

Ep #265: Body Image in Athletes with Jane Pilger



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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: Hey runners. So I am here this week with Jane Pilger, who is, oh my gosh, you're going to be so excited for today's discussion. She is a food freedom and body trust coach. And she helps women who feel out of control around food develop trust with themselves and trust in their bodies. And as athletes, this is like one of the most important skills that we can have, is to trust our bodies.

So we're going to be talking today all about body image, in particular body image in athletes. I'm just like so excited to dive in. Jane, thank you so much for joining me here today.

Jane: Thank you for having me. I'm so excited to be here.

Jill: And I haven't seen you in person in, it's been probably five years.

Jane: It's been, it has been years for sure.

Jill: It's been a while. I feel like it was California last time we saw each other. So yeah, it's delightful to see you here on Zoom today. So before we get too far into our discussion, I would love for you to share with everybody who you are and how you've come to this place in your life.

Jane: Yeah, thank you. So I would say as far as what we're talking about today with body image and body image as an athlete, I never considered myself an athlete growing up. I just wasn't really particularly an athlete

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growing up. I played volleyball in high school. I loved volleyball, I loved the sport.

And when I graduated from high school I went on to college and that transition from high school to college was very challenging for me. And it was in that very first semester of college that I was no longer playing volleyball, I didn't make the team and I was crushed. And I had a lot of other things going on. And I started, I basically started bingeing my first semester in college.

And I proceeded to spend decades bingeing, restricting, trying to lose weight, trying to stop this terrible thing that I did, full of shame around this behavior that I didn't want to talk to anybody about. But I would just eat volumes upon volumes of food. I lived by myself so it was very easy to just go to the grocery store or pretend like all kinds of people were eating this food.

And I was on this, just this path really of feeling very out of control with food. But at the same time I was an active person. So I shouldn't say that I never considered myself an athlete. I've always enjoyed being outside and doing things. And over time and over these decades basically, as I was trying to stop bingeing I was also discovering my love for athletics and discovering oh, wow, I really like to go out and run. I like to go out and do these things.

And a girlfriend of mine, she was talking to me about doing a triathlon one time, years and years ago. And I was like, wow, that sounds like so much fun. So I looked up a local triathlon in my community. I did my first triathlon in 2002 and for the last 20 years I have just been hooked on the sport of triathlon. So through that I was still-

Jill: Wait, we need to pause because you're like an iron level triathlete, right?

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Jane: I am, yes.

Jill: Let's not let that pass by.

Jane: Yes, so I started with a sprint triathlon in my local community. I put my helmet on backwards, I did not know the cops were stopping traffic, I thought they were stopping me. All the beginner mistakes back in 2002. And I worked my way up to the full iron distance. And last summer I qualified for Kona, the world championships, Ironman World Championships and I'll be headed there on October 6th this year.

Jill: Stop it. Oh my God.

Jane: Yes.

Jill: Congratulations.

Jane: Thank you.

Jill: I did not realize that, that's so fucking amazing. Oh my God.

Jane: Talk about impossible goals, it is something that I literally never thought was possible for me. And yeah, particularly two years ago I broke my pelvis in a bike accident. And then to turn around and be able to qualify for Kona, it's just-

Jill: Oh my gosh, okay. Congratulations on that. And I apologize for like misdirecting our conversation, but I could not let that, "Oh, I've been a triathlete for 20 years." I'm like, wait, let's talk about this. Okay, so you found triathlon and...

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Jane: I did, I found triathlon all while still struggling with binge eating, still trying to get a handle on all of that. I had a lot of drama around there's no way that I can be the type of athlete that I want to be while I'm still bingeing. I really felt like what I was doing with food was keeping me from being an athlete.

I had a lot of body image, thinking about what I was looking like in my outfits, comparing myself to everybody else. There was a very long, big journey through all of that. And now I'm at the place where I am helping other women who are feeling out of control with food, and struggling with bingeing, and struggling with the idea of their bodies and their body image as it relates to athletics and all the things. Like it's all come full circle now for me, but yeah, it's been a ride.

Jill: I love this. So what, I mean, what was the thing that helped you shift from feeling out of control around food and having a lot of thoughts about your body and yourself as an athlete to where you are now?

Jane: Honestly, I would say it's really been two things for me. I spent so much time trying to stop this thing, trying to control it. Trying to control my body, trying to change my body. It really felt like I was working against myself.

