. Or they think a mistake is a signal that something has gone wrong because they have this thought error that everything should just work right the first time, and then if it doesn't, the world is ending.

I mean, maybe it's not quite that dramatic, but I know you can relate. It's totally normal for your brain to create that thought pattern. The trick is to interrupt it, so it doesn't take root and hold you back. So here's an example, recent example from my life.

So about three weeks ago I started working with a personal trainer online. And her name is Nancy Brown. You can find her on Instagram at @nancymuscles. I love her. She is amazing and she's got me doing some moves that feel really difficult. Like really, really difficult for me.

And so I'll try, I'll try to do the move and she'll give me some guidance on how to adjust this or that, and in my brain, I'm like, no, that's what I'm doing. But she can see that it's not what I'm doing and I won't get it right and I'll fuck it up over and over and over again, and my mind will want me to believe that I'm just really bad at Romanian deadlifts or whatever it is.

And so guess what happens when I think that way, when my brain's like, you're really bad at this? I don't get any better. And it's like, my brain is thinking you're really bad at this so instead of taking the guidance that she's got and trying to figure it out, I just block myself. I feel frustrated and I don't work too hard to try and improve my form.

And I actually said something out loud to her. This is last week. I said, "You know, this move is just so hard for me." And she's like, okay, well, what's something else we could think about this move that doesn't make you feel so discouraged and frustrated? And my brain broke a little bit.

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I'm like, what do you mean what's something else that we could think about this move? It's fucking hard for me, right? Can't you see that? But my trainer is very familiar with the coaching model and she uses it on me when I start complaining. This is one of the reasons that I love her.

But it really did break my brain a little because I realized she was telling me like, hey, when you say this move is so hard for me, it makes you feel discouraged and it blocks you from taking action. And the move isn't hard for you. You're just thinking that way.

So we talked about my progress with that move and in that moment, she was like, well, this is what I'm seeing from being outside your body, this is what I'm seeing on video. And I realized I actually was getting better at it. And then we moved on to what she has me do is we'll do one move that works lower body, and then while that's resting, we'll work upper body.

And so we moved on to an upper body move and it was time to come back to the first one. They felt super easy. These were - what were we doing? We were doing a version of a squat that I'd not done before. And so we came back to the squats, they felt super easy. And I said, I shit you not, I'm sharing this because I want you to know my brain is just as messed up as everyone else's.

I said, "Wow, I must have been cheating somehow because that set felt really good." She's like, "No, you just stopped telling yourself a shitty story and when you got out of your head, you were actually able to do this move pretty well." And I'm like, "Oh, alright, maybe you're right." It was a moment.

So anyway, that was a little bit of a detour in my story. My point in telling you this is that mistakes are how we get better. And so I've just been like, willingly not doing the moves right. I mean, I'm not doing them wrong on purpose, but I'm willing to try them over and over and over again and get

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feedback and adjust and get feedback and adjust because I know that over time, I'm going to improve.

And that I never expect myself to be perfect right out the gate. So I personally make so many mistakes when I'm trying to learn something new, whether it's a new strength move, a new business skill. For Pete's sake, in the eight years that I've been in business for myself, I've made so many mistakes. I could do a whole podcast series on all of the business mistakes that I've made.

And what do you know, after all those mistakes, I have a successful business. So I make a lot of mistakes when I'm trying to learn something new and every single one of those mistakes is important and necessary. Because it means that I'm learning and adapting and it's date to help me level up. And by the way, next week's podcast is going to be all about leveling up, so make sure you're really listening hard to this one because we're going to work on it in the next one.

But seriously, I could not have done the beautiful, gorgeous, ass to heel squat that I did in our last session without doing hundreds of shitty ones first or incorrect ones. They weren't shitty ones. They just weren't quite right. But all of that work, that practice over and over again, boom, I did an absolutely stunning squat. I was extremely proud of myself.

Now, this does not apply just to squats though. It applies to everything. Your whole fucking life, my friends. Getting messy and allowing yourself to make all the mistakes is a skill and it's a gift. And here's the thing, I believe this so deeply, and I know there's a lot of folks out there that are like, no, when you make mistakes there are repercussions in your life, there are consequences.

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And yeah, if you make the mistakes of turning in your taxes a year late there might be consequences, but a lot of other mistakes, they're just mistakes. And the only problem with making them is in your brain. But I've realized that not everybody is as excited about making mistakes as I am.

