Ep #233: Are You A Real Runner?
How to Stop Doubting Yourself

Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Jill Angie

Ep #233: Are You A Real Runner?
How to Stop Doubting Yourself

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 so excited to bring you this episode today. As I was typing up my notes for it, I got chills. Just this is a good one, all right? And I know this episode is called are you a real runner, and we're totally going to get to that. But first, I have to ask you a question.

And that question is, do you ever doubt yourself? And I don't mean wondering if you turned off the stove when you're on the way to work. I mean like really second-guessing your life decisions. Or when you have a big goal in front of you, you're thinking, there is no way in hell I'm going to be able to do this.

Now, if you do, congratulations, you are totally normal. That's the good news. Seriously, I have doubtful thoughts about myself all the time. I mean, come on, I'm a fat menopausal woman who has the audacity to think she can be a running coach. And not only that, to help a million women just like her start running. And if I didn't doubt myself once in a while, I would be a robot.

Now, the dictionary definition of doubt is a feeling of uncertainty or a lack of conviction. And that's actually two different things in my mind. I think there's two different definitions there. Because a feeling of uncertainty is like, I'm not sure that it's true when somebody tells me that the Covid vaccine is the government's way of microchipping me, right?

Ep #233: Are You A Real Runner?
How to Stop Doubting Yourself

Actually, wait, that's not doubt, that's complete disbelief. Uncertainty, right, that doubt that's like uncertainty is more like when you get a random text that says your Microsoft account has been hacked, but you have an iPhone and you use Gmail. And you're like, "Well, I doubt that's true. But maybe I have a secret Microsoft account like from when I was in college. I don't know."

You're just sort of uncertain. You're questioning whether it's true, and you proceed with caution, right? You think it through before you say yes, I'm going to click the link. And I think most of the time, that type of doubt, that slight uncertainty actually serves us and keeps us from getting scammed and making big mistakes in our life.

But the other half of that definition, the lack of conviction part is more like, "Yeah, I'm signed up to run a half marathon, but I don't think I'm going to finish." That is the doubt that really causes problems.

But let's back up a little because doubt is actually part of the human experience, right? It is an evolutionary advantage, believe it or not, because second-guessing ourselves when we lived in caves meant thinking, "Hmm, is this decision going to result in death for me or my clan? Is it really smart to fight that tiger face to face? Or perhaps I should run away." So doubt and uncertainty kept us alive by making sure we didn't do dumb things.

And honestly, I think it still serves us to an extent. Like when you're online dating and you swipe right on a cutie and you read their profile. And something in your brain says, "I don't know." There's that uncertainty that says, "I need to give this a little bit of thought before I act. They look like a great match, but there's just something about this person that raises some red flags. So you know what? I'm just going to pass."

[The Not Your Average Runner Podcast](#) with Jill Angie

Ep #233: Are You A Real Runner?
How to Stop Doubting Yourself

And doubt can also get us to think through all of the possible ways that something could go wrong so that we come up with backup plans. Like if you plan an outdoor wedding, you are also going to have a plan B in case it rains. You have uncertainty about the weather, you think it's probably smart to have an alternate arrangement. So that's healthy doubt, the kind that has you evaluating, strategizing, double-checking, making sure that you stay safe.

But then there's that other kind of doubt, right? The kind where you don't trust yourself. Where you have a lack of conviction, a lack of confidence. You're like, "Am I doing the right thing? Can I actually finish a marathon?" And that type of doubt springs from that place inside us that doesn't want to fail because it seems like failure is just the worst possible thing that could happen.

And we actually think that failure is the problem. But really, it's what we think about the failure and the shame that those thoughts create that is creating the problem for us. It's never the actual failure that is the issue. Failure is just the circumstance, okay?

Here's what I want you to know, you have failed a shit ton in your life already and you did not die of shame. You probably didn't even experience it. When you were little and you learn how to do, oh, I don't know, everything, you failed a lot.

Learning to talk, potty training, walking, feeding yourself, riding a bike, all the things. And you didn't make your failures shameful. You were just like, "Okay, that didn't work. I'll try it again, and again, and again, right? And look at you now, you're feeding yourself like a boss. You're walking without falling down, at least most of the time. And it's all because you were willing to suck at it until you mastered it.

The Not Your Average Runner Podcast with Jill Angie

Ep #233: Are You A Real Runner?
How to Stop Doubting Yourself

So you understand conceptually that failure is actually necessary for success. The problem is never failure. The problem is you making it mean something about you. And here's the kicker, most of the time we don't even realize we are doing that. We're just like, "No, no, failure feels awful." We forget the thought part in the middle there. We just say failure means I feel awful. There's no option. If I fail, I have to feel bad. But why?

First of all, why do you have to feel bad? And why does it actually feel awful? Unless you actually hurt yourself, maybe you're learning to skateboard, you fell off, you broke your wrist, that sounds painful. Otherwise, failure doesn't actually feel like anything. It's just a circumstance that happened.

