

Ep #185: How to Be Nicer to Yourself



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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. So this week, we are going to do a deep dive into a topic that almost everyone can relate to. And that is how to stop being such an asshole to yourself. You know what I mean. That inner voice that says things like, "Why are you so slow?" Or "You can't do anything right. What's wrong with you?"

And I like to refer to that voice as your inner mean girl. She's always just talking smack right in your ear, and it can be pretty hard to love yourself when you've got somebody bullying you all the time, right? Eventually you just start to believe it. You're just gaslighting yourself.

But here's the thing; a lot of people don't actually realize that they have an inner mean girl. Why? Because you think what your inner mean girl says to you is just the truth. You're like, I'm just making observations, Jill, I'm just telling you the facts. When you look in the mirror and you see your belly and you think, ugh, so gross, right? That might sound very factual to you.

It's just like, I have brown hair, I'm five foot four, my belly looks terrible. These are indisputable facts. So it seems like what am I supposed to do? My only option if I want to love myself is to change those things because they're facts.

But really, they're not. And we're going to talk about that today. But I want to kind of dive into this other concept that if you do think you have an inner mean girl, you might think well, but she is speaking the truth, she is saying to me what nobody else will say.

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She's saying you have no business trying to run because you're too fat, or too slow, or too something, and other people are just too polite to say it, right? Or you've got no business wearing that bikini because oh my god, somebody might see your stomach and other people are just too polite to tell you, "Girl, you can't pull that off."

Here's the thing; absolutely none of that is true. I mean, yes, your hair color and your height, things that we can measure, those are facts. But you cannot measure terrible. You cannot measure gross or lazy or ugly or slow. You cannot measure those things.

Therefore, they are simply opinions. And this, my rebellious friend, is the first step to handling your inner mean girl. Actually, the very first step is recognizing you actually have an inner mean girl, but then acknowledging that all of those, and I'm using air quotes here, "observations" that you make about yourself are not actually true.

They're just evaluations or assessments or opinions or judgments. And then once you recognize that, then you can start to decide if agreeing with those thoughts is something you want to keep doing. Because you really do have a choice. The reason that you believe your inner mean girl is twofold.

One, she's in your head, and sometimes honestly, she's so fucking loud it's hard to hear anything else, right? And two, because well, my mom said those things about herself and my sister says those things and my friends say those things. And so if other people have those opinions about their own bodies, what I think about my body must be true also, right?

No. So this is going to blow your mind a little bit. A bunch of people having the same opinion as you does not make it true. There are a lot of people right now who believe that the Earth is not a sphere. I know, it blows my mind because I'm like, if anything's true, that is true.

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But there are - and I'm not talking a handful of people. I'm talking hundreds of thousands of people, they have Facebook groups and clubs, they go on talk circuits, there's one of them that hangs out in downtown Princeton and has a sign. He'll talk to anybody that walks by and these are people - they're not crazy.

I mean, well, they're a little bit crazy, but they're not mentally ill. They just really and truly believe the Earth is flat like a pancake. And then all the evidence that we have to show that it's spherical is simply made up. So believing something does not make it true. Believing the Earth is flat does not make it true.

Actually, believing the Earth is round doesn't make it true. But seriously, believing something, even if you have thousands of other people who think the same way, still doesn't make it true. And this is the best part. This is where we really are going to blow your mind a little bit. When one person tells you something, your mom, your sister, your best friend, your spouse, we think, "Oh, that person's telling me the truth."

But guess what? If one person tells you something, you still don't have to believe it. Did you know that? I don't care how close that person is to you and I don't care how much it sounds like they're just telling you the truth for your own good. You don't have to believe it because it's opinions. And you actually already know this.

You practice not believing people when they tell you something all the time. You are already doing this. Did you know that? Because here's how I know. I am pretty sure that when someone compliments you, you come up with all the reasons that they're wrong. And you probably tell them.

Like, "Your hair looks so nice today." "Well, yeah thanks, but I need to trim my split ends." Or "Oh my gosh, your outfit is adorable, I love it, looks so cute on you." "Oh yeah, you know it's a little tight around the butt and look at

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this stain where I spilled my lunch,” or this is one of my favorites. Somebody comes up to you and says, “Wow, you did a half marathon, you’re amazing.” And your first instinct is to say, “Oh yeah, but I’m really slow,” or, “Oh, I had to do run-walk. I didn’t run the whole thing.”