I actually asked the question on my Instagram stories the other day. I said, okay, when you make a mistake, what do you make it mean about you? And I got so many responses. And I thought I'd read some of them here because I found it fascinating. People seem to fall into two different camps.

The first one went something like what can I learn from this? What adjustments can I make? It's a reality check on myself, I'm human. Or maybe do I need to rethink how I'm doing this. So there was definitely the camp that resonates with me, which is I made a mistake, what's next?

But then there was this whole other group and I'm going to read this verbatim because I know that if one person believes this, many people will believe this. So here they are. "I suck at adulting." This is what people make mistakes mean about themselves. "I suck at adulting." "How will others judge me for this?" "I can't do anything right." "I'm a failure and I will never be able to do this." "I suck and others will figure out I'm not perfect."

I fucking love this one. I suck and others will figure out I'm not perfect. Like guess what, they already know. "It continues to circulate a million times in my mind of why I didn't do it differently." "I'm inadequate and not good enough." And then this final one, this one actually hit home for me because I've had that exact thought in the past and it's something I've worked really hard to reframe. "I'm flawed and unworthy of responsibility."

So all of these statements, imagine if you make a mistake and that's what you make it mean, what do you think that does to you? I can't stop thinking

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about what it does to us when we believe that making a mistake means something about us that is negative.

Because nobody's perfect. Literally nobody. Even the perfect people you see on Instagram, not perfect. Staged, staged, staged. Perfect doesn't exist, perfect is just a thought, perfect is an illusion in my opinion, as I've stated above earlier. Perfect is kind of boring too. That's just my opinion, but seriously, boring.

Here is what I know for sure. Mistakes are a part of life. We all make them. Small ones, big ones, silly ones, stupid ones, we all make mistakes. The problem is not the mistakes that you're making. The problem is believing that it means something bad about you, believing that you did something wrong.

When you believe that, it paralyzes you. Thinking that making a mistake is the worst thing that you can do is going to keep you from taking action. It's going to have you sitting on the sidelines of your own life because I know I've done this. Have you ever missed an opportunity because you couldn't make up your mind because you were thinking, I have to get this right, I have to make the right decision?

And then you waited so long to make the decision, boom, opportunity gone. So instead you get nothing. That is what fear of mistakes can get you. And I know there's some of you right now saying, well, that's all fine and good when you're ordering dinner, but what if I choose the wrong job or the wrong person to spend my life with, or I get a tattoo that I regret?

No decision is permanent, my friends. Really. I can think of very few decisions that are actually permanent. You can change jobs, you can break up with the wrong person and go find the right person, even a tattoo can be removed. It's not cheap but it can be removed.

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So think about this. Think about when your brain is like, I have to do the right thing, I have to make the right choice, I can't make a mistake, I can't fuck this up, of course you can. Go for it. Because if it's paralyzing you, you're not going to get anything anyway.

Or maybe this is you. You make a mistake and then you spend hours, days, weeks reviewing it in your head, thinking about god, if only I had done this differently, or oh my gosh, I really regret making that choice, or doing that thing, and you're reviewing it over and over in your head. And again, you become paralyzed because it's really hard to move forward with your life when your brain is stuck in the past, reviewing things that have already happened.

So we obsess about the big things, we obsess about the little things. Maybe the little things we obsess about the most because I think we think to ourselves, that was so easy, I shouldn't have messed that up. Or here's one of my favorites, this happens a lot with my clients. If I miss a training run, I have messed up my run streak and I should probably just quit and start over again next month.

I was going to do 30 days of workouts in November and now it's November 10th and I messed up, I missed November 10th so well, I guess I got to wait until December 1st to start. You know you've had those thoughts. Or here's another one, damn it, I had to quit my long training run two miles early, now I'll never be able to finish my race, I've ruined everything.

This happens a lot, especially with half marathon training. Because somebody misses a training run and they think, oh my god, I missed a training run, I messed it up, and they're so paralyzed because they keep obsessing over it that then they miss another training run.

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Or they're so worried that they're going to fuck up their long training run that they actually do. They get so stressed out about it that they end up talking themselves into quitting early and then they're like, oh my god, I've ruined all my training. No, y'all.

