

Ep #276: 3 Powerful Takeaways From the Run Your Best Life Texas Retreat



Full Episode Transcript

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 I just want to wish a happy US Thanksgiving to those of you who celebrate. And if you are celebrating, I hope you're listening to this while you're doing an actual turkey trot, I think that would be really fun. Strangely enough, I don't think I have ever done a turkey trot. I've been a runner for 25 years, and I don't think I've ever done one.

Prior to COVID I spent every Thanksgiving visiting family out of town and I would go for a run, usually on Thanksgiving morning. But I never really made the effort to find a local race because I'm the only runner in my family and so I would have been going all by myself. And frankly, I would just rather be home drinking mimosas with everyone in my pajamas. We are definitely a mimosa family on holiday mornings.

But since COVID, and since Andy and I have been together and he pretty much works either Thanksgiving day or the day after, I've sort of gotten out of the habit of traveling at this time a year. And so we're actually planning to do a 5k together on Thanksgiving morning. It's a week to go, I'm recording this a week ahead, we still haven't decided which one yet.

Hopefully we'll have it figured out in time or we might just make our own turkey trot. But this actually will be the first time in my life that I've gone running with somebody else on Thanksgiving morning and I'm very excited for that.

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Anyway, enough about me. A few weeks ago I was in Fredericksburg, Texas with 10 of my Run Your Best Life Clients for a race-cation retreat. And the race was the ZOOMA Race Series. And there was a 10k, a half marathon, and a 5k over a couple days, it was amazing.

The retreat part of the event, however, was a day and a half before the races. We spent a day and a half together in a room working on their 2023 goals, and it was powerful. It was very powerful. And I have a process that I use to help myself and others dream up, plan out, and execute big goals. And we worked through that process as a group and it was super fun, super fun.

And the goals that people came up with were just all over the map. So just to name a few highlights, Cynthia set a goal to do a half Ironman in 12 months. Beverly has set her sights on the New York City Marathon. Veronica is working on doing an unassisted pull-up. And Susan is starting her own business as a vegan nutrition coach. So like literally all over the map.

And there were so many, there were many other goals, I'm just reciting kind of some of the most varied types that came up. But it was super fun to see what everybody came up with and then to start watching people plan out how they're going to make it happen. And there were a lot of aha moments as we worked our way through the process.

And so today I wanted to share some of the takeaways with you because there were actually some pretty jaw dropping moments and I think they're helpful for everybody to hear. So there's three of them that I want to go over today. I may actually do another podcast with more of them later on, but we're just going to do three today.

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And the first one is called choose your ass. And this one came up while we were talking about the process of actually executing the steps of achieving a goal. And how when we first start out with any goal we're super excited because we are thinking about how cool it's going to be to have achieved it and we feel excited. And when we feel excited, we do all the things, right? We take all the steps.

And I want you to maybe think back to the first time you signed up for a new race distance, and maybe it was your first 5k or maybe it was the first time you signed up for a half marathon or whatever it was. You hit submit and you start planning out your training and you kind of have this little like flutter of excitement in your body, right?

Usually for like the first few weeks because you keep thinking like, "It's going to be so awesome to cross that finish line," right? And you're putting all your focus, all your thoughts on the results that you want to achieve. And this is normal, right? Because if you didn't want that result, you wouldn't be working on the goal. So usually in the beginning it's like all you can think about. So you feel excited a lot of the time. And when you feel excited, you're taking all the action you need to be taking.

But then what kind of happens after you've been working on it for a few weeks? It's like suddenly it's not as exciting. You're like, "Why am I not as motivated as I used to be?" It kind of feels like ass. Especially, imagine if it's half marathon training, right? And you have that motivation, it feels good until you get to the week where you have to run six miles.

Or maybe it's the week where you're running five miles, and you start thinking like, "Wow, that's going to be really hard. I don't know if I can do it. Why did I even sign up for this race? I can't do this. Who do I think I am?" Right? And we start like getting all of this spin in our head.

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And when those thoughts are in your brain, instead of feeling excited because you're thinking about how you're going to finish, you're starting to feel dread. You're starting to feel fear. You're starting to feel unmotivated, right? And so you're thinking all those things and you're feeling unmotivated, you're feeling afraid, you're feeling dread. And then we start skipping workouts, right?