So you already know how to not believe somebody when they give you their opinion. You’re really, really good at it already. Is your mind blown a little bit? We believe other people’s opinions when they line up with our own. And when they don’t, we find evidence that they’re wrong.

So if you have a lot of shitty opinions about yourself and somebody agrees with you, you’re going to be like, see? Sally says I’m slow, it must be true. If you have somebody that comes up to you that disagrees with you, oh, Lisa thinks I’m fast, here’s all the ways she’s wrong.

So shitty opinions about yourself, you’re going to look for reasons to prove yourself right, whether it’s other people’s opinions, or whether it’s evidence to prove them wrong. And it’s exhausting. So what I really want you to know though is it doesn’t have to be that way.

You don’t have to listen to yourself. You don’t have to be the world is flat dude yelling inside your head, that you say, oh well, he says it’s true, it must be true. You don’t have to listen to yourself. So what I want to do today is give you three things you can do when you hear those voices that you know are not helpful. So you can stop listening and get on with whatever it is that you want to do, which I hope is running.

First, let’s talk about exactly what the inner mean girl voice is. She might sound like your mom a little bit. She might sound like your little brother, or that sixth grade locker room bully, Lucy C. I’m looking at you. You know who you are, that you still have nightmares about. And it’s like, you hear these voices that you’ve heard externally in your head and suddenly they seem true.

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But actually, it's just your brain trying to protect you from a perceived threat. So hear me out on this one. Humans evolved in a very dangerous environment to humans. Lots of threats everywhere, things trying to eat us. So our brains evolved to be constantly scanning for something that could be harmful. Constantly taking in all of the data, visual data, all factory data, auditory data, constantly scanning for - assessing the data, looking for harm.

And that really worked well because here we are, tens of thousands of years later and we've pretty much conquered the planet for better or worse. And we don't necessarily need to be constantly scanning for threats to our lives. I mean, yes, maybe in some cases we do but for the most part when you're sitting in your living room watching Netflix, you don't need to be scanning for threats.

But your brain, our human brains have not evolved as fast as our environment. So fast forward to present day, the threat level from mountain lions and I don't know, whatever enormous terrifying things lived back when humans first evolved, I don't know if dinosaurs - did dinosaurs and humans overlap at all? I think not, but anyway, regardless.

There were big scary predators back when humans first evolved, when our brains were first sort of up-leveling into the version that we know today. And our brains have not caught up to our environment. So our well-developed brain that can find so much danger doesn't know the difference anymore between a mountain lion and an inner mean girl.

So what it finds instead of a charging elephant is the danger of getting our feelings hurt. To your brain, this is equal to being eaten. It is just as painful and scary when we think about getting eaten by or trampled by an elephant as getting our feelings hurt.

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So our brains take immediate action to avoid the threat, and the problem here is that feelings are not dangerous. They're just a vibration in our body. They're not life threatening. And they eventually pass unless we jump into the pool with our inner mean girl and start believing her stories.

So let's think of an example here. Imagine you're signed up for a 5K and you've never done one before. And your brain might perceive there's a threat of not finishing. And the circumstance of not finishing the race gives you a bunch of thoughts about it. You make it mean that you're not a real runner, you make it mean that everybody's judging you, and then you feel the emotion of embarrassment.

Or you imagine if I don't finish, I will feel embarrassed. So your mind is like, oh hell no, we don't want to feel embarrassed, that's dangerous. It's not, your brain is just confused, but it believes it. It believes it real hard. And so it decides to "save" you, and again, I'm using finger quotes, by scaring you away from the 5K with a bunch of bullshit reasons why it's a terrible idea.

And you're like, well, my brain is in my head, it's the only one I've got so you trust your brain. You think this must be a very serious issue. I better listen or I might get hurt. So you don't sign up for the race because you want to stay safe from the potential life-threatening condition of embarrassment.

