

Ep #196: The Domino Effect of Showing Up with NYAR Ambassador Kelsey Pavlidis



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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.

Jill: Hey Rebels. So I am back this week with another fabulous Not Your Average Runner ambassador. Her name is Kelsey Pavlidis and we are here to talk about her running story and all the fun things that she's done with her running. So welcome Kelsey, thanks for joining me today.

Kelsey: Yeah. Hey Jill, I'm so excited to be here with you.

Jill: So for those of you who are listening, you cannot see the gloriousness that is Kelsey's hair, but it is stunningly beautiful and I'm looking at it right now going, how did you make your hair look like that? It's so pretty.

Kelsey: Thanks Jill. That's really funny that you say that. I was just looking in the mirror thinking I needed a haircut really bad. You know you want what you can't have. I have the flattest hair in the world. So all I have to do is blow-dry it. I don't use a brush, anything. It's just flat. And so people who have curly hair, I'm like, "Oh my gosh, I want that, I want your volume, I want your waves." And they're like, "You're crazy lady. I want your straight hair." So thank you though. Thank you very much.

Jill: It's almost as if our thoughts create our feelings about our circumstances.

Kelsey: Weird, right?

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Jill: So weird. So actually we're going to talk about running, but before we get there, because your hair's really long, it's down to your elbows about it looks like for me.

Kelsey: Yeah.

Jill: So what do you do with your hair when you go out running? Because that's a lot to put in a ponytail.

Kelsey: It is. And it actually gets really heavy. So great question. I think there's a group of us on Run Your Best Life actually, we're the pigtail crew. And actually, Stormi who you talked to recently is absolutely one of them too. But I rock pigtail braid a lot. Just because it's not holding on the back of my head bouncing because it can give me a headache sometimes. But otherwise I just braid it.

Sometimes I'll do a ponytail braid or pigtail braids. I learned not to do buns on top of my head because that is instant headache for me personally. I think some people definitely don't struggle with that but hats are always key. Hats and braids for me.

Jill: If you had to estimate how much your hair weighs, this would be a fun - you could put it on a scale maybe? I don't know.

Kelsey: I feel like a couple pounds.

Jill: Yeah. I mean, you've got a lot of hair. So this is a thing, this is - it's so funny because dudes don't have this as an issue when they go running. They're just like - most dudes. I mean, some do but even the biggest man bun I've ever seen is not the degree of hair that you've got. So it's just one more thing that women have to contend with.

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Kelsey: That's what comes to my mind is one more thing that bounces on my body. Like my hair, my boobs, my belly, my butt, everything bounces. And that's fine but it's just one more thing that bounces.

Jill: You're like, I've got a lot of bouncing. Why? Why one more thing? I think we need to talk to Enell and say we need a hair bra. Come up with something. A hair bra. I don't know, strap under your chin to provide a little extra support.

Kelsey: I'd like mine in the cotton candy print though.

Jill: Excellent. So the owner of Enell is a personal friend of mine. I will reach out to her and tell her about our idea and let's see.

Kelsey: It'll be fashionable, I'm sure.

Jill: I think it will. I think it will. Hair bra. I think this is a thing. We're going to make it happen. Like fetch, we're going to make it happen. Okay, so we took a little detour there. We're here to talk about you and what running is like for you, so I think this is a legit question. So let's kind of roll it back a little bit. So how did you get into running? How did you start? Tell me the story.

Kelsey: Yeah. So I mean, I'll give you the basics and then I can kind of give you some background here because I feel like it's kind of a big story. So it was two years ago in March. There was this non-profit program that exists in Northern Colorado where I live, and it's called Running Start.

And you've maybe heard of it just because of Nicole DeBoom, the founder of Skirt Sports. So she also founded this program, Running Start. And I was

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on I think it was a weight loss forum or something on Facebook and I saw this pop up and it was like, become a runner, whatever.

And of course I'm like, oh, I'm trying to lose weight, I've never been a runner really, and I'm like, oh yeah, I can totally - I'll try this program. And it was the night before the deadline and you have to do this big, long application, talk about what your barriers are to running, why you want to be a runner, kind of share a little bit of your background.

