

Ep #213: The Adventures of Four Rebels



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With Your Host

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, I've got a very special treat for you this week. You are going to hear from four Rebel Runner Roadmap graduates on how things have been going for them since they took the class. And their stories are all different and all super inspirational. I'm hoping you hear something in their stories that inspires you.

And, of course, I would love to have you join the upcoming round of the Roadmap because it might be you that I'm talking to on the podcast in a few months. How much fun would that be?

Okay, without further ado I'm going to dive in. We're going to talk to the Rebels and I'll catch up with you at the end of the show.

Jill: So, Rebels, I am here right now with Rachel Hart, who is a Not Your Average Runner ambassador, she's been a member of my coaching programs for many years. And Rachel, I'm so excited to chat with you. How are you doing today?

Rachel: Thanks Jill, I'm so excited to be here. I'm doing really well, I'm in the midst of training with a bunch of other Rebels so it's great to be able to talk about how I got to this point with you today.

Jill: Oh, so fun because you have become an extremely accomplished runner in the time that I've known you. But let's take it back a little bit, how

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long have you been a runner? When did you start? What did that look like for you?

Rachel: Okay, I think I started just running for exercise in the late 90s.

Jill: Oh my gosh.

Rachel: Yeah, going way back.

Jill: Yeah.

Rachel: But the fun thing is some of my current gear looks like it came from the same time period because those colors are back. So I started running then but was very on and off again. Dealt with a lot of injuries, not major ones, but minor. And would sort of go to it seasonally and then stop. So that was before I joined the Rebel Runner Roadmap and figured out what was getting in my way.

Jill: Yeah.

Rachel: And why I was stopping so often.

Jill: And wait, I didn't realized that you had been injured a lot before. Because I don't think you've had a single injury in the time that we've worked together.

Rachel: No, I haven't because I ended up having surgery on both of my ankles.

Jill: Oh my goodness.

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Rachel: I had what was considered to be loose ligaments and so I would constantly twist my ankles and it just seemed like normal to me and it was a part of like if I'm going to be active it's going to happen. But I got really good medical help and it totally healed.

And it was at the point the I decided I wanted to join Not Your Average Runner through listening to your podcast, and the Rebel Runner Roadmap so that I could come back to it stronger than I'd ever been.

Jill: That's amazing. And I think because a lot of people think like, "Oh, once I've had surgery on my ankles or surgery on my knees, that's it for me." But you actually had surgery and then it made things better.

Rachel: Completely, yes.

Jill: That's so fun. So tell me a little bit about like what are you training for now? What does running look like for you now? Because, I mean, I know that you've got some pretty amazing things going on. But I think everybody would love to know what you're doing right now.

Rachel: Sure. Well, I'm in the midst of training for a trail Ragnar with a bunch of other Not Your Average Runners, including you, which is so exciting. And so to be able to have the community of those teams and sort of the accountability is a big part of what I've gotten out of it.

I'm also training for a 12 hour race, which is also on a trail. But I've been doing half marathons recently and 10Ks, those are sort of the distances I have been working on lately.

Jill: Oh, I love this. So this Ragnar in September is going to be your second trail Ragnar this year, right?

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Rachel: Yes. Yes, because I did one in Michigan earlier this summer with some other women from the group who just reached out and wanted to have another team. So I got to drive there, it was close enough for me to drive and meet some other friends from this community and run those trails together, and also learn more about their stories and their goals and everything. So it's kind of built my running community like a thousand fold since I joined.

Jill: I love that so much too. So you're in a pretty rural area, would you say?

Rachel: Yeah, exactly.

Jill: And I think when you don't live in a major metropolitan or even a major suburban area it's kind of hard to find running buddies. And so that community becomes super important.

Rachel: Right. I will add, though, that being with your group has helped build my confidence enough that I actually have connected with some local runners as well, which I would have avoided before. And that's a part of the skills that you taught in the Roadmap that helped me deal with like, I don't need to worry about their opinions, I can focus on what I need to do, they can focus on what they need to do, and we can all have fun together.

Jill: Yeah.

Rachel: So I have some local running friends too. But yes, I'm in an area where there aren't as many people and there aren't as many opportunities. So it's like grown and grown over the time that I've been involved.

Jill: I love that so much. And I love that you said that you now have the confidence to reach out to people that maybe you wouldn't have had the confidence to reach out to before. And then what happens, because I think

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we often are like, “Oh, they're going to judge me. They're much more advanced than me,” or whatever bullshit story we want to create. And in reality, they're just like, “Oh my gosh, you're a runner too? Yay! Are we best friends now?”

Rachel: Right, yeah.

Jill: Yeah, it's so fun when that happens. So what's it been like to, because I know some of those local friends you've actually met online and now – We have a weirdly large number of people from Wisconsin in our group. So what has it been like to kind of get to know people online through the Roadmap and then meet them in person and realize like, “Oh, there's a human, there's a person I can touch on the end of this.”

Rachel: Right. Well, I think it just kind of reinforces how real it is. Because it just shows that this is another person with their own individual goals, and needs, and running challenges or running accomplishments. And it just makes it that much more real to then be able to meet one another in person.

And I think it just shows me, it has shown me how different we all are and how much you and the other coaches have helped each one of us with our own individual stuff.

Jill: Yeah, that's so good.

Rachel: It's like, oh cool, we're here and we're the same because of this group, but we're so different too and that all can be embraced.