Or we're half-assing our workouts, or we're self-sabotaging until, guess what? Race day comes, you're under trained and you have a terrible time. Or if you're like me, because I totally did this for my first half marathon, you don't even show up to the race. And then what happens? Well, guess what? You still feel like ass, okay?

You felt like ass when you were worried about whether you could do that five mile run. But then you also feel like ass when you quit on yourself because you're disappointed, you're embarrassed, you're frustrated, maybe you're a little mad at yourself, all right? So that part of the process, in the beginning where you're feeling unmotivated and it feels like ass, right? That's called the dip.

And this is, full disclosure, this is a term that I stole from Seth Godin. If you don't know who Seth Godin is, you can just look up Seth Godin. And he wrote a book called The Dip. Other people have other terms for this concept, all right? He didn't invent the concept, but I love the term the dip. So that's what I use, and I stole it from Seth Godin.

But basically it's when you go from high energy to low energy on your way to a goal. And if you read his book or books that other people have written about this, right, the path to any goal, it starts out with high energy and then it dips down into low energy. But then if you achieve the goal, right, the

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energy is going up towards the end because it needs to, to bring you to the finish line.

But a lot of people give up in the dip, okay? This is where people mistakenly think that something has actually gone wrong. They're like, "Well, I was motivated when I signed up, and now I'm not motivated. Something's wrong with me." And nothing is wrong with you, right? It's normal, okay?

And if you're willing to work your way through it, and by that I mean if you're willing to address the thoughts that are making you feel like ass, you can get through it and succeed. But if you don't keep going when it feels like ass, if you give up because you're tired of feeling unmotivated, or worried, or afraid, you're just trading one type of ass for another, okay?

So you're trading the discomfort of the effort, of the hard work, maybe the doubt, right? A lot of times we feel doubt when things aren't going well. You're trading that for the discomfort of feeling disappointed in yourself. So either way you're going to feel like ass. So the takeaway from this part of our retreat experience was choose your ass, right? Decide which is worse. Is it worse to be in the dip, when you're feeling doubt and you're feeling unmotivated? Or is it worse when you just give up on yourself?

So the dip is normal, it is part of every single big goal, everyone goes through it. Nobody takes something new on, nobody sets a goal and it's just smooth sailing the whole time. That's not a thing, okay? And even if no actual circumstances come up that you have to deal with, right, the brain just can't maintain that level of excitement over several months of training or working on whatever it is your goal is. It just, it can't.

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The only way to maintain that level of excitement is for you to spend literally 100% of your time thinking some version of, “Oh my God, it's going to be so awesome to cross that finish line.” You can't have that thought in your brain the whole time because you also need to think about your job, and your family, and your friends, and a million other things. And it's totally normal for doubting thoughts to creep in because, I don't know, you're a human.

So those doubting thoughts cause your energy to dip. And if you make that mean that your goal is too hard for you or that it's not meant to be, guess what? You're going to feel bad, you're going to give up, you're going to make your thoughts come true.

But if you are prepared for the dip, if you are prepared to choose your ass, so to speak, if you're like, “Okay, yeah, here you are, I was expecting you,” You can see it for what it is and you can work on your thinking, so that you can see the truth. And the truth is, of course it's hard and of course you want to give up. But those are just thoughts and you don't have to believe them.

You can decide to keep working towards your goal, even if it doesn't feel like rainbows and daisies. Especially if it doesn't feel like rainbows and daisies. And that finishing is going to be so much sweeter if you had some struggle along the way because then you are really going to appreciate your effort. When things are easy we take them for granted, right? When we work our butts off for something we are so much prouder of ourselves.

And so the dip is normal, it's going to happen. And once you understand that in advance, you can be prepared for it and you can keep going, okay? So as you're planning out your next big goal, remember that. And it's going to be uncomfortable either way, okay? It's going to be uncomfortable when

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you're in the dip if you keep going. It's going to be uncomfortable when you're in the dip if you quit. So you get to choose your ass. So choose wisely, okay? All right.

Takeaway number two is something that we call the power of yet. And I think this, well, no, they're all my favorites. So I'm not going to say that any of these are my favorites, but this one is pretty awesome. So here's the concept, the biggest predictor of whether you're going to be successful or not with your goal is not what you have done in the past. It is what you are thinking right now.

