

## Ep #209: Choose Your Hard



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Jill Angie**

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## Ep #209: Choose Your Hard

Welcome to the *Not Your Average Runner* podcast. If you're a woman who has never felt athletic but you still dream about becoming a runner, you are in the right place. I'm Jill Angie, a certified running and life coach and I teach women how to start running, feel confident, and change their lives. And now, I want to help you.

Hey Rebels. What is up with you? Can we talk about how freaking fast this summer is going? I feel like I blinked and it was August. So since the middle of May I've taken no less than six trips. And I've got one more planned for next week. Some have been pleasure, some have been business. But let's be honest, all of my business trips are fun too.

One of my favorites was actually going to Louisville, Kentucky in July to be a model for the new Skirt Sports line that is dropping at the end of August. Oh my God, it's so cute. You're going to love it. I'll have all the information in a later podcast. Anyway, let's dive into today's topic.

So I have heard the term choose your hard a lot. It's a concept really. Most recently I heard it discussed on Corinne Crabtree's podcast, or I heard her talking about it somewhere. And it's just really such a powerful concept. I've actually talked about it with my coaching clients in *Run Your Best Life* and it's been a game changer for some of them.

So what exactly does choose your hard mean? I'm going to give you all of my viewpoint on it today. But on the surface, it kind of sounds like one of those Instagram challenges, right? Like 75 hard, where you have to do two 45 minute workouts a day for 75 days. No thank you.

So actually, choose your hard is not a challenge. It's not anything like that. It is quite simply a concept that helps us make life choices that support our goals. Because, I mean, let's be honest, it's hard to get up early before work and go for a run, right? But here's something else that's hard, feeling

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tired all the time and not being able to keep up with your kids because you're out of shape.

Okay, so choosing your hard simply means deciding which hard thing you want to do. All right, that's kind of the simplest way I can explain it. Choosing your hard means, "Okay, well, this thing in front of me is hard. But, of course, the consequences of that thing are going to be hard."

And so you just decide which one you want. Is it going to be the early morning workouts so that you can be fitter and have more energy, but it's kind of hard to get yourself going in the morning? Or are you going to choose feeling like shit because you've been existing on caffeine and donuts for weeks?

And by the way, there is no judgment if you have been existing on caffeine and donuts. I have totally been there, totally. I use it as an example because when that's how I rolled I was exhausted constantly. You might thrive on caffeine and doughnuts. It might be like rocket fuel to your body. And if that is the case, just rock on with your bad self. Again, there is no judgment. So I'm generalizing here based on my own experience and based on the experience of a lot of my clients.

So I think you kind of know what I mean when I say choose your hard. There's the hard thing that's right now in front of you, like getting out of bed and going for a run. Or there's dealing with the consequences later like not feeling good.

And we are wired to seek pleasure or to seek relief or to minimize our effort level. We are quite literally hardwired to do that. So that's why in the moment it feels easier to choose the consequences rather than choosing the hard thing in front of you.

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And I mean, it doesn't just feel easier. It is easier, right? There in the moment, physically it's easier to stay in bed than it is to get up and go for a run. That moment, totally easier because you don't have to move. You can just literally lay there and sleep versus the physical effort and resources of your body that are required to get out of bed, get dressed, warm up, go for your run and so forth.

But here's the thing, those consequences of not doing, not choosing the immediate hard, the consequences start pretty quickly in your mind. Like that shit that your inner mean girl starts spitting out as soon as you do get up. Say that you wake up, your alarm goes off and you're like, "Oh, fuck no, I can't do it today." And you hit snooze. Nine minutes later, snooze again.

And so maybe you get an extra 30 minutes of sleep. And let's be honest, it's not real sleep. It's broken, fragmented, guilty sleep. But as soon as you do get up your inner mean girl just starts right in on it. She's like, "Yep, there you go again. You can't stick to anything. You skipped another workout. You're never going to be a real runner. You're so lazy."

If you're listening to this right now and this sounds vaguely familiar to you, I want you to give me a hell yeah. I don't care where you are. But the thing is, it may have felt easy to hit the snooze button but it's so hard to listen to your inner mean girl saying stuff, talking smack.

It's so hard. It feels awful. And of course, it doesn't stop there. Because okay, so she beats you up when you finally do you get out of bed. But then she's beating you up when you get to work because you're so fucking tired and your head hurts from the venti frappuccino with two extra shots that you drank in the car just to wake up.

