

Ep #243: Tired AF?



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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 runners, how are you this week? I gotta say, I'm feeling tired. Actually, exhausted, might be a better word for it. I had a whole episode planned for today, to talk about some visualization techniques to help you on race day, but you know what? I just can't. This is gonna be a different kind of episode, but I've got some things to get off my chest. Because I know that you can probably relate to, at least some, if not all of it. If you can, I want you to know that you are not alone.

I have been feeling tired like this for months, and some of it is physical fatigue because I don't feel super rested when I get up in the morning. My sleep is restless. Running has felt like sludge, but mostly, it's mental. My brain just feels foggy. Like I'm not functioning at 100%. Here's a great example.

Last June, Andy and I bought tickets to see Elton John in Philly this July. We bought the tickets a full year in advance. I fucking *love* Elton John. It's his farewell tour. We have great seats. He's playing at the Philly's baseball stadium, so this is Citizens Bank Park. It's just going to be so fun. So, we got these tickets and, somehow, I completely forgot we had them. I booked the Alaska retreats at the same time. We just figured it out last week.

I'm like, "*How* does someone forget they have tickets to see one of their favorite artists?" Just completely forget. Because when Andy said to me, "Ooh, the Elton John show is coming up." I was confused. I'm like, "What are you talking about?" I had zero recollection of buying the tickets. Zip. Nada. Like it never happened.

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And that is just one example. It's the most annoying one, but in the middle of googling "Early on-set Alzheimer's and brain tumors", I mentioned to a friend that I just feel so scattered lately. She looked at me and she's like, "Yeah. Me too. Me too." The chances of both of us having a memory-impacted brain tumor at the same time, are pretty slim. So, I'm no longer spending hours on WebMD, but that doesn't change the fact that I'm not operating on all cylinders right now. Knowing that I wasn't the only one was super helpful. So, again, that's why I'm doing this episode today.

I've actually been telling myself all kinds of bullshit stories, like, "Oh, well, if you'd just stop eating sugar, you'd feel better." Or, "If you just could get your sleep dialed in, you'd have more energy." I've been looking externally for this secret sauce that will fix my fatigue. Because obviously, it's something I'm doing wrong, right? Can you relate? It must be my fault that I'm so fucking tired all the time. That I keep forgetting things. It must be *my* fault that I can't sleep through the night. It must be my fault. I'm doing something wrong.

Yeah, I'd probably feel a little better if I ate less sugar and got more sleep, for sure! But, trying to eat less sugar when I'm beating myself up for eating it in the first place, actually leads me to eat *more* of it not less. When, in the history of humans, has nagging, berating, or shaming ever worked to change behavior in the long run?

Now, simultaneously, with me saying, "Oh, it's all my fault that I'm struggling mentally." I'm also, at the same time, telling myself, "Well, you need to get more done. You need to be more focused." I'm like, "You procrastinate way too much, Jill. And, if you could just be more *disciplined*, you'd get stuff done faster, and you'd have more time for rest." Right?

I'm pretty sure you can relate to this internal monologue. It really all boils down to believing, "I'm unworthy because I don't do enough." Believing everyone else is so much more productive than me. (Believing) because I

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can't do everything that I think I should be doing, there's something wrong with me. When I believe all those things, I feel overwhelmed and I feel guilty.

What do I do? I procrastinate or I sign myself up for way too much. I get totally unrealistic about what I can actually accomplish. And, I either fail to do it, I do it half-assed, or I do it all and I end up exhausted. I feel overworked and stretched way too thin. But also, at the same time, I feel like I'm not doing nearly enough and I'm always behind.

This leads to not being able to actually rest when I do take time off because I'm always doing three things at once. Because I think I need to be productive all the damn time. Even when I'm just relaxing watching television, I'm on my phone or my laptop, or else I'm passed out on the couch because I'm so fucking tired. When I wake up in the middle of the night I'm checking emails, and then I'm unable to get out of bed in the morning. I think, "I really need to get up early and be productive right away." When I don't do that, which is actually most days, I beat myself up for not being disciplined enough to get things done. It's a vicious, vicious cycle.