Jill: Yeah, for sure. Oh, I love that. I love that. So let's think back to when you were planning to join in the first place. What were some of the things about the Roadmap that got you to say like, “Oh yeah, that's the thing for

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me”? What was it that that said to you, “I need to join this merry band of crazies”?

Rachel: Well, mainly a lot of swearing. So I like that. No, that is a big draw for me. But I think there's a few things. So being able to focus on fundamental things like, am I using the right gait for me to avoid re injuring myself? And how do I adjust so that I feel like I can manage my other health – I have asthma too, so that becomes a challenge.

And that was one of the things that prevented me from trying to connect with other people before because I was really embarrassed about it because I was pushing myself too hard to run comfortably and efficiently with my asthma. And now I've figured out intervals that help me do that.

But then also, the main thing, the biggest shining star is the thought work and dealing with how my brain and maybe false beliefs and thoughts get in the way of being the runner that I want to be and accomplishing what I want to accomplish.

And my professional life is as a mental health counselor and I've focused on mindfulness a lot and it all just connects for me. It all makes sense because it's so connected with all that I focus on as a counselor too.

Jill: Oh gosh, I love that so much. And really a lot of the work that we do in the Rebel Runner Roadmap, a lot of the mindset work that we do is sort of rooted in cognitive behavioral therapy. And so I just love that you said that because I've talked to therapists who have said, “Oh yeah, that makes a lot of sense. That's very similar to what I teach my clients or my patients.”

Rachel: Yeah.

Jill: Oh, that's super fun.

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Rachel: Yeah, so that's really the biggest thing. And I think because there are so many ups and downs with physical running, or the season, or events, and we all know like things being canceled. So the way we think about all that is really the key because all that is still going to happen, we can't control all of that.

Jill: Yeah, and I think especially for the not so average runner, you know, a lot of people come to the Rebel Runner Roadmap thinking that the deck is stacked against them, like, well, I'm fat, or I'm older, or I'm slow, or I'm not athletic, or what have you. And then the mental work that we do helps people see like, "Oh, no, those are just your circumstances." And how you think about it determines all the types of results that you're going to get. I love that.

So okay, one more question for you. If you had to give one piece of advice to somebody who's thinking about joining the Roadmap and is not sure how to get the most out of it, what would that be?

Rachel: I would say to really invest in it. Not just the money that you invest, because you're totally going to get every penny is worth of that. But just make it a priority so that you can figure out what it is that's getting in your own way. Or figure out what it is that's going to help you meet your goals and accomplish what you're there to do.

Putting it number one on your list and putting it in your calendar. So you can get there and do the coaching calls and talk to everybody or listen to the recordings if you can't and make the time to make that happen.

Jill: Yeah, I love that because it is, yes, for sure it's an actually fairly small investment financially. But it is a time investment because every week there are lessons to watch on the website. And then, of course, either coming live to the coaching call or watching the recording. And then there's the running, right? There's the running piece.

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So it's definitely investing the time in yourself means that you will get the most out of the class. And I think also investing the time and connecting with the community, because so many of our Run Your Best Life members met each other when they took the Roadmap together. And now they're kind of good friends and running buddies.

And it's just so much fun to watch. Every time we do another round of the Roadmap I always think like, "I wonder who the besties are going to be this time. I wonder who's going to meet each other that didn't know each other before. And what friendships are going to develop."

But okay, well, thank you so much, Rachel, for joining me today and talking about your experience because I love the obstacles that you've overcome and how beautifully you've overcome them. And it's just a pleasure to watch how much running you do and how adventurous you are with it. So I just I appreciate your time today. Thank you so much.

Rachel: Thanks, Jill. I'm glad I get to share it. I'm glad I get to be a part of it.

Jill: Awesome. Me too.

Jill: All right, Rebels, I am here with the one and only Sarah Clermont and we are going to talk all about how the Roadmap has transformed her as a runner and what it's like to be a Canadian runner in the wilderness of Canada.

Sarah: A lot of lights.

Jill: So, Sarah, thank you for joining me. So yeah, some of your running adventures make me laugh. The pictures that I see you post of what you

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see out on your runs. But let's take it back a little bit. So how long have you been a runner?

Sarah: I started running in February 2020, so only about a year and a half.

Jill: Okay.

Sarah: Right before the world shut down.

Jill: Oh my gosh. That's good timing, right?

Sarah: I mean, I had time to focus on it, so that was good.

Jill: Yeah, for sure. Okay, so you really have been a runner for – Yeah, so you said about a year and a half and you actually started running with the Roadmap, is that correct?

Sarah: Sort of.

Jill: Okay.

Sarah: So I started with Couch to 5K and I was about three weeks into that program when I signed up for the Rebel Runner Roadmap because I was getting to a point where I thought, "There is no way I'm that I'm going to be able to keep this trajectory. I am dying."

And also, I didn't know anything about running. When I first started running, I literally was wearing like winter hiking boots, and all of the cotton, and a coat.

Jill: Oh my gosh. No, wait, stop, stop, stop, stop. I did not know this. You were running in hiking boots and like a coat, a winter coat. I love this.

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Sarah: Yeah, or like two giant hoodies. Which sometimes I will still do actually.

Jill: Yeah.

Sarah: But, yeah, I did not know anything about what kind of gear you needed. I don't think you really need the gear; it really is about what makes it more easy and enjoyable. So yeah, I really came to the Roadmap knowing nothing. So literally everything, I was just like soaking up all the information.