So I kind of - I'm like, okay, Jesus take the wheel, I'm just going to do this. So I submitted it and I didn't hear anything for like a month. I think I forgot about it. And one night it pops in my inbox and it's like, you've been accepted to be a Running Start beginner.

And I'm like, oh shit. Now I actually have to do this. And so I got accepted into the program and it came the day - they have these kickoff meetings. So you go and meet all the other beginners who got accepted into the program, and then there are motivators and I'll get to that. But we had this giant snowstorm and in the email it was like, after our meeting you're going to go on your first run or walk with your motivator.

And I was like, oh, fuck no. I'm not about this life. It's snowing, I don't know what I signed up for, oh shit. And so my husband, very grateful for him, was like, I'll drive you, you just have to go to the meeting. If you decide you don't want to do it afterwards, I'll come pick you up, no big deal.

And I was like, okay, fine. They can talk you into anything when they're being sweet, which he's sweet all the time but anyway. So I went and it was like my heart exploded. I know that sounds so cheesy. But I was in this room with this huge group of women.

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I don't know if you - I mean, Jill, I think you know Nicole's background and her story. But I never met this woman before, I never even heard of her. And she's telling this story about her struggles and I am just like, what? She overcame all this and she's a pro triathlete and she started this clothing business and now she has this non-profit. I'm like, wow, my mind was just blown.

And we went around the room and everybody shared a little bit about why they were there, why they applied. And it was so empowering to be in a space where these women could be open about their struggles. And so long story short, I completed the program. I ran my first 5K.

And the way they do it is really cool. They hook you up with - they call them personal motivators. And so they are people who are already runners or walkers or whatever and they basically are just there to be your cheerleader, like go on runs or walks with you and answer all your crazy silly questions along the way.

And my motivator, she's still a dear friend, but she runs like an eight-minute mile. This woman is intimidating AF. And she was the best though, just cheered me on, she did my intervals with me, it was great. Everything about it was great. I had an amazing experience and I still - now I'm actually on the board of Running Start, which is really cool.

Jill: Stop it. I did not know this.

Kelsey: Yeah. This is what Run Your Best Life gives you Jill is opportunities like that to be - I was a personal motivator last year for the program. And then I got invited to be a board member, so that was super, super cool. Awesome part of my journey.

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But I want to back up a second too because I know, I feel like this could go on for hours but two years ago was when I actually started running, but before that, when I was a kid, I did track and field I think once. I joined cross-country and I quit the first week. I tried cheerleading and I quit after bootcamp.

And I always felt like I was a quitter. That was my MO. I start things and I stop. I never make it through. And I get a little emotional so I apologize, but when I was 15, I feel like I got an answer as to why. So I actually was diagnosed with something called a Chiari malformation, which basically - I know it's a really medical term but basically my skull didn't grow big enough to accommodate my brain in the back.

So the back part of your brain is called your cerebellum and mine was receding into my spinal column and being squished down and causing really, really severe headaches. So for pretty much my whole life, up to being 16, what I remember is having a headache every single day. And feeling really hard. Even laughing would trigger a worse headache for me.

And so it was like, one day I was at the doctor and he was like, hey, this is really weird but every time you're in here you have a headache. And I was like, yeah, I mean, I have a headache all the time. And I think my mom subconsciously thought I was addicted to Tylenol or Advil or something because I was always asking for it because I always was hurting.

And so I now understand why things were really hard for me. I would start and stop them. And then I got to this point, so I ended up having surgery. I have a really badass scar on the back of my head from this surgery and that was kind of a journey too of finding doctors who were actually validating what was going on for me.

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I had one doctor tell me that I was just depressed and to go see a therapist, which is a whole 'nother thing. But I had surgery and my headaches actually went away. It was a miracle. Not everybody has that experience who has Chiari. So I was very fortunate in that.