And what I've learned over the years, it's two really powerful things for me. A lot of work, I really became very well versed in the body, the nervous system. Really understanding how the nervous system works, and how so much of my life I was in a very activated state, very in that very kind of fight or flight state, which would send me too food to relax myself and to calm myself down.

And when I got to really learn more about myself, my body, how it worked, then I could respond in such different ways. Then, as I started to learn that I was like, wow, I can actually work with my body. So I started actually like

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communicating with my body, trusting my body, hearing what my body was telling me all along, I just never listened.

And that really just shifted the whole relationship between myself, my body, myself as an athlete. Like really wanting to work with myself instead of trying to change myself, control myself, that's been the biggest shift.

Jill: Yeah. Now, I think that is probably the biggest misconception that most people have, is if I want to stop doing an activity or if I want to get better at another activity, I have to control. It's this belief that we have to have this like tight control and discipline over everything. And that just leads to a lot of problems.

Jane: Exactly, exactly.

Jill: Okay, so let's talk about your definition of body image, because I think everybody has a different idea of what body image means. But how would you define it?

Jane: I would define body image as, for an individual, as your own collection of thoughts about your body.

Jill: I love that, that's so simple.

Jane: Plain and simple, yeah. Yeah, your collection of thoughts about your body. And what you will find is your collection of thoughts about your body often show up when you look at other people's bodies.

Jill: Oh, say more about that.

Jane: So if I think to myself, oh man, I really need to lose weight. I'm focused on maybe feeling some part of my body as not acceptable, it's not

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okay as it is, it needs to change. I am likely to be able to look at other people and think, maybe think, oh, they need to change, they need to lose weight.

If I'm judging myself and my own body in a negative way, I'm likely either judging other bodies as good or bad. So either like that body needs to change, it could lose weight or whatever. Or ooh, I would like to have that body.

Jill: Yeah.

Jane: So we're looking at it as good or bad when we look at our own body as good or bad. Maybe I'm good that one time that I went on that one diet and I weighed the least amount I've ever weighed as an adult. I looked good then. But then my body in this place or at this place is bad. We likely end up doing that when we look at other people's bodies too.

Jill: So we're constantly like ranking ourselves from the worst to the best. And it's so funny because your body is literally just a circumstance. I always say like it's just my meat suit. And it doesn't have any goodness or badness until we create thoughts around it.

Jane: Right. And as an athlete where that shows up, so for example if you show up to a race, you show up to a running race and you're looking around at all of the bodies around you. If you find yourself looking, oh wow, look at that body. That body looks amazing, I would love to have that body. Or oh, I wouldn't like to have that body. Or oh, I feel like I don't like what I look like in this self, in this body.

If you find you're really focused on either your own body, or the bodies of other people, it's really just a reflection that you're not in a place of acceptance of your body or all bodies as a general concept.

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Jill: Yeah, I love that so much because I've noticed that in my own journey to body acceptance that I'm constantly getting surprised by the, not just the size of my body. But like I'm not so focused on the size of my body that I'll just knock stuff over with my butt because I like forget it's there. Whereas I feel like 10 years ago I was so aware of exactly how much I took up in space.

And it was just exhausting to think about it all the time. And now I'm just like, Oops, knocked something off the coffee table and I can just laugh about it. And it's amazing to me because I'm literally just, oh, all right, I guess I better remember for next time. And it's just not a huge issue anymore. But do you think that body image issues show up even more in athletes maybe than other populations?

Jane: I think they do actually. And I think it's for several reasons. For one, if you look at so many, just we're all bombarded with media of any type. But if you look at the magazines, the Runner's World Magazine and any sort of magazine that is specifically for whatever sport it is, they especially in the past, it is getting better, but we're given these images of what a "runner's" body looks like.

You hear these stories of these college coaches telling these women who are already so underweight that they need to lose weight. There's this idea that's so perpetuated that if you weigh less then you will be faster, you will be better, you will be stronger, whatever. There's this idea within the athletic community that weight and performance are tied together.

And then you look at how we end up doing these sports that require very tight form fitting outfits. And so then there ends up being comparison, oh, look at that person, look at that person. Sizing each other up or thinking that somebody is going to, what happens a lot is, and your listeners may have experienced it themselves.