Jill: So okay, so you went through the Roadmap. And let's fast forward to today, because you went from not being a runner, to starting to run, and then you join the Roadmap. And now you've got some pretty amazing things that you're working on.

Sarah: Yeah, in six weeks I will be doing 13.1 miles.

Jill: Yay!

Sarah: So the New Jersey half was canceled, but a bunch of us are hopefully going to do it in Rhode Island, as long as the border opens. And if I don't do it in Rhode Island with my Rebel friends, then I'll be doing it right here in Magnetawan, Canada.

Jill: Magnetawan, Canada. I love that.

So okay, so you've basically gone from zero to half marathon in about 18 months. That's amazing. That's a really amazing accomplishment.

Sarah: Yeah, it's really cool. Actually, the best part I think right now of the training plan is that every two weeks I'm planning a PR for new distance.

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Jill: Of course.

Sarah: So it feels like there's such momentum.

Jill: Yeah. So fun. So, let's dial it back a little bit. So you did a few weeks of the Couch to 5K and realized that that wasn't going to work for you. And then the Roadmap came along at what sounds like the perfect time.

So when you think about where your mind was at when you joined, what was it about the Roadmap that interested you and made you think like, "Oh, this is the program for me"?

Sarah: For me, I love that it actually was a whole plethora of information. I didn't just want to know how I should move my body. I wanted to know how I should take care of my body beyond moving. I wanted to know what should I be wearing? How should I be breathing?

Because that's something that we take pretty for granted in our everyday life. We don't think about how we're breathing. But when you're running, you're like, "Oh my god, how do you do this again?"

Jill: Yeah.

Sarah: So really, I really wanted to know all of the pillars. I wanted to know when I was feeling crappy about myself and I didn't think that I deserved to be out there in bright colors rocking the world, that I wanted to be not seen in the dark Highway in Northern Ontario that probably wasn't safe. So to know that I could do that.

And the strength training. To be honest, one of the things that I remember the most about the first time I did the Roadmap was the fact that you actually are the person who's doing the strength training videos. So that

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told me that if somebody in your body can do it, then my body can do it. It wasn't somebody with like a six pack of abs and crazy biceps doing something that my body was supposed to do.

Jill: Yeah. Right.

Sarah: So it really was empowering to me.

Jill: Yeah. Oh, I love that so much because that is true. The strength training videos, it's not some stuff that I pulled off the internet, right? It's literally me in those videos teaching you the moves to do. And yeah, I definitely do not have the typical runner's body.

So okay, so that's so cool that – And everybody that I've talked to about the Roadmap has a different favorite thing. And I love that your favorite thing was the strength training part. Because that's for sure something that most runners neglect, is the strength training. And I know that – Were you doing strength training before you joined the Roadmap? Or was it kind of a new thing when you joined?

Sarah: No, when I started running, I literally was just starting to exercise period.

Jill: Okay.

Sarah: So I went from literally driving in my car to the store behind my house to actually running. And now going for a half marathon, in a year and a half.

Jill: Yeah, that's an incredible transformation. It really is, let's just take a moment to kind of like celebrate what you've accomplished in the past year and a half.

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Sarah: I have so many amazing people backing me. And when I can't believe in myself, there's so many people that do, how can I not believe them?

Jill: I love that. And I think that's another amazing thing about the Roadmap, is the community for sure. Because you live in a very rural area, right?

Sarah: We're very tiny.

Jill: Very tiny, and so I think that's one of the challenges for somebody who lives in a rural area is, "Okay, how do I find running friends?" And how many running friends would you say you have now online?

Sarah: Oh, honestly, I literally couldn't count.

Jill: Yeah.

Sarah: In real life I have run with one person one time ever, in the last 18 months. But I regularly run virtually with my friends online. Like we will message each other while we're going, we'll send videos. And Covid has been a time that has felt very isolating for a lot of people, especially people in very remote areas or less populated areas like I'm at.

So it has really allowed me to connect with people of a like mind in a way that I never would have guessed before. Like, this is very weird, I'm going to go to another country to see people I haven't met. This is something you tell your children not to do. But this is something that I just feel like deep, deep, deep within me is the right thing. These are my people.

Jill: Yeah, and that's one thing that I loved watching, at least this particular year, is when we were talking, because I think I posted something – The

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race is supposed to be about 45 minutes from my house. And I posted something like, "Oh, I'm going to do this race." And you're like, "Oh my gosh, I want to do this race."

And next thing I knew, there were just all these women from our coaching program that were just going to converge on Asbury Park, New Jersey to do this race together. And most of them had never met before. And you're all like renting this huge house, and it's just been so super fun to watch.

And it totally sucks that the race got canceled, but I love that you're taking the spirit of that and you're like, "Okay, fine, we're just going to go run it. We're going to go to Rhode Island and run it." And by the way, you know you're going to be about like 20 minutes from my sister's house, where you're running it.

Sarah: Wow.

Jill: I was just up there last week and I'm like, that's so random that you're going to be running up there.

So I'd love to kind of talk to you about when you first joined the Roadmap, what was it like to interact with the coaches that are in the group? Did you feel like intimidated, like, "Oh my gosh, running coaches?" Or were you like, "Oh, these running coaches, they get me. I can relate to them." What did that feel like for you?

Sarah: For me, it felt very natural, I had been listening to the podcast for a very short while. And I am kind of a crazy person and I have to listen to things from the very beginning. So I was years behind and just kept going and kept going. But I just felt like this connection to the way that you interact and the way that you view things.

