

Ep #274: So You F*\$@ed Up, Now What?



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With Your Host

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.

Hey runners. So this week I am traveling to Fredericksburg, Texas with a dozen of my Run Your Best Life members who are doing a race there. And we are going to spend a couple of days before the race working on getting all set up for big, audacious 2023 goals. And I'm so excited, I'm so freaking excited. Because helping people plan and execute big ass goals, it's my jam. It is just so fun for me thinking about what could be possible and then working on bringing it into existence.

And one of the things we're going to be doing while we are there is thinking a lot and talking a lot about failure and what failure means to us as runners and as people, and how we're all so fucking scared of failing. And by the way, I know that you are fucking up and failing all over the place right now, because you're human. And humans are messy and imperfect at the same time that we are amazing and fabulous.

And now this is not going to be one of those podcasts where I shake my finger at you and say you must do better. This is more like, hey, you're failing and I'm so proud of you. Right? So awesome, good job. So here's the deal, I need you to stop pretending that you're supposed to be perfect, okay? And pretending that you don't fuck things up once in a while.

I want you to stop pretending that failure is actually a bad thing. Because you know what? Success doesn't happen on the first try most of the time. And sometimes it doesn't happen on the 10th try, or maybe even the 1,000th, right? That's how many light bulbs Edison made before he got the

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one that worked. 1,000 light bulbs. He was willing to fail 1,000 times so that he could perfect the light bulb.

And the thing about failure, right, is that you've been taught that it is embarrassing, something to be ashamed of. You've been told that failure is not an option, right? That that's what you should believe and put it on a t-shirt, right? And the problem is that if you think failure is something to be ashamed of, if you think failure means something has gone wrong, you're never going to do anything new.

That is the truth. You're never going to run that marathon. You'll never apply for a new job. You'll never know how to make the perfect chocolate chip cookie. If you're like, "Well, I might fail. I might not do it right," you're never going to do anything. And, my friends, failure is the path. Failure is the way. Failure is necessary.

We need to stop thinking that failure means something has gone horribly wrong. Failure is simply not getting the result you want after you made an attempt at it. It's a neutral circumstance, all right? Imagine you tried to run a half marathon at Disney and you got pulled off the course at mile seven, right? You didn't finish. Yeah, it's a failure. The circumstance is you didn't finish the race.

But that is not what makes you feel bad. That is a neutral circumstance. Everybody's like, "I failed and I feel terrible because I failed." But the failure is not what makes you feel bad. It is your thoughts about it that cause you pain, right? Failure is neutral, your thoughts are not.

And your thoughts might be like, "I'm so embarrassed. I told everybody about this race and I didn't finish, and now they think I'm pathetic," right? Or, "I spent so much money on this vacation and now it's ruined because I failed." Or, "I'll never get another chance to do this again, I totally blew it."

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Or even I've heard some people say, "Well, I didn't finish the race, so I guess I should just quit running."

And when you think those thoughts, you feel awful. But the race and your lack of finishing it is not what makes you feel that way, okay? You're beating the crap out of yourself with your thinking, and that's what hurts. So failure is a circumstance and it only hurts if you believe that something has gone wrong. If you believe that there's something wrong with you because you failed.

And when you were younger, you failed all the time and you never made it mean anything. How do I know this? Well, when you learned how to talk, when you learned how to feed yourself, when you learned how to walk, when you learned how to run, right? When you tried to feed yourself and you ended up with food all the way down your chest. When you tried to walk and you fell down over and over and over again.

At no point did you say, "Well, that's it, I'm never going to figure out walking. I guess that's it, I'm done." Right? Like, no, you failed, maybe you cried because it hurt, I don't know. And you got up and you tried again. Okay, over and over again because we're not born thinking that failure is a terrible thing. We are born like if you don't get what you want, you try and try again. That's what's instinctive with us.

But over the years you're socialized to believe that failure is not an option, that failure is a terrible thing, that it means that something's wrong with you. And then we give up on trying new things. We give up on making attempts because we think we cannot tolerate failing, okay?

