

## Ep #221: Creating Epic Running Adventures with NYAR Ambassador Rachel Hart



### Full Episode Transcript

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, so I am back this week with another really amazing Not Your Average Runner ambassador, her name is Rachel Hart. I have been looking forward to this interview for, literally for months. And she's an adventurous sort, this one. And we're going to hear all about her amazing adventures. Without further ado, Rachel, thank you for joining me on the show.

Rachel: Thank you, Jill, it's fun to be here. And it's kind of amazing to be here too, because I never would have expected to be sharing with you on your amazing podcast.

Jill: I know, you never know where life is going to take you.

Rachel: Right.

Jill: And we just got to hang out in person a few weeks ago in Wisconsin for the Ragnar race. But you've led an incredibly adventurous life, the more I get to know you the more I'm like, "Oh, you did that too? Like, holy shit."

So I don't even know where to start. But I'm going to selfishly say can we start with the Pacific Crest Trail story because I think that's such an epic adventure. And I would love to hear all about it. Like, why you decided to do it. What it took to get there. What it was like on the trail, like that whole adventure. Just all the things. So I'm just going to shut the hell up and let you go.

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Rachel: All right. Well, yeah, so in 2013 I embarked on this backpacking trip a thru hike of the Pacific Crest Trail, which goes from Mexico to Canada, through California, Oregon, and Washington.

And before then, just to rewind a little bit and give some background, as a kid I camped and backpacked, I worked at a camp. But then I didn't do any of that until I moved to Wisconsin in 2008, moved back to Wisconsin from Minnesota. And I made a bunch of friends there and one of them, her name is Robin, her trail name is Toots McGoots. She asked me if I would like to go with her because she was planning to go and I said yeah, I would. And I think she was surprised.

And I was surprised. I surprised myself because at that point then I began kind of tidying up everything in my life, like selling my house and paring down all of my belongings so that they could be in storage or with my family. And then putting a notice at my job as a counselor and hitting the trail in April of that year.

And then we hiked from the border in California, north for as many miles as we could go and made it to Canada in October.

Jill: And it's how many miles again?

Rachel: Well, the trail itself is like 2,100 something miles. I think 2,165 miles and we hiked most of that on our four feet. But there's a little bit of debate about whether we thru hike the whole thing because there was a government shutdown that year.

So talk about a circumstance that's out of your control, right? Let's put this in one of your thought models. We were kicked off the trail at a certain point because it went through a National Park and the federal employees were

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not working because of the shutdown. So they didn't allow us to be there at that time.

So it was really right towards the end as we were in Washington almost to Canada. So we improvised and we drove to Canada and then we hiked down.

Jill: Oh, that's brilliant.

Rachel: Yeah.

Jill: I love that you're like, "Okay, this is the circumstance and here's what I'm going to do with it." That's so fun. So you still got all the miles in, it was just slightly different than you thought it was going to look like.

Rachel: Almost there are about 50 miles of the trail that I've never hiked. Someday I will.

Jill: Oh my gosh. Okay, do you have a plan to go back and just hike those 50 miles?

Rachel: I've had multiple plans and they haven't really worked out quite yet. But they will someday.

Jill: They will, they will.

Rachel: Yeah.

Jill: Okay, so like 2,000 miles in six months with nothing but the pack on your back, the clothes that you brought with you.

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Rachel: Yeah.

Jill: What was that like? Tell me all the emotions.

Rachel: It was surprising, I think, in terms of just how much I could do. We hiked on average 20 miles a day. And I did end up hiking fewer of those miles with Robin than I expected. We split up at a certain time because she was pushing herself to really go super ultra uber miles. She was doing 30 sometimes and I was comfortable with 20.

Jill: Yeah, that's still far.

Rachel: You know, "just 20."

Jill: Yeah.

Rachel: But this is like hiking from the morning until night, that's what you do. And you take breaks when you need to, and you explore, and take pictures, and enjoy this amazing wilderness where you wouldn't be if you weren't hiking with what you have on your back.

So, feelings, there's so many of them. Mostly I felt really grateful that I had that opportunity and I took it. So I was really proud of myself for doing it. And I turned 39 when I was on the trail, and at that point I think it's hard to really feel that sense of pride sometimes. You're kind of in the grind doing your thing, but not necessarily like pushing yourself in different new ways. And that certainly was pushing myself in a new different way.