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It felt very connected to the way that I feel about things. I have been saying for years that what somebody else thinks of you isn't your business, and I thought, "Oh my god, that's a real thing?"

Jill: I love that.

Sarah: And so I just think the thought work is so incredibly powerful. And just the empowering bit and knowing that there was other people like me, that had this thought that they could be crazy and go outside and be seen by other human beings exerting themselves in a physical manner.

Jill: Right, you're like, "What? I'm allowed to do that in public?"

Sarah: Yeah, and enjoy it. That's the thing, like every time that I would be done with my run, I'd be like grinning from ear to ear. And I didn't have any hecklers in Magnetawan, Ontario. I had coyotes and deer, I had a lot of people that would drive by and smile, or give me a thumbs up, or wave. I didn't have any negativity at all.

Jill: Isn't it amazing how much we imagine all of these terrible things are going to happen, and then we go and do it and none of it comes true? And it's like, "Oh, maybe I was wrong about that. Maybe really nobody's judging me because they're so busy judging themselves."

Sarah: I think we kind of maybe think that people care too much about us. Because the real truth is we're kind of insignificant to most people.

Jill: Exactly, exactly.

Sarah: And that is a sad thing to say in some ways, but it's also incredibly freeing.

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Jill: Yes, it really is. It really, really is. Okay, I absolutely love that.

So what do you think, if you had to sum up the greatest benefit that you've received from joining the Roadmap, what would that be?

Sarah: I would have to say the community. Honestly, just the people that I have met that have such beautiful hearts and people of every background all over the United States, and Canada, and New Zealand. And lots of people. And just to know that we all actually have exactly the same problems. We all have exactly the same bullshit thoughts about ourselves.

We all go through the same drama in our heads. We all get irritated with our spouses. We all have troubles with the dishes. We all think, "Oh my god, there's no way that I can possibly do that distance." We all maybe don't eat the best and then regret it when we're running.

We all go through those exact same things and to know that you're part of a sisterhood that's way bigger than yourself is incredible.

Jill: Oh, I love that. Because I think that one beautiful thing about our community is that everybody's pretty real and honest with their life, right? Nobody's like, "Look at me, how perfect I am." Everybody is just super upfront and real. and that leads to really productive conversations and really deeper connections. So I love that you said community.

Sarah: I think it's a vulnerability that I wouldn't have really expected to be available to me in an online forum.

Jill: Oh my gosh.

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Sarah: It just creates this intense relationship with people when you feel like – We often joke that Run Your Best Life is the place where TMI goes to die. There's a reason for that, because we have all gone through stuff.

We have talked regularly about bathroom issues, and feeling nauseous, and injuries, and everything, what kind of underwear, if you should wear underwear at all, what kind of bra? What about chafing under your boobs? We've talked about it all.

Jill: Yeah, we have and there's no like, “Oh, I'm so embarrassed to say this.” It's like, “Well, it happened to me.” And, yeah, it's just like such a freeing, open, honest place. And a very safe place. Because I do say what happens in that Facebook group stays in that Facebook group. People are super respectful of that.

Because it's just like, some of the stories are funny too, you're like, “Oh my God, I can't believe that happened to you.” And then you think, “Oh, wow. All right, I'm going to file that away in case it happens to me someday.”

Sarah: And that's exactly it, so every time that I have had a question about anything I have had no concerns posting it. Because I know that I am not some crazy unicorn who has been the only human being to ever, ever experience this. There's so many experienced women, I feel like not only do we get a coach, we get several coaches. But we also get the experience of all these women.

Jill: Yeah, exactly.

Sarah: That's years and years and years of experience.

Jill: It is, like literally thousands of years probably, by this point.

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Sarah: Yes.

Jill: And I don't think I've ever seen a question posted where nobody else had ever had that problem. I don't think there's ever been a time where somebody said, "This happened to me, does anybody know what I'm talking about?" And there was crickets, because there's always somebody who's like, "Yep, happened to me, happened to my friend. Here's what you can do about it." It's so powerful.

Sarah: Yeah, and that's the thing, it's not just reading what's going on. It's how do you get solutions for these issues. And solutions of so many different varieties.

I had an injury and was looking for a compression sleeve for my big, powerful knee and thigh, and could not find anything that would fit. And somebody told me about KT tape and I was like, "Oh my god."

I had tried so many different things and other people in similar bodies to me understand the complexities and trying to solve issues at a certain size. I can't go to Walmart and buy a compression sleeve for these thighs, it doesn't work.

Jill: They're too powerful.

Sarah: That's right. But KT tape, worth its weight in gold.

Jill: Yeah. Right? So fun. So fun. Okay, so let me just ask you one final question real quick. If somebody called you up and said, "What's the main reason that I should join the Rebel Runner Roadmap?" What would you tell them?

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Sarah: Because you will get to see what you're actually capable of when there's a whole group of people that believe in you the way that you should believe in yourself.

Jill: Aw, I'm going to steal that for our marketing, that's so good. That's so good.

Oh my gosh, well, it has been my honor to watch you evolve as a runner over the past 18 months. And I'm kind of blown away by all you've accomplished, starting from zero and just really – You've committed so hard to yourself that you've just kind of blossomed. The possibility that you see in yourself now is just kind of amazing to me.

So, again, it's been my honor to be a part of that journey. And if anybody's on the fence about whether they should join the Rebel Runner Roadmap or not, if you join, you get to meet Sarah.