You get to work, the elevator is out. You got to haul your ass up four flights of stairs to get to your desk. You're totally out of breath because you

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skipped the last three weeks of workouts. And then you run into your boss and you have to pretend you're not out of breath, but there's beads of sweat on your forehead, which is a total giveaway.

No? Is it just me? This may be actual experience from my life multiple times. Seriously though, feeling tired and cranky for most of the day because you didn't get your workout in is one kind of hard. That's a pretty immediate consequence. You said, "Okay, the easy that I'm choosing today is not going to do my workout. And I'm trading that for the hard later on of feeling tired and cranky." And that does kick in pretty quickly.

You know what you feel like when you get up in the morning and you get your workout done. You know what that feels like that. You're like, "I am fucking unstoppable. Bring it on the world." Right? That's an amazing feeling. So you're trading that by skipping your workout. You're saying, "Okay, I guess I'm cool with feeling tired and cranky all day long." So that's one kind of hard.

But another kind of hard, it's a little more long term than that, right? Maybe you signed up for an awesome race. And again, you guys, I've been there. I have done all of this. I remember signing up for a half marathon in 2012. I was like, "This is going to be my first half marathon." Signed up for it, and I did not choose hard in the mornings.

So guess what my hard was. It was feeling stressed, and discouraged, and mad at myself because I knew I couldn't do the race. And then it was the hard of not even going to the race on race morning and just laying in bed crying because everybody else was running the race I was supposed to run because I couldn't get myself out of bed.

So there's that immediate hard of the consequences of not feeling great that day and your inner mean girl beating you up. But then there's that long

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term hard of not achieving the goal that you set for yourself. And that feels so awful, right? It feels so awful.

So, choosing your hard means deciding, “Okay, this might be hard right now, but it's also going to be hard later. And if I do the hard thing now, I'll feel so much better later. Physically, mentally, and emotionally.”

And here's the other trade off. This is like it's some kind of like magical math, I don't know. But if you do 30 minutes or an hour of hard now in the morning, you get like hours of feeling awesome later. I wish retirement plans paid out the benefits the way a 30 minute workout does.

So half an hour in the morning of doing the hard thing of getting up and going for your run or doing your strength training, whatever it is, you get this huge payback of feeling awesome for hours afterwards. So this to me sounds like an excellent trade.

The flip is that, okay you get that 30 extra minutes of sleep now. So you get 30 minutes of easy and the payoff is you get hours of your day sucking later. So a little bit of hard now, and I've said hard so many times you guys, I'm probably going to get some kind of like sexually explicit warning on this podcast.

Anyway, if you're like a 12 year old boy in your mind like me, just ignore it. Ignore the silliness. But choosing to do 30 minutes of hard in the morning pays back with hours and hours of awesome. Choosing 30 minutes of awesome in the morning pays back with hours and hours of hard.

Okay, it's such not a fair trade to pick the sleep. But here's the other thing you guys, so we've been talking about it in the context of getting up and going for a run in the morning, but this doesn't just apply to workouts.

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I was just doing a Facebook Live for my Run Your Best Life coaching group the other day on this very topic. Each month in that group we have a focus that we work on for the month. And in August our focus is self-coaching. It's learning how to work on your thoughts, we're doing a deep dive into it.

And I'm challenging everybody in the group to do a thought download every single day in the month of August. Now, thought downloads are actually super easy from a physical perspective. This is what you have to do, you have to pick up a notebook and a pencil. And you have to open the notebook and then you hold the pencil with the point facing down and you move the point around on the paper.

Legit, a thought download is on par easy wise with sitting in front of the television and watching Netflix from a physical effort perspective. It's not like swinging a 50 pound kettlebell or running a 10K. It's pretty much a non-challenge. Pencils weigh, I don't know, what a half an ounce? Probably.

So doing a thought download is not hard. Except, oh my god, people make it so hard with their thoughts, which of course I find delightfully ironic. But we have these thoughts like, "I don't know what to say. This is weird, what if somebody reads what I wrote? I don't know what I'm thinking. I don't want to find out what I'm thinking." We have all of this bullshit going on in our brain.

And so first of all, those are thoughts, which means those are the thoughts you're having. When you pick up your pencil you just write those down on your paper as part of your thought download. Because duh, they're thoughts and you're removing thoughts from your brain. So boom, thought download done. Not hard. Okay. Really, really think this through.