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I know I have experienced it, I don't so much anymore, but I know I've experienced in the past of just showing up and basically deciding just by looking at somebody whether I think they're going to be fast or whatever. I think it's pretty common in the athletic world.

Jill: Yeah. And I wonder if the athletic world even attracts people who are more likely to have body image issues. Because it's attracting people who are saying like, oh, if I can exercise to keep my weight off, like it just, that whole diet mentality I think it becomes, what is it, like the snake eating its own tail?

Jane: Yeah, I do definitely think that there's probably those people who do it for the motivation of trying to control their size or their body. There's also a lot of very black and white thinkers, very all or nothing. And so those types of thinkers also can be more in the extremes of whether it's the extremes of how they eat, what they choose exercise wise.

Certainly in the world of Ironman these people are, they're definitely all or nothing type of people. So there's that type of thinking also. And there's a lot of discussion around race weight. There really is

Jill: I have one kind of amusing comment and then I have kind of an important question to further this discussion. The first that cracks me up is like this discussion that you can tell by somebody's weight, or the less you weigh the faster you are. Usain Bolt is like what the fastest man in the world arguably? 207 pounds.

Jane: Wow.

Jill: So it like blows my mind. I haven't weighed him recently, I'm just going off of information I got off of Google. But he's a big dude, he's super

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muscular, he is clearly obese according to the BMI charts. Right? And he's also the fastest man in the world.

And so a lot of folks come to this podcast and to my community, which specifically is created for fat runners and they're like, if I'm overweight I'm going to ruin my knees or I'm not going to be fast or whatever. And I'm like, actually that, I think, doesn't always hold true. But I just always think that's so funny, I'm like, yeah, Usain Bolt weighs over 200 pounds, his knees seem to be just fine.

Speaking directly, I think, to the running community that either identifies as fat or is officially classified as obese, whatever classification you want to use, folks that would identify as plus size. How do you think that, because I think up until now we've been speaking probably more about the type of athlete that most people would look at and say, hey, listen, you're a size six, what's your problem?

But there's like a lot of fat athletes out there that are doing some really amazing things. And I'm wondering what are your thoughts on, first of all, how the chatter about weight and body image from more straight size athletes would impact somebody who's more plus size? Or do you think that some of the more plus sized folks that come to sport have already started doing the body image work and maybe have fewer thoughts about it? That was a loaded question, I'm sorry.

Jane: Honestly, I think it's probably 50/50. I think one thing that many plus size athletes might be surprised to hear about is they might be surprised to hear about the prevalence of body image issues in straight size athletes. And not even like straight size, but like the pointy, like not even the pointy, the extremely this body could be on the cover of a magazine athlete, there is such a prevalence of body image issues, I think, around all sizes.

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So there can be this idea of, I've had it said to me before by somebody who is in a larger body, if I had your legs I would run around naked. It's like this idea if I was in your body I would have no body image issues at all.

Jill: Yeah.

Jane: But that's not the way it works. It's like your body, the way your body looks, the size of your body, anything about your body, that doesn't create your body image, it's what you think about it. So really, I think it would be just interesting for plus sized people to know that they might be thinking, oh, if I had that body, then I wouldn't have any body image issues. And that's just not true.

We had this discussion before we started, I don't think either one of us have ever met a woman, athlete or not, runner or not, who does not have some days where she does not feel good, confident, or comfortable in her skin. That's kind of part of just being a human and having a human body.

So there are the negative thoughts and the thinking that it needs to change or that it could be different or that it should be better. I think those types of the thoughts that come up that can create negative body image can happen whether you are straight size or whether you are plus size. It really is not at all actually what your body looks like.

Jill: Yeah, because your experience of your body is not determined by your actual body. And I think that the difference is for a plus sized person who's, "Oh, if I had your legs I wouldn't have any body image issues," I think what they're really saying is I wouldn't experience external fat phobia. Because there's such a thing as thin privilege.

Jane: Absolutely, yes.

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Jill: And for sure, yeah, if you're a thinner person, if you're traditionally thin, then there's hundreds of studies out there showing that you get treated differently than a fat person.

Jane: Absolutely.

Jill: But I think that's a completely different conversation than what we're having right now, which is your internal experience of your own body. What are some of the ways that kind of those thoughts that we have about our bodies can get in our way as athletes?