Sarah: That's true.

Jill: You get to see all of her gloriousness because she's kind of a badass. So thank you so much for joining me today. It's always a pleasure when we get to connect. And I'm sorry that we're going to miss each other in October, but I'm sure there will be another event very soon.

Sarah: One day, it can't last forever.

Jill: Yeah, I'm cooking something up for Alaska. So stay tuned for that.

Sarah: That would be so cool.

Jill: I know, right? Stay tuned. All right, thanks again. It has been my absolute pleasure.

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Sarah: Thank you, Jill.

Jill: All right, my Rebels. I am here now with the one and only Bethany Shields. And Bethany has been a runner for quite some time. She's been a client of the Not Your Average Runner community for quite a while. She's also a Not Your Average Runner ambassador. And so we're here to kind of like dive into what running is like for her and how amazing she is.

So thanks for joining me, Bethany.

Bethany: Thanks so much for having me, Jill.

Jill: Yay. So let's take everyone back to before the Roadmap, because you were a runner when we first started working together. You were already a runner. So can you talk about what that experience was like for you when you first started?

Bethany: Sure, I started a health journey in 2016. So almost about five years ago, because that was around, I feel like in the spring of 2016. And I decided I was going to start getting fit. And I was working out at the gym.

And when I got comfortable, and I had a long storied history with exercise and working out at the gym. But once I started getting comfortable working out at the gym again I decided I was going to try to run. Something brand new and exciting.

So I started off with the Couch to 5K program in 2016. And I would say that I had a love hate relationship with running. Because I loved that I would eventually progress when I was doing it. But it was also very frustrating to

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me that as I got to longer intervals of running, it was harder and it took me longer to get through the process than your average runner might take.

So, yeah, I did my first 5K in 2016. And then I signed up for a few 5K's after that. But I didn't realize that training was something that you do. I thought that you just ran. You learned to run the 5K and then you just ran whenever. Which isn't really a thing.

Jill: I love this, I had no idea.

Bethany: The point is probably to become consistent with that training and maintain that. But I had no idea, new to fitness. So, yeah.

Jill: And actually, let's take a moment because I think that's a pretty common thing, that people are like – I've had all kinds of stories, I've had people come to me to say, "I'm training to run a half marathon. So I'm running a half marathon every weekend until the race." And I'm like, "Do you have any pain right now?" "Yeah, actually, I feel like I'm always in pain." I'm like, "Let's not do that."

Bethany: Right.

Jill: And then there's other people that come in and they're like, "Okay, I trained myself to run a 5K, so now like once every three months I go out and I run a 5K. And I don't run in between." It kind of runs the gamut when you don't necessarily have a coach or any kind of professional helping you

Okay, so you were like running the occasional 5K?

Bethany: Exactly.

Jill: And then what? And then what happened?

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Bethany: Yeah, so like the first one, I loved it. I maintained running for a while and then life got busy and I kind of fell off the wagon. And I continued strength training, but I wasn't consistent with running. So every time I tried to run a 5K, it felt like death. Because I also didn't realize that there's different paces that you can run. It's not just a sprint or walking, since I have learned.

Jill: Yes.

Bethany: But yeah, so that was kind of where I started out before I found the Roadmap.

Jill: I love that. There's like a whole spectrum of paces in between leisurely walk and all out sprint. But a lot of new runners think that that's what it's got to be, either I'm just walking or I'm running for my life.

Bethany: Yes.

Jill: And neither of those really feels good in a race at all.

Okay, so you were kind of like struggling to sort of find your stride, no pun intended. And then you joined the Roadmap. What brought you to join the Roadmap? When you were contemplating, "Should I sign up for this program or not?" Like what was going through your mind?

Bethany: At that point in time I was working pretty hardcore with strength training with a personal trainer. And once I was like pretty consistent with that, I was like, "I could probably start running again." Because I enjoyed that to a point. So I'm like, "It might be fun to try that out again."

And around that time I had found your podcast and I gobbled that right up. I listened to all the episodes and I was like, "Oh, what is this interval

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running?” I learned all these really interesting things that I never knew about. I mean, I knew Couch to 5K was interval running, but I didn't realize that it was an approach to use to train.

Jill: Right, right. Yeah, I think that's a confusion that people have, because the Couch to 5K kind of implies like, “Well, at the end you should be striving to run without stopping.” Whereas the run walk approach is just also something you can do, period. And you don't ever have to get to the point of running without stopping.

Bethany: Right. So because I had found my trainer before I found your podcast, I had started to work with him on running. And I was working on a goal with him to get myself to running a 5K all the way through without intervals. And that actually was pretty successful.

Jill: Yay!

Bethany: Thanks. And after that I was like trying to build up a little bit of mileage with him. But also at this time I had dove deep in your podcast and was really into this interval strategy. So once we got up to the five miler I was like, “Oh, so what if I tried some of these intervals that I keep hearing about as I start to increase distance?” And that's about the time that I found the Roadmap.

And it was a perfect fit because I was at a point where I was increasing my distance and I was learning about intervals. And that took me from 5K to a half. So it was awesome.

Jill: I love that. And so how many half marathons have you done so far?

Bethany: Two.

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Jill: This is amazing, right? The first one wasn't a fluke, you did another one.

Bethany: Yeah, I did another one within the same month.

Jill: Oh, my gosh, I love that.

