

Ep #283: 7 Secrets to Stay Committed to Your Long-Term Running Goals



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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 back this week with everyone's favorite coach, Jennifer Lamplough. How are you this week?

Jennifer: God, you're killing me. I love it. I'm good, I'm good. You know, I love being on the podcast with you. It's my favorite thing.

Jill: You're a fan favorite on the show, yes. I love it.

Jennifer: I am not. Go on.

Jill: Yes, you are. Yes, you are. But we're here actually to talk about something really fucking important, especially this time of year. And that is how to stay committed to a long-term goal once you've set the goal. And I think you and I have both experienced this that we set a big goal and we get really excited about it. We're like, oh my God, it's going to be amazing. And we're like thinking about how fun it is to achieve the goal.

But then the reality, the day-to-day reality of executing all the steps that it takes to get there is like next thing you know, you're like, you know, I really didn't want to run that marathon or whatever it is. I was wrong. It was a mistake. I don't want to do it anymore. Even though you really do.

Jennifer: It was my evil twin.

Jill: Yeah, exactly.

Jennifer: My evil twin said she wanted to do it. It wasn't me.

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Jill: I love it. But you and I actually have both successfully set long-term goals and achieved them, right? Like you decided, I can't remember what year it was now, but it was like four, maybe four years ago, you were like, I'm going to run the Chicago Marathon. And you fucking did it, right? And you trained for it, and it was hard. And there were lots of ups and downs, but you finished that race.

And like I've done that with half marathons. And this past year, I set the goal to do a 200-pound deadlift, and again, it was the same thing. It was like there were plenty of times I didn't want to do it, but I kept showing up, and I nailed it.

So, I think you and I have both learned a lot about it because we both also set goals and then flamed out.

Jennifer: 100%.

Jill: So, I think we both learned a lot. So I thought it would be a fun conversation to kind of talk about the things to keep in mind and the ways to sort of stack the deck in your favor. And so, for everybody listening, Jen and I kind of like chit-chatted before this and talked about like the five things that we think have been critical to both of our successes when we've set those big goals that were months, maybe even years in the future and succeeded at them. So we're going to talk about them today.

Jen: I love it.

Jill: Yeah. So the first one, and I think this one is really relevant to your current goal. So do you want to talk about the first one, which is basically giving yourself actually enough time to do the thing?

Jennifer: Yeah, totally. It was always a little bit of a trap, I think, that I fell in, and I think new runners fall in because you get in the vortex, right? And it's like I ran a 5k, now I'm going to run a 10k, now I'm going to do a half. And

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you get like swept up in the running vortex, which is exciting, fun, and amazing. But it also can be really hard on your goal setting because you're like, you know, you started running in July, and in February, you want to do the Dopey challenge.

And for those of you who don't know what the Dopey challenge is, it's four races over a weekend that ends in a marathon. I mean, it's like an amazing feat and really hard, and that might not be realistic. It might be for some people, but for most people, it's not.

Jill: Not in that timeframe.

Jennifer: Not in that timeframe. Right, that's what I mean, that sort of six-month timeframe, seven-month timeframe. It would definitely be realistic for anybody to train for it. But you have to give yourself enough time, and I think layer in life, right? Like I'm a single mom, and I have a big job and, you know, you layer those – Those aren't excuses, they're just realities. And so you layer those things in, and it's like you have to be able to give yourself enough time to get the training.

Especially if it's a big goal, like a marathon, it's like taking on a part-time job. And so you either can do it over two years and spread it out a little bit and work your way up to it. Or you can kind of cram everything in, and that doesn't always work and it makes it really hard to stay consistent and achieve the goal because it becomes really stressful, you can get injured.

The other side of that, though, is about the long planning. I think this is one of our other numbers, but you could get bored, too, sort of working toward it. So it's got to be realistic. It's like maybe five years is not the goal, but maybe it's two years or whatever. It's really up to you, whatever sort of like resonates in your brain.

Jill: And you said a couple of things there that I sort of want to pull out. It's like you need to give yourself enough time, enough of like a runway, right?

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You don't want to say like, okay, I started running six months ago, and now I'm going to start training for a marathon. Because you've got to let your body adjust and really think about like how much time is it going to take my body to develop the strength and endurance to do something as challenging as a marathon?

And so we need to think of it in those terms, but also giving yourself enough time, thinking about how much time it's going to take to do the actual actions, right? Because you said, it kind of becomes like a part-time job, especially training for a marathon because every other weekend, you're going to have like several hours that you devote to running.

