

Ep #263: Live Your Dreams as the Person You Are Right Now with Slow Fat Triathlete Jayne Williams



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Jill Angie

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Welcome to *The Not Your Average Runner Podcast*. If you've never felt athletic but you still dream about becoming a runner, you are in the right place. I'm Jill Angie, your fat running coach. I help fat women over 40 to start running, feel confident, and change their lives. I have worked with thousands of women to help them achieve their running goals and now I want to help you.

Jill: Okay runners, I cannot even begin to tell you how excited I am for today's episode because I am here with the one and only Jayne Williams. Author of *Slow Fat Triathlete*, and literally the human being that if it wasn't for her writing that book, I would not have done my first triathlon, probably would not have done my first half marathon, and definitely would not be sitting here recording this podcast. None of it would exist.

And so I literally have goosebumps right now thinking about how personally I get to actually have a conversation with one of my heroes. I cannot wait to share it with all of you. And so I'm just going to stop talking and say, Jayne, welcome to the podcast.

Jayne: Jill, it's so cool to be here. This is great.

Jill: Thank you so much for joining me today. And I know you have a busy life, I actually know that you have a lot of other things going on in your life besides triathlons and this book that you wrote, that started, I think, a whole movement. But I want to hear the origin story of the book.

Before we dive into that, can you kind of just give people like a little sliver of what your life is like? Because you are a multi-talented, extremely intelligent, hilarious human being with just so much fun stuff going on. So just give us a flavor of who you are and then we'll dive into that origin story of the book.

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Jayne: Okay, so what I am not right now, and somewhat to my sadness, is a triathlete. I think I did my last multi-sport event in about 2008. Although I do consider myself an active person, an outdoors person. My passion right now is music and songwriting.

I compose my own songs. I play the mandolin, play the guitar a little bit, I also play in a band in the Santa Cruz Mountains area called The Dirt Rakers. It's better than the Droolpigs, that was the last band name that our band leader had. For some reason we couldn't book the Droolpigs, go figure.

Jill: Really? Nobody wanted to hire that name, I don't know. Dirt Rakers though, I would hire Dirt Rakers. I'm in, I'm in for that. Okay.

Jayne: Yeah, we're kind of an Americana band mixing originals with some covers, that sort of thing. And it's really fun. We are playing out at least once a week, sometimes twice a week. So that takes up a lot of my time with rehearsal, and practice, and gigging. Yeah, it's definitely not a path to riches, but it makes my spirit soar in ways that very few things do. Although triathlons and talking about being a fat athlete and self-acceptance definitely come close.

Jill: I love that.

Jayne: And then my day job is that I am a consultant and grant writer in a firm that my partners and I founded last year. Before that I was completely freelance for five years. So that's one of those project-based kind of gigs that is feast or famine. You sit around thinking, "Wow, is there ever going to be another project?" And then suddenly there's five and you can only take on two. So there's a lot of, what's the word? A lot of juggling. There's a lot of juggling.

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Jill: I can imagine. And you also have an interesting educational background as well.

Jayne: Oh yeah, I was super practical when I went to college, and majored in Russian.

Jill: At Harvard.

Jayne: My life is sort of a series of happy accidents in so many ways. I really only applied to Harvard because my best friend was applying. And I was like, "Oh, I'll do it, too."

Jill: Oh my gosh.

Jayne: And then when I got in I was like, "Well, I guess I better go."

Jill: How very Elle Woods have you.

Jayne: Kind of.

Jill: like, "Okay, I'll go, I'll go. We'll see."

Jayne: Without the perfect outfits. Yeah, then I went to graduate school in Slavic languages and literature's and I studied Croatian as my second Slavic language. And I got a fellowship to study in Croatia for a summer. But unfortunately that summer, after I got there, I learned that the program was canceled. This was before the internet, because they were having the World Youth Games that summer.

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So I was like, "Okay, now what do I do?" So I took a train south to the coast and found an island and stayed with a family and got pretty good at Croatian, which I haven't used that much since then.

Jill: Interesting.

Jayne: But I did use my Russian. I actually worked in two jobs, at least, that required me to be a Russian language interpreter. So it was less impractical than you'd think.

Jill: Oh, I don't know, I just love this because I think that when you go to school and you're supposed to pick something that that's going to be the thing that you do for the rest of your life. That is a lot of responsibility to put on a 17 year old, right?