So I think that it's interesting that we're talking about how you had been running and having a fair amount of success with running before you joined the Roadmap. Because a lot of folks say to me, "Well, I'm already a runner, so why should I join the Roadmap?" And I think you're a beautiful example of that.

What are some of the benefits that you've gotten out of joining what is essentially a beginner's running program, but you were not a beginner. However, you still got a lot of benefit out of it. So can you speak to that a little bit?

Bethany: Yeah, so I will say one of the first things that I really gravitated to with the Roadmap was this huge community and the fact that everyone is literally cheering everyone on, and cheering for their consistency, and high-fiving you on your ups, downs, all of the roller coaster in between. And you might be having the worst day in the history of your life, you wake up and go on Facebook and you see someone else had a really bad day and got out there and ran. So, "Oh, I'm going to go to."

So it's really like that community creates a lot of momentum, motivation, all of these feelings. So that was one of the major selling points to me. And one of the things that was really intriguing about the Roadmap, and the fact that it was – Not that it was just beginner runners, because there were runners at all levels, all shapes, and sizes, and all ages. So the community portion of that was like, super amazing.

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The other thing that I found really, really kind of got me interested in the Roadmap was the idea of thought work and how I could change my thoughts about running. How I could change the way that I envisioned myself as a person, as an athlete, as a human being. And it really helps manage your emotions and feelings, so that was amazing.

And it also, through the process of the Roadmap, it also solidified me being comfortable to have ownership of myself as someone who was a runner and an athlete. Because before that I just thought I was someone who would go out and run occasionally or someone who was trying to run rather than taking ownership of, “No, this is who I am and this is what I do.”

So all of those things were super great. And really, really helpful. And the group is like the best friends that you never knew you had. And I have such close friendships with so many of these women now, it's amazing. I never would have thought, it's amazing.

Jill: Yeah, that you've literally never even met in person.

Bethany: Right.

Jill: Yeah. And so I think the other thing that I want to highlight here is not only have you owned your own athleticism and kind of redefined your identity as an athlete, not somebody who's like, “Oh, I'm running as part of a fitness journey or part of a health journey.” Like, “I am a runner and that is just a big part of who I am. And I am an athlete.”

But you've also kind of taken another leap and even started a whole career based on a lot of your experiences. So I don't know if you want to share where this has led you.

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Bethany: Yeah, so actually, as I was training for my first half, I was probably like quarter marathon in, somewhere around that seven mile distance, somewhere in there. I decided that I was going to become certified as a nutrition coach and I was going to undergo that certification.

So I took that course and finished it during Covid. And then I decided that I was going to start a nutrition coaching business. So yeah, this has led me down a complete path of awesomeness that now I'm not only just a runner and an athlete, but also someone who coaches other people on how to be healthy women. So it's awesome.

Jill: I just love that. And I think that all starts when you own your own identity instead of saying like, "Oh, I'm just somebody who's trying to do this," you're like, "No, no. I am someone who does this." And then it just sort of blossoms from there.

Bethany: Yeah.

Jill: So I just think that's super fun that you've made that career shift and that you're kind of really pursuing your passion in that area.

So if somebody called you today and said, "I don't know, I'm on the fence about this Roadmap situation here. I don't know if I should join." What is the one thing that you want everybody to know about the Roadmap as they're making their decision?

Bethany: I would say if you are a person who has difficulty with self-motivation or has a lot of excuses with your exercise and consistency, the community of this group is so supportive, so nonjudgmental, and literally all you have to do is go to your feed in the morning and you will see, probably 40 people have already gone out on a run by 5am.

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Jill: Yeah.

Bethany: And suddenly your excuses don't seem so important anymore. And it's amazing because it's women of all ages, all sizes, all shapes, all walks of life and everyone's getting up, getting out, doing the damn thing. And if they're doing it, why can't you?

Jill: Yeah. And I love that you said that because the other piece of that is it's not always like rainbows and daisies. It's not like we're a bunch of people who are like, "Oh my god, I just had the most amazing run." Sometimes it's like, "Motherfucker, I did not want to get up and do my run today. But I knew all y'all were going to be out there running so I did it. And it sucks, but I'm done and I feel awesome now."

There's definitely a healthy dose of, "Hey, this wasn't easy and I did it anyway. And I'm glad I did, thanks for being there." Because when you say like, "Oh, everybody else has already got their run done," I want to make sure that people know that we're not like –

None of us are perfect, we show up in that group all in our beautiful imperfectness and still manage to get it done. And sometimes it looks exactly the way we want and sometimes it does not. And it's just everybody's there supporting everybody else. It's super fun like that.

Bethany: Yeah. And the other piece of that is you see women accomplishing some of the most amazing shit that you might not ever even think of.

Jill: Right.

Bethany: Like running a 50K or running for 24 hours in the middle of the night, or running three times a day training for Ragnar. So much amazing

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stuff. And it's like if these things are possible for other people, what is possible for you?

Jill: Yes, it really gets the wheels turning.

Bethany: Yeah.

Jill: So fun. All right, well, thank you so much, Bethany, for joining me today. And you guys, if you're interested in Bethany's nutrition coaching, we will have a link in the show notes to how you can get in contact with her. Or actually, Bethany, why don't you just tell us as well right now?

Bethany: Yeah, it's Be Better with Bethany, @bebetterwithBethany on Instagram and Facebook.

Jill: Awesome. So you guys, make sure you check her out. But yeah, it's always a pleasure when we get to chat. Thank you so much for joining me today.