And so, not only do you have to give yourself enough of a runway, setting the end goal far enough in the future, but also making sure that you have enough time on the regular.

And the longer you stretch out the goal, right, so if you give yourself a year to train for a marathon, you are going to be spending probably more time each week developing the physical skills and taking care of your body and making sure that all of that is ready to go to kind of accelerate that. Versus if you set it two years out, you're actually kind of lightening the load on your weekly schedule. So, I mean, I'm all in favor of, like, that two-year runway to a marathon.

Jennifer: Yeah, for me, it's just right, right now. Because I didn't plan for the last time I trained for the marathon, I planned for the like running time, but I didn't plan for the pre-prep and the recovery and how tired you are after running 15 miles. And I mean, I had a two-year-old at the time. It was five years ago.

Jill: Yeah.

Jennifer: And so my son was two at the time. There was no like laying around and watching TV afterward. And so that's what I didn't account for.

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Had I known that, I would have planned even a little bit better and done the same thing where I sort of dragged it out a little bit where it might be feeling like it's a little bit dragged out. But it's like I also need to rebuild my endurance.

I mean, I'm going basically from, I wouldn't quite say zero, but pretty close to zero. Like, I'm starting with like 5k or 8k this spring and into a half marathon in the fall. So I'm really giving myself this year, the year previous to the marathon year, to get myself back to running shape.

Jill: Yeah. And for those of you who don't know, Jen's long-term goal is to run the Chicago Marathon again in 2024, which is like October-ish 2024.

Jennifer: Yep, it's the first weekend in October.

Jill: And you kind of started working on this like in November. So you gave yourself a two-year runway.

Jennifer: Yeah, I actually started, so I went to the Chicago Marathon this October to cheer on our team because we had a team for my food bank where I work. And we had a bunch of people from Run You Best Life doing it too. And so I went to go cheer on both our teams. And so that was like day one. So I'm like, okay, this is the first day.

Jill: This is day one, yeah.

Jennifer: It was literally two years to the day.

Jill: I love that. And so can we just touch back on some of the, I don't want to say ancillary, supporting activities, I guess? Because you talked about, like, well, I didn't have time to, like, lay around on the couch after a 15-mile run because I was taking care of a two-year-old.

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And so what are some of the, like when we think about a long-term goal, that's a running goal, what are some of the things that you didn't account for that you now are like, okay, I've got to build all of that into my schedule.

Jennifer: Yeah, most of it was, I would say, recovery after the long runs. That was the biggest shock to my system because I would do my stretching, and then I'd maybe soak in an Epsom salt bath or something like that. But that was it. There was no nap afterward. There was no, you know, none of that.

And I was getting up at five in the morning to go because I'm a slow runner. So it took me a long time to run 15 miles, and I was training in the summer, so I didn't want it to be so hot. So we would start at five in the morning. And so I'd be tired, and I'd want a nap, and my son stopped napping at 18 months old. So there were no two-year-old naps either at the time.

So I would plan better and just either figure out a way to – Now that he's seven, he'll be eight when I'm training, or he'll be nine when I'm training, he'll be fine. He can hang out on his own even a little bit, but back then there was no way. I would have had to have like prepped people, like my ex-husband or a neighbor or something, to have a babysitter so I could recover or whatever it was.

Jill: You've got to like factor in the time to arrange a babysitter and to go get the babysitter if you need to. I feel like there's a lot.

Jennifer: There is.

Jill: And we've even talked about sleep, right? Because your sleep needs are going to go up, so factoring in that time. Factoring in the time to take care of your body, like prepping the food that you know is going to support you from a fueling perspective. Making sure that you have, you know, like the planning, the grocery shopping that you have to do, right?

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Jennifer: All of it.

Jill: Like all of it. It's not just the running time.

Jennifer: Making sure your clothes are ready. Yeah, totally, like all the things.

Jill: The extra laundry things.

Jennifer: All the extra laundry, absolutely. Yeah, I mean, there's so much planning that goes into it. Even though you're just throwing on running shoes and going out, it's not that simple. I mean, we had to drop a cooler, and we had to have the fuel on our bodies because it was summer and it was hot.

And there's just so much that goes into it and I didn't know kind of all of that part and how much energy and time. And I was even younger then, that was five years ago. So I'm going to be 50 when I'm doing this, so it's going to be different, it'll be a whole different ballgame, you know?

Jill: Yeah, I hear you, I hear you. And when I think to my goal this year, which is the Philly Half Marathon, and I also have a time goal associated with it. For me, the planning is going to be, I don't have a kiddo to watch so I don't have like that level of complexity. But now I live in Philly and I'm like, well, shit, where am I going to go out for like a 10-mile run? So I'm kind of like, all right, now I've got to factor in researching routes.