It sounds so silly when we talk about it this way. So the problem here is you're also missing out on a lot of good stuff as a result of skipping the race, and your brain is just confused about what it means to come in last in a race. Your brain thinks that's a bad thing, but it's actually just a neutral circumstance. It's just a reflection of how long it took you to get from point A to point B and how many other people did it before you.

Those are the facts. So we can have a little compassion for our inner mean girl. She's actually not a jerk. She's just doing her job. Unfortunately, we do

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not have a need for her position anymore at the corporation of you, and she probably should have been laid off a while ago, but you know how corporations work, right?

There's always that person that's not doing their work and they just keep them around forever. Nobody wants to fire her because it would take too much effort. So they keep her around, she's always that annoying person in meetings that are coming up with reasons things won't work. And for the most part, nobody pays attention to her. They just roll their eyes; they keep the meeting on track.

Your inner mean girl is like that person. She never gets the good projects to work on. So she has to spend all her time complaining and whispering to anybody that's going to listen. So here's what we do when our inner mean girl starts her shenanigans.

So the first thing is that awareness. Recognize, hey, I think this is inner mean girl bullshit. This thought that I'm having might not be accurate. And remember, this is actually a normal brain function protecting you from harm. But it's - when your inner mean girl steps in, it's actually a brain function gone haywire. It's a thought error.

And you've heard me talk about thought errors before. It's just a bug in the code. Your inner mean girl, she's actually trying to do her job. She doesn't know that her job doesn't exist anymore. And now she's got nothing else to do so of course she's going to sit around and whine. And you know, she's going to be loud and insistent

But that doesn't mean she's right. She might tell you the world is flat, doesn't make her right. So this is when you get to sit down and have a chat with her. You are in charge of your brain and your body. You would not let an ineffective employee run your company. If you were the CEO of a

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company, you would not be like, inner mean girl, yeah, let's put you in charge, let's put you in charge of everything.

You wouldn't do that if it was an actual company, so don't let your inner mean girl run your brain. You're going to explain to her, you've taken her opinion under careful consideration and you've made an executive decision that her advice is not in the best interests of the company.

You appreciate everything she does, you love her enthusiasm, but for the moment, you're going in a different direction. And the too long didn't read, your opinion is noted, we're still signing up for the race. So often, this is all that's needed to turn things around.

Just that awareness that you're letting your inner mean girl run amuck. You can be like, oh wow, no, not what I want to do. Let's put you back in the toddler seat, let's strap you in the backseat or even better yet, pull over and let you out of the car. But you can leave her in the car if you want, but you have got to sit in the driver's seat.

So that awareness in the beginning is so important. Recognize, oh, this is just my inner mean girl talking, I'm not going to put her in charge. Her opinion is noted but we're going in a different direction.

Now, if that doesn't work or if your inner mean girl is like, yeah, but seriously, you need to listen to me, you're going to move on to step two. And this is where you challenge your inner mean girl. You stand up, get in her face a little bit and say, "What's your problem here? Why are you so concerned? What is the worst that could happen if your concerns come to fruition?"

And usually, she's afraid of feeling something. She's afraid of feeling shame, embarrassment, disappointment, and she thinks feeling those things will be the end of the world. She's thinking, we can't handle it, that

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would be terrible, everybody will know that we're a failure, shame, embarrassment, disappointment, I can't handle those things.

She's confused. Because the truth is those are just emotions. You can feel them and then move on. The reason we feel any emotion is because of a thought that we have. And we think - the thought that we have is I'm a failure for coming in last in that race, and then the emotion that we experience is shame. The reason we feel shame is not because we came in last. It is because we believe that coming in last means that we have failed.

So you get to have a conversation and say, alright, well is coming in last really failure? We showed up at the start line, did the same distance as everyone else, crossed the finish line, I'm unclear as to how that is a failure. Did all the same things as everybody else. How is that failure?

It's not. It's all in how you define it. So your inner mean girl wants you to think those thoughts that create negative emotion because that means you're going to avoid doing the thing that's associated with it. Because she thinks doing that thing is going to lead to shame, shame is dangerous, so don't do the thing.

So she's going to come up with all these thoughts that create that emotion ahead of time so you avoid the thing. But you're on to her. You know about her little tricks. You're in charge. Even though it might not always feel that way.