And it feels awful, shameful, embarrassing, whatever it is because of your thinking about it. That's the whole of it, right there. Your totally completely optional thoughts are what are making you feel awful. You're choosing to make failure a big deal.

Now, I'm not saying that when you try something and it doesn't work that you should be like, "That felt amazing." Because you know what? It probably doesn't. You're probably going to feel disappointed because you're thinking, "Oh, I wish that had worked out. I wish I had succeeded." And we feel disappointed.

And I think that disappointment can actually be helpful to keep us going because after, "Oh, I really wish that had worked out," the next thought for a lot of us is, "But I'm going to figure it out." So imagine you signed up for a marathon, you trained for it, and then on race day you dropped out halfway through because your feet were covered with blisters.

[The Not Your Average Runner Podcast](#) with Jill Angie

Ep #233: Are You A Real Runner?
How to Stop Doubting Yourself

So that's the circumstance, right? Signed up for the marathon, trained for it, dropped out halfway through because you got blisters on your feet. And you think to yourself, "All right, well, that sucks. I really wanted to finish that marathon." And you feel disappointed. But you're also thinking, "But damn it, I'm going to figure this out and I'm going to try again. There's always another marathon."

But when we feel emotions like shame or embarrassment after we fail, it's because we're making failure mean something about us, right? In the first example we don't make dropping out of the marathon mean anything other than, "Okay, well, I guess I need to figure out this blister thing so that I can get through the full thing." Right?

But when we make it mean something about us like we're not good enough, or we have no business being a runner, or, "Oh yeah, I'm just a failure. I never make anything work." I mean, imagine after dropping out halfway through the marathon you thought, "Wow, everyone is laughing at me. Everyone thinks I'm a joke. I'm so embarrassed. I'm going to quit running."

If that's what you made your marathon failure mean, that you're a joke and everybody's laughing at you and you should quit. Guess what? You're going to feel devastated, you're going to feel ashamed, and you're going to quit. The failure in both of those situations is exactly the same. It's what you make it mean that makes all the difference.

Now, imagine you haven't even failed yet. You're signed up for the marathon and you're doubting. "I don't know if I can do this. I probably can't do this. I'm probably going to fail. What happens if I fail?" All the thoughts, right?

Ep #233: Are You A Real Runner?
How to Stop Doubting Yourself

Some of the doubt may be legit doubt like well, a marathon is pretty far. There is the possibility I could get hurt or get some blisters. The weather might be really bad, I might get a charley horse. The weather might be super hot and not what I trained in and I might not be able to finish. This is normal doubt. This is the uncertainty doubt that says, "Okay, these are the things that could happen. How am I going to plan ahead for them?"

And you're like, "Okay, well, there's a medic tent there. I'm going to train in all weather conditions. If the weather's really bad, I can just decide not to run and go do a different marathon. If I don't finish, there's always another race." And that's your brain making decisions that are in your best interest. It's just like, yes, this could happen, here's what I'm going to do about it and then I'm just going to handle the rest of it when it happens.

But that lack of conviction type of doubt, that is the part that holds us back. And that comes from thinking if I fail, I will be so ashamed. If I fail, I'll be so embarrassed. If I fail it's the worst thing ever. You don't ever have to feel shame or embarrassment over failure, ever. They're totally optional.

And guess what, even if they do creep in, because you're human and they will, you don't have to wallow in it. You don't have to say, "Here comes shame. Better put on my waders and jump in and splash around." Right? You don't have to identify with it. You can say, "Okay, this thing happened and I felt a little embarrassed for a while. But I know I'm a worthy human and failure is part of my journey."

So when you notice yourself feeling doubt, I want you to analyze it this way. Okay? Is the doubt here to help me or is it here to hold me back and make me feel like shit? If it's the first one, you can lean into that and say, "All right, doubt, let's figure this out. Let's create some backup plans." But if it's the second one, it's that lack of conviction and confidence doubt, I want you

[The Not Your Average Runner Podcast](#) with Jill Angie

to think in advance about what you're going to make a failure mean if it happens.

Just decide in advance, if I come in last I'm going to make it mean that I'm a badass for showing up. If I don't finish, I'm going to make it mean that I learned a lot about what doesn't work, so when I try again I'll be better informed. Just decide in advance what you're going to make it mean.

And there's also a question that I ask myself when I start to feel this kind of lack of conviction doubt. It goes kind of like this, "Hey Jill, how are you going to feel if you don't even try? How will you feel if you don't show up? If you don't even try?" And I ask myself that question. And then if I say, "Actually, I'm going to feel pretty relaxed and a lot less anxious, and I will probably forget about it in a couple of weeks." Then okay, maybe I just don't do that thing.