Jennifer: And driving to those routes.

Jill: And driving to them. And driving anywhere in the city is like it's so funny, the place where I'll probably do a lot of my long run training is, as the crow flies, maybe three miles from my house. But it'll take me 30 minutes to drive there.

Jennifer: Oh, I'm sure. At least.

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Jill: And I could like in a roundabout way, take the train. But it's going to be almost as much time to take the train as it will be.

Jennifer: Oh God, and you're not going to want to take the train home after that.

Jill: Yeah, exactly. So there's just like a lot of that kind of stuff. So when we talk about giving yourself enough time and being realistic about the amount of time it's going to take, it is, A, the length of time that it's going to take you to achieve the goal. Give yourself plenty of cushion.

And if you're like, "I want to do a half marathon and I can run five miles now. And there's a half marathon in like six weeks." Like, no. Just don't, right? Don't try to cram, don't try to rush it because there's always going to be another half marathon. You can do the one next year, take the extra time to train.

And then be realistic about the amount of logistical time it's going to take you to do all of the things of when you're planning out your goal. Because a lot of times, right, we're like, okay, well, I'm going to train for a marathon and so that means every other week I'm going to be devoting anywhere between three and six hours to running. And, oh, I can do that.

But what you don't think through, like I'm going to need to rest after and there's all of this extra stuff that goes along with it. Pretty quickly it can get overwhelming.

Jennifer: And rest before. I mean, you're going to sacrifice things, you know what I mean?

Jill: Yep.

Jennifer: You're not going to want to go out the night before, you know, there are those things that you have to also sort of be ready to sacrifice. I mean, some of it's nice because you can use it as an excuse. It's like, oh

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sorry, I got a long run tomorrow, can't do blah, blah, blah. So it's also a nice excuse, but it also is a sacrifice.

Jill: Yeah, so okay, that's a good point because we came up with five things, but I think this is number six. So we're just going to insert this in between numbers one and two. We'll call it one A, is be aware that you will be making choices. Because if this goal is important to you, if you've committed to this goal, even if you've given yourself a really long runway, you're going to have to make choices because you only have 24 hours in a day.

And if this thing is important to you, right, you're going to have to very often choose. Like you just can't have it all. You really can't.

Jennifer: No, you really can't. I mean, I witnessed this for myself over the summer. I finally started going out and having some fun and doing that kind of stuff over the summer. And I sacrificed a lot to be able to do that. I only basically have two nights a week that I can go out because those are the nights my son stays at his dad's. And so that's also my other free time to do things too.

So I was sacrificing a lot to go out, which is normally the time I'd go to the gym or that I would go swim or go do whatever and I wasn't doing any of that. And I consciously chose it, I knew what my choice was. But I also knew that I was going to pay the piper this time coming up because I lost so much of my endurance. So I really, need this time now.

But it was fun and I don't regret any of it. Well, maybe a couple of things, but that's for a different podcast.

Jill: I don't know. Yeah, right? I've heard some of the behind the scenes, you were living your best life this summer.

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Jennifer: I was living my best life this summer. So I'm slowing my roll a little bit on that too, and prioritizing like, no, I need to go to the gym before I go out. You know that kind of thing.

Jill: And I think, right, that's it. It is a matter of just deciding what is the most important thing to me in this moment. And if the goal is important to you, you're going to sacrifice. But you had other things that were more important to you this summer and so you were like, okay, fine.

Jennifer: Yeah, and that's the key to any goal. The goal has to be more important than the other things that you have to choose. Because you're going to be making choices every single day. You're going to choose to get up early or you're going to choose to sleep in. Or you're going to choose to go out the night before or you're going to choose to eat something that might upset your stomach that might affect your run later.

Like you're going to make choices all day long and they're going to be hard. And it's going to be like, do I want this in the moment, this gratification in the moment? Or do I want to set myself up for success? And it doesn't always work out. I mean, you don't always make the right choice. You know what I mean? So it's okay.

Jill: Yeah, but commitment is recognizing that every choice you're making is either taking you closer to your goal or keeping you the same, or taking you farther away. And there's no judgment in any of that, it's just kind of like being aware of like, okay, I'm making this choice.

Like the other night, we were just talking about, we got this ninja creamy thing that like makes sherbert and ice cream at home. And Andy brought me, we eat our ice cream and our sherbert out of mugs because we have so many freaking months. He's like we've got to use these fucking mugs. So he puts ice cream in the mug.