Here's the best part. Since I don't have kids, or an actual job location to go to, because I run the whole Not Your Average Runner empire from right here, in my apartment, I start thinking about how everyone else has it so much harder than me. I just really need to get it together because I have an easy life that I'm not even appreciating.

Even though I'm basically working eighteen hours a day, because again I work from home, I've completely dissolved all of my boundaries between my personal and work lives. I'm constantly telling myself, "You're not doing enough. But you should rest. But while you're resting you should be working." It's so fucked up. Basically, I've been traumatizing myself in the

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name of self-development and productivity. Guess what? I feel like shit. Again, I'm pretty sure you can relate.

Recently, I started taking a coaching certification. Which is teaching me all about intersectional feminism and how to use it in my coaching practice. And, I'm reading the book *Tired As F*ck* by Caroline Dooner. That book is about how her belief that she needed to be constantly working on herself, fixing herself, led her to complete exhaustion.

Between those two things, I started to realize what's actually going on here. As someone who was raised and socialized as a woman, in a patriarchal society, I've been taught that my worth, as a human being, is dependent upon how much I produce. How much I do. That my value is contingent upon things like my appearance, and how much I do for others.

Until recently, I truly did not realize I had those belief systems. I mean, yes, for sure I realized that I was taught that my worth is tied to being thin. I've dismantled a fair amount of that bullshit. There's still a little bit of diet mentality hanging out in there, but I'm working on it actively.

But recently it was pointed out to me, by my own coach, that the reason I'm so fucking tired is because it has been drilled into my head (by my mom, by my teachers, by my bosses, by my co-workers, by my friends) that productivity is a virtue. That women are expected to not only be productive at work, they're also supposed to be productive at home; have a beautiful home, raise families, never stop smiling, always be the perfect hostess, all the things. They're supposed to be compassionate and loving to everyone around them, at the expense of their own health.

I used to think that women are genetically wired for this. To some degree, that is actually true because estrogen, women have a lot of estrogen at least until the point of menopause, gives a woman this drive to create community and keep the peace. Back in the days of yore, many years ago,

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caveman times, even back to... if you think back to the history of the U.S. when we took wagon trains across the North American continent and we were putting ourselves in danger's way. Estrogen, that drives women to create community and keep the peace and take care of everyone, was advantageous. Those communities survived hard times.

It's biologically advantageous to be driven to keep everyone happy and together. But the patriarchy has totally exploited that drive into something that I think is absolutely ruinous to women. We're taught from birth that not only is it our job to raise the children and keep the community together, we also need to be productive members of society. We need to look pleasing. We need to be nice and thoughtful and loving. In other words, we need to be perfect according to some bullshit standard. And, if we're not perfect, we're criticized by others. Not just men, but other women. Even worse, by ourselves.

If you think you don't have even a smidgen of this patriarchal bullshit in your minds, have you ever seen a woman wearing an outfit... I don't know, maybe you were at Walmart (that seems to happen at Walmart a lot). You saw a woman walking down the street and you thought to yourself, "Oh honey! You *can not* pull that off." Right? I know you've thought that. I've thought that. You know what that is? That's your conditioned belief that women should always be trying to look their best.

Why? Why should we always be trying to look and do our best? For who? You might think, "I'm just a perfectionist." Or, "I just have high standards." But have you ever questioned where those beliefs even came from? What if they were learned and taught to you by the patriarchy? When I say the patriarchy, I don't mean there's a bunch of men standing around teaching you that you will always have to try to look and do your best. No, it's so much more subtle than that. It actually comes from the women in our lives that have been raised in a patriarchal society, as well.

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If you have always thought that you're just a perfectionist, or you just have high standards and you've never really questioned where those beliefs came from, I want you to know it's not just genetic. You fucking learned it from the people that raised you, the people that influenced you your whole life. You *learned* that.

Now, I'm not here to say that having high standards is a bad thing. You want to work hard and get shit done? Awesome, have at it. You want to look your best? You want to always be trying to look your best? That's totally cool. You do you. I love to dress up. I love to do my hair, and all of that. I love a solid productive day when I'm checking things off my list, left and right.