Somewhere along the line between learning how to walk and now, you've been taught a bullshit idea that failure is not acceptable. But the thing is that success, right, like failure, so we've been taught failure is a terrible thing and that it makes you feel awful. And success is a good thing and that

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it makes you feel wonderful. But success is also neutral, just like failure, okay?

Success just means you got the result that you wanted. Failure, you didn't get the result you want. Success, you got the result you want. It's two sides of the same coin, it's neutral. When you succeed at something, that success doesn't make you feel good any more than the failure made you feel bad. It is your thoughts about the success that create the feeling, okay?

You think you feel awesome because you finished your marathon. You don't feel awesome because you finished your marathon. You feel awesome because you have a thought about the neutral circumstance of finishing the marathon, okay?

Our lives are simply a bunch of neutral circumstances that we have opinions about. And those opinions, right, those are our thoughts, they make us feel a certain way, which influences our actions, gives us our results, which then become more circumstances, right? That is how it works.

So what I'm here to tell you is that if you want more success, because success does feel good, right? With success it's easy to think the thoughts about success that make us feel good. But if you want more of that, you have got to be failing a lot more. Because the failure is where the growth happens. It's where the learning happens.

Now, if you're afraid of feeling embarrassed, or disappointed, or mad at yourself, sure, it makes total sense to avoid failure because you're like, "Oh, I might feel my embarrassed, my face might get hot, I might feel like a fluttering in my chest." Somehow we have conflated, we have decided that embarrassment and shame are the worst things in the world that can

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happen to us. That feeling disappointed is the worst thing. It's not the worst thing, right?

A feeling will not kill you. A feeling is quite literally a bunch of electrical impulses that start in your brain and travel throughout your body from neuron to neuron, okay? It is literally electricity, that is what a feeling is. A feeling will not kill you. Your fear of feeling a feeling though, will keep you from doing a lot of cool stuff.

And then you are left with different emotions, like maybe feeling bored, or lonely, or unfulfilled because you never try anything new. So being afraid of feeling a feeling is not super helpful. Avoiding disappointment doesn't mean that you just walk around feeling happy all the time. You end up with other emotions like bored, lonely, unfulfilled because you're never doing anything new.

And honestly, I think the big reason that most people don't do the stuff in their lives that they want to do, is they're just really afraid of being disappointed or embarrassed or mad, right? And they're like, "I don't want to feel those emotions, so I'm not going to do the thing." And instead, what they don't realize is that they're choosing boredom, loneliness, unfulfillment, guilt, and maybe disappointment for something else, right? Because we get disappointed in other ways.

We might be disappointed if we try to run that half marathon and we fail. But if we don't try, then we're disappointed because we didn't try the thing. Humans are so funny, right? So it's a tradeoff. So if you're willing to feel disappointed, right, and you obviously are willing to feel disappointed if you're going to give up on trying something and then instead just be disappointed that you didn't try.

You're saying it's okay for you to feel disappointment if you're willing to, if you're okay with it, right? You know it might not feel great, but it's also just

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a feeling. If you decide ahead of time that you're like, "All right, I might fail, I might feel disappointed, embarrassed, ashamed," you can weather failure. And then you can do some really cool stuff.

If you are willing to fail and then handle the emotions that will inevitably come when you have some thoughts about your failure, you can do some really cool stuff.

Now, if you're like, "Nope, sorry, can't do it. Disappointment is a hard pass for me." Then, okay, you get to stay right where you are. And you always wonder what could have been, right? On your deathbed you're thinking, "I wonder what my life would have been like if I had tried to run that half marathon." Right?

But if you want to do something new if you want to live a different life or change parts of your current life, and I do not know a single person on this planet who is not interested in at least changing one thing about themselves, right? If you want to do that, you've got to be willing to fail. You just have to. There is no other way. It is either stay where you are, or evolve.

And evolution is just a series of failure after failure after failure, with a few successes sprinkled in there, okay? Fail, learn, grow, fail, learn growth, fail, learn, grow. You fail forward. Every time you fail, you learn, you grow, you're a little bit farther down the path. Now, again, if you want to stay put, if you're like, "You know, it'd be nice to change things, but it seems like a lot of work. I just want to stay where I am." That's fine. Go ahead. I'm all in, okay?