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So he brought me some sherbert that he had just made. And I was like, if I eat this, I'm not going to feel good tomorrow. I just knew it. It was like close to bedtime but I was like, but I really want it. And so I had the conversation in my head, you are literally trading feeling your absolute best tomorrow morning with enjoying this sherbert right now. And I was like I'm going to eat the sherbert.

But it was like a conscious choice. And I think that's, you know, and a nonjudgmental choice too. I wasn't like, oh my God.

Jennifer: I was going to say, losing the judgment. Because we all love to like, oh, I just screwed it all up. Now it's all over, I'm not going to be able to run the marathon because you screwed up one day.

Jill: Yeah.

Jennifer: We all do that to ourselves at some point and we have to like learn how to, and that's like the work we do together in the group around the thought work around letting that stuff go and not judging yourself when you do make a choice that isn't the best one for you.

Jill: Yeah, exactly. I think that's it. Okay, so number seven, drop the judgment.

Jennifer: Yeah, exactly.

Jill: That'll help you. I do think that's true. Like if you're judging yourself too much, it's going to interfere with your commitment. And so I think it is important. That's something to work on and to look at all the choices that you make as literally it's neutral. I decided this over that, it means nothing about me or my abilities. This is just what I decided, let's keep moving forward.

Jennifer: Yep.

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Jill: Okay, number two, now that we've done one, six, and seven.

Jennifer: It's conventional, what can we say?

Jill: I know, right? Like, well, this podcast is a metaphor for success, right? Success is never a straight line, and neither is this podcast. So number two is to kind of set small goals along the way, both like as milestones so you can kind of like stop and take stock and assess where you are. And also, to keep celebrating yourself along the way.

So I know for your marathon goal, you've actually set quite a few milestones along the way. So what does that look like for you?

Jennifer: For me, it's exactly what you said. It's the celebration along the way, it's to not get bored, right? It's not like right now in January of 2023, I'm not thinking about the marathon in October of 24. Right now I'm thinking about my next race, which will be, I still don't quite know yet. It'll probably be an 8k in March. And so I'm thinking about that. And then it's like, okay, that's over. All right, what's next?

So next will probably be a 10k maybe in May. And then it'll be a half marathon in October. And then I'll do my sort of off-season, you know, strength training, yoga thing over November, December, January. And then February, that'll be marathon year. And I need a long time to train because I just, I need that time. I need to not feel pressured like the marathon is tomorrow.

But I also need the fear of the marathon to keep me motivated. But two years out, there's no fear of the marathon, you know what I mean? February 2024, the fear of the marathon is there.

Jill: Yeah.

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Jennifer: So for me, it's that like part of that is my motivation, and it's to keep me from getting bored.

Jill: Yeah. Okay, so I love that. So the small goals kind of keep you from getting bored, right? Which we're actually going to talk about a little bit later. And they give you something short-term to focus on, right? Because I think sometimes like you said, that long-term goal, it's easy to sort of lose sight of it, right?

So the short-term goal, especially if you design them in such a way that it like continues leading you forward toward your long-term goal, the short-term goal gives you something that seems achievable, right? It's not like, oh my God, I can't believe I have to do this hard thing. You're just like, no, no, no, I can do a 5k or an 8k or whatever. It kind of gives you something to look forward to in the immediate future, and a chance to celebrate and have like, you know, just a way station, I think, along the way.

To be like, okay, so if your marathon is your big goal, and you have like five smaller goals along the way, then you're like, okay, I'm 1/5 of the way done. Like I hit goal number two, I hit goal number three, right? It's like that little hit of dopamine every single time. I think that's really powerful.

Jennifer: 100%, it is the motivator. You know, it's part of what keeps me motivated.

Jill: Yeah, for sure. I love that. And okay, so let's talk about number three, which is expect to get bored and discouraged along the way. Because that's a real thing. If you're training for a 5k and it's like eight weeks, I think for most people that's a short enough time to remain focused and not get super discouraged. And also, it's a short enough distance that if you start out and you're able to run one mile, you can see yourself running three miles.

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Versus okay, I can run one mile now, I can't really see myself running 26 miles. And so there's so much opportunity to get bored and to get discouraged. When you've experienced that in the past, how have you dealt with it?

Jennifer: Well, everyone will laugh when they hear me say this because I say this in coaching calls all the time. You don't need a ticker tape parade every time you do a run. You know what I mean? It's like you get up in the morning, you brush your teeth, you take a shower, like it becomes part of your routine.