Jayne: Right. Yeah, and then in a lot of countries, and my parents are from the UK, and you almost have to pick your destiny at 16 when you decide what three subjects you're going to study your last year of high school. So yeah, no, I never liked the phrase reinventing yourself, but I think I've just been doing it for a long time.

I worked for a nonprofit. Well I came out of grad school, I worked for a nonprofit that did experiential outdoor education and citizen diplomacy, organizing rafting trips for international groups of people in Siberia, and Costa Rica, and Zambia, and Zimbabwe, and the US. So I got to do a lot of fun rafting and also speak Russian.

Jill: I love this. So you've like literally traveled the world and seen a lot of amazing things.

Jayne: I'm missing several continents.

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Jill: You are? Okay.

Jayne: Yeah, I have not been to Antarctica or South America.

Jill: Okay. Oh, because Costa Rica is Central America, isn't it?

Jayne: Yeah, Central America.

Jill: Okay.

Jayne: It's right there in the middle kind of.

Jill: I mean, I feel like it kind of counts as South America. I would just count it.

Jayne: Okay, thanks. Check.

Jill: Check. Okay, so let's talk a little bit about Slow Fat Triathlete because that's definitely not what you went to college for, not what your career was leading you towards. And yet, here we are, right? Writing a book that has, like I kind of feel like it sort of kicked off the fat athlete movement-

Jayne: What? Wow.

Jill: -that is so prevalent today.

Jayne: Sorry, I didn't mean to interrupt you but I was legitimately kind of shocked by that assessment. And I don't want to argue with it, but I had never really honestly thought about it in that way. So that's kind of cool.

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Jill: I mean, for real, I bought your book in, I think it was 2010, right around the time that I was just like, "I can't fucking believe I haven't lost weight. And I can't just keep waiting for myself to lose weight to start living my life." And so I thought I'm going to do this triathlon. And I started looking for books and I came across your book, I think it was probably Barnes and Noble. I don't know, some bookstore, I found your book on the shelf and I was just like, "Wait. Wait a minute, what is happening?"

And I devoured it, cover to cover, and then immediately gave it to a friend who was like, "Hey, I kind of want to do a triathlon." And I've had conversations with that friend of mine before about how back then, and this was 2010, I know that book came out in 2004. But back then there just wasn't anybody to follow or anybody to look up to.

I mean, obviously there was you, but there weren't a lot of people to look up to. And I think you were just such a great leader in that space and made it so welcoming and so safe for a lot of us. So I mean, deeply, thank you from the bottom of my heart for doing what you did for putting yourself out there because you've impacted so many millions of women that you probably will never know exactly how many because they're just quietly like doing their triathlons going, "Thanks, Jayne."

But anyway, I completely just misdirected. Let's talk about how the book came to be.

Jayne: Okay, well, first of all, I just want to say that it's an incredible honor to have been able to shine a little bit of light in a very murky corner of the world there when we were first starting out being fat athletes. And that really wasn't even a concept then, I think. But I did not set out to do that, or to break ground, or to be a role model or any of that.

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The whole genesis of the book was kind of a joke at a dinner party. And when I first started doing triathlons, which was only in about 2002 I think, I wasn't a very experienced triathlete when I started to think about writing the book. I had written race reports for my friends and family saying, "Hey, this is what I'm doing now, this is kind of an adventure. You might want to check it out."

And so every race that I did I would sort of tell the story. And I'd seen other triathletes race reports and a lot of times they were a bit, you know, technical and performance oriented. And I really wanted to capture that whole experience of the sun rising over the lake or the ocean, that flurry of feet and arms and legs as you jump in to swim, the wild turkey you see out while you're out on the bike. You know, that feeling, "Oh my God, I'm never going to finish this."

I really wanted to make it a whole experience for people who didn't know about triathlon and wouldn't really appreciate, you know, well, my transition time was one minute, 37 seconds. So I started sending those out to my friends.

And one of my friends is a guy I went to high school with and I'm still in touch with, works in the publishing industry. And he said, you know, these race reports are amazing. I think they're great. I was at his house for dinner, and he said, "You could write a book based on these." I'm like, "Right, yeah, I'd call it slow, fat triathlete." And he's like, "Yes, that's what you should call it."