Bethany: You're welcome, thanks so much for having me.

Jill: All right.

Jill: So I am here with the one and only Rebecca Wallenfelsz. And she is a Not Your Average Runner ambassador, but more importantly she's a longtime client of Not Your Average Runner. She's gone through the Roadmap. She's a member of Run Your Best Life. And what we're going to talk about today is kind of your experience as a runner and your journey.

So thanks for joining me, Rebecca. It's a delight to have you here.

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Rebecca: Thank you, it's wonderful to be here.

Jill: And, I mean, let's just dive right in. So how long have you been a runner?

Rebecca: I count myself a runner from when I joined the Roadmap the first time. Before that I would never have described myself as a runner. Even though I would do 5K's, I even did an 8K one time, one time. But until I joined the Roadmap, I would not have described myself as a runner.

Jill: Well, that's fascinating. So it's almost like you did running activities, but you didn't call yourself a runner. You joined the Roadmap, and then that became your identity, that you're a runner.

Rebecca: Yeah.

Jill: I love that. So talk to me a little bit about that shift. Because I think there are quite a few people who do come to the Roadmap and they're runners, and then there's just like a mental shift that happens during the class that sort of changes things for them. So can you say more about that?

Rebecca: Yeah. And it was two things that the Roadmap gave me that I really think shifted my thoughts. So one is that the way you teach running with the intervals. And you gave me the freedom to explore intervals. And I found an interval that really worked for my body, and I love intervals now. That I feel better when I run, like physically it feels better.

So that was one thing that changed, because before I would try to run the whole time and then just walk when I needed to. And then I would talk to myself like an asshole too about me stopping and judge myself about what I was capable of.

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And that was the second part I think that the Roadmap changed for me. It is how I describe myself and that shift really to having that identity as a runner. That a runner is someone who still can do intervals. And a runner is just someone who gets up and runs. They put on the training plan; they stop the excuses for why they don't run. And the Roadmap gave me that identity of a runner that I just really glommed onto and embraced.

And it was the mental work that we do in the Roadmap that really caused that shift.

Jill: I love that so much. I love that. Okay, so before the Roadmap you were doing 5K's, you did an 8K, you weren't calling yourself a runner. Let's forward fast forward to now. You took the Roadmap for the first time, what, about a year and a half ago?

Rebecca: Yeah.

Jill: It's been it's been a chunk of time.

Rebecca: Yes.

Jill: So what are you doing now with your running? What does it look like for you?

Rebecca: Let's see. So one, I run three days a week, and I have since the Roadmap. The only time I do not is when I was injured, smartly I didn't run. I had 10 weeks where I did not run, it was really hard. Actually, it was fascinating because it was really hard not to run during those 10 weeks.

Jill: Wow.

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Rebecca: And I do, and I still run three times a week. I don't always do all the miles on my training plan, but I always get out there, all three times. And it's that consistency that's been a big shift.

And even the fact that this morning, before this I was not a Monday morning person. I was someone who would lay in bed until the latest time possible on Mondays because I didn't like Mondays. And I wasn't a morning exerciser. And yet, this morning my alarm goes off at six o'clock, I get up. I have my morning routine. And I get out and I run five miles, with hills.

Jill: Oh my gosh.

Rebecca: That is an amazing shift, even when I think about it, in the time. Because before this, I would never have done that. And it would be because I would give in to my excuses for why that was hard. I would do it later. I've got busy work schedule. I don't have time for this.

And it's redirecting all of those thoughts to, "Why do I want to? What are the thoughts that are going to get me still up in the morning? What are the thoughts that are going to get me hitting the pavement and make me really enjoy being out there and running?"

And even this morning, even though the first mile was ugly, but once I'm out there I remember the joy that I feel of being outdoors, in the sunshine, breathing the fresh air and just feeling my body move and the beauty of that movement.

Jill: Oh gosh, I love that.

Rebecca: Yeah, it's just it's so special and it's given me a love of running. And so even on those mornings now when my feet are dragging and the

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coffee hasn't kicked in, I want that experience of joy. And sometimes it doesn't come until the end of the run. Sometimes it comes after the first mile, sometimes it comes after the second mile. But it's there and I know it's there.

Jill: I love that. So right now for you one of the big differences is running used to feel difficult. What would you describe – Before you took the Roadmap, how would you describe your experience of running?

Rebecca: It was something that I felt I should do. And when I would run it often didn't feel good in my body, like I would hurt.

Jill: Yeah.

Rebecca: And then I would judge myself and my fitness because it hurt. And I didn't spend time thinking about why I wanted to run or what joy I could find in running. I just felt like I should be a runner because runners were tall, thin, and athletic. All things I would want to be.

Jill: Yeah.

Rebecca: Because somehow running is going to make me taller, I'm like five two.

Jill: I was going to say, "I don't think you're a super tall person." That's so fun. You're like, "Magically running is going to make me grow five inches."

Rebecca: Yeah, and give me long, lean legs, right? Because that's what runners have, and if I run this what I'm going to become.

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Jill: Oh my gosh. All right, so before it was just kind of like a lot of obligation. And now it's more of a fun and sort of joyful experience for you it sounds like.

Rebecca: Yes. Yeah, yeah, it is much more joyful. I mean, and I have developed a passion for running and a love of running that my husband sometimes describes as a little bit cultish. But that's okay.