And if you are thinking, "Oh, I can't do that. I don't have the skills, it's too hard for me," you are going to feel defeated and you will not take the necessary actions to succeed. Okay? It is not because you have failed in the past or what you have not done in the past that predicts your future, it is what you are thinking about your past that creates your future, okay?

So a sweet little hack to help you shift your thinking away from, "Well, I've failed before so I'll probably fail again," and get you into believing in yourself going forward is the simple word yet. Okay? So instead of thinking, "I've never done that before, I've fucked that up before," I want you to rephrase it to, "I haven't done it yet."

This switches your focus from the past to the future, okay? It creates possibilities. It is a really powerful word. And so instead of thinking, "I can't do a marathon" try, "I haven't done a marathon yet." Instead of, "I'm not consistent with my training," you could try, "I haven't figured out how to stay consistent yet." Instead of, "I just can't do an unassisted pull-up," try "I haven't worked up to an unassisted pull-up yet."

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All right, so the reason this works is because the statement I haven't done it yet is true, okay? So it doesn't trigger your brain to argue. But it doesn't close the door on the future. It's open-ended. It acknowledges the truth that you have not completed a marathon, even if or especially if you have tried and failed, it's acknowledging that truth. I have not completed a marathon yet, right? Then the yet gives you that possibility and maybe even a little certainty that it is in your future, okay? You're just not there yet.

So I want you to imagine you're driving across the country. And you've made it from California to Kansas. And if somebody asked you how it was going, you wouldn't say, "I haven't driven across the country." You'd say, "Oh, I'm not there yet. I'm halfway there, I'll get there soon." Because you know you're going to make it, right? You're just partway through the journey.

So I want you to take this same mindset to your goals. You just start talking as if you are still on the journey. Even if you tried to do a half marathon and you didn't finish it on your first attempt, you just haven't done it yet. That's all. You're still working on that goal. You're still working on it, you're just not there yet, okay?

So I want you to give this a try and let me know if it changes anything for you because for me personally it's been a game changer. And I know for everybody in the goals retreat that we just did, it was super powerful as well. Again, give it a try, let me know if it changes anything for you.

Now, our final takeaway from the retreat actually came from a session that Cynthia taught us on self-defense for runners. Cynthia is a Black belt. She gave us a ton of techniques, both physical and mental, on how to, first of all, how to avoid an attack where possible. But then if it does happen, how

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to escape or defend yourself, okay? And one of the most important things that she taught us is the power of your face.

The expression on your face. And some people jokingly call it resting bitch face, right? We all know what that means. My friend Kara Loewentheil calls it resting nope face, which I love because it's just like my expression just says, "Nope, don't bother me." It's just a nope. So I'm going to call it resting nope face because I absolutely love that. But essentially, it's when you actually just have no expression on your face.

And it's so funny because women are conditioned to believe that we always have to be smiling, we always have to look nice for the men and all the things. And I know what my mad face looks like and I'll tell you what, my resting nope face is just expressionless. But because I'm not smiling, and a lot of women have this experience, if you're not smiling people will assume that you're mad because we're so used to like, oh, women are supposed to be smiling and looking pleasant and pleasing all the time, right?

So I have resting nope face like 100% of the time when I'm not speaking or smiling, when I'm not engaging with somebody. It's just sometimes I see pictures of myself when it's kind of a candid shot and I didn't know the camera was looking at me.

And I'll be like, "Yep, there's that resting nope face." It's just how my face is, right? It's like I look kind of pissed off when I'm not smiling. And I mean, I look pissed off when I'm pissed off. So when I'm not smiling, it's just the absence of expression. But again, I think we are conditioned to believe that if you're not smiling, you must be mad.

When I was in the workforce, for fucks sake, I'd have men tell me all the time, "Why are you so sad? Why are you so mad? What's wrong? You

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should smile, you have such a pretty smile, you should use it more.” And it drove me bananas because I'm like, oh, so I'm supposed to arrange my features in a pleasing expression so that you find me more pleasant to look at? No thank you, fuck that, right? You have not earned my smile, sir. Talk to me like an intelligent human, like your peer, and then you will see me smile.