So about, I don't know, four or five months later he showed me how to write a book proposal. You know, what the format of that would be, how to do like comparable titles, and a sample chapter, and outline all of this stuff. I

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sent it to him and less than a week later he called me at work to say that it had been picked up by a publisher, by Marlowe and Company.

Jill: That's really fast.

Jayne: I know. I had no idea, even doing the proposal was like, "Well, this is a lark, what a good experience to do this." When I got the news I literally stood up in the middle of my cubicle filled bureaucratic office and shrieked with joy and laughter.

Jill: Oh, I love that.

Jayne: And then I wrote the book and it flowed so easily and naturally. And I just felt like I was talking to the friends that I had talked to when I was out telling people I'm doing triathlons now. And they said, "Oh, I would love to do triathlon, but I have to lose 20 pounds first." I'm like, "No, actually you don't, you can just do it now."

And that's where the subtitle of the book came from, live your athletic dreams in the body you have now.

Jill: I love this so much. I love this so much. So I love that you wrote it, like it started as kind of a lark. But then you started taking it kind of like, hey, this is a serious thing. And what was the public reception when it first came out? And what was it like to get that first box of books from the publisher like, holy shit, this is real.

Jayne: Yeah, no, I just got goosebumps just remembering that. When you first see the cover and you open the book. And my then husband did the little illustrations.

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Jill: I remember that, I loved those.

Jayne: Oh, good, I'll be sure to let him know.

Jill: Yeah, they were amazing.

Jayne: Yeah, and I was really quite amazed. For a fairly small, a very small actually, publishing house, the person who was working with me to kind of get the word out was really great. I started getting press in a bunch of different fairly major places. And I was kind of shocked that there was that interest in it. And I think just the boldness of the title really helped.

Jill: Yeah.

Jayne: Although I had a lot of phone calls with people, reporters and stuff who were like, "Wait, is it called low fat triathlete? What is the name of your book?"

Jill: Oh my God.

Jayne: No, it's quite the opposite. It's full fat triathlete.

Jill: It's full fat, all the fats. All of the fats, please.

Jayne: Yeah, although I want to say this is one thing that if I, you know, in two years it's going to be 20 years since that book came out.

Jill: Oh my gosh.

Jayne: And I kind of thought it would be cool to maybe do a second edition or an update or a new edition with like notes in crayon in the margins. And

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the one thing that I would really change now is that I was really still in a weight loss mode. And I really promoted that in a way that I felt was more or less positive.

But looking back, no, I mean, I did Weight Watchers for crying out loud. Now, I think that they're a pretty oppressive, and deceptive, and not really that ethical organization.

Jill: Yeah.

Jayne: And the diet industrial complex is something that we all need to look at very closely and hopefully eliminate.

Jill: Yeah, same. I agree. And I think like when I found your book I was kind of like, okay, well, weight loss, you know, I kept gaining and losing and gaining and losing, waiting until I lose weight to do these things. So I'm just going to start doing them. But I was definitely still in that mode.

And I mean, even when I wrote my own first book, which was right around 2013, which I think it was probably around the time that I contacted you the first time. I was like, "You inspired me and I wrote a book too about being fat and being an athlete." I was still kind of like, well, I'm fat and I'm an athlete, but if I could lose weight, if I can figure out how to lose weight, I'm going to do it like. I still had that mindset.

So I just think we're conditioned so deeply from birth to believe that, from our families of origin, from the media, from just, you know, you walk down the street and people shout things at you if you're fat. So you can't really avoid it. But yeah, I get what you're saying like, wouldn't it be nice to go back and just say like, "Hey, this is how my thinking has evolved. The

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message is the same, but there are some fine points.” I think you should totally do that.

Jayne: I would absolutely love to go back and just say, more self-acceptance, more self-love, more trust in yourself and your own capabilities. No thinking at all about society's arbitrary standards for what your body should look like, or act like, or who thinks that you're going to get hurt. I know you just had some trolling around, concerned trolling around your poor knees, and oh my God, you're going to be in a wheelchair by the time you're whatever. Which was an age that you are already past.

Jill: Yeah, they're like, “Oh my God, good luck living past 50.” I'm like, “Well, I'm 54 and I just dead lifted 200 pounds yesterday. So I feel like things are going pretty well, but you know, I could be wrong.”