But afterwards, I was not allowed to do anything. I was not allowed to lift more than 10 pounds, I couldn't carry a backpack, I couldn't hold anything. It was super, super strict. Really restrictive around my movement. And part of it was to protect the muscles in my brain. But what ended up happening is that just went on.

So I was 16 at the time and that story, we tell ourselves a story, well I was being told by other people you can't do that, you can't carry that, you can't move like that, you're going to hurt yourself, if you do anything something is going to happen and you're going to have Chiari again, which isn't really a thing. But it was this narrative.

Jill: That must have been really scary though. That must have been terrifying.

Kelsey: Yeah. I think more so for the people around me. I know that sounds bad but I was 16 so I was like, whatever, I feel better. That was my mindset. And I think for my parents, they were like, porcelain doll a little bit, don't move, don't touch that, don't lift that. And so then I felt like I couldn't do anything.

So I didn't want to try. And I told myself well, you can't do that because what if you hurt yourself, or what if you hurt your head. And it just kind of carried over into my adult life of not doing anything. I'm not saying I believed it still but I think it was definitely playing in the back of my brain of like, you can't do that. What if you hurt yourself again? Or what if you do this?

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And so I became really lazy and fed into that narrative a little bit. So when I did apply for Running Start and start that whole process, it was kind of like a well, I guess we'll wait and see what happens. I don't know if this is even something I'm capable of even doing or completing.

Jill: What did they think would happen if you started to run or lifted something heavier than 10 pounds? What were they saying would happen to you?

Kelsey: From what I remember and my memory is kind of fuzzy around this time. That happens I think when people go mess around in your brain. But it was muscle spasms that were going to cause issues in my neck and with headaches. So causing - not using my muscles properly and then causing them to spasm.

And I'm totally not a doctor so if you're listening to this and I'm saying the wrong terms I'm really sorry. But yeah, and I don't think that was a permanent thing either. From what I'm remembering, because we stopped having appointments at some point and I think really that probably ended.

Jill: Probably during the healing time don't do these things because you can jack with your muscles a little bit. But after a certain point in time you should be okay or...

Kelsey: Yeah. And I think that was it. But my mom - and I love her, please don't get me wrong, but she would - I think her worry and probably her own feelings of guilt or anxiety about it would then say things to me and I think feed it. So can you really carry that purse on your shoulder? Is that hurting your neck? Is this a problem for you? And I think sometimes that would feed my own...

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Jill: You just picked up her poop bag.

Kelsey: I totally did.

Jill: Put it in your pocket. You're like, yes, that's an opinion I want to hold on to.

Kelsey: Yeah. And it was kind of this ongoing thing. And it took me a really long time to break out of that cycle and it still is a process. Our thoughts are always a process that we have to work on.

Jill: But how did you make that leap from that mindset to I'm going to sign up for a running program?

Kelsey: That's a really great question. And I think it was grad school. So I went to grad school to be a social worker but I did my master's so I could do therapy. So I have my master's in social work and now I'm a clinical social worker. But I think I realized I was helping all these other people empower themselves to be their best and do their best, and then I was not allowing myself to do my best and be my best and try new things.

And I also didn't really feel like I had the support system in place to do so. We would feed off each other's laziness. I think people do that. Misery loves company. I don't want to eat healthy; I don't want to exercise because doing nothing is really fun. And it's not, by the way.

But I thought it was. And so I was feeding this narrative and I noticed that when I started working with people. I was like, oh, it's a little hypocritical of me to tell them to do these things that I'm not even doing. I'm not even stepping out of my comfort zone to try new things.

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And so I think it was then, and then I met my husband who was like, pushing me constantly. I would say something - you know how people pick up on things that you don't even remember that you said? My husband is that person and it bugs me sometimes. I love him but this is a total side note Jill, sorry, I have to tell you this.

So we were on our first date and we were walking around this downtown area where I live and I apparently told him that I've always wanted to learn to play the ukulele. I have no memory of this. It's true, I have always wanted to learn that.

So a couple months later it was my birthday and he bought me a flipping ukulele. And I was like, how did you know? Did you talk to my mom? What's going on? He's like, no, you told me on our first date. Anyway, goes to show though that you put something out in the universe, I think it's going to come back to you.