It was overwhelming and scary sometimes. The heat in California and the water situation at times was a little scary. And it was just such a different

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lifestyle. We talked on the trail about that being real life and back at home was other life.

So it was like really just immersing yourself in that opportunity to live out in the woods and on the trail and take care of yourself out there and take care of the wilderness that you're in at the same time.

Jill: I mean, I'm just in awe of— I mean, I can't even put words to the quality that it takes to commit to something like that and then follow through. Because I'm sure there were times where you're like, “This is not super easy, I want to pull my phone out and just call an Uber.” Right?

Rachel: Right.

Jill: Can you tell me, did you have moments like that? You must have had moments like that. And can you say a little bit more about that? Like how did you keep yourself going?

Rachel: Well, and I should probably say too that I wasn't necessarily as well trained beforehand as you probably would want to be, and as I had wanted to be, because I was dealing with all those other things before we left.

But there was a time when I was hiking by myself in California, it was extremely hot, there were some bears that were getting too close to other backpackers, so I was freaked out about that. I had gigantic ants get into my food bag and chew into all the food bags. So I had to pick ants off of all my food so that I could eat it. Just a random assortment of weird outdoorsy experiences.

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But then I got to the end of that section where we would stop at a small town, take a break, met up with my friends. And it was okay, I was ready to keep going. But that was the main time that I really contemplated like, “Do I really want to keep doing this? Is this an experience that I want to fully commit myself to? Or am I fully committed to this?”

And I think it was important to ask myself that. Because then when I kept going, I was like, “Hey, this is what I'm choosing to do. And I'm going to make it work, it's going to be an experience that I'm going to always remember.”

Jill: Yeah, yeah. So you you basically had a point where you could have just said, “I've had enough of this experience so far. I'm going to call it at however many miles.” And chalked that up, because that's still pretty epic. Right?

Rachel: Right.

Jill: I would say, I mean for me, I love to hike. I'm not so much the kind of person that would want to go hiking and camping on my own. I'm okay to hike by myself if it's daylight, but I'm not like the camping overnight and stuff. So even to do that for a weekend, to me, seems like super epic.

So you could have called it at any point in time and people would have said, “Damn, she's a bad ass.” But you made that conscious decision to keep having the experience.

What were you hoping to get out of hiking 2000 miles? Because I think about the book, and the name is escaping me now. I know you know what I'm talking about. It's like Wilder or something like that.

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Rachel: Yeah, it's called Wild and it's about the Pacific Crest Trail. It's by Cheryl Strayed.

Jill: Oh, yes, that's it. So, I mean, she had her own reasons for doing it. But what called to you about hiking 2,000 miles?

Rachel: Well, I mean, I would not have started it on my own. So having a friend who was nudging me to do it was part of it. But also just to sort of reevaluate, "Okay, where am I right now in my life? And is this something that I can do? Is this something that I want to do?"

I was single, I had a great job, and owned a house. But I didn't have any kids, I had a cat at the time and she went to live with my parents. But I felt like, well, I'm not tied to some of the more traditional things that would prevent people my age from doing this. So it seemed like things were sort of lining up to point me in that direction too.

And before then, I had really only gone on a week-long backpacking trip as my farthest. And never consistently doing so many miles day after day. And we did take breaks, of course, within that time period that we were gone. But it's about having a goal and a destination, and you make your plan for the week, or for the time in between the stops. And we did it.

Jill: And you sold your house?

Rachel: Yeah.

Jill: So when you finished you literally had nothing specific to come back to.

Rachel: Mm-hmm, yeah.

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Jill: I have so many questions, but I want to know what it was like. First of all, when you finished that 2,000 miles, what was the prevailing emotion that you had?

Rachel: Well, I really just felt in awe of the kind of experiences that I had logged in such a short amount of time. All the different places that I saw, all of the different friends that I made. And I think that that's very similar to being a part of Run Your Best Life because we had a common factor, which was the thru hike. And there were a lot of other people that I met and then who had decided that they weren't going to continue or needed to stop for some health reason or injury. And so I saw that and the impact it had on other people that became really important to me, too.

Jill: Yeah.

Rachel: So I think, primarily, it was just like this is something that I decided I was going to do. And I, day after day and step after step made it happen. And I think that that's where that experience with the government shutdown could have really, really negatively impacted us and made us feel like, "This is not what I wanted, this is not the way it's supposed to be." You know, way you can respond to stressors like that.

And we didn't let it bring us down too much. It did for a while, but then we were able to reevaluate and think like, "Well, I guess we need to go back to Washington at some point."