If you're one of those people, and I know, there are so many of you out there that don't take the time to work on your thinking because you have a

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thought, “This is hard. I don't know what to do. This is hard. This is difficult. It's confusing.” So, when you keep thinking to yourself, here's the results of continually thinking this is hard, I don't know what to say, the emotion you feel is overwhelm.

And then that further reinforces your faulty belief that thought downloads our hard. So you avoid them and you choose a different hard. So we're talking 10 minutes of thought downloads in the morning. Maybe doing a couple models and you're like, “Oh my God, that's so hard. I can't do it. It's too hard.” So you're saying instead of doing 10 minutes of hard, mental hard, because it's not physical hard. Instead of the 10 minutes, you're choosing the consequences of avoiding your thought downloads.

So what are those consequences? Well, for one, when you let your shitty thoughts run amok in your brain, like a toddler with a knife, not a good idea. They're just going to keep making you feel bad. All right, and we've already established above that it is hard to feel stressed, or discouraged, or angry, or pissed off, or whatever emotion you're unconsciously creating for yourself.

That's hard, it's hard to manage. It's hard to live your life when you have this blanket of negative emotion just kind of like clouding everything. All right, the way you show up for yourself when you feel like that even creates more consequences that are even harder to deal with.

So you're like literally saying, “Oh, 10 minutes of a thought download is so hard I'd rather just let my shitty thoughts run amok in my brain. That's what I'm choosing.”

So in the case of thought downloads, choosing your hard here is so easy. 10 minutes of writing to trade off for hours of mental peace. And you don't



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even need to get out of bed to do a thought download. You could literally do it, sit in your pajamas with your coffee.

You can make everything so comfortable and you're just going to sit there and you're just going to move the pencil against the paper for 10 minutes. It's so easy you guys. So thought downloads are not hard, they're just not. You make them hard with your thinking. And then you miss out on all the benefits of managing your mind.

And guess what? A well-managed mind is way more likely to get up and go running in the morning. I'm just saying, if you're managing your mind, running in the morning becomes a lot less about, "Oh my god, this is so hard" and a lot more about like, "Oh, of course, I'm going to do this because I get so much out of it."

So that's thought downloads, here's another example. This is maybe my favorite one, strength training. And I know there are some of you cringing right now because you're thinking, "I should really be doing my strength training, but I hate it because it's so hard. I don't know what to do." Blah, blah, blah.

I used to hate strength training. Actually, now I kind of have a love hate relationship with it. Let's be honest. I love the results. I absolutely love how my body feels when I am strength training regularly. It's just, I mean, it's such a powerful feeling. I might like it more than running, I might like the results of strength training more than running.

During each session, when I'm actually doing the strength training, I would say I love, I don't know, half? Half of the stuff. There are some moves that, like deadlifting, I just find it so satisfying. There's just something so delicious about lifting something heavy, nailing your form, repeating it. And

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then the next time you do it actually lifting heavier. That is joyous to me, I absolutely love it.

But there are some that I'm not a huge fan of. Mostly the core exercises. I do not love the core exercises at all. And I used to complain a lot to my trainer about the exercises I didn't like. Then I figured out a little hack that I'm going to share in a moment. So let's put a pin in that.

Anyway, normally when I wake up in the morning on strength training day my brain gets right to work finding all the reasons that I should cancel my session.

So my sessions right now are on Mondays and Wednesdays at 2pm. Okay, so I wake up around 6am. I got like eight fucking hours of waking time for my brain to figure out how I can get out of it. So much, so much time. So much. And strength training is hard, y'all. It's like lifting things, lifting heavy things over and over and over again is tiring.

I can't even explain to you what my legs feel like right now because my trainer just went ham on me yesterday. My legs feel like they're made out of limp pasta. Lifting heavy things is hard.

And then when you're done, right, you're done for the day. You're like, "Okay, I finished that workout." Two days later, all over again. There is no end point with strength training. It is a lifetime commitment. It's not like school where you graduate and you're like, "Yippee, I never have to study again." No, no, it's like a job where every day you're like, "All right, this is my life for the next 50 years. Okay, kill me now."

Now, I'm exaggerating. But still, there's no end game with strength training. Just like there's no end game in brushing your teeth. It's regular

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maintenance. It's a practice that has to be repeated regularly or your teeth will fall out. Strength training, same thing. And it's hard.