And so I would like, drop little things like I wish I could do that, I can't do that, I'm too fat, I'm too slow, too this, too that. And I think when I mentioned this program, because I was like, I think I'm going to sign up for this, then he was following up with me, like yeah, you should totally do it, really babe, support there. And then once I got into the program, it was like, even if I didn't want support, I was getting it from 100 other women through the program.

Jill: The power of community in a space like that is everything. You don't need cheerleaders at home when you have women who understand you and are trying to do the same thing as you. So powerful.

Kelsey: Exactly. And I think that's why ultimately, I was successful in that program. So that ended and then I was like, oh shit, again? Because I loved it. I did run-walk and that was the really cool thing about the program.

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It wasn't just like a here's a training plan, go run, figure it out. They had three different training plans so it was for every level you could just walk if you wanted, it was completely whatever you needed it to be.

So I actually did intervals for that whole time. And intention I think in the beginning of running the whole thing, but I didn't. And it was totally cool. Not a big deal. I still completed my 5K, my motivator ran with me the whole time, it was great. But afterwards I was like, I don't want to lose this thing that I've started. I don't want to quit one more thing. I'm done giving up on things like this.

Jill: I love it. Because you got a taste of it and you're like, oh, this is what happens when you follow through. I want more of that.

Kelsey: Yeah. And it was - Jill, it was different though than even weight loss. I think about that, I lost 10 pounds. That's amazing, it feels great. Running was different though. You would think losing 10 pounds or 20 pounds or 40 pounds or whatever would feel so amazing that you'd just want to keep going.

Running was different for me than that. And so I did what everybody does. I signed up for another race to keep me motivated. And I trained like three times maybe. I mean, it was a month apart. It wasn't terrible but not great. And when I was at the pack at pick up for the next - it was a 5K.

And they had this table to the side for this amazing half marathon and five mile. And in my town, there's this canyon coming out of the mountains and this race was coming down this canyon. So really beautiful along our river, and I was looking over kind of like, that's cool, I wonder if I could run five miles because I wasn't even thinking half marathon. That's not in my brain.

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And so I signed up for that five-mile race. My husband talked me into it. And I think I only signed up because they gave me an extra shirt for free when I signed up. And I was like, that's really cool. But it was right around that time where I was in the Skirt Sports store in Boulder when it was still there and I picked up your book.

It was on the shelf. They had just started I think a plus-size line that season and your book was there and I was like, what's this? And I picked it up and I bought it and I started listening to your podcast. And I was like, okay, I'm drinking this Kool Aid. I'm going to get on board here.

And so your podcast got me through to September, got me through that race, which I was not trained for by the way. But I got through it, it was downhill, it was fine, and then I joined Run Your Best Life. And it's dominoed for me from there. And you mentioned earlier the community piece and I feel like that's what I was seeking after that program was over. I was like, I need another community of women where I fit in, who understand me, and that's what I found.

Jill: I love that. So that took you through 5K and five-miler. And then but you've done a lot more than that since, so let's talk about some of your - what's your favorite running accomplishment so far?

Kelsey: Probably the longest distance I've done, which is only a half marathon. Not only. Which is a half marathon. And that's probably also one of my favorite distances. So last October during the pandemic I did my first half marathon and it was actually an in-person race. I was super lucky.

The area I live in, I keep talking about this. I live in Colorado. I live in Fort Collins. And we've - knock on wood - things have been okay here. They've managed to do a lot of things that I think most places probably haven't. Smaller town, whatever, not a big city.

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But it was a modified start with waves, masks, all the good stuff, but I was super lucky to be able to do it in person. But it's my favorite and I think it's because I'm not a person who gets runner's high right away. Do you know what I mean?

Jill: Yes, I know what you mean.

Kelsey: A three-miler just ain't going to do it for me. And I think I was stuck for a really long time in thinking I'm never going to get a runner's high; I don't know what that's like, that's just not going to happen for me. And then I started running longer distances and I was like, oh, this is amazing. That's what this is.