Jill: Yeah. And so when it was all over, you finished that last step— Actually let me ask you this, where was the official end point for you?

Rachel: In a park in Canada.

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Jill: Okay.

Rachel: Yeah, there's a park there that you're supposed to hike north to.

Jill: Got it, okay. So you're there—

Rachel: The northern terminus of the trail has a big trail marker.

Jill: Oh, my gosh. And you're like, “Okay, this is it. We're done.”

Rachel: Yeah, it's like the finish line, essentially.

Jill: Yeah.

Rachel: To put it in runners' terms.

Jill: Right, exactly. So you cross the finish line, there's nobody there with a metal unfortunately.

Rachel Yeah, you have to pat yourself on the back.

Jill: Yeah, I guess so. And then what's next? Do you say, “Okay, that—”  
What was going through your mind and your heart when you took that very last step?

Rachel: I think there was fear at that point too, because it was like, “Okay, now what do I do?” And having focused so much on such a big goal for that long and that being the only thing you really have to worry about. To have to then shift your focus and think about, “Oh, what am I going to do for work now? What kind of position do I want to look for? Do I want to do something that's the same or do I want to branch out and do something different?”

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So it was kind of awkward to shift the attention. And there's sort of a post hike depression that can sort of set in too. And I think that's similar to running as well. Like you plan for a marathon or a big, fun event, or a vacation even, and then you get finished and you're like, "Okay, well, that was good. Now what?"

Jill: I know, right? It's super common, especially with half and full marathon. People are training for those distances because it does take so much of your time, and then when it's over, you're like, "What am I supposed to do now?" I think it does take a lot of deliberate consideration of, "Okay, what do I want to think and feel about this experience? Where do I want to put it? And then what do I want to do next?" And, yeah, I think it does take a lot of deliberate assessment and thought.

So, okay, but you were a runner before you hiked the PCT?

Rachel: Yeah, I've been running for many years, but just very recreationally. And, like I said, started then backpacking when I moved to Wisconsin in 2008. But I've been running just for exercise and on my own mostly.

I did do a full marathon once, I think it was in 2011. That was my only full marathon to this date. And some half marathons and 10Ks and things like that. But so I was running as well before that and before I became a part of Run Your Best Life.

Jill: And were you a trail runner before you hiked the PCT or did that come afterwards?

Rachel: Trail running came afterwards. And I think that it was a difficult shift because I was used to just taking my time and hiking with my pack on and

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everything else with my trekking poles. I don't typically run on trails with trekking poles, although some people do. And I've considered it since the last trail run that I did. But it took a little while to adjust to that.

Jill: I think you can make a case for them for sure.

Rachel: Yeah, definitely. And I don't know if others get the swollen hands like I do running, in especially long distances. But trekking poles prevent that a little bit because your hands are up more.

Jill: Yeah. Oh, that's so interesting. I hadn't noticed that when I run with poles, I don't get puffy fingers, but it's true. Yeah, because they're up more. And also, I think there's a little more pressure on your hands kind of making sure the fluid doesn't pool there. I did not know that, that's so interesting.

Rachel: Yeah, yeah.

Jill: So would you say now that you actually prefer trail running to road running?

Rachel: I really love trail running, yeah. And I love— Yes, I guess I should just answer your question directly. I love road running also, but I really love a lot of things about trail running, like, just so many different scenes and views. Everything is a little different depending on the season. And that's the same in most roads too.

It's especially true for me because I live in Wisconsin. So our seasonal changes are pretty significant. But I like running at night on trails, I think it's like yet another fun adventure and everything looks so different and sounds so different then too. So I'm a big fan of trail running now.

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Jill: Yeah. Would you ever consider running the Pacific Crest Trail?

Rachel: No.

Jill: No?

Rachel: People have done it. And actually, there's a new record set this year by somebody with the fastest known time or FKT to finish the whole trail.

Jill: Yeah?

Rachel: And they're actually from a small town close to here.

Jill: Oh my.

Rachel: I'm familiar with them, I don't know them really. But yeah, it's such a different experience.

Jill: But how long did it take? What is the FKT?

Rachel: I would have to look it up for you, I'm not sure what it is.

Jill: I think we need to find this out.

Rachel: Yeah, it's extremely fast.

Jill: I mean, 2,000 miles, even if you ran it as like a marathon a day, that's still what like 80 days or so? That's still like several months.