And while that might feel boring, it's also like, it's okay. Like it doesn't have to be fun all the time. You can just have it be a thing that you do. And so to remember that and to expect that, if you're like, yes, I'm going to run the marathon, and you're so excited about it. And then like six months in you're not feeling as excited and you weren't expecting that, you don't always know how to deal with it. It's like, what's wrong with me? I'm not motivated anymore. I lost all my motivation.

And it has nothing to do – Motivation is not currency. Like you can't lose it, you know what I mean? It's like you create your own motivation every day, right? And so it's like even if you're bored, you can still go do it. Like brushing my teeth is boring. You know what I mean, doing my laundry is boring, that kind of stuff. It's one thing, it's on your to-do list. Like it's one of your tasks.

And there's going to be runs that aren't boring and they're going to be amazing and it's going to be beautiful out and you're going to feel so good. And there's going to be runs that feel like it's the death march, you know? And you just got to slug through it.

Jill: Yeah, I love that. And I love the whole concept of the ticker tape parade because I think that people genuinely feel like when they don't wake up and

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feel motivated, or when they wake up and they're like kind of arguing, they don't want to do it or whatever, that they think something has gone wrong.

Jennifer: Right.

Jill: They're just like, wait, other people don't have this problem. We all fucking have this problem because it's not even a problem. I should stop calling it a problem, this is how everyone's brain works. Nobody wakes up and is like, oh my God, I can't wait to run 20 miles. That is not a thing, right? We all wake up and think, that's going to be really hard and it's going to be uncomfortable, right? And the way you get past it is also like, oh, but there's going to be other rewards.

Jennifer: Yeah.

Jill: You said to me one time many years ago because we were talking about like motivation, and I think there was another word. We were talking about motivation and determination or something like that. Anyway, you said that the word motivation doesn't even resonate with you. You're like, I don't try to think about getting motivated. Like that does nothing for me.

So can you say a little bit more about that? Because I was like, oh that's fascinating that that word doesn't have a lot of meaning for you.

Jennifer: Yeah. Because, like I said, motivation isn't currency. You can't earn motivation, you can't, you know what I mean? It's like it's just a state of being, right? And so like to get motivated, it's funny, this is going to be a little bit of a tangent but it'll make sense. I love professional assessments, like the Myers Briggs and the StrengthsFinder and all that. And there's one called the Working Genius by Patrick Lencioni.

And there's six working geniuses and you have two geniuses. And you have two things that you're like competent in, and you have two working

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frustrations. And the things that are your frustrations are, you might even be good at them, but they frustrate the hell out of you.

One of my frustrations is galvanizing. Like getting people motivated to do something like, I'm a just fucking do it person, you know what I mean? If you're going to do it, do it. You don't need a ticker tape parade, I don't need to motivate you. I'm a positive, upbeat person and people are shocked when I tell them that galvanizing is a frustration for me. But it really is because it's like, I don't want to motivate you to do this, you should just want to do it.

Jill: Yeah.

Jennifer: It's like if I decide I'm going to run a marathon, there's a reason I want to do it. I'm not going to like earn like the motivation fairy isn't going to come like stick her wand up my butt and make me go. Like this is a thing, just go do it, you know what I mean?

Jill: Yeah.

Jennifer: And so it's always so funny that people are so shocked when they hear that galvanizing is one of my frustrations.

Jill: Oh, that's fascinating.

Jennifer: Yeah, my other frustration is tenacity, which is like getting to the finish line, which is also very much me. Like I love the process, but I don't care about the last mile. So it's interesting in running where I always, like towards the end I get like despair at the end of the race because I feel like it's never going to end.

Jill: You do get despair, I have seen you.

Jennifer: I get despair, I know. I am like ready to die.

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Jill: If you're like two miles from the finish and you're like, oh my God, I'm dying.

Jennifer: Yep.

Jill: But like I think once you know that about yourself, then you can plan for it. And that's like part of being successful and staying committed to a goal, is like knowing yourself and knowing that you're going to get bored and you're going to get discouraged, and you're not going to feel motivated and that all of that is normal. And, first of all, I think a lot of people confuse motivation and excitement.

Jennifer: Agreed.

Jill: Like to me motivation is not like, oh my God, I can't wait to do it. Motivation is like, it's just a decision. Like I'm going to do this.

Jennifer: It's just a state of being.

Jill: Yeah, exactly. It's less about this like deep feeling of emotion. Because that, to me, is like determination.

Jennifer: Right.