Jayne: Right, right. Yeah, and it is true that I felt like, at the time that I wrote the book certainly, and for some years after I didn't really feel that even fat activism was a thing. Or it wasn't a thing I was aware of. I think it was about 2010 that I discovered Ragen Chastain and *Dances with Fat*. And that blew my mind way open.

Jill: Yeah.

Jayne: I was like, “Oh, this is like fiercely unapologetically fat.” I was like, “Whoa!” At the time I had had some health issues, which led me to basically stop doing triathlons. And I was gaining weight again and I was still in that mode where I was like, this makes me a bad person. I am weak, I am undisciplined, I'm lazy. All of that negative self-talk and that inner critic that's just out of control.

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And at that time, so how old was I then? 47. I mean, it had been a good 34 years or something of diet culture. And then when I found Ragen's blog, I still remember where I was. And I devoured it, kind of maybe the way you devoured Slow Fat Triathlete. And by the end of that, I was like, "Oh, okay. Life changed."

Jill: Yeah, it's like suddenly you're like, "Wait a minute, I'm allowed to not feel bad about being fat? That's a thing?" That's almost how you feel because you're like, "But I've been told that I have to feel bad about this." And to have somebody give you the freedom to just not be upset about it is, I think, for a lot of women in particular, I mean men too, but mostly women is just absolutely a total mindfuck because it's like finding out that the flat Earthers are right.

Jayne: Yeah, or that fairies actually exist.

Jill: Right, exactly. It's one of those, I mean, fat is bad is one of those things that I think is, you know, it's so deeply embedded in our consciousness that it can really be an amazing moment.

So I'm glad that we're talking about this because I've had a lot of thoughts about the fat activist movement over the years, about the body positive movement, and I think that there's pluses and minuses to all of it. But for sure, like that permission to not obsess about my body is probably the second best gift I've been given because your book is the best gift that I've ever been given in my life.

But yeah, I mean, what are your thoughts in general about the fat activism movement, the fat acceptance movement, the body positive movement? I know those are three overlapping but different sort of things.

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Jayne: Yeah, I wouldn't consider myself any kind of expert in any of those movements. I wouldn't know how really to differentiate them. I don't spend a lot of time in that space. For a while when I discovered sort of fat activism I thought, "Oh, wow, this is my next thing. This is where I need to dive in."

And at the time I wasn't, I think, emotionally prepared. I soon found out that sort of the amount of conflict and troll defending and just struggle that you would have to do on the daily was too much for me at that point in my life. I just couldn't. I couldn't even think about being in that space. And I was going through a lot of stuff as well, so I was just kind of trying to concentrate on my own thing.

But what I would say is that I see this amazing increase in the number of people who think that fat shaming is bad. You know the number of people who are fat accepting, I see a huge increase in the number of people who are fat accepting. I see different messages starting to come out in the media. I see different companies starting to feature a broader range of sizes, and shapes, and abilities, and colors, and ethnicities, and ages.

And to the extent that those movements have made those things happen, I am profoundly grateful. I can't speak to, I don't even know who a lot of the players in the space are. There's Ragen Chastain, I know. Marilyn Wann.

There's now some great fat athletes who are promoting all the things that you promote. And there's Sarah Robles the weightlifter, and there's Louise Green up in Vancouver doing Big Fit Girl, and there's Jeanette DePatie with The Fat Chick stuff, she was another early discovery for me and just fantastic work from all of those folks.

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And like I said, it's not my jam to kind of dissect and analyze and see who's doing what and what the pluses and minuses are. I'm grateful for what I see as some shifting in the culture.

Jill: Yeah, well, and I agree because I think you have to be real loud and real strong in your opinions and stir, you almost have to stir up the controversy so that people start talking about it so that attitudes shift, right? Because if you're just like over quietly in your corner saying like, "Well, you can be a fat athlete, it's okay to be fat." But you don't say it in such a way that it doesn't raise up conflict, then it's just going to be an echo chamber of people who agree with you, right? And to change minds you do have to, I think, create the conflict. Which I think that's what fat activism has done.

And I don't necessarily agree with everything in that movement, but I'm 100% on board with the strength, and the courage, and the commitment that it takes to put your message out there. To stand behind it, to withstand all of the, trolls isn't the right word. Well, trolls, but like all of the vitriol that you get from the world, and still be so committed to helping affect change.