But you know what's also hard? Not being able to lift your kids or getting injured all the damn time when you're a runner. Or always having body aches. Or throwing your back out all the time. Or feeling like your knees are on fire when you go up and down stairs. Those things are really hard.

So when my brain throws out the option to quit, and my brain has got some very legit arguments. It's like, "It's expensive having a trainer and you really don't like it anyway." And all the reasons. I just say to myself, "Oh, well, remember all those injuries that you used to get and all the races you had to drop out of because you were on crutches? Choose your hard, motherfucker." That's my response to my brain.

I will choose the hard of slinging around a 50 pound kettlebell all damn day over sitting on the sidelines of my life because I chose the wrong hard.

So I really want you to think about that. I know I talk about strength training constantly. Well, maybe not constantly, but frequently on this podcast. And one thing that we in Run Your Best Life, my coach LD says this all the time, you can go to strength training or you can go to rehab. These are your options. She actually calls strength training, she calls it prehab. In other words, it's like preventative maintenance for your body.

So if I haven't convinced you yet, I want to share one more hack with you that has helped me enjoy my training sessions. And so when I have the experience in my brain of enjoying the training sessions, it becomes easier to choose the hard of strength training than to choose the hard of quitting.

So I think this is an important hack. I learned it from Kara Loewentheil, coincidentally, we share the same awesome personal trainer. I found my

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trainer, Nancy Brown, and if you're interested in who my trainer is, you can find her on Instagram. Her handle is @Nancymuscles. I think you can also find her at [trainwithnancy.com](http://trainwithnancy.com). She's amazing.

We were talking yesterday during our session about her ideal client. And pretty much a description of all of her clients is like body positive or plus size women who love cats and have a certain political leaning.

I was just like, "Yeah, you kind of described me to a tee." And then I thought about other people I know that work with her and I was like, "Yep, that's pretty much it." So if you love cats and you are body positive, plus size, and tend towards the liberal, please check out Nancy Brown. She's amazing.

Anyway, a while ago I was in a session and Nancy, my trainer, asked me to do a floor exercise that I really don't love. And okay, let's be honest. I mean, actually I just fucking hate it. It builds core strength really, really well. It feels like torture to me. I just think it's not a thing I want to do.

I'm seeing great results from doing it over and over again. I still hate it. Or so I thought I did. So here's the thing, she asked me to do that exercise this one day and I'm like, "Oh, not again." And apparently, I used my outside voice and not my inside voice. And she laughed, but then she said, "You know, you chose to be here. You're literally paying me to tell you what to do. I'm not making you do it."

And of course I know that intellectually. But when I have a hard thing to do my brain seems to need scapegoat. Like it wants to put me in the place of victim and then the person who's telling me what I should be doing in the place of like the mean overlord. I've noticed this about my brain.

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But really, she's right. I've chosen to be there. I've chosen to be there. Why am I complaining about it? And then shortly after we had that conversation, I saw an Instagram post of Kara Loewentheil's where she talks about complaining and what would happen if you just sort of went on a complaining diet.

Where you just decide I'm done with that. I'm not going to whine in my head. I'm not going to whine out loud. I'm just going to stop saying things like, "I hate this exercise. This is so hard."

Because when you say those things, whether it's saying it outside or inside to yourself, you feel annoyed. Say it to yourself right now, "I hate doing planks." You feel annoyed. And when you feel annoyed, you're more likely to quit or at least not give 100% effort.

So I decided to try it. I stopped complaining to my trainer about the moves she gives me. I mean, occasionally I will say, "Wow, that was really hard." Or "That was really challenging for me." But I have stopped saying things like, "God, not this." Or "I hate this one." Or "Oh, are you trying to kill me?" Because first of all, she's chosen these moves very carefully and specifically to help me reach the goals that I told her I wanted to do. I said, "I want to run injury free. I want to keep running injury free. I want to dead lift my own body weight. I want to do an unassisted pull up." She's like, "Okay, if that's what you want, here's what you need to do to get it." And then I start complaining about it.

So I've stopped complaining to her about anything that she gives me. I stopped saying, "Oh, not that one again." And that was super helpful. Because A, I'm no longer whining to the person I'm literally paying to help me get stronger. Because she's a human too and she doesn't need to hear my belly aching.

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That's a term my dad used to use when I was growing up. Stop your belly aching. I don't know if people still say that.