But there is a difference between doing that stuff to please *myself*, and doing it to satisfy an inherited and flawed belief system that (says), "I am not worthy unless my make-up is always done to perfection. (Until) every last body roll has been camouflaged in Spanx. And, I complete more tasks than anyone else." That is some bullshit, right there.

I don't actually have some real answers for you this week, my friend. I just have more questions. I'm still exploring all of this in my own mind. It really kind of rocked my world over the past few weeks as I have been realizing just how much the patriarchy has affected my brain in ways that I didn't even understand.

But I felt compelled to record this episode because I'm pretty sure I'm not alone. I guess I just wanted you to know that I feel you, sister. I know you're struggling too and we're going to figure this out. It doesn't mean that tomorrow you march into your job and tell your boss, "Okay, I'm only going to work twenty-five hours a week from now on. I'll be taking a full lunch break. I will not be answering emails the second that they land in my inbox." You're not going to suddenly tell your kids, "By the way, I'm not

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making dinner anymore. You're on your own because I need to rest." It would be amazing to do that stuff, but it's just not realistic for most people.

What I can suggest for you, is to start noticing where in your life you are over-achieving or feeling obsessed about looking a certain way. Or, under-achieving and beating the shit out of yourself because you're thinking other people are judging you. Just notice it.

I'm not asking you to change anything. Change is hard. You have been steeped in this flawed belief system your whole life. I want you to just start noticing. Those beliefs are not your own. That's some other shit that was handed to you. You didn't ask for it. Maybe, just maybe, knowing, "I didn't ask for that. Someone gave it to me. I don't have to believe it myself." (Knowing) that might give you a little bit of relief. Yes, we live in a flawed system, but we don't have to believe it. We don't have to believe that our worth is tied to our productivity, or our appearance, or any of that. We can recognize that we were taught that stuff and we can choose to think differently, if we want.

Start small, please. Here's a great way to start small. Go out in public wearing a skirt without Spanx underneath. Yes, people might see a roll of fat and that's okay. Because having fat doesn't make you intrinsically less valuable or less attractive. Also, the whole belief that you need to be attractive, that, in and of itself, is so flawed because who are we being attractive for? We've been taught that we need to look a certain way to please other people. Please stop. Please, just stop.

Try not answering an email the second that it lands in your inbox. Just see what happens. Tell yourself that you have a fifteen-minute waiting period on responding to texts and emails at work, or at home. By the way, even if you don't relate to feeling exhausted, because you've been handed unrealistic expectations as a woman, here's how the patriarchy affects you as a runner.

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You might say things to yourself like, “I don’t have time to run. I’ve got too much going on between work and family.” Or, “I want to start running but my husband thinks run-walk is stupid, so, you know, I’m just not going to bother. I’m not going to do that race.” “I don’t feel right about spending money on myself right now, so I’m going to skip joining that 5k class.” “Yeah, I did do a 5K but I walked some of it.” “I’m really more of a *wogger* than a runner.” It’s everywhere. Every single one of those statements, if you’ve ever said them or you’ve thought them to yourself, is the patriarchy influencing you.

If you’re still here with me, if you haven’t deleted this episode yet, and you’re constantly feeling like your mental fatigue is all your fault... If you could just eat the right foods or have the perfect routine or just get more done and suddenly life will be easier, guess what? It won’t. But it’s not your fault.

For now, here’s what I want you to do. Start noticing where our patriarchal system has affected your beliefs about yourself. Just pay attention. Know those are not things that you asked for. They were handed to you. You learned them. You can unlearn them over time. We’re going to be talking about this again. I’ll be coming back to this topic over and over. For right now, all I want you to do is become aware because once you see it, you can’t un-see it. Once you see it then you can start to change it.

Okay runners, what did you think of today’s episode? If this has been helpful for you, I would love it if you’d share it on Instagram and let people know. I love you. Stay safe and get your ass out there and run!

Hey, real quick before you go, if you enjoyed listening to this episode, you have got to check out Up and Running. It’s my 30-day online program that will teach you exactly how to start running, stick with it, and become the runner you have always wanted to be. Head on over to

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notyouraveragerunner.com/upandrunning to join. I would love to be a part of your journey.