And you're right, here we are, what year is it? 22, I don't even know what year it is anymore. 2022 and it's normal to see fat people on the internet, like just living their lives and not talking about weight loss. Like Lizzo is another person that I really look up to and how absolutely unapologetic she is for just who she is in general. And her weight is part of who she is, but she's just like, "Hey, I'm not changing for you, world." And I think we need a little bit more of that in this world.

Jayne: Oh, absolutely. We need a lot more of that in this world, and for everybody who has been marginalized for race, sexual orientation, country of origin, culture of origin, religion, all of that. We need a lot more of the, you know, not changing for y'all.

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Jill: Yeah.

Jayne: And about what you said about having to sort of be out there and stirring up the controversy, I think that is true from one perspective. And then from the other perspective, I think that just in your own circle of people that you influence day to day, just being out there living your life as an unapologetic happy open person, whether you're a fat person, or a black person, or a gay or lesbian or bisexual person, or a trans person or any of the things that you can be, it's a revolutionary act in our culture.

Jill: Yeah.

Jayne: So I think that for people who don't feel like they have the stomach for the public fight, the public activism, I think you can be an activist in your own life just by living authentically and being who you are.

Jill: Yeah, 100% agree because the more people who do that, it normalizes whatever the marginalization is to just be more like, hey, this is just one flavor of being a human. And yeah, I absolutely love that.

And I think there are a lot of athletes that actually do that so beautifully, speaking of the athletic world I think of like Mirna Valerio who is a friend of mine. And when you look at her social media feed it is literally just her living her best life in the world. And just providing example after example after example of what life looks like for a fat black woman.

And she she's just, she's like, "Here it is, here I am, no apologies." But she's also not in anybody's face yelling like, you should change your mind or whatever. She's just like, "I'm just going to be me and y'all can come along if you want, and if not, okay."

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And I agree, I think that that kind of showing up that way in the world does just like normalize it and also gives people a safe space to kind of think about things without the conflict kind of swirling around and decide like, do I have to take a side or whatever? Like you're like, oh, you could just be. You can also just be.

Jayne: Yeah, and I think all of it is needed too. I think the really important work happens through the academic work, the policy struggle, the activism, the art, the social media, like it's all part of this mosaic of hopefully just leading to fuller acceptance and appreciation of all the diversities of humans everywhere. That's the goal.

Jill: Yeah. So I have a question for you, when you first wrote the book were you already comfortable with using the word fat? Or was that something that you had to do some thinking about before you used that word to describe yourself or to put it on the title of a book?

Jayne: I guess I must have been fairly comfortable with it because of the joke that I came out with at the dinner party.

Jill: Yeah.

Jayne: And I started the book with, you know, "Let's talk about the F word."

Jill: Yeah. Yeah, that's right, exactly.

Jayne: And I don't know, I don't remember how my thinking and feeling got to that point. Because, as you say, there wasn't a lot out there that I would have found in terms of other media. But I somehow just developed for myself a sense that fat should just be a descriptor, like tall, or short, or pale skinned, or dark skinned, or brown eyed.

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Jill: Yeah, because that is what it is, right? It's just a word. It's just a fucking word, and it's a neutral word. So that's really cool to hear that, that that was your approach, is there's no like polarizing about it, it's just a descriptor.

I've had people message me privately, strangers, that have said, "You shouldn't use that word because it's very negative." And I'm like, "Not in my brain." Right?

Jayne: Right, your attitude towards that word is fucking negative.

Jill: I know, that's it, that's literally why it's negative.

Jayne: Yeah.

Jill: So is it weird that people like me, you know, it's 18 years since your book was written. Is it weird to have people reach out and say you changed my life?

Jayne: Only in a good way. I mean we all have our struggles, right? We're all just little monkeys trying to do our best. And when we connected, it was a couple months ago over some social media post. You know, we reconnected and you invited me to be on this podcast.

It's such a surge of positivity and gratitude for me like thinking, oh, yeah, this thing that I did, and in some ways am not doing any more, in terms of actively triathleting, and writing about it and working with people about it. But that's still having these ripple effects in the world, you know, that's incredibly cool and it's very humbling.

Jill: And I think it's, like the lesson that I take from that is when you put yourself into something and just believe in it and kind of put it out there, you

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never know who's watching, you never know who is benefiting from it. And whether it's writing a book or whether it's simply putting a post of yourself crossing the finish line of a triathlon, you don't know who you're impacting.