Jill: Or excitement or something like that. And motivation is more, I mean, I always say motivated is an emotion, but I don't think it's like a powerful emotion. It's a very calm, certain emotion. Like, oh, I'm just going to do this thing.

Jennifer: Right.

Jill: So like, expecting that you're going to get bored, expecting that you're going to get discouraged is another thing, right? Boredom is where people are like, oh, I'm not motivated or whatever. And a lot of it's because they're

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feeling bored or they're thinking like, what am I going to think about for 10 miles when I'm out there, right? Like running is so boring.

It cracks me up when people sign up for marathons and then they complain that running is boring. I'm like, did you not understand what you were; It's like, you did not understand the assignment, right?

Jennifer: Right, you know 26 miles is long, right?

Jill: And I actually said this to one of the Run Your Best Life members. She was talking about the treadmill and she's like, the treadmill is boring. And I was like, you're boring, that's the problem. I'm like you've got to learn how to entertain yourself. The treadmill is just a piece of machinery, it doesn't have the ability to be boring or not boring. Like you got to bring the juice. You cannot expect the running to feel exciting. Like you've got to create that in your mind.

But I think also, like discouraged is another thing that people feel, especially if like they have a couple bad runs in a row. And I remember, we had a conversation, it might have been after your 16-mile run or something. This is like when you trained for the first time, you were just like, I don't know if I can do this. And we had a long kind of heart-to-heart talk about that.

So I don't know if you want to like share how you were feeling and then how you ended up turning that around.

Jennifer: Well, that was exactly right. You and I talked about it, and I was miserable from the first step to the last step. And every step was like, I can't do this, I can't do this, I can't do this. And you were like, well, why were you telling yourself you can't do it? And I was like, well, because I felt like shit.

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And you were like, well, why did you feel like shit? I was like because I was telling myself I can't do it. It was like, ding, ding, ding.

And so really we had a very thorough talk about thought work and how to like change your thought pattern and create the result that you want, which is what we do in this group, right? We use the coaching model, the self-coaching model. And so for my next long run, I did exactly that. And it was like 18 miles and it was fantastic, or 17 miles and it was fantastic. No, I mean, I wouldn't say fantastic, but it wasn't a death march for 16 miles.

Jill: Yeah

Jennifer: And literally nothing changed, nary a thing changed except what I was thinking.

Jill: And the fact that you were running longer and somehow it managed to feel easier.

Jennifer: Yeah, and I went faster for that run, too.

Jill: Right? Isn't that amazing? And I mean part of it could have been like maybe you got extra rest that week or whatever.

Jennifer: Sure.

Jill: But I do think a big part of it is what we're saying to ourselves during the run, leading up to the run, right? I feel like if you spend the entire week leading up to your long runs going, oh my God, I can't believe I have to do this this week. It's going to be so awful, it's going to be so hard. Like just dreading it.

Like if you spend a week feeling nothing but dread, you're not going to feel motivated on run day and that run is going to be really fucking hard. And I think it saps your energy to spend a lot of time in those emotions like dread and discouragement.

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Jennifer: It does, yeah.

Jill: So turning that shit around.

Jennifer: Because it creates stress, you know what I mean? And then the stress snowballs, and then you can't sleep and you're grumpy. And you're you know, I mean, it really does. It takes a serious toll on you. And I can't emphasize sleep enough. It's like sleep is so critical.

Jill: Yeah. And high-quality sleep, not like eight hours of laying in bed and like fucking around on your phone.

Jennifer: No, no. Yes.

Jill: Like, yeah, put that phone on the dresser, walk away from it. Like actually set yourself up with proper sleep hygiene and do your best to get high-quality sleep. I'd rather have five hours of like super high-quality sleep than seven hours of shitty sleep.

Jennifer: Agreed.

Jill: Yeah. Okay, number four is expect setbacks and disruptions, which is different from expect to be bored and discouraged. Like there are also going to be circumstances that fuck with your training.

Jennifer: Yeah, I mean, shit happens, right? You get injured, your kid gets sick, your job changes, you go from working nights to days, you know, your schedule changes. Right now I'm dealing with long COVID and this whole sleep thing has been, like I keep talking about it because it's really messing with me.

Like I can't get good quality sleep right now because I have these nodules on my vocal cords that caused me to snore really badly and it wakes me up. And then I start coughing, and then I have to drink water. And then that makes me have to pee. Like I haven't had a full night's sleep since June,

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literally not a full night's sleep. And I'm a sleeper and I'm a person who needs sleep. Everybody needs sleep, but I really need sleep. And I love to sleep. And it's like, it's like almost making me depressed.