Let's give it a metaphor. You know I love my metaphors. So imagine you're driving to work and there's a bunch of stop lights on the way to work. And sometimes they're green, sometimes they're yellow, sometimes they're red. And when they're green, you just drive right through. And when they're yellow, you either speed up or slow down, depending on how close you are. And then of course when they're red, you stop. Most of you do. If you're not a stopper at the red lights, we probably need to talk.

But here's the thing; you don't have a whole story about oh my god, there's a red light, I'm never going to make it to work. No, you just wait until the light changes and then you keep going. I mean, you might be annoyed but you never doubt that you're going to get to work. You never think to yourself, "I might not make it to work today." You might be late but you're going to get there.

Now, imagine you're driving to work and a sinkhole opens up below you and your whole car falls in. Now you've got to call 911, you got to figure out how to get out of the sinkhole, we're just going to assume that everyone survived. You got to take a bunch of pictures of your car in the sinkhole. You might have to go to the hospital to get checked out, you're going to have to figure out how to get your damn car out of the sinkhole.

And let's be honest, you're probably going to be shopping for a new car as well. You're going to be busy. You're definitely not going to make it to work today. You might even take tomorrow off or the whole week, depending on how your body feels after falling into a sinkhole.

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Now, why am I telling you this silly story? Because mistakes are a stoplight. Not a sinkhole. A mistake is an obstacle you kind of expect. I mean, not that you can anticipate every mistake you're ever going to make, but mistakes are just things that you say, okay, well that didn't work, what else can I try? Or alright, I knew that probably wouldn't work, what else can I tweak?

A sinkhole is oh shit, game over, at least for right now. So I want you to stop turning your mistakes into sinkholes because they aren't. You can survive any mistake. You can turn anything around. I promise you. I stayed married for 12 long years because I thought I married the wrong person.

I made that marriage into a sinkhole. I was like, well, here I am, I guess this is where I live now, in the sinkhole. I didn't see it was just a mistake that I could learn from. And then I figured out I was wrong and guess what? I got a divorce, I decided to create a different life because no mistake is permanent.

Mistakes don't mean you're stupid or irresponsible or incompetent. They don't mean you're lazy or undisciplined or destined for failure or any of the other shitty things you say about yourself. Mistakes are just a stoplight. Don't turn them into a sinkhole.

But you know what? Some of you, and you know who you are, will also use a mistake as an excuse to quit. You're going to turn it into a sinkhole because you're like, now I got a nice little excuse to quit. You'll say, "I just can't handle failure so I'm not going to try. I'm not even going to put myself out there because I can't handle failing."

So really? This is - you can handle failure and I'm going to show you exactly how you've handled it in the past. If you only do things in life that

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you're already good at, how the heck are you going to even know what you're good at unless you're willing to fail?

If you say to yourself, I only do things that I'm good at, then you can only do the things that you're already good at and you can never do anything new. I mean, seriously. If you had that attitude when you were a baby, you wouldn't have learned to walk or talk or feed yourself or potty train yourself.

Nope. If you were only willing to do things you knew you'd be good at, you would be a grown ass adult in a diaper right now sleeping in your crib, waiting for your mom to come feed and change you. Seriously, think this through. Somewhere along the line, you were willing to try a lot of things that you didn't know if you could do and I promise you, you didn't just wake up one day and take your first steps like a pro.

I mean, if you have kids, you know that's not how it goes. And learning to talk, for fuck sake, it takes kids forever to figure that out. It's a funny story. A friend of mine had a kid that did the funniest thing when he was learning to talk. I don't think he'll ever listen to this podcast but oh my god, it's the funniest story.

So my friend was not super careful about not swearing around his son and one day, he legit found his son hiding in a corner of the dining room all by himself, facing the wall, and he was practicing saying the word shit. I mean, he was like, sounding it out, trying it all different ways. My friend reproduced it for me, I was crying with laughter.

So little dude was sounding out the word, trying it all different ways, just practicing and doing it wrong and practicing and doing it wrong until he finally belted out, "Shit." Little dude, so proud of himself. So I want you to be like that little dude. Just keep trying and trying and trying until you get it right and then be insanely proud of yourself.

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So let's put this in the context of training for a race. There are so many opportunities to fail when you're training. This is why I love running. There's so many opportunities to fail. This is a good thing. Wrap your brain around that. The longer the distance too, the more opportunities there are.