And I think it just kind of goes back to the conversation we just had about living your life unapologetically is, first of all, a revolutionary act in many ways. But like the impact can reverberate in ways that you can't even quantify, right? And then here you are, like 20 years later, and people are just like, okay, let's talk about this book that changed their life.

And I'm really hoping that a whole new wave of people will find you. I've got to, got to, got to do the 20 year reunion or the 20 year revision book. I just think that would be so amazing.

Jayne: Thank you. That's great, I will talk to my agent who is my high school friend who had the dinner party.

Jill: Stop it, right? He has to, he's your friend from high school. He owes you.

Jayne: He's my friend from high school, yeah. He's like, "Well, you could get a real agent." And I was like, "No, I want to work with you. This is all about having fun."

Jill: I love that. I love that. And I think that comes through in the book too. It is a very fun book to read.

Jayne: Oh, thank you.

Jill: Okay, so what's new and exciting for you right now in your life? I know we talked about music, so maybe you can say a little bit more about your

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band and how you evolved into that. I would just love for people to kind of get to know you as your current self.

Jayne: Okay, so yeah, there are a couple things that are going on right now. The music is one that I'm really deeply presently into. It takes just taking a lot of my sort of creative energy, and I don't know, my dedication. It's like where's your spirit sort of calling you to be right now? And it feels like the music even though when you figure your hours of practicing, promotion, coordinating, travel, setup, performing, breakdown, you end up making about \$7 an hour. Or, as my boyfriend says, \$40 and a muffin.

Jill: Nice.

Jayne: For the coffee house gigs. We mostly play brew pubs and beer gardens, and so it's, you know, \$40 and a free beer.

Jill: And a free beer. That's it, just one free beer? I feel like they could at least give you a six pack.

Jayne: No, any free beers, I just can't drink more than one free beer, not if I'm going to drive home.

So yeah, there's real parallelisms for me between the whole Slow Fat Triathlete arc and the current music arc, in that it wasn't something I planned. It wasn't something I thought I would even ever do, was be a performing professional musician. It just kind of, just like with triathlon, I was always outdoorsy, and I love to swim, and I love to bike and hike. Run, not so much, but I got there.

And then that sort of all was catalyzed by other people who inspired me. Same thing with music really. I had always played music as a kid. I was

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what I call a campfire guitarist, I would take take the guitar camping and lead the sing along until the ranger would come and shut us up.

And then in 2012, 2013 I picked up the mandolin. 2012, I think. Literally picked it up, it was on my friends mantelpiece, and I said, "What can I do with this?" There was a jam going on and all the instruments that I could play were already taken. So I was like, well, let's tinkle on this thing. And then that just evolved. I started playing and taking lessons.

And then the studio where I took my lessons would have student recitals. So I would nervously perform one song at the recital and absolutely be quivering with adrenaline from that. And just little things happened along the way where people kept encouraging me. You know, when I performed they would encourage me. When I first performed a song that I wrote, I got a lovely compliment from someone who I really respected.

And just people kind of helped me along the way in this path that seems sort of magical. And then next thing you know you're writing your own songs, you're getting your EP recorded, you're putting together a band to travel 5,000 miles and perform at a festival in Wales at your parents' hometown and just stuff starts happening.

Jill: I love that. I remember seeing that video because you posted it on Facebook and I was just like, "Oh my God, this is so cool."

Jayne: Right, from the Merthyr Rising Festival?

Jill: Yeah, I mean that was ages ago, but I still remember watching the video and just being like kind of in awe. Oh, that's so fun. So I love how you compared it to the arc of triathlon. It's like something you kind of liked, or you always liked doing. But then circumstances conspired to make it

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something that you really, really, made a passion for a period of time and now you've got this new passion.

So you said you have an EP out. So can people actually download or purchase this somewhere?

Jayne: I'm going to make that happen. It turns out I have been extremely inept with the whole business of getting that music available.

Jill: Okay.

Jayne: Not long after I recorded it, I actually got in a very minor car accident. Yeah, I was rear ended, I had a little whiplash in my right side of my neck, my shoulder. And that just kind of dragged on and I started getting chronic migraines and chronic pain and chronic back pain. And it became a whole thing that really sort of took over my life for a couple of years.