I'm not saying everyone should be trying to change themselves. There's nothing wrong with staying the same, it's totally a choice. But if you're listening to this podcast, my guess is that you actually do want to change at least something about yourself. And that's where the failure comes in.

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And so you might be wondering, “Okay, right now, I’m all in with my belief that failure is the worst thing that can happen.” You’re like, “I’ve been taught that, my parents drilled it into me, it is just part of who I am. I believe that failure is the worst thing that could happen and I have to avoid it.” And you’re like, “This is my belief system, so how do I just stop believing it?” Right? You’re like, “What if I fail at thinking about failure?”

So, first of all, it’s a process, okay? But I want to start by opening your mind up to thinking differently about failure, just a tiny bit, just a little skosh. So maybe just be willing to fail and feel awful. You say, I don’t have to like the failure, I don’t have to be proud of the failure, I don’t have to look forward to it. I’m just willing. I’m willing to fail and I’m willing to feel kind of awful.”

Kind of like if you’re somebody who enjoys a glass or two of wine, or maybe a glass three or four, when you have a few drinks you are willing to feel awful the next day. You are saying to yourself, “I am going to be hungover tomorrow, and I’m all in.” Okay? So if you’re somebody who drinks, I know, some of you might be like, “That sounds like a really dumb idea. Why would we do that?”

But if you’re somebody who enjoys alcohol, right, you know when you’re having that third glass of wine and you’re saying to yourself, “I’m going to feel so bad tomorrow, but I’m willing to feel bad tomorrow to enjoy this glass of wine right now.” Okay? You’re like, I know I’m going to feel awful about this, but I’m going to do it anyway.

What if you applied that whole concept to failure? Because, first of all, with failure there are no headaches, there is no thirst, there’s no bed spins, right? It’s just some neural connections in your body zinging the emotions around, right? So when you’re willing to fail and you know, I’m going to feel awful, I’m going to have some emotions, but I’m willing to try it and see what happens.

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I'm willing to feel awful, willing to feel ashamed and disappointed and frustrated while I learn to think differently, that's the power, okay? If you're able to be uncomfortable while you evolve, while you fail along the road to success, you are going to be unstoppable, all right?

So learning to think differently, like shifting your brain, sometimes it's like turning the Titanic, right? And we all know, actually it's probably a terrible example because the Titanic did hit an iceberg. So we're going to imagine a really big cruise ship that is down in the Caribbean where there's no icebergs, okay?

So if you've ever like watched some of those time lapse videos of what it's like to turn a boat like that around, it takes a while. It's like, adjust, shift, adjust, shift. It's like back and forth, they're constantly adjusting and moving. And those big boats, they don't have a tight turning radius, you can hear the whole thing kind of creaking and groaning, and you're like, "Is it ever going to get there?" Right?

And it might not feel great. You might get a little seasick if you're on that boat while they're trying to turn it around. But shifting your brain is like turning around a really big ship. It's totally possible, but you're not going to turn it on a dime, okay? So you do it incrementally.

And maybe you start by practicing thoughts, right, like we just talked about. A thought like, I'm willing to fail even though I'm going to be scared. I'm willing to fail even though I feel like I want to barf. Or one of my favorites is, I don't know, failure is just a circumstance. Failure can't hurt me. Emotions can't hurt me, right?

So I'm not saying you got to be excited about failure. Just be willing to feel the discomfort, all right? And so then I know, okay, I might fail. It can't hurt me, right? We think about our Disney race, you made it seven miles to the half marathon, you got pulled off the course. Yes, that was a failure, but it

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didn't really hurt you. You were disappointed, but you lived. You lived to see another day. You lived to run another day.

You don't have to wallow, okay? And I think that's what happens to a lot of us, is we have a failure and instead of saying, "Okay, I'm going to give myself a hot minute to feel disappointed. But then I'm going to move on, and I'm going to learn what I can and grow." A lot of us are like, "Nope, I'm going to wallow. Somebody bring me a glass of wine and some Cheetos and I'm going to get real comfortable in this disappointment and I'm going to live here now." Right?