Jill: I've heard people say that, they're like, "Are you in charge of a cult?" I'm like, "No. No, not at all." Okay, let me let me ask you like a couple – Because you joined the Roadmap way back in the beginning of 2020 and at that time what was it about the concept of the class, or anything about it, that sort of spoke to you and you said, "Oh, that? I need that, I need to sign up for that." What were some of those features?

Rebecca: So I knew I needed something more than just me attempting it on my own. I'm a very do it yourselfer type of person. And so I did look at a couple of training plans, go out there and do it myself. But I knew I wasn't doing it all on my own. It wasn't getting me to where I want it to be.

And so when Covid hit and I spent my first week at home sitting in front of my computer for 12, 14 hours a day and not moving, I was like, "I got to do something else." Something that would get me up and to go outside, because getting outside was about the only activity that was permitted. I wanted something else.

And it was just at that moment you started talking about the Roadmap opening up now. And I was like, "Oh, that sounds like something I really could use right about now." And it was that deeper dive into both running form, but also the coaching and the access to the coaching that really sparked. I'm like, "I need something. I need something that is more than just me trying it on my own because me on my own, I'm not getting out the door."

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Jill: Yeah. Oh, I love that. And what I think is one of my favorite parts of the Roadmap is that fact that you have access to the coaching. And it's not like you've got a running coach breathing down your neck, but it's almost like you've got them on speed dial, right?

You can post a question in the Facebook group and just get an answer for me or one of the other coaches. You can come to a live call and get a question answered there. And actually, we can speak face to face. You can come to a Facebook Live, we do those in the group.

So I think there's like so many different options to get what you need. And it's kind of available sort of 24/7. You don't have to wait until, you know, "Oh, my coach is available Tuesday from 8 to 11am. And then I have to wait all the way till the next week if I want to talk to her." You've got access to people.

And you have like – Can you speak to the community a little bit? Because you're pretty active in the Roadmap community and I'd love to hear your thoughts on that.

Rebecca: Yeah. And, honestly, the community is one of the pluses that I hadn't anticipated when I joined the Roadmap. But just when you talked about coaching, seeing other people get coached is so powerful.

Because even at a time when I don't always feel like speaking out or asking a question, someone else does. And I hear them getting coached and I'm like, "Oh, that's so good." It impacts me. So I didn't even have to be brave and ask the question, I'm watching someone else do it.

But this community is so supportive. And just when I posted things in the Roadmap, or sometimes I didn't even feel comfortable posting at first, but just I would see other people's posts and I would comment and they would

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respond back to me. Having that interaction is so good because you feel a community. I mean there are people in there who are running their very first mile to people who are trying to do a marathon.

Jill: Yeah.

Rebecca: So the range is very big. But all of them support each other and are supportive of what they want to do and accomplish. And frankly I love the fact that we don't necessarily emphasize that you need to run at a certain pace or certain level of capacity in order to participate.

Jill: Yeah.

Rebecca: You can find such a big range, but such a group of people who, even if I say, "Look, they're so fast, they're so good. Look at what all they've accomplished," but they still cheer for me and where I was and where I started from, it's so beautiful.

Jill: Yeah, it is kind of a magic place. I do love it there.

Okay, so last question I have for you, if somebody asked you right now, "Why should I join the Rebel Runner Roadmap?" What's the one piece of advice, the one thing that you would tell them?

Rebecca: You will find a love of running that didn't likely exist before. And a community of people who have that same passion. And that community is so, so special.

Yeah, you get training, you get guidance for form, you get guidance on gear, you get all those things that you do from any kind of good training program. But the thought work that you get, the ability to really redirect how

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you talk to yourself about your fitness, your activity, not just for running but that's so good in life, it's life altering.

And having a community of like-minded people who are doing the exact same thing, I think is just so very, very special. Because that thought work is what makes this community, I think, such wonderful supporters of each other.

Jill: Yeah, I think you're right, because everybody in the community is there for each other. And even on days when I'm struggling, I'm like, "I'm going to go over to that Facebook group and see what people are doing because it'll inspire me."

And it's pretty amazing. I love that you used the word special, because I do think it's unusual and unique, and a very special place that we don't often find that in the world right now. And so it is really kind of that safe harbor for you to really be yourself and explore running and do it among people who get you. That's so good.

Rebecca: Right. Yeah, and even people who explore their challenges, their challenges in running, their challenges in life. And to hear the comments back and the support from other runners is just it's very powerful.

Jill: Yeah, this is so great. Well, thank you so much, Rebecca, for joining me today. It's been my pleasure to just kind of hear your side of things from what your experience has been like.

And if anybody's interested in learning more about Rebecca and her journey you can actually find, if you go onto our notyouraveragerunner.com website and look for meet the team, you can see Rebecca's profile on the ambassadors and find out how you could follow her.

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And of course, join the Rebel Runner Roadmap and you can actually talk to her.

Rebecca: I will be there.

Jill: She will be there; she takes it every single time. And you can do that at rebelrunnerroadmap.com.

So thanks again, Rebecca. It's been a pleasure.

Rebecca: Thanks, Jill.

All right, my friends. Was that not amazing? Are you ready to start running now? It is so much easier than you think. And once you get started my way, you will be amazed at how good you are at it.

So the next class starts on September 13th. You can get more details and sign up at rebelrunnerroadmap.com. That's rebelrunnerroadmap.com. It's also linked on my Instagram account, and it'll be in the show notes.

Okay, my rebellious friends, that's all 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 to join. I'd love to be a part of your journey.