Jill: So for those - that's a great point because I think a lot of people have that belief that I'll never - I just don't get a runner's high. So explain what it feels like to you to get the runner's high and when it kicks in for you.

Kelsey: Yeah. And it's probably different for everyone so totally acknowledge that. But for me, it's that point where my brain just goes like, zen, quiet, and I'm just listening to the pounding of my feet, I'm breathing, I'm just observing things around me. I'm completely present in the moment.

And I'm not sitting there having to work on my thoughts of no, don't think that, this is what you think instead, or telling myself you're strong, you're confident, you're a runner. I'm not having to do that anymore. I'm just running and observing. And that's it.

Jill: It's like you're in some kind of beautiful zone of...

Kelsey: Yes.

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Jill: Because I think a lot of people believe that a runner's high means you get - that you physically feel high or you physically feel - which I'm like, sometimes I feel loopy.

Kelsey: Need some fuel maybe.

Jill: Right. But it's not this - it's so hard to describe but you just said it so perfectly. It's sort of this place where your brain just stops being a jerk. Actually, not even jerk. It's just like your brain just sort of slows down and you're in the moment. And it's less of a physical sensation and more of a mental experience I think.

Kelsey: 100%.

Jill: So when does that kick in for you? Is it five miles? Six miles? Excuse New Jersey transit flying by my - I don't know if you heard that but oh my goodness. Must have been the Amtrak because it was loud.

Kelsey: Yeah, five miles. Definitely I have to hit five miles. I know that feels like so long but getting there is so worth it for me. Doing that. And I think that's why half marathons are my favorite because all of my training runs were - my long runs were over five miles. So I found this - I was looking forward to it.

I have a 10-mile run? This is going to be great. I'm so excited. It's going to be hard; it's going to be challenging, I haven't done 10 miles before but - and I'm also one of those people, I don't typically run with music. I used to think I had to. I was like, I can't move my feet unless I have music in my ears. And one day the headphones died, I couldn't do it, and it was great for me personally. And so I had five full miles of just quiet on those runs and it was so amazing.

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Jill: I love that. And I think what people are usually concerned with is my brain - they use the music to distract from their brain and when you're trying to quiet your mind down so that you can just be in the moment, distracting yourself from your thinking doesn't quiet you down. It just allows - it's not the same thing. And I think sometimes people are like, it's so boring. I'm like, it's not boring. It's just your thoughts.

Kelsey: Oh man, and I have so many conversations with myself too. The first five miles I got to work out all my shit from the day or the week or whatever, I got to work that out. And once it's gone - and I think that's part of it. You have to get it all out for me anyway.

Jill: But it's like meditation. I mean, if you've ever tried to meditate, you don't just sit down and bam, you're in a meditative state. You sit there for 10 minutes and your brain is jumping around and doing all the things. And then eventually it quiets down and quiets down, and then you can kind of be in this beautiful place.

And I think running is a great way to get yourself there. Just maybe takes a little longer because it's not just that you have to quiet the thoughts about sitting still. You have to quiet the thoughts about this hurts, that hurts, it's so hard. I love that so much.

So five miles for you is the sweet spot. And here's the other thing and maybe this happens to you. It happens to me is I'll get to that spot where I'm really in the moment and it'll last for a mile or two, and then I'll get out of it and I'll be like, oh, that was a bummer. But then it comes back.

If I don't resist, if I don't get mad like, now it's hard again, it kind of comes and goes in waves. And so a lot of people, they get to mile eight of a half marathon and that's sort of the traditional time where it starts to feel a little

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more difficult and they're like, oh great, it's just going to suck for the next five miles.

I'm like, just hang out there for a half a mile and you'll start to feel good again. But then we all get up in our own heads and we sort of ruin the experience. So I love that you recognize that for what it is, as that in the moment, it's so worth it. So worth it.

Kelsey: It is. And you're right, it's 100% work. Just like meditating is work. People are like, I can't do it. Like, did you try? Did you give it more than five minutes? Just because from a quitter, 100%, it's so easy to give up. Giving up is the easy part. Keeping going, that's the challenge.