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Rachel: Yes. So here's the latest fastest known time, I think, from Timothy Olsen, 52 days, eight hours and 25 minutes.

Jill: I love that it's like, "Oh, and eight hours and 25 minutes." 52 days, so that's about 40 miles a day.

Rachel: Yeah.

Jill: Holy cow, it's like literally an ultramarathon a day without stopping.

Rachel: So pretty much just constant continual running, and then stopping for food and rest and then running again.

Jill: Oh my gosh. I think we should reach out to Dean Karnazes and be like, "Hey, this would be a great idea for you." Since he and I are friends now, I'll just text him and let him know we came up with that.

Rachel: Yeah, give him a call.

Jill: Okay, but just the idea of hiking the PCT at all, like even sections of it, it seems exciting but then when I think about the logistics I kind of get kind of overwhelmed. But you just dove right in. And I feel like you kind of do that with a lot of things in your life.

Like we had talked, I don't know, what was it like a month or two ago, you said, "Well, there's this trail marathon coming up soon. Do you think I have time to train for it?" And I think before I could even get the words out of my mouth you had already signed up for it. You're like, "Yeah, I'm just all in."

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Rachel: Yeah, and there's a lot that goes on behind the scenes and then I say those things and it sounds like I've just magically decided it's going to happen.

But that trail marathon that I am signed up for is on November 20th. And they kept talking about it, the organizers, but weren't posting it. It wasn't available to be signed up for. So I didn't know exactly when it was going to happen. But I knew we were doing the Ragnar. And then I had a six hour trail endurance run that I did two weekends ago now.

And I was trying to do the math of from Ragnar, to the six hour run, to a marathon, which this will only be the second time that I've completed that distance in my life in an organized way. I've hiked a lot of miles, but in a marathon. So yeah, I'm making it work. And thanks to your guidance doing it in a reasonable way, I think, that will help me do it without injury.

Jill: Yeah. Well, let's talk about your six hour endurance run. Because you probably covered close to a marathon during that time frame.

Rachel: I did. Yeah, it was 22 miles, maybe a little bit more than 22 miles. Which my goal was to go back and do more than last time, which was last year, I did 20.6 miles, I think or something like that. So I was able to, and I didn't feel as much fatigue and as much pain in my knees this time.

Jill: Nice.

Rachel: It was a very hilly route and while I was doing it I thought of something that I think you should talk about more, runner's amnesia. Where you do something and it's really hard and you get finished with it and you say, "Okay, great. I accomplished that." And then an hour later you're ready to sign up for it again.

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Jill: Yes.

Rachel: And I got back on this trail and realized like, this is hills, all hills. And I had completely, except for one of the hills I had completely forgotten.

Jill: Yeah.

Rachel: Just selective memory loss for that.

Jill: Fascinating.

Rachel: I guess I'm glad I did because it was a great experience again, and I got to do something and push myself in a different way. And also enjoyed it in a different way because I think I felt more prepared for it.

Jill: Yeah. Well, you'd had a couple years of really getting trail running under your belt. Because we did the Ragnar— So we did the Ragnar in 2019, was that your first experience with trail running? That can't have been.

Rachel: No, I had done some here and there, but not very much. It was kind of random.

Jill: Okay.

Rachel: Yeah, I did a 10K on a different trail run in Wisconsin. So then that and that whole team experience and being around different people for Ragnar really got me. And then I have done two Ragnars this year, the one a few weeks ago and one in Michigan.

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Jill: Yeah, so you're like kind of— Would you say you're sort of hooked on the Ragnar experience as well?

Rachel: Well, I like it. And that doesn't mean that's all I will do, but I really love how the team element of it is really positive in all of my experiences. And that's probably because the women that I did it with were all people I met through Not Your Average Runner.

Jill: Yeah, we have a really good group of women, I must say. Every Ragnar just seems to be more fun than the one before. Even though it was practically a nor'easter in the middle of this last one.

Jill: It was.

Jill: It was insane, just like the water just coming up through the floor of your tent. And you're like, “What is happening? Why is this happening?”

Rachel: Yeah, it was really insane. And it wasn't predicted in the forecast either. It was not meant to be that way.

Jill: It was fast and furious. So another thing that I'd kind of love to have you touch on is the fact that you did a lot of your athletic activities prior to a few years ago, you had some injuries or like some issues that you were dealing with in your feet. And that kind of— Well, I'll let you share. You had two kind of specific things going on.