But if the answer is it's going to gnaw at me, I will always wonder what I could have done. I'll be so sad watching everybody else do that half marathon without me. It's going to haunt me till the end of my days, then yeah, do the thing even if you might fail. Because again, failure is just a circumstance, it does not define you.

Now, there's actually a third kind of doubt that I want to address today and it's a very specific type of doubt. And that is the thought, "I am not a real runner." Because I know a lot of you have this thought because you look at other runners and you say, "Oh, they're faster than me. So I'm obviously not good enough." Or, "They don't do run/walk, so I got to be doing it wrong because I take walk breaks."

One of my community members said to me a while ago that when she hears people talking about their pace, it deflates her excitement. She said,

Ep #233: Are You A Real Runner?
How to Stop Doubting Yourself

"I'm running a 15-minute mile pace for six miles." So that means she can do six miles in 90 minutes. But somebody else once said that they run at a 10-minute mile pace and they did this run, it was 10-minutes per mile. And they were like it was the worst run ever. And so she felt like giving up when she saw that.

And she says, "I feel like giving up every time I see something like that." Here's why, she's assuming if someone else is bummed out about a 10-minute mile, then she should be completely embarrassed about running slower. And probably she's also thinking how dare they complain about running a 10-minute mile when that's all I want to do, it's not fair.

So we're looking at our own results, comparing it to somebody else and deciding, okay, well, that's what they can do. Obviously, I'm not good enough. And I'm like, why would you indulge in this kind of thinking? Why ever? Because everyone's thoughts create their own emotions, not their circumstance. Circumstances don't create emotions.

So if you run a 15-minute mile, and you can go six miles in 90 minutes, that's your circumstance. If you decide to think, "Wow, that is so awesome. Yay me." You're going to feel proud. Now, somebody else could have that same circumstance and think, "Worst run ever." And then they would feel rotten because it's not the circumstance that creates the emotion, it's the thought you have about it.

So when someone else runs a 10-minute mile and thinks, "Oh, this is the worst run ever." It has nothing to do with you and your pace, and everything to do with their thoughts about their performance." How fast you run, how fast they run are completely unrelated circumstance. One has no meaning or bearing on the other.

Ep #233: Are You A Real Runner?
How to Stop Doubting Yourself

And guess what? I know by this time in listening to my podcast, you know that other people's opinions are none of your business. But it works both ways, my friends. Other people are entitled to their opinions, and you don't get to decide whether their opinions are valid.

So somebody else running a 10-minute mile thinking it's the worst run ever, hey, that's their CTFAR model in their head. That's their business, it has nothing to do with you and you don't get to decide whether they should stop complaining about their 10-minute mile. Because they're looking at somebody who's running a five minute mile saying, "How could you possibly complain about your pace?"

It's all relative because the circumstance doesn't create the emotions. I mean, there could be an Olympic runner who does a half marathon in like, I don't know, an hour and 15-minutes, which is crazy fast for like 99.999% of us. But it's actually on the slow side for an Olympic distance runner. So that runner could think, "Oh my God, worst run ever." And you're thinking please stop complaining I would kill to run that fast. Right?

Does that mean that they're no longer allowed to think that that hour and 15-minute half marathon is their worst run ever? Just because you'd like to be able to run that fast doesn't take away the validity of their thoughts about their own circumstance. And does it invalidate your 15 mile? Also no. No fucking way.

So please stop doubting your validity as a runner because you think other people are doing it better. Just stop. Stop it. Please, I beg of you. You have this one beautiful and precious life and I don't want you to ever waste a moment of it looking at someone else's results and making yours be less.

[The Not Your Average Runner Podcast](#) with Jill Angie

Ep #233: Are You A Real Runner?
How to Stop Doubting Yourself

Are you going to be lying there on your deathbed saying, oh, if only I had been able to run a 10-minute mile so I could call myself a real runner, my life would have meaning? No. So let that shit go right now. But you got to manage your mind about these thoughts.

And when they show up, you're going to gently remind yourself that other people's performance and other people's opinions about their own performance are none of your fucking business. You can use them as fuel to improve yourself like, "Wow, look what's possible for them. I wonder if I could do that if I kept training." That's what other people's results are for. They're to inspire you, not to make you give up.

All right, to sum up, number one, doubt that makes you come up with backup plans or question whether something is a scam, obviously a scam, healthy doubt. Keep doing that. Doubt that keeps you from trying because you think failure is the worst thing in the world, let that shit go.

Doubting whether you are a real runner because someone else can run faster and is bummed out about it, please do not waste a single microsecond of your time entertaining that bullshit. Okay?

All right Rebels, I hope this has been a helpful episode for you. If you liked it, please share it on Instagram, review it on iTunes. Let everybody know about it. I love you, stay safe, and get your ass out there and run.

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.

[The Not Your Average Runner Podcast](#) with Jill Angie