And yeah, the waves, I hear you 100% with the waves. It ebbs and flows, it comes and goes, and there's always going to be something that happens on your run, guaranteed, that you're not expecting, you're not prepared for. For my half marathon I think I got to mile 11 and I was like, I'm not prepared for this because I was like, shit, this was not on the plan.

It was on the plan to do three more miles but I was like, I am not prepared. And I was, but my brain - my thoughts kicked in. I lost my mojo; I lost my little zen wave and I had to find it again.

Jill: I just think it's so funny that the drama that is created in our brains at mile 10 of a half marathon, like oh my god, I've got three more miles, like, you just came 10 miles. You really think you can't go three more? Are you running on bloody stumps? No. Just keep going. Just keep going.

But it's so funny. In the moment, the drama feels so real and so urgent and intense and in reality, it's like, seriously, you're just going to keep run-walking for another 30 to 40 minutes. It's not...

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Kelsey: What's the big deal?

Jill: It's not a big deal when you step away. But in the moment. But I think when you've experienced that zen feeling, it's a lot easier to overcome the panic moments because you're like, oh, that's right, this is just some silliness.

Kelsey: Right. This is just my inner mean girl piping in, she's feeling a little left out at the moment.

Jill: Nobody's talking to her. She's feeling left out. I absolutely love that. My inner mean girl pipes up because she's feeling left out.

Kelsey: She's the chatty girl in class. You know what I mean. She's got to be heard every once in a while.

Jill: She's like, I'm still here.

Kelsey: By the way.

Jill: So what do you think has been the biggest thing that you've learned about yourself through the process of becoming a runner?

Kelsey: That I'm not a quitter. I said it earlier. I realized after I said it, I'm a quitter, no I'm not. I'm not a quitter anymore. I did use to stop things and not finish them or follow through. And that's not true for me anymore. I know that. I know I can be. I know I'm capable, but Jill, you used an analogy once and it might have been on a retreat. I don't know when it was.

And you say it a lot, but your past self doesn't dictate your future self. And just because I quit in the past doesn't mean I'm still a quitter. Toddlers fall

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down when they learn to walk and they still learn to walk. And so I know that I can follow through with things. I know I can complete training plans; I know I can eat healthy. I know I can do these things.

And I think the other thing I've learned is that - this happened recently is that I can inspire other people too to be their best selves. And that was a big smack in the face for me actually.

Jill: Because you spoke about when you first started counseling people how you thought I'm telling these people to do this thing that I'm not doing myself, and so you started showing up differently for yourself. And that has such a domino effect. Because when you show up for yourself, other people see it and think, oh, if she's doing that, maybe I can do that.

And now of course you're a Not Your Average Runner ambassador, which means you're impacting even more people. But it really is - it starts with us. When you show up for yourself, then first of all, you're able to show up for other people even better, but other people see what you're doing.

And I think when moms come to me and they say I don't have time to take care of myself, I have all these people to take care of, I'm like, taking care of you is taking care of other people because you're demonstrating to them first of all that you value yourself, and also, you're an example of what's possible.

And we have no idea the impact that we have on the world. I had no idea that writing a book and putting a copy of it in the Skirt Sports store was going to impact you. I didn't know who you were, you were a stranger to me, but because I showed up and did those things and got over my own bullshit, to write a book and to appear in a swimsuit in a national ad.

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I was like, okay, I guess I'm a swimsuit model now, alright, awkward. I had no idea that me showing up to do those things was going to lead to you carrying on the journey. And I love that you started your journey with Nicole DeBoom because I was literally just on the phone with her the other day. She's a friend now.

We've become friends as a result of working together, but you never know who's watching, you never know who you're going to impact, so you just got to keep showing up because that person is out there. So I love that you're doing that so beautifully now. It's just - so amazing.

And there's going to be somebody listening who has that specific brain condition that's going to be like, wait a minute, you mean I actually can be a runner right now? Maybe they'll go see a different doctor or specialist or something and get a treatment because you showed up today.