And the reason I want to have you share that is because I know there are folks out there that think, “Well, I can't do this because I've got blah, blah, blah.” And I'd love to have you explain what you went through and how you fixed it.

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Rachel: Sure, yeah. So the big thing was that I had loose ligaments on both of my ankles. And I was dealing with that, probably my whole entire life. And I'd twist my ankle, and I'd sprain it, and I'd have to heal, and then I get back at it.

That happened while I was hiking the Pacific Crest Trail as well. And that was a moment where I was like, "Uh-oh, am I going to be okay?" And I figured out how to at least let it rest enough, wear a brace and keep going.

But I had surgeries on both of my ankles in like 2018 prior to joining Run Your Best Life. And while I was finishing the PCT I had also developed plantar fasciitis. I had to recover from that afterwards, and dealt with that throughout at least the second half of the trail.

And I'm so grateful for the medical care that I had. And it's like a whole different world now. I could do it before but I was not necessarily able to consistently do it because I was often so injured. And now joining has helped me to come back stronger because I know that I can get support and ask questions if there's anything going on. But also I've been able to really feel like I'm fit to do this because I've been able to address those issues.

Jill: Yeah, and I mean, it's a big decision to get surgery. Because we have one member that got surgery for bunions on both of her feet. And she was she was sort of crossing her fingers that she'd be able to run afterwards. And turns out she can and she's running much better now. But it's a big decision because you don't know. Like, "Okay, well I hope this makes it better." But sometimes things make it worse.

But I'm wondering if you had tried trail running with loose ankle ligaments before, you probably would have like just been twisting your ankle left,

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right, and center. So I'm glad that you didn't really start the trail running until after this.

Rachel: Yeah, well trail running is one of the main reasons why I pursued having my ankle surgeries because I did twist when on a training trail run and had a chip of the bone come off. So it was not going to heal itself at that point, but it would have just kept happening.

Jill: Yeah, oh my gosh. So, I mean, what advice would you give to somebody that has an injury or a condition that makes running difficult for them? What would you suggest for them as far as how to move forward with their desire to be a runner?

Rachel: Well, I would encourage them to seek out information, find out what's available, like what you can do. Because even for me just making sure I have the right shoes now, the right shoes for me makes running so much more fun and so much more comfortable so that I can do distances and not just feel like hell afterwards, you know?

Jill: Yeah.

Rachel: So I would say seek information. Don't just accept one opinion, especially if it's negative, or if it's limiting, or really judgmental. Because unfortunately, we encounter those things, especially because not everybody's a runner. And not everybody understands people who do want to continue running even if they have health issues.

Jill: Yeah.

Rachel: I have asthma too, so trying to work out how do I run and deal with my asthma and stuff has consistently been something I've worked on. And

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I've finally, with realizing you don't have to be fast. I don't have to be constantly trying to make myself faster, it's amazing that I can go my pace and enjoy it and put on the miles.

Jill: And I think recognizing that, especially if it's an injury, injuries happen. And runners and athletes, it's an expected part of your experience. Whether it's a twisted ankle or whether it's an overuse injury, it's totally normal.

And being willing to take the time off from running so that you can heal, so that you can address it means you get to come back stronger, like you did. Rather than just saying like, "I'm just going to force it. I'm just going to try and push through." And get hurt even worse.

Rachel: Right, and I think a lot of people have this false belief that running is supposed to hurt, it's supposed to just feel really bad. And I think that's so unfortunate because there's so much with stretching, and strength training, and flexibility, as well as just addressing issues that might be causing other issues. You know, when you overcompensate for one injury, you cause something else.

Jill: Yes, exactly.

Rachel: Yeah, I would encourage people to seek out coaching and talk to professionals. And just make sure you gather as much information as you can before you decide one way or another.

Jill: And like you said, getting a second opinion. Because I've talked to many doctors that have said to me, "You really shouldn't be running." And I'm just like, "Okay, you're just not my doctor."

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And I think, nothing against the medical profession, but I also think when you're a physician, whether you're an orthopedic surgeon or something else, and you see somebody that in your mind probably shouldn't be running, you're thinking, okay, if I tell them to go ahead and try and then they get hurt, they're going to come back on me. So I'm going to be as conservative as possible and just say, "Hey, you probably shouldn't be a runner."

So you kind of have to decide for yourself, do you want to keep— If you really want to do this then keep working until you find somebody who's going to work with you.