And like it's hard to get up in the morning and it's hard to be motivated in the morning because once I finally am like falling asleep, then I don't want to get up. Like I slept until 10:30 the other morning. I haven't done that since I was in college. Like it's crazy. And so this is like a disruption that I'm having to figure out and deal with because this is not good. Like I can't live like this.

Jill: And, you know, okay, so I was talking to my trainer about this because like ever since I hit perimenopause my sleep just went to shit. And like I have to have like the trifecta of like a 65-degree room, and complete darkness, and dead silence and not having eaten for at least three hours before I go to bed, right? Like if all these things align, then I can get like six to seven hours of really, really good sleep.

But it rarely all aligns at the same time. And I think like I was talking to my trainer, and she's like you should get one of the – You can get sleep studies done online where you don't actually have to go into the place. And they can like diagnose a lot of stuff. I mean, it sounds to me like you kind of already know exactly what's going on. And I think I know what's going on with me.

Jennifer: Yeah, and I do have to have a sleep study done because I probably need a CPAP because right now I think I do have sleep apnea just because I have this chronic congestion and I have this throat issue that like I'm always with my mouth open and it's like making my gums hurt. Like it's crazy, I'm having all these crazy side effects from it. But again, I need to make time for the sleep study and all that good stuff too.

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Jill: Okay, another amazing analogy, so my trainer uses a lot of car analogies, which is so funny because she lives in New York City and she doesn't actually have a car.

Jennifer: I was going to say doesn't she live in Manhattan?

Jill: Because I was telling her like, I don't want to have a sleep study, it's going to be such a pain in the neck. And she's just like, listen, if your car wasn't running well, you would take it in and get it fixed, right?

Jennifer: Yep.

Jill: And I'm like, yeah. And she's like, okay, why wouldn't you do that for your body? Because if your car dies, you can buy another car. But you don't get another body. So like why wouldn't you prioritize taking care of your body? And it kind of blew my mind. I was like, oh, that's a good point. So anyway, that's just my two cents.

Jennifer: No, I agree.

Jill: We're getting way off-topic.

Jennifer: No, that's okay. It's on my list of things to do and I need to get it done because I think that'll make a huge difference just to get some good quality sleep.

Jill: Like just like talking about setbacks and disruptions in general, right? Like babysitters are going to cancel, the weather is going to come up, there might be a hailstorm on your long run day. Or you might end up with an injury, or a family member might get sick and you have to spend a lot of time taking care of them.

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Like there are so many things that can come up and I think it's important to, A, think it through and have as many plan B's as you can. Have a plan B, have a Plan C, have a plan D. But also recognize that there are going to be times where you are going to legit want to prioritize something else over your training, right? Whatever it is, a disruption to your life.

Because I think we end up coaching a lot of people who are just like, well my training was going great until this happened. And then they're really beating themselves up. And it's like no, why wouldn't you want to take care of that?

Jennifer: Right.

Jill: There's always another race. Like it's okay to make those choices. But I think expecting it ahead of time so you're not like when something happens you're like, oh my God, look what happened. Your training is never going to be perfect, it's never going to be a straight line. Shit is going to happen.

And people, I think people who are successful with committing and seeing those long-term goals through when the disruption happens, they don't just give up. They're like, okay, well, maybe I need to take a break, maybe I need to find an alternate plan. But they figure out a way to keep going, even if it means delaying their goal by another year or something like that.

Jennifer: Yeah. And losing one training run, even if it's one of your long runs, it's not going to ruin your whole training. It happened to me, I didn't do the 20-mile run when I was training for the marathon. Again, it was summer and the one day I was supposed to do my 18 miles It was like 100% humidity at five o'clock in the morning and something else. I'm like, I can't do 18 miles in this. I just knew I couldn't.

So I had to delay my 18 miles, which made me not be able to do the 20-miler. And guess what? It wasn't pretty, but I still finished.

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Jill: Still finished. You still finished, exactly.

Jennifer: Yeah, so it's not the end of the world.

Jill: And you finished on one of the hottest days of the year, too.

Jennifer: Yeah, it was a really hot day.

Jill: Yeah, it's not like you finished and it was like this perfect weather. Like you had a lot of, when you say it wasn't pretty, you had a lot of things to deal with on race day that, you know, you didn't have ideal running conditions, and yet you still finished.

Jennifer: And even if I hadn't finished it would have been okay, too.

Jill: Of course, it would have, yeah.

Jennifer: Yeah.