Jane: I think one of the biggest ways that body image can really get in our way, especially as athletes, is a lot of times when you're thinking about your body or how it looks or comparing yourself to other people, you're really in your head, right? Like you're in your head, you're thinking about what you don't like and you're not able to really be present.

So whether it's present in the experience of let's say you are just out running with some friends, but you're in your head about how you look in your outfit or how you're bigger than somebody else. Whatever that kind of dialogue that's going on up in your head, you're really then not able to be there to experience the conversation, to connect with yourself in your body and really pay attention to how is my body feeling today?

Am I feeling really good? Am I feeling energized? What is my, thinking about your fueling, or your hydration, or your cadence, or all of these other things that can really help increase whatever your goal is as a runner, right?

Like your goal may be to just go be able to run one mile and have a great time and have your body feel really good at the end. Your goal may be to

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be able to run three miles faster than you ran three miles last month. Your goal may be to PR.

Whatever your goal may be, like any one of those, if you're in your head so much about what your body looks like or comparing yourself, you're not able to actually be in your body to experience yourself as a runner, yourself as an athlete and what it feels like to be in your body doing this sport because you're so much in your head about what you think maybe other people might be thinking about you.

Jill: Yeah. And so when you're not in your body experiencing your sport as you're doing it, what do you think that does to your performance?

Jane: For sure it's going to, I think it's going to take away from your potential, right? If you have a certain potential as an athlete, no matter where you are on the scale, no matter if you started running yesterday, we all have a different potential at any point.

But when you're so caught up in your head, there's no way you're going to be able to reach your potential if you're not able to really connect in with thinking about your breath, or thinking about your posture, or thinking about your cadence, or your high knees, or whatever it is that you happen to be working on in that moment within your sport.

If you're so in your head like it's just if you've ever had the situation where you might be watching TV, but all of a sudden you start thinking about maybe tomorrow. What am I going to do tomorrow? I've got to do this, I've got that, I've got that. And then all of a sudden, you're like, wait a second, I have no idea what just happened on this show.

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That's what happens also with us while we're running or doing whatever sport. If we're so in our heads about what we're thinking about our bodies, we can't be in our bodies at the same time.

Jill: Yeah, oh, I love that. And I'm thinking of specific examples, like all right, if you're checked out from how your body feels you could have a developing injury and not realize it. Or alternatively you might have something that feels a little uncomfortable and your brain is just like, okay, that's it, it's over.

So it could result in quitting early, it could result in pushing yourself too far if you're not able to just like drop in and see what's actually going on in your body.

Jane: Absolutely. And one of the things that I am so passionate about is really connecting with your body at any point, right? So if you are exercising, there is a difference between a little bit of discomfort that you can work through that actually you will get stronger through. The feeling of ooh, like this isn't quite right, if I push myself this could develop into an injury.

There is a difference between those two, and only when you've spent time really in your body connecting with what's going on can you discern between is this something that I can push through and get stronger from or is this something I need to stop?

It's like, also, when you get that craving eat a snack in the middle of the afternoon. Huh, let me check in with myself. Is this something because I actually really could use a snack right now? Or is my brain freaking out because I don't really want to do this next thing and it's just, hey, let's go do something else. Like it's different.

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But when you check in really with yourself, you can tell the difference. But if you're in your head about whatever else is going on, you don't have access to that information.

Jill: Oh yeah, I love that. I love the way you said that you don't have access to that information because it's always there. It's always there.

Jane: Yeah.

Jill: And I think another way that those thoughts show up is if we're thinking, this is a very common phrase that I hear frequently from people that have just met me. Usually after they've known me for a while they know not to say this to me, but, oh, nobody needs to see that. Like when we're talking about wearing a tank top on a hot day, or wearing shorts, or even running in a sports bra, or running in spandex. Which I'm sorry, running in spandex is the most freeing thing in the world. There's no chafing, there's nothing.

But I think that when your brain is in, I need to hide my body so that nobody else can see it and be offended by it or have opinions about it, then we end up wearing clothes that don't make sense for the activity and we're unable to perform because our fucking clothes are getting in the way.

Jane: Yes, absolutely.

Jill: It's insane, right?

Jane: Yes, yes. And I think it's also we can remember that when that person, of course, we can't control what anybody else is going to say or think about us. But here's what we do know, that comment that person however, whatever they say, they are going to be on to the next thing, and to the next person, and to the next judgmental whatever 30 seconds later.