Kelsey: Thanks Jill. I hope so. I think - but you're right, we never know the impact. And unless you put yourself out there, you're never going to find out. That's the other piece. Posting - for example, for the ambassador stuff, we've been posting a lot. We've been running Rebel Runner Roadmap and the workshops and things like that.

And though that I just started telling my story and people were like, coming out of the woodwork like, oh my gosh Kelsey, you're such an inspiration. And these are people that I'm like, I'm inspiring you? Hold on. I don't think that's an even competition.

My mom signed up for the workshop and the Roadmap. Like what? And my sister-in-law, it just feels good to me but more I'm excited. I'm excited for other people. I'm excited for them to be a part of your mission to get a million women up and running. I'm excited for them to experience this.

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Jill: I just have this vision of a million women holding hands, running across the United States. I don't know. That's obviously never going to happen. What does it mean to you? You've kind of already alluded to this but what does it mean to you to be a Not Your Average Runner ambassador?

Kelsey: Everything, first of all. But I think the biggest thing is I didn't feel like I fit in. Yes, I did the Running Start program, and I still had these feelings of I don't fit in here. I live in Fort Collins. It's one of these super healthy places. It's always in the top 10 or whatever healthiest places to live.

And here I am, I'm like, okay, my doctor tells me I'm morbidly obese and need to lose weight and can't, can't, can't, you can't do this. And I was like, I can't run an eight-minute mile right now, I can't do this right now. And so I needed more community and finding that in Not Your Average Runner.

So to me, being an ambassador is really about showing other people that you can fit in no matter what. You can be a part of something no matter what. And if you look at our group Jill, we have everyone. We have everyone. We have people who are overweight, we have people who are really thin, we have tall people, short people, old people, young people, everybody. We are such a diverse group of women and they are my best friends. We are so connected. I talk to them more than I talk to most people.

Jill: It's like the best friends you've never met.

Kelsey: Yes, absolutely. So being an ambassador is just about helping other people find their place and realizing their potential and their capabilities. Because I still don't know what my body is capable of. I'm still figuring that out and I'm going to keep going until I find my limit. I'm ready for this trail Ragnar in September to happen. I'm so excited.

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It's going to happen and then marathon is going to happen and then I don't know. But I'm ready to find that out. So being that though, being that I'm ready to find out, I'm also wanting to help other women find that out too and that's important to me.

Jill: It's like you're like, I've got this amazing gift and I have enough for everyone and I'm going to give it to everybody whether they like it or not.

Kelsey: It's like a magic wand. I mean, yeah, figuratively it's a magic wand.

Jill: Okay, so last question I have for you today is what piece of advice do you have for a brand-new runner, someone maybe who's listening to this thinking, that's all fine and good for you guys but I can't start for whatever reason, what piece of advice do you have for somebody brand new?

Kelsey: I think my piece of advice is to take one step. Just one step. And whether that step is continuing to listen to the podcast or filling out an application for something random or going to a running store and just trying on shoes, or looking up a race, just taking one step and seeing what happens.

Because that's all it is. It's just one step and then one step and one step. It doesn't have to be overwhelming, it doesn't have to be too much, and it doesn't have to be what other people tell you. All it has to be is what you want it to be.

Jill: I love that.

Kelsey: Forget everybody else. Forget your inner mean girl. Forget everybody else. Forget your family, forget your friends, forget your

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significant other. Just decide one step that you want to take and try. Nothing will work unless you do.

Jill: Right. You can't take the second step until you take the first step. So if people want to follow your running adventures, how do they do that?

Kelsey: Instagram is probably the best place to do so. So I'm @kpav18 on Instagram. And you're probably going to get a smattering of my crazy fur animals as well as my husband on there. But he likes to join in on my running adventures too, which is somebody else that I didn't know I inspired to start moving. But yeah, definitely find me over on Instagram and also just get out there. Move your body.

Jill: So good. Alright, well, thank you so much for joining me today. It's been my pleasure.

Kelsey: Thanks for having me, Jill.

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.