You don't have to do that after a failure, right? You did the best you could do. It's normal to feel disappointed. But it doesn't mean that, all right, that's it, you're running life is over, right? All you did was you tried and you failed, okay? And it happens to everyone. The important thing is what you make it mean about yourself. And I always like to make stuff like that, when it happens to me mean, oh, I just haven't figured it out yet, but I will. All right?

So being willing to fail is just another thought, right? The thought "failure is not an option" is one thought. I always say failure is always an option. Failure is always an option. Failure doesn't mean the end, failure just means I tried and I didn't get what I wanted, so I'm going to try again, all right?

So I want you to practice that. You don't have to believe that failure is a good thing, it might be going too far for me to ask you to do that right now. I just want you to be willing to actually try it and prove to yourself that you will not die if you fail.

Now, some of you might know that in 2019 I trained for the Philly marathon and I did not finish. My goal was to complete the training, and I also wanted to complete the race. But my primary goal was to complete the training,

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and I did actually do that. I did all of my training, or all of my long training runs, kind of blew my own mind, was super happy with myself.

Race day came, I did not finish the race, all right? And if you want to know the whole story of what happened you can check out all the podcasts that I did at the end of 2019. But the short story is I didn't make it mean anything about myself other than that I didn't finish the race and I'm going to try again, right?

I said I'm just not done yet. I'm just getting started. This was my first try. I will train differently. I will train harder. I will also learn how to run in wet socks, that was my biggest failure. I was not trained to run in the conditions that showed up on race day. That was my bad, right?

Okay, next time I'm going to make sure I seek out those rainy training days for at least one long run. Now that was in 2019, I wanted to train again in 2020 but of course Covid intervened in the meantime and then I got wrapped up in other things and I'm ready to try again.

So I've set a new goal to do it in 2023. So here's the thing, while I'm training for that race I'm going to fuck things up. There are going to be runs that feel awful. There are some that I might not even start or not finish. I will probably make some gear mistakes. I will tell myself awful things along the way. I'm up for all of it, right?

It's part of the process of training, because we need to fail during our training so that we can get better and evolve and become the person who finishes. If your training goes perfectly, if my training goes perfectly like it kind of did in 2019. My training went really, really well. And then on race day it was sleet, it was icy cold, and my feet were wet, soaked all the way through before I even started.

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So I didn't know, like I was not prepared for that on race day. And my training went really, really well. And because I didn't really have any big fuck ups during my training, things like having to run in a huge rainstorm, I wasn't prepared for race day. So I'm seeking out the mistakes. I'm seeking out the failures. I want to mess it all up during my training so I can figure out the solutions and be prepared.

That's how you prepare, right? You make mistakes, you learn, you regroup, you improve. There is no success without failure. Success does not happen in a vacuum. Failure is the path, failure is the way, and failure creates, it forces the evolution that is necessary to achieve success.

Now, there's something I do think I need to clarify on this. I don't want you to fail on purpose, okay? And when I say fail on purpose, I mean like giving up on yourself. Like, oh, this is getting too hard, I'm just going to quit and come back tomorrow, right? Or I'm just not into it right now. I'm not having fun, it's raining out, I don't like the rain, right?

Skipping a training run, because you're not feeling it, right, you're not having fun, that's quitting on yourself. That's not failing. Well, actually, let's clarify, it's failing ahead of time. It's failing so that you don't have to experience the failure, so that you don't have to experience the discomfort.

So I want you to avoid that, all right? Failing on purpose, giving up on yourself, failing ahead of time, that's kind of like a let's not do that, all right? Because the more you do that, the less prepared you're going to be.

But a failure where you really give 100% and you still don't get what you want, that is the sweet spot. That is the place where you're like, I did the best I could do, I failed. What did I learn? What's next? How do I regroup and try again? What can I do differently? Right? How can I fail at something else? What is the next thing I can fail at so I can see what works and what doesn't? Failure is magic, okay?