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We stay with it for a long time. But when those comments happen, and they absolutely do, but that person just moves on. They just move on and then on to the next probably terribly judgmental thing they're going to think about the next person, because they're likely thinking judgmental things about themselves.

Again, it's like that mirror of when you find yourself judging other people's bodies, you are probably judging your own body. It can be such a mirror and such a reflection of really where your own personal work is too.

Jill: Yeah. Yeah, for sure. You should see some of the shit people write on my Instagram. Oh my God, the stuff. Oh, your knees, you're going to ruin your knees. I'm like, you're a stranger, why do you even care about my knees? But to me, that's a thing that I've had to just be like, oh, that's their brain. They're showing me their brain, I don't really care about the brains of strangers on the internet, especially if they don't even have a profile picture on their Instagram.

Yeah, and then we take this passing comment and we turn it into the seed of something really awful inside ourselves. And literally, it's just something that somebody tossed out of a car window. It's crazy.

Jane: Another thing that really comes up for me in terms of the question of how does our own kind of negative body image, how does that impact our performance or like our potential? I think anytime we are thinking that our body is not okay, it's not acceptable, it needs to change, it needs to be different.

Anytime we're going against our body, our body's not going to necessarily want to be like, hey, let's go work together and do these amazing things together. So if we're against it in some way, we're not really going to be able to work with it, if that makes sense.

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Like when we're trying to control, manipulate, change, but part of being an athlete, part of being a runner, is using your body, working with your body, seeing how can you even work more with your body to create whatever result you're looking for? Whether that's just to run a mile straight, whether it's to run three minutes straight, whether it's to make a PR around your neighborhood loop or at your next local running race, or if it's to do something else.

Whatever that is, you're working with your body to achieve that result. And if there's a part of you that is really against your body and thinking your body is different or needs to change, it can't help but hold you back if you're not really in partnership with it.

Jill: Oh, partnership. I love that term. So talk more about that. Like how do we create that trust with ourselves so that we can feel that partnership?

Jane: Yeah, so what I really like to say is that your body is always communicating with you, always. We just don't often listen. We are often like, I don't care if I'm having this cramp or this whatever. I said I was going to run three miles, I'm going to make myself run three miles. But our body is always communicating to us.

So what I'd like to do is really encourage people to just put your mind to work on in what ways is my body communicating to me throughout the day, that maybe I don't even listen? Or maybe I do listen clearly. It could be little things like thirst signals, like just being thirsty but not really responding to that, oh, I got to get this thing done, I got to get this done. In an hour, I'll get up and get myself a drink.

Or even urination signals, I am as guilty as many of holding it just so that I can get something else done. But guess what, my body is talking to me. My body's telling me these things, but I'm not always listening. So it doesn't

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have to be even running related. What are the ways that my body talks to me?

Maybe it is little niggly things that it's maybe my body telling me like, oh, you could really do a little more stretching, or maybe a little more mobility before you head out on your run. It can be in any different ways. Like just put your brain to work on what are the ways that my body is talking to me?

And how can I respond to what my body is saying? Rather than just ignoring it or bypassing it or thinking that well, if I just don't respond. We do the same thing with hunger, right? I'm not going to eat, it's not time.

Jill: Yeah. Yeah, I feel like we spend, our whole society is set up now for us to just check out of our physical experience between Netflix and social media, and food, and alcohol, and all the things. And even I was just on a podcast with somebody else where we were talking about how a lot of times people use exercise to check out of their bodies.

And exercise is like such a great time to actually really deeply check in. And we're like, yeah, I'm going to put on a podcast or some music because I don't even want to hear myself breathing. Like I want to disconnect from my physical experience as much as possible.

Jane: Yeah.

Jill: Yeah, so like the opposite, which is listening and paying attention. And during athletic activities, like maybe even specifically for running, what are some ways that you can check in with your body and create that trust and partnership?

Jane: I do a couple of things. One thing that I like to do is I might have just a few like cues. Every once in a while, if I'm doing a race maybe every mile

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I will just remind myself like check in. So maybe I'll check in with my posture, or my shoulders, do I have a nice upright posture? I might check in with my cadence.

One thing I'm working on is increasing my cadence when I run, so I'll check in there. And I'll check in with my breathing. So those are three places that I'll just check in with myself at least every mile if not. And during the run when my body talks to me, I listen. But I have those cues, three little form cues.