And so I've got a couple of boxes of CDs in my van that people are welcome to, but I need to get them there. No, I'm actually working now with a group called Mountain Music Productions in the Santa Cruz Mountains and we're going to be able to, I think, sell the CDs and do the download. And when that happens, I'll be sure to let you know.

Jill: Oh my God, yes. Yes, yes, yes, absolutely.

Jayne: Yeah, and I'm hoping to go into the studio later this year and record a few of my newer songs. The EP only has four songs. I didn't really have a full band, I had a marvelous, multi-talented instrumentalist and producer who helped back me up and stuff.

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But now I've just gained a lot of confidence and I think, "Oh, yeah, on this song I want some fiddle, and this song I want some dobro. This is more of a folksy tune, this is more of a 70s style rock ballad."

Jill: Oh my gosh.

Jayne: I just put that together, and that's terrifying.

Jill: Of course, and so is triathlon and you did that.

Jayne: Yeah, I think people used to think I was nuts. I'd be walking up and down on the beach before the start just kind of randomly cheering and cheering, you know, engaging with people like, "Isn't this great? This is going to be fun." And they'd be like, "Ah" or trying to like not make eye contact with the crazy lady.

Jill: Oh my God.

Jayne: For me, I was always scared like the night before. And then once I got into my car and got on my way to the start I was like, "This is great. What a good day."

Jill: Right, that's the feeling I always have before a triathlon too. I'm nervous the night before, and mostly nervous that I'd forgotten something or I don't know, just like that general anxiety. But as soon as you are there in the swim corral and you're just like getting in the water, it's just like, "Wow, the sun is shining. I'm swimming, I'm splashing around."

And then you get out of the water and you get on the bike and it's like you're nice and cool already because you're wet. So you like dry off on the

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bike. It's just such fun. Why do I not do more triathlons? I feel like I am going to have to resurrect this past part of my life.

Jayne: Awesome, yeah.

Jill: Because they are fun and that's it. It's like it's just a joyous celebration of what your body can do. A lot of people, I think, are like, "Oh, I have to make my transition as short as possible and I have to beat this time." And I find that when you approach your races with I have to perform a certain way or I have to beat this time or whatever, it sucks all the joy out of it.

Jayne: Yeah, yeah. I mean, I think for me, part of the great wonderful paradox of triathlon was trying to hold that childlike joy being in the moment, and also be striving to be smoother, be faster, be more aerodynamic and not lose either one of them. But it wasn't always like that, but I always felt like if I had fun, then I'd had a great race.

Jill: Right, right. Yeah, like main goal, fun. Second goal, like improve on the one before. Something like that, yeah.

Jayne: Yeah, I remember actually having a pretty interesting conversation with my publisher, who was also my editor, right after Slow Fat Triathlete came out. Because I kept harping on fun and he was like, "I don't know about fun. Fun just seems so frivolous to me." And I was like, "No, fun is sacred. Fun is what makes us human." And he's like, "Well, I believe in work." I'm like, "Well, if your work is not fun, maybe you should get some different work."

But for him, his work was fun. He was a publisher, he was doing this thing that he was passionate about.

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Jill: Yeah. He didn't know he was having fun, but he was.

Jayne: Right, exactly. Yeah. So I try to bring that to all of my endeavors too. I think if there is one unifying thread in all of the different career things that I've done and planning to do, it is to make it fun, to have joy. Even when I'm meeting with people.

Like yesterday I had a meeting with some clients about a possible \$30 million dollar grant that we're applying for and it's crazy competitive. And it's going to be very complex to put all these pieces together and I'm working with a team of my partners, and it's a big deal. But I am still trying to always instill in the gathering, into the conversation, a sense of we are human, we are imperfect doing this, and we're loving our work so let's have some fun around all of that.

Jill: I love that.

Jayne: And I think that's one of the things that has helped my career sustain itself. That's kind of the secret sauce.

Jill: Yeah, because what's the point of going through life and just being miserable all the time? I don't know, that just sounds like the least fun thing ever.

Well, this podcast has been incredibly fun for me. I hope it's been fun for you as well.

Jayne: Oh my goodness, so much fun.

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Jill: Is there anything that we didn't talk about that you want to make sure people know? And then we're going to talk about how people can follow you, find you, and stalk you. Oh, sorry, I take that last part back.