But as annoying as it is to have someone tell you to change your face so that they can feel better about you, right? What in the actual fuck? This whole concept of the resting nope face works in your favor when you're out alone. So I think I was already sort of subconsciously doing this, but after our session with Cynthia I was like, “Oh, I'm all in.” Because when I'm running in the city, my nope face is on lock.

When you are running and you're just like working hard and you're just kind of focusing on the next interval and where you're going and trying not to trip over the sidewalk, right? My nope face is on lock. I'm not making any effort to smile at anybody, especially at dudes when I pass them.

Although I always make eye contact because I want them to know I see them and I want them to see the determination and the hell fucking no in my eyes. I'm like always, every time I pass a man when I'm running I make eye contact and in my brain I'm thinking, “Please do not fuck with me sir, it's not going to go well for you.” Right? I telegraph that message, so I'm sure it comes through on my face.

But before Cynthia talked about the expression on your face when you're running, or otherwise out and about by yourself in public, I never really thought about it as an asset, right? And this is what, when she talked about how the expression on your face is a great deterrent when you're by yourself in public, like something flipped in my brain.

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I was like, wow, I was born with resting nope face. And I used to think, “Oh, that's really annoying that men feel the need to comment on it, but whatever.” But now I'm like, “Fuck yeah, my nope face is a good thing.” And it might even deter somebody from fucking with me, okay?

Now, this is 100% not a substitute for being aware of your surroundings, educating yourself, taking a class, taking lots of classes, practicing what to do if you are approached or attacked. But it is a way to project confidence and strength through your body language that might give someone pause before they approach you, before they mess with you.

And it made me, it made me happy. It really did to think that something that is so annoying to the patriarchy, right, i.e. a woman not making every effort to look her best for dudes, is the thing that could be the difference between an attacker coming after me or leaving me alone. I was just like, wow, thank you to my genetics for my resting nope face and for how angry it makes me look, because that really might be the difference someday.

So it was just like such a fun shift for me to switch how I think about how my face looks when it has no expression because, again, in the past I've kind of thought of it as a liability and an annoyance. And now I think of it as an asset.

Okay, so that's our third takeaway from the Run Your Best Life race-cation retreat. And before we wrap up today, this is a super time sensitive announcement, but I am doing a huge Black Friday sale on Run Your best Life and it starts at 8pm Eastern on Thursday night. Thursday night, Thanksgiving night. And then for the first 24 hours of this sale, you can get \$100 off the annual membership price, plus over \$1,000 in bonus classes. Like nutrition classes, cooking classes, yoga classes, and a few others.

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This is fucking huge, okay? So the bonus classes alone are amazing, by the way. And in addition to getting \$100 off the membership price, which by the way that's two sports bras, that's a pair of running shoes, that's like three 5ks, right? That's a good chunk of money.

But the bonus classes, especially the nutrition class, which is actually five separate lectures from a registered dietitian on how to fuel yourself for running. Plus cooking classes with demos and recipes. And a beautiful yoga immersion taught by a certified yoga and Pilates instructor, which again is like several classes rolled into one. That is an immensely huge bonus that's going to help you up-level your running.

So from 8pm Eastern on Thursday night to 8pm Eastern on Friday night you get all those bonuses. Plus, if you join as an annual member, you get \$100 off that annual membership price.

After 8pm Eastern, you can still join Run Your Best Life and get all of the bonus classes. So all of those additional classes are still part of the Black Friday sale, even after the annual membership piece of it goes away. So make sure you check it all out at runyourbestlife.com. Again, that's runyourbestlife.com.

And I want you to know that the stuff that we talked about at this retreat is the kind of stuff that we talk about in Run Your Best Life all the time, right? So we do a lot of running talk, but we also do a lot of like how to hit your big ass goals, how to plan, how to get through the dip, how to defend yourself in the event that something happens to you.

So it is not just run your best race, it is run your best life for a reason. And so the whole point of that program is to help you use running and thought work to up-level your entire life. So I hope I will see you there. Please make

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sure if you're listening to this Thanksgiving weekend check out the sale. If you're listening to this afterwards, just check out Run Your Best Life in general. And that is it for this week, okay?

All right my friends, I love you, stay safe, go eat some turkey, and then get your ass out there and run and I will talk to you next week.

Real quick before you go, if you enjoyed this episode you have got 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.