So again, the circumstance of crossing the finish line after everyone else, neutral. Your thinking about that circumstance is what causes the pain. And you can apply this everywhere in your life. Say you set a goal to finish your half marathon in under three hours and you finish it in three hours and 15 minutes. That's a neutral circumstance.

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If you don't feel good about that circumstance, it's because of what you're making it mean. You might be making it mean I should have trained harder, I always fail at this stuff, I'm not a good runner. Stop thinking those bullshit thoughts because that's what's causing your pain. Not the circumstance.

And really let that sink in. That is a life-changing concept. Instead of thinking you failed, you can think, "I can't believe I finished that race, that was so much fun." Or "Damn, I just did my seventh half marathon, that was awesome." Same circumstance, different thought, different feeling. You're going to feel maybe pride or excitement, I don't even know what the word is for extreme joy of accomplishment. Hard to put that into a word.

But you can feel those thoughts about the exact same circumstances by changing your thinking. And your inner mean girl is going to argue with you a little bit about that but that's okay because you're smart and you're on to her.

So now that we understand thoughts create emotions, we're going to move on to step three, which is spending your thoughts wisely. And I've talked about this concept a lot on this podcast but you guys, you have a certain number of hours in a day and a certain number of thoughts that you can think during those hours.

According to Google, we have approximately 50,000 thoughts a day. Give or take 10,000. And also according to Google, 70% of them for the average person are negative. So 70%. That is 35,000 negative thoughts per day that the average person has.

So if our thoughts create our feelings and our feelings drive our actions and results, we are thinking 35,000 negative thoughts per day, we're going to have 35,000 negative emotions a day. And how do you think that is going to translate into actions and results? It is not going to be pretty.

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So the secret I have for you here is that all of your thoughts are optional. And again, you might think they're not. We talked about this in the beginning because you've practiced thinking the same thoughts over and over again, other people agree with you and you're like, hey, this person says I'm slow so I think I'm slow, it must be true.

So it's basically just kind of a habitual way of thinking that you've created. And choosing different thoughts feels weird at first. Just like that first time you went running, remember? And it felt weird and uncomfortable and you were like, I don't know about this. But then after you practiced thinking differently, it does get easier.

So if you have 50,000 thoughts a day, how many of them do you want to hand over to your inner mean girl to manage? Do you want to hand over 35,000 thoughts to her? You're like, here, inner mean girl, you've proven yourself to be a terrible judge of character, here's half my thoughts or more than half my thoughts.

Really think about that. If you had to actually count all your thoughts out, or if it was money, if you had \$50,000, would you give \$35,000 over to the company's worst employee and be like, alright, here you go, do what you need to do with this? No, you would not do it. You would not give that kind of money to somebody who was going to use it very unwisely, use it buying things that don't help you get to your goal.

Instead of doing that, you would think about what's the best way to use that money. Okay, I got \$50,000, what could I do with \$50,000? We don't think how can I throw \$50,000 away. So I want you to think of your thoughts like \$50,000. What can you do with that money to move your life in the direction you want it to go?

So if you start thinking about your thoughts like thought money, kind of a little word that I coined, but decide whether you want to spend your thought

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money on things that make you feel terrible about yourself or hold you back, or if you want to spend your thought money on stuff that's going to make you feel great.

Alright, so your inner mean girl, she's not the boss of you. She might be loud. Loud does not make her the boss of you. She might be repetitive. Repetitive does not make her the boss of you. Who is the boss of you? You.

So your challenge that I'm going to give you this week is to pay attention to what your inner mean girl is saying to you. It helps if you write it down. I teach all my clients to download all of their thoughts from their brain on to a piece of paper once a day so they can see. Your inner mean girl will have opinions that you're going to write down on that paper.

And then you can decide, alright, do I want to spend my thought money on these thoughts? Yes or no. You can decide whether it's serving you and if it's not, then you can decide to change it. The only true freedom we have on this planet is the ability to think what we want.

I mean, that is a universal truth. Your only freedom is what you do with your brain. And your brain is powerful. Thoughts are power. What do you want to spend yours on?

Alright my rebellious friends, that is it for today. I would love to know what you're going to spend your thoughts on so hit me up on Instagram @notyouraveragerunner. Let me know. Meanwhile, 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

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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.