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Now, one last thing I want to cover, this is something that I hear people say and it bugs me. So I'm going to rant about it a little bit. And that is, I'm failing at life right now. Everything sucks, I'm failing at life. And people say this when things aren't going their way, okay? And mostly when they're like, I keep fucking up everything. I don't know, nothing is going my way.

That's what they mean when they say I'm failing at life. If that's you, I really want you to stop saying that. Because first of all, you're alive. If you're breathing, by definition you're succeeding at life, okay? failing at life is dead. So let's be factual about that, right? If you are alive and breathing, you are succeeding at life.

But secondly, if you're not getting a result you want in your life, it might be because you keep whining about how you're failing at life, right? When you think the thought, "I'm failing at life," do you feel enthusiastic and motivated? No. You feel overwhelmed and defeated and full of self-pity. Absolutely full of self-pity.

And how do you show up for yourself when those are your emotions? Well, you're like, Eeyore. You're like, "Woe is me, I'm Eeyore." I don't even know what Eeyore sounds like. I don't think that's what he sounds like, but that's what he sounds like in my head. "Wah, Eeyore, woe is me."

But seriously, right, when that is your emotional state, overwhelmed, defeated, full of self-pity, poor me, life is against me, I'm failing at life, right, you show up for yourself in a really shitty way. Okay, you create more of the same stuff for yourself.

So I want you to pay attention to what you're saying. And I'm not saying you're going to walk around going, "Oh, look at me, my life is perfect." Right? But get clear, what are the circumstances? And then what is the bullshit story you're telling yourself? And if the story you're telling yourself is

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that you're failing at life, like we got to be telling a different story because that story is not helping you, all right?

So, yeah, I think that's enough ranting. I think that's enough ranting for now. Okay, so Andy has a saying that he uses when he runs that I think is really applicable here. And so I want to share it for you because it's about failure. He says forward is forward. Like I define failure as a forward motion. So forward is forward, whether it's failing forward or succeeding forward, forward is forward.

It's like I went all in, I fucked it up, I broke it down, I said this is what I'm going to do to move myself forward. It's still forward motion. So I want to know what you're going to tell yourself when you fail, all right?

I know what I'm going to say when I fail. I'm going to say, "What did I learn? What can I do differently? Bring on the next one," right? Andy will say, "Forward is forward." What are you going to tell yourself? And are you going to seek out opportunities to do things that you might fail at so that you can learn, grow, evolve and get better? All right, that's what I want to know.

All right, one last thing before we close out for today. Run Your Best Life, which I've mentioned a few times during today's podcast is open for new members now. And you may have heard that we're only open a few times a year, that you have to take my Up and Running class first. And yes, that was true in the past, but for the rest of 2022 I'm testing something out, I'm going to open it up to the public.

All right, so there's no longer a prerequisite to joining Run Your Best Life, you can just hop right in whatever your running level. Whether you are a brand new never run a step, or you're an ultra-marathoner, we have something for everyone.

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And here's the thing, the reason I'm doing this is because I want to make it as easy as possible for fat women to start running. And I realized that having everyone go through a 30 day class first was doing the exact opposite. I was actually making it more complicated, right?

So I want to make it simpler. And that's good news for everyone because if you wanted to join Run Your Best Life and you didn't want to take the beginner class, you can just hop right in right now and we will help you train for that race, whatever it is.

So all of the details are over at runyourbestlife.com. I really hope I'm going to see you there. Again, it's runyourbestlife.com And that is it for today. Okay, my friends, I hope it was helpful for you. I hope that talking about failure in this way helped you maybe switch your brain around a little bit. And, of course, if you loved this episode, please share it on Instagram. And as always, I love you, stay safe, and get your ass out there and run.

Real quick before you go, if you enjoyed this episode you have to check out Run Your Best Life. It's my monthly coaching program where you will learn exactly how to start running, stick with it, and become the runner you have always wanted to be. Head on over to runyourbestlife.com to join. I would love to be a part of your journey.