But B, by not saying those things out loud, I'm not hearing them either. I'm not reinforcing my own crappy story. And then I took it one step further, decided I would no longer even allow those thoughts in my head. If I hear a wind getting started, I shut it right down.

And guess what there is – I've been doing this for, I don't know, probably a month. There's at least 50% less dread of my training sessions. At least. I don't know how you measure dread, but it's at least cut in half. 50% less arguing and bargaining and trying to find a legit excuse not to do it.

And now sometimes before my training sessions I'll hype myself up and be like, “Yeah, you're going to crush it. You are getting so strong. I wonder how much weight you can lift today.” I actually find myself getting kind of pumped to find out what I am capable of.

Now, there's still some dread, some arguing, some bargaining. Brains are brains and those are habitual things that I've done for many years. So I'm in the process of phasing it out. But like I said, it's been cut in half.

In fact, I want to share my internal monologue. And we're just going to be real about this. This is how my internal monologue goes now on strength training days.

So I wake up, it's Monday morning and I'm like, “Oh God, it's Monday. I got eight more hours to dread my strength training. I don't want to do it. It's going to be so hard.” And then I remember I'm paying for this. And I like my trainer because she's funny. She's got cute cats. Sometimes the cats show up during the session.

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And I haven't been injured in a really long time. And the last run I went in on I went on my core felt really solid. And I kind of do like dead lifts. I really like the feeling of hauling that weight. Oh, wait. Monday, Monday's dead lift day. In fact, I think about all the stuff on today's list, I like about 80% of my Monday workout.

And yeah, okay, that core exercise, not my favorite. But it's basically four minutes of time, right? It's like one minute at a time spread out over four sets. In between I get to do dead lifts. It's over pretty fast. It's less than 10% of my workout time, or 5%? I don't know, however much 4 over 60 is. It's 1/15 of my workout time.

And then after I'm done with that, I get to do my bench press AMRAP. And I love those, I'm getting so strong. And all that core work really is making my running easier. It's totally worth it." And then suddenly, I have that conversation in my brain, and I'm not grouchy about it anymore.

Okay, so the complaining diet, thank you very much Kara Loewentheil, it works like gangbusters. Because it makes choosing my hard so much easier. I start looking at the hard instead of like, "I don't want to do that." I start looking for all the reasons that I do want to do it.

And by the way, you really can apply this to anything. You can apply it to running. I know we talked a little bit about it. But the complaining diet, you can apply that to running as well. Because I mean, I think you know this, but just in case you don't I'm going to tell you a secret. You actually do like to run.

I mean maybe that first mile isn't the most fun mile, but overall you kind of like running. Even though it's hard. Even though you get tired and sweaty and sometimes pushing through that last mile takes a lot of mental effort.

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You like it. You like it, you just forget it temporarily when you're laying in bed hitting snooze.

The hard part about running isn't the actual running. It is all the thinking that you do about it that keeps you from being consistent so that it gets easier.

Okay, let me repeat that. The hard part about running is not the running. It's your brain. Your brain is making it difficult. It's literally the easiest thing in the world to take just one more step.

Maybe not as easy as moving your pencil around on the paper to do a thought download, but pretty close. Running is easy my friends, stop making it so hard on yourself.

So choose your hard and then with the hard that you're choosing, do your best to make that hard easier. Okay, so you're going to be like, "Strength training is so hard. Here's how I'm going to make it easier so that it's easier to choose."

All right before I go, I do have some really awesome news for you. This Monday, so Monday, August 16. Depending on when you're listening to this, it might be last Monday. I'm opening up registration for my How To Become a Consistent Exerciser workshop.

Now, this is the fourth time I've taught this workshop. And every single time people have been blown away by how I teach the concept of consistency. Because what we do in this half day online class is I help you understand what excuses you're making, why you're making them.

I teach you what your excuse personality is. And then I teach you how to work with your specific excuse personality to get past them so you can get your butt in gear and you can choose the hard that you really want to

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choose. So make sure you get signed up, there's going to be a link on the site on the [notyouraveragerunner.com](http://notyouraveragerunner.com) site that will be there on Monday, August 16th.

It's also going to be all over my Instagram page. So I hope that I see you there, my friends, because this workshop has been a game changer for many, many, many of my clients, and it's just awesome. It's just awesome.

All right, my rebellious friends, that is it for today. 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](http://rebelrunnerroadmap.com) to join. I'd love to be a part of your journey.