Rachel: Exactly, because there are so many solutions and ways of making it work for you. It doesn't have to just be one way.

Jill: Exactly. And I think the way we approach running in the Rebel Runner Roadmap and Run Your Best Life, which is to do the run walk method, it really helps a lot of people who have had chronic injuries run without re-injuring themselves. So it's just a powerful way to run and I wish more people would do it.

Okay, so your very first trail marathon is coming up in like four weeks or so, a little under a month.

Rachel: Yes, probably. That scares me to put it in those terms, but yes.

Jill: It's happening, it's happening. So how will you prepare for your race?

Rachel: Well, I've already done the training, and I've got one more long run, and then a plan to sort of taper down after that. But I think in terms of preparation has been going on for the last six months to a year.

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So I've figured out the fuel that works well for me, so I'll make sure I've got that. I'm going to do some journaling about it to make sure I'm in the right head space because there's a lot of pre-race jitters for me and anxiety for me about what am I doing? Why am I here? What is this all about? And then once I actually get started, I realize, "Oh, it's because it's fun and I like to be outdoors and doing this."

But prepare, I think really just making sure I try to focus on dealing with any little hiccups that come in a productive way, not letting them drag me down, which can also happen close to a race for me. I don't know, is that kind of what you're thinking in terms of race prep?

Jill: Yeah. I mean, I think everybody's rituals and how they get themselves ready in the days and weeks before a big event are different. So I was just curious what yours were.

And I mean, I love the idea of doing the journaling ahead of time so that you kind of get your mind in the right space. Because I think it's very easy to let fear just run amok in your brain and be like constantly refreshing the weather report and, "Oh my God, it's going to rain, it's going to be so cold." Or just what if this happens? What if that happens?

And I think the journaling can just sort of, you know, it's like we talked about when you made that decision on the PCT, deliberate decision, "Okay, this is the thing I'm going to do, I'm going to keep going." I think when you do that type of journaling before any big event, it requires you to bring some consciousness to your thinking so that you can choose the mindset that you want to have.

Because I just finished reading, and you may have read it too, the book Mindset by Carol Dweck, obviously, we just had it as our book club in Run

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Your Best Life. And she's got a whole chapter on athletes and the type of mental preparation they do and how all of these like pro athletes, all of these Olympic athletes, just like world renowned talent all agreed that talent is such a tiny little part of it and mindset is everything.

Rachel: Right, right. Yeah, and I think that not allowing negative thoughts about the way one training run or another goes between now and then is really important. And making sure to try to keep everything in perspective, to not let certain circumstances really get me bogged down, like checking the weather.

Jill: Yeah.

Rachel: The race I'm running is a loop run as well, so I'll run four longer loops and then two shorter loops.

Jill: Okay.

Rachel: So I can have gear and food and stuff at the point where we continue.

Jill: Oh, that's perfect.

Rachel: And that will help with any anxiety about like what if I need a jacket? What if it is raining? What if it's snowing? What if, who knows what's going to be happening.

Jill: Yeah. Right, because you know you're only a few miles away from your gear.

Rachel: Exactly.

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Jill: So that's perfect. I love that.

Rachel: Yeah, and I don't necessarily have to carry every last thing with me, but I can be prepared for it. And that's something that backpackers, at least those that I know, have talked about is like you pack your fears.

So if your fear is that you're going to run out of water, you'll over pack water, which is really heavy. Or that you're going to run out of food, you'll pack too much food. Or that you'll be cold then you'll over pack layers. So trying to make sure you're not running with carrying too many fears around with you too.

Jill: I absolutely love that. That's it, don't pack your fears in your hydration pack.

Rachel: Exactly.

Jill: That's so cool. That's so good. So okay, so before we close out today, I'd love to know, I want to talk about the Rebel Runner Roadmap, which is the 30 day training course that we do a few times a year. For anybody who's thinking, "Okay, maybe I want to be a runner someday," or "I'm already a runner. I love running." What advice would you give to somebody who's thinking about joining the Rebel Runner Roadmap?

Rachel: I think it's the best possible thing you can try if you're even just considering it. Because it does introduce this whole new running community and new perspectives on dealing with some of the, you know, maybe as an experienced runner you've hit these different roadblocks that tend to then derail you for a while before you can get back into it.

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Or if your experience is seasonally doing runs and then taking a big break but you don't necessarily want to have that sort of consistency anymore, you want to be a more consistent runner throughout the year. Then to have a plan and this kind of framework to help you continually reevaluate your goals, that's been really helpful for me.