There are going to be training runs that don't go well, there are going to be ones you completely miss out on for one reason or another, there's that time you didn't check the weather and got stuck in a snowstorm, or the time you didn't realize the trail would be closed and it got too dark to run or whatever.

Or there's going to be plenty of times where you might just say fuck it because you're not in the mood and you didn't want to coach yourself through it. And then there's always race day when sometimes things don't go as planned and you finished slower than you wanted, or maybe you don't finish at all.

And none of that is wrong. It's all just mistakes that you learn from. If that's how you look at every failure, oh, it's just a mistake I can learn from, it's such a powerful place to live your life. There's always going to be another training run, always another race.

Hell, I failed at my first marathon. I mean yes, there was sleet and there was rain and it was hella cold. And I could blame it on that. Those are circumstances that influenced the decisions that I made. But really, the critical mistake I made during my own marathon training was not preparing myself well enough to run 26 miles in that weather.

To be honest, it was not top of mind to me. I just was like, the weather is just going to be fine because I'm just going to decide it's going to be fine. I just thought I'm going to train in whatever weather comes up and I'm not going to seek out the rain or anything like that, which probably would have

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been fine for a half marathon, but my first time running 26 miles, I did not train in all weather conditions.

And so on race day, by mile 13, my feet were wet and rubbed raw. They were just big ass blisters, and that's on me. I didn't bring any blister protection; I didn't have a plan to keep my feet dry even though I knew it was going to be raining that day. I hadn't done any of my long training runs in cold wet weather. Oops.

So guess what? I learned so much from training for that race and failing on race day as well. I learned so much from all of my training runs. If you listen to my podcast from the summer and fall of 2019, you know exactly what I mean. So much good stuff that I learned.

And I learned a lot from failing on race day. I made mistakes; I will adapt for next time. I could make it mean that I'm just not meant to run a marathon, but really in my heart of hearts, I know that I am. This is a thing I want to do. I just failed my first time. That is all.

Literally, that's it. I tried to run a marathon, I failed, there's always another race. And we're actually working on these concepts right now in Run Your Best Life. There's a group within the group, there's a group of my clients that has been working on creating new habits for themselves during the last quarter of 2020.

And they're tracking them. There are a lot of spreadsheets and bullet journals. It is so fun. It is very sexy. There is so much data. Love the data. Then at the end of each month, they check in with their data and see how they did. And what I've been encouraging each of these clients to do is just look at the numbers.

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If it's a daily habit, how many times did you do it? Was it 15 out of 30? Awesome, that's 50%. Strive for 51% next month, right? What can you tweak for next month? What went well, what didn't go as planned? We take all the judgment out of it.

We look at the circumstance, okay, I did 15 out of 30 times this month, my goal was 30, I did 15, I got halfway there, what can I tweak for next time? How can I up-level to 55%? Gather data on your mistakes. Imagine you're a scientist and you're running experiments. If something doesn't work for you, you're not like, oh my god, my life is over. You're like, I wonder what went wrong. What do I need to change? How can I get closer to what I want? What did I learn?

Mistakes are just data. They're stoplights on the way to work. You wouldn't use a red light as an excuse to skip work, right? You wouldn't get to a red light and just be like, I don't know, I had to stop, I guess I should just turn around and go home.

So if you wouldn't do that, don't use a mistake as an excuse to quit on yourself. If you are struggling with consistency in your exercise routine, I want you to think really hard about this episode and where you are using mistakes to beat yourself up, where you're using them as a reason to quit instead of learning. Really, really think about it.

And guess what? Of course I am doing a whole masterclass on how to become a consistent exerciser and let go of your excuses. So the class is on January 3rd and registration opens on December 26th, the day after Christmas. So you're just going to go to notyouraveragerunner.com/masterclass to sign up, or you can click the link that we're going to have in the show notes, which I'm just realizing, if you're listening to this before December 26th, it's probably not going to work for you. But just write it down.

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I'm going to be talking about it again after this podcast - in the next podcast, in the one after that. But mark your calendar for January 3rd to come to the masterclass. Mark your calendar for December 26th to go sign up. Because this class is going to be a game-changer for anyone who's struggling with consistency, especially those of you who start out strong and then you sort of lose steam after a few weeks, then you got to start all over again three months later. You know who you are. This class is for you.

My friends, I love you. Stay safe. Get your ass out there and run and I will talk to you next week.

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.