And then I also have, I have a mantra that I say to myself. And it keeps me within, it keeps me out of my head and more in my body and like the experience that I want to have as I'm running. And I repeat that to myself, and it's strong, steady, smooth, confident. And so then I'm really working on feeling strong in my body. I'm feeling steady. I'm feeling smooth. I'm feeling confident. I'm creating that experience and those emotions for myself while I run.

So sometimes it's more of like the emotion that I'm trying to create for myself. And then other times it's the actual physical cues of things that I know will help get me towards where I'm wanting to go.

Jill: Yeah. And I noticed none of those have anything to do with how your body looks.

Jane: No, right.

Jill: Right, because it's, hey, let's not focus on that.

Okay, so I have one final thing that I'm hoping we can talk about, which is if you are out on a run and you are experiencing some body image thoughts.

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You're out there and you're like, I don't know, you see somebody running faster and they look thinner, and you just like, and it starts.

Because I think, first of all, I think people believe, oh, I can fix my body image and then I never have those thoughts again. And they're always going to come up, it's what you do with them that matters. And here you are, I don't know, maybe we're in an Ironman right? Here you are in Kona, the race you've been training for years and you have a body image attack. Like what do we do in those moments?

Jane: So the first thing I do, I know when I get to a race the body image chatter will start. It's just I know, I have done enough races and I know that's what happens. When I go to bigger races, when I go to Kona it will probably start when I get on the first airplane to Kona and it's filled with a bunch of very lean looking athletes.

And what I do is because I know that's happening, I say to myself, oh, this is the part where I start comparing myself to others, or where I start to notice other bodies, or this is the part where I think that I don't measure up or that my body needs to be different, or change, or whatever.

Just noticing, for me just being aware, oh yeah, this is the part where I start to compare myself to other people. Oh yeah, I knew this was going to come, this is that part. And once I see it, then I'm not attached to it. When I don't acknowledge that it's happening, then it just feels real. Like I'm living it instead of observing it.

So if you are out for a run, and you notice yourself comparing yourself to somebody else on the trails, oh yeah, this is the part where I compare myself to other people. It doesn't mean it's good or bad or right or wrong, it's just you go from living in it to observing it. So that, just giving yourself a little bit of space there can be super helpful.

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Jill: I love that. I love that so much. Okay, keep going.

Jane: And for anybody, when you go to a race it is very likely, or even a big group event, a big group run, something like that, those are the times it is going to be likely that your body image chatter may come up. So even just, oh yeah, okay, this is that part. This is that part she was talking about on that podcast I listened to.

Just giving yourself that much just relief from it, really, it's pretty remarkable because it's, oh, this is the part. Then it's oh yeah, that's normal so I can just let it go. Oh yeah, okay, that happened, now next, moving on. So yeah, that alone is super, super helpful.

Jill: It's like you're watching a rerun of friends and you're like, this is the part where Joey and Chandler get in a fight.

Jane: Exactly.

Jill: It's like I've seen it seven times, I know what's going on.

Jane: Yes, exactly, that's it. And you're not like on the edge of your seat because you don't know what's going to happen or how is it going to resolve or then what. It's just, oh no, this is the part.

And for our runners who do races on a regular basis, there are probably many other parts of your races that you also can experience, right? Oh, this is the part where I start comparing myself to other people. Oh, this is the part where I get really nervous right before the start. Oh, this is the part where I have to go to the bathroom 10 times.

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And then you just know and so it's not oh, what's wrong with me? Why am I going to the bathroom 10 times? It's, oh no, this is that part. So when it happens multiple times, you can figure that out.

As you're first starting to go to races, then it's like you talk to somebody else, "Oh my gosh, I'm going to the Porta Potty for the 10th time." And somebody else says, "Oh yeah, that's totally normal." So being able to just verbalize what's happening for you is super helpful.

The other thing that I really love is anytime I find myself focusing on something about my body that I don't like, or I think needs to change, or I would rather be different, I love the concept of giving myself at least as much time to focus on what is amazing about my body, what is strong about my body.

The concept of equal airtime, right? Like giving yourself the same amount of time that you think about what you don't like or what you might prefer to change. Give yourself at least as much time to think about what is amazing about what your body does. It's so incredible.