Jill: Yeah. Yeah, we do so much mental work in that course. It's really, it's really— I don't want to say it's intense, but it's like the tools are there for you to go as deep as you want to into your mindset and into your thinking.

Rachel: Right.

Jill: So good.

Rachel: Well, and sometimes the tools and the thought work isn't necessarily deep or intense, but simple and eye opening to realize that one phrase that you've been saying to yourself is really holding you back from being more confident about it.

Jill: Yeah. Do you have an example of that? Because you've kind of had a little bit of an evolution personally over the past few months as you've become an ambassador. And so has thought work helped you through that?

Rachel: Definitely. Well, my probably biggest example, or at least the one that I've had to deal with the most would be my asthma, and breathing and pacing, and running with other people. I would never really want to do that before. I got very much in my head when I did it. I felt self-conscious and worried about what other people might be thinking.

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And the thought work helped me just put that away. I don't need to pack that fear, I can leave it. And I can focus on just what I need to do. And if that means it's a lot slower than other people, big deal.

Jill: Yeah.

Rachel: And if they don't like it, that's their problem. But typically, nobody else cares and they're supportive and everybody's good. But in your mind that thought work needs to go to that to say like, "Why are you worrying about what they might think?"

Jill: Yeah, it's amazing. I've never been on a group run where somebody got angry with me for being slower. Either they say, "Hey, I'm going to run ahead," or they say, "Oh, you know what, I'm happy to run your pace." It's never like them running 10 feet ahead going, "Come on, come on. Come on." That's never happened.

Rachel: Yes, and I think more likely it's going to be that they'll say, "Oh, I'll run with you. That's cool." But then in my head I'm thinking I'm holding them back. I'm forcing them to run slower. Well, they made the choice. They know what my pace is. So realizing don't get caught up in those thoughts spirals that really just aren't helpful at all.

Jill: Yeah. Yeah, I love that. Oh, I'm so glad that that's where you took your thought work. Because I do think it's a pretty common concern that new runners have. They want to be able to go run with other people, but then they think, "Oh, I'm going to be too slow." And guess what? There's a lot of ways to work it out. So good.

All right. Okay, this has been an amazing conversation. I'm so glad that I got to hear more about your adventures. And I want to make sure that

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people know where they can follow you. So how can people find you on the interwebs?

Rachel: Well, I'm Rachel Hart on Facebook.

Jill: Okay.

Rachel: And I'm Rachsep R-AC-H-S-E-P on Instagram, which is as an ambassador where I have lots of fun. And I think as you're talking about that sort of evolution of me as an ambassador for Not Your Average Runner too, I just became more confident about sharing my experiences too, even though I've held back and resisted that before. It was just a lot of fun. And I care so much about the program and love it so much that I just got it out there, yeah.

Jill: And does it feel good to share your experiences now?

Rachel: Yeah, it does. And also, because I think I wondered in the past and questioned, "Well, who wants to hear about this? It's not a big deal, nobody really wants to hear my story." But everybody's got a story and we all should be telling them. And it's awkward, I think I come from a place where it's like you don't want to brag, so to speak. And I don't think that's what it is anymore. But I think it's fun to connect and share, and I hope everybody will do it.

Jill: Yeah, and I think when you share your story, other people see what you're doing and think, "Wow, if she can do it, maybe I can do it." You have no idea who you're going to inspire.

Rachel: Right, and one thing that in my story might connect with somebody else in one way, something from their story is going to impact me in

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another way and connect with me in another way. So I just appreciate that we all have something we can learn from each other, so let's share it. Let's get out there and do it.

Jill: I love it. Well, thank you for sharing your story today because it's such a good one. And I know there's going to be a lot of people that are inspired to maybe even hike the PCT as a result. But definitely, we're going to get some new trail runners coming out of this one.

Rachel: Yes.

Jill: Thank you so very much. And, hey, if you are listening to this, and you want to join the Rebel Runner Roadmap, go to [rebelrunnerroadmap.com](http://rebelrunnerroadmap.com), sign up for the wait list, the next class starts in January. And after you join then you get to meet Rachel in the Facebook group, because she's pretty awesome. She's like a real, she's just a leader within that group. So I hope we'll see you there.

Thank you again for joining me today, Rachel. It has been my pleasure.

Rachel: Thank you, Jill. It's fun to be here, like always.

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.