Jill: The last thing that I think we wanted to cover was this concept of like, we talked in the beginning about giving yourself a long runway. But there's a downside to that, and that is thinking like, oh, I've got two years. I don't have to start right away. So I think number six is don't wait to start. Like, give yourself that long, realistic runway, that generous runway, but don't fuck around.

Jennifer: Right.

Jill: Get started. And so are you kind of experiencing any of that right now with your two-year goal or have you been tempted to?

Jennifer: Oh yeah, definitely over December I was like, I'm going to be in the gym doing strength and this. And it was like holidays and parties, and tired, and blah, blah, blah. Like, yeah, my December was a wash. I mean, it was. I told Jill when we got on, I'm made up of about 95% Christmas cookies at this point.

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Jill: I hope the good kind.

Jennifer: So like, my December was a wash. They're always the good kind, homemade only.

Jill: Always the good kind.

Jennifer: But yeah, so yeah, my December was a total wash. And so, you know, you have that thought like, oh, it's only December of 2022, I got plenty of time. But it's going to be here before we know it and like I don't want to be cramming at midnight for the test.

Jill: No, exactly. So training for your dream race is not something that we ever want to procrastinate. I mean, yes, you might procrastinate your individual runs, and that's okay. But like don't procrastinate getting the whole thing started and think I got plenty of time. Because it's so funny, it's like oh, I'll start on Monday. Oh, I'll start on the first of the month. People always say that. Like I got plenty of time. Actually, you don't just. Just fucking start.

Jennifer: No, because time flies and we know that. And that's why the little goals, I think, are important because it keeps you on track. You know, it's really just part of your grand training plan, are these other things. Like my training plan started in December. Well, you know, I screwed around a lot in December, but it technically started in December to like really get myself back on track.

Jill: Maybe December, that was just the part where you were going to fuck around and find out.

Jennifer: Very much so.

Jill: You're like, okay, I'm just going to build that into my training plan. This is the month where I fuck around and find out, and then we start.

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Jennifer: Yeah. Yep, for sure. And I definitely, like, I don't regret it because it was lovely. But I also am like, oh God, I really, you know, my body is suffering. Like my joints hurt and I'm wheezing, you know, my breathing is really bad and like, you know.

Jill: It's choices.

Jennifer: It's choices, so I'm like, okay, I made that choice, and this is why I feel this way. So what can I do that I know is going to make me not feel this way?

Jill: Yeah.

Jennifer: So I started working on that.

Jill: I love it. Well, I love that our five points turned into seven points. And that they were totally out of order because I feel like that is just typical for life in general.

And so I just want to let everybody know that, like, I think we said this at the beginning of this podcast, but in case we didn't, Jen is one of the coaches in the Run Your Best Life program. And she's an amazing coach.

Jennifer: Thank you.

Jill: You coach at least once a week in that group, like a live coaching call.

Jennifer: At least, yeah.

Jill: So if you're just like, hey, I'm jiving on Jen, like I want her to coach me. Just be done with it and join Run Your Best Life. Let's just get you in, and then we can start, first of all, she's going to be talking a lot in the group about her ongoing marathon training and so forth. But we have a lot of fun stuff coming starting in February when we launch Run Your Best Life 2.0. And I'm going to do a whole podcast on how amazing that is.

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Jennifer: Oh, good.

Jill: We do a lot of coaching in Run Your Best Life on the actual running, right? There's a lot of like technical coaching. But I would say at least half, if not more, of the coaching that we do is on the mental game. It's like quieting the negative self-talk and figuring out how to feel motivated or whatever word works for you. And like how to overcome the emotional struggles and the setbacks and all that stuff.

So we do so much mental work in that group and I think running is like 80% mental anyway.

Jennifer: 100% agree.

Jill: Yeah. So just get your ass into Run Your Best Life. You can go to runyourbestlife.com to join. You can get coached by Jen. You can get coached by me, you can get coached by coach LD, who you're going to hear from on the podcast next month, who is also a total badass.

Jennifer: Amazing.

Jill: She's a fucking amazing human. So she's going to be on the podcast next month, and we're going to talk about what it's like to start running when you're over 50, which is good stuff.

So, do you want to sign us out? I know I always do the sign-out, but I would love – Like, let's just mix it up. Do you want to sign us out?

Jennifer: All right, thank you so much for having me on and talking about this. You know I love this topic, and it also helps keep me motivated. And I hope you all were able to listen and get something out of it. Now get your ass outside and run.

Jill: Yay! Thank you so much for being here.

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Jennifer: Thank you. Bye, everybody.

Jill: Bye, everybody.

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.