Even just like I'm dealing with an injury right now. I could focus on the pain, the oh my gosh, what if I can't do my workout, my whatever. But what I'm choosing to really put my energy on is how amazing the body is in how it heals, and what it does, and how I can really set this situation up for the best healing possible.

It's like focusing on that part of it as opposed to the part that I don't like, which I can't change that there's pain and there's an injury. I can't change that part. But you know what I can do, I can focus on all of the other amazing parts and the way that my body can work to really heal and probably even be stronger at the end of this.

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Jill: It is amazing how our bodies can do that. Injuries aside, you put yourself through a hard workout and your body is, oh, okay, that's how we're going to do it? All right, well, I'm going to build back a little bit stronger.

Jane: Exactly.

Jill: Your body is so freakin smart. And sometimes when I'm running, I'll just be imagining, I'll be like, okay, so to move my foot there's like a neuron firing in my brain and then an electrical signal running all the way down to the various muscles that are necessary. And then the foot moves and then the next thing. And it all happens in, I don't even know what's smaller than a nanosecond, but it happens so fast that it seems like we're not even participating in it.

And I just think the human body is so miraculous. And whether you are a pro level triathlete, or whether you are a brand new runner who is just starting out, the exact same process is moving your foot. Bodies are just so freaking cool.

Jane: They're amazing.

Jill: Yeah.

Jane: They really are amazing. And the other thought that helps me a lot is there will always be somebody faster, there will always be somebody fitter, there will always be somebody XYZ. I can just be me, be in this one body, we all get one body. This is the only body that you get to live in and it's such a privilege to be able to participate in these sports and to be able to whatever your body is capable of, is amazing.

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And to really be able to spend at least as much time thinking about the amazing things that your body does and is capable of, at least giving yourself, giving your brain that space to really just have that appreciation for your body and what it can do. And the fact that it houses you and it lets us have this conversation, and it lets us go out and enjoy runs, and do all of the things. It's remarkable.

Jill: It is and like some bodies do that with a little extra cellulite and fat cells, and that's literally the only difference. This has been such a great conversation, Jane, thank you so much for joining me today. Is there anything else that you want to share or add to what we've talked about? And then of course, we're going to get to how people can find you and follow you.

Jane: I just would go back to the idea of as it relates to your body, just making that connection of working with your body instead of against your body. So if you feel like you're somebody who's just in the I don't like my body, I hate my body, it needs to change, like where you've really rejected your body, I really encourage you to just consider thinking about working with your body in partnership with your body.

Sometimes people, they're a little hesitant to say if I work with my body now, if I accept my body now and I think my body now is amazing, then I won't change it. Then I won't want to change, then I'll have to continue to be in this body and live in this body. And that thought actually keeps people from accepting themselves.

So they think, no, I can't accept myself now because then I would never change. But the reality is, if you don't accept yourself, you are going to be at war with yourself for the rest of your life.

Jill: Yeah.

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Jane: And so far, not accepting yourself has not helped, right? It keeps you in this constant battle. So look at the ways, look for the ways you can work with yourself, where your body is always communicating with you, where is your body, how does your body communicate with you on a daily basis? It wants to be in partnership with you. We just, we have been so conditioned to not listen and to really keep that separation, but it's there. It's available. It's always available.

Jill: I love that so much. You are like very gifted with this work so I hope that everybody is going to immediately go follow you and check out your stuff. First of all, let's make sure that we get the spelling of your name correct.

Jane: Yes, so it's Jane Pilger, and the last name is P as in Peter, I-L-G-E-R.

Jill: Okay.

Jane: Yeah, so my website is janepilger.com. So you can go there or I'm on Facebook and Instagram both, @janepilgercoaching is how to find me there.

Jill: Awesome. And if people want to work with you, how can they do that?

Jane: Yeah, so I work with women specifically, who feel out of control around food. I work in a six month container. This work, it takes a while to unwind all of this, right? To find that trust, the safety.

What I really do is help people develop safety and trust with themselves and with food. And that's like just where really my passion lies. But you can find me on janepilger.com, set up a food freedom session with me. And

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then we can definitely talk more about all of what I do, what that looks like, and just what that potential might be for anybody else.

Jill: Awesome. I love it. And we'll have all those links in the show notes for this episode. Thank you so very much for joining me today. This was such a great conversation.

Jane: Thank you. Thank you for having me. I really appreciate it.

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/upandrrunning to join. I would love to be a part of your journey.