Jayne: Well, first I want to say that even though I'm a devotee and possibly a priestess of fun, it's not to say that I don't have down moods, or even depressive episodes or all of that. Of course that all happens. And I think that part of getting back to the fun is not fighting the negativity that you have in yourself.

I'm just experiencing it, try to let it pass through you, not beat yourself up for not being positive. So all of those things, I don't want to try and set myself up as some like perfect Buddha of eternal fun. That's not me. But I prioritize it.

Jill: Oh, I love that, the perfect Buddha of eternal fun. That is a statue I would 100% put in my office. But no, but you make a great point, right? It's like when fun is the theme of your life, it doesn't mean that like, oh, suddenly my life is just one big amusement park ride, right?

Jayne: No, not at all. It's very serious business.

Jill: Yeah.

Jayne: And so another thing, you'd ask what my life is about right now and besides the music and the day job with the consulting, I'm also working with one of my business partners and a good friend of mine who lives in Japan and teaches at the University there, a university there, to come up with some workshops and some coaching structures for people who are looking to sort of find their kind of authentic voice.

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Right now we're focusing on folks, finding your midlife voice is a retreat series that we're in the middle of creating right now. I just talked to my friend in Japan a couple days ago about that. And it's living creatively, whether you have an art or a craft or hobby that you're passionate about, or that you've never tried.

Or something that people criticized you into stopping when you were younger. Or you criticized yourself into stopping doing it because, oh, I'm not good enough to paint or, be a cook, or do ceramics, or I don't even know.

Jill: Or do a triathlon.

Jayne: Or do a triathlon, right, exactly. And so it sort of expands on the whole Slow Fat Triathlete theme as, you know, it's not live your athletic dreams in the body you have now, it's live your dreams in the person that you are now.

Jill: Yeah. Oh, I love that. Wait, so because I think a lot of times we think like, oh, I need to get better at X, Y, Z or I need to get more organized or whatever before I can try that thing. And it's like, no, you can do it. You can do it in the person you are right now. Oh, so good.

Jayne: Thank you.

Jill: So can people register for these retreats now?

Jayne: The first one we're planning on doing is next spring. So we don't have the registration process set up yet. We're really just, you know, doing curriculum notes and how are things going to be structured. But we're

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looking at doing three or four day retreats. We're going to do them both in California and Japan, that's the plan.

My friend has been leading women's empowerment and work-life balance retreats for women living in Japan the last couple of years and she has graciously agreed to collaborate with me, a newbie in this field. But we just complement each other really well.

Jill: Oh, this is exciting. I love this. I cannot wait, you will have to tell me when they are open for registration because I'm going to tell everybody I know.

Jayne: Oh my gosh, I will put it on Facebook. I need a social media coach because I've got like, you know, I've got a page on Facebook for this, and I got a page on Facebook for the music, and I've got my own personal thing. And I've got an Instagram account, which is more music focused. And I'm just like, I need to manage all this better. But I will try to get the word out as best I can once it all happens.

Jill: Oh my gosh. Okay, well, we're going to have all your links in the show notes so that people can follow you so that they will be alerted when everything is available. And in the meantime, everybody needs to go and buy Slow Fat Triathlete, even if you don't want to be a triathlete. It's just an inspiring book, it's a fun book, and it will change how you think about yourself, for sure.

Okay, so how can people find you? Let's talk about that for a moment.

Jayne: Okay, so on Instagram I'm Jaynetunes, J-A-Y-N-E-T-U-N-E-S. And Facebook, Jayne Williams Original Music. The band is Dirt Rakers on Facebook and Instagram.

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Jill: Okay, and is there a website?

Jayne: You know, I actually don't have my own website anymore. I used to have, slowfattriathlete.com was the domain. But when I stopped sort of doing that I let that lapse. So I don't have a website right now.

Jill: Okay. All right. Well, I mean, Instagram and Facebook are basically great places to advertise what's going on with you. So make sure everybody follows you there. Gosh, thank you so, so much for taking your time today to hang out with me and have this conversation.

Jayne: It's been an immense pleasure. Thanks for having me.

Jill: Yeah, same. All right runners, I hope you enjoyed this interview because I think it might actually be the favorite one then I've done. In 262 episodes this is my favorite. So thanks again.

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