

Ep #297: A 5K a Day for the Past 1562 Days with Sandra Mikulic



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Jill Angie

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

Jill: Hey, runners. So I'm really, really excited to bring you an absolutely awesome guest this week. Sandra Mikulic is a self-described 250 pound runner who has done a minimum of 5k a day for the past 1,562 days, which is also four years, three months and 10 days. What the fuck? Man, that is amazing.

She is also the founder and editor of Run Your Life Magazine, which is a publication for athletes of all shapes and sizes, and the only body positive athletic magazine out there right now. She is also a five time marathoner and an all around badass. Sandra, welcome to the show.

Sandra: The pleasure is all mine, Jill. Thank you. Thank you for having me. This is like a little girl's dream come true, even though I'm not little. But a little girl's dream came true from hearing your voice in 2018, girl. 2018, I've been stalking you. So the pleasure is all mine.

Jill: Oh my gosh, that was five years ago. Damn. Damn. So, okay, well, let's talk about you. So let's just start with who is Sandra? Give us a little bit of your backstory. And then also, we all want to know why you started running in the first place.

Sandra: Yeah, in a nutshell, let's do this in a nutshell. Like many of your guests I've always kind of had working out in my life. Always at various levels, some more intense than others, depending on how much time I had, what job I had at the time. But working out was something always there

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because it was like a form of trying to lose weight. If I needed to lose weight, there was the working out. And I don't know if it would be like a form of punishment or more so just a means to reduce some of the pounds.

But anyways, in 2017 I had bought a treadmill because I was doing these HIIT workouts on YouTube. And I was like, I need a better warmup machine than my cross country skiing machine, which I had in my basement. Can you imagine the rattling that that machine made? And I was like, okay, let's upgrade.

So I got this treadmill and I started in 2017 spending a lot of time on this treadmill and watching documentaries. And in 2018 I finally signed up for Instagram. And my first Instagram handle name was Elegantly Filled, okay?

Jill: Wait, okay, let's just take a moment. That is the most creative way to say fat I have ever heard. Elegantly filled, I fucking love it. That's amazing.

Sandra: And it was thanks to my fucking cousin in back country Croatia, where I'm from, who used to call me elegantly filled every fucking time he would see me and or we'd come for a visit. He would say, "Hey, elegantly filled cousin, how are you today?" Like I would want to punch him, but that's how people talk in Europe. He would point out that you're elegantly filled in front of every single person that is in the room.

Jill: I'm literally crying over here.

Sandra: I know, right?

Jill: It's like, I mean, props for creativity. And I get that it's a cultural thing. And I mean, I guess there's a bunch of other things he could have said, but that is just – I can't, that is amazing.

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Sandra: Yeah, I know.

Jill: Okay, I'm sorry to interrupt.

Sandra: Oh no, don't be. It was so funny because when I thought like, "Okay, 2018. What's my handle going to be?" That was all I could fucking think of, elegantly filled. So I did it. I posted the worst possible photos of myself that you would throw darts at. Like this was going to be a self-punishing, self-hatred type of private Instagram page. And I left it at that.

I started the page and I didn't do anything with it. And 2018 rolls around and I'm still going fiercely on my treadmill. I'm still walking, walking fast, and doing some running on there, and watching some documentaries. And all of a sudden I started spending more and more time on this Instagram and my feed, for whatever reason, started getting filled with all these runners. Like all these like running pages.

And I was like, you know, and I'm running a little bit more on the treadmill. So, March 18, 2018 is my runiversary.

Jill: Awe.

Sandra: Yeah, it was the first day I went outside since high school to go for a run. Yeah, I was 43. Since high school that was the first time that I had gone outside intentionally to run in front of other people. And I put a jacket around my waist so that nothing bounced up and down. I ran and I came back and I was like, "Holy shit, what just happened?"

Oh my God, I have goosebumps always talking about that moment, because I came back and I was like, "Holy shit, sign me up for every

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fucking race you can find in Kelowna that year.” And I changed my Instagram handle.

And to this day, the first person who ever followed me, she’s this lovely lady in the US, she goes by Twiggy. She’s not twiggy, but she just goes by Twiggy. And she was my first person who commented on the first picture that I took and posted and it started off as Big Fit Mom of Four Runs.

And see this is how our brains are just so fucked. So instead of Elegantly Filled, I chose Big Fit Mom of Four Runs because I thought I had to justify my size by the amount of watermelons I popped out. So you know.

Jill: Yeah. No, it makes perfect sense. And I love that you have that kind of awareness that you’re like, “Oh, I felt like I needed to justify,” because it indicates to me that you no longer feel like you need to justify it. Yeah, y’all listening can’t see it, but I just got like the best eye roll ever. It was amazing. So congratulations on that.

Sandra: Yeah.

Jill: Okay, so you’re Big Fit Mom of Four Runs. I remember because I remember that was your handle. Even a couple of years ago that was your handle.

Sandra: Yeah, it was, it was. And then I thought, well, I don’t really need the four in there anymore. So I changed it. I didn’t know what it was going to be, I didn’t like my last name. I was like, oh. So I just thought, “Big fit, I run. Big fit. I am big, fit, I run. Like that’s it.” And I made peace with it and that is who I am, this big fit person that runs.

And the other day I shared this reel, like every fucking winter I go up 10 pounds. And then this winter it creped up to like 265. I was like, “Fuck.

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Now all of my reels are lies. I'm no longer 250." I was like, "Do I delete them all? Do I make a correction and edit every single one of them?"

But every single winter, it's like we hibernate. The bear puts on some extra layers and then spring comes along and summer comes along and we're eating a lot more fiber and watermelon and there goes the 10 pounds. I mean, right?

Jill: Amazing. Yeah.

Sandra: So yeah, that's kind of how I got here. 2018 was kind of the year that I did a lot of races locally. I did my first trail races. And the endorphins, and you know about the endorphins, how they make you feel. How you keep coming back for more, no matter the state of pain you're in. And I wouldn't even call it pain, it's like a discomfort. It's like a comfortable discomfort that you're in at that moment and you think never again, but you're already planning the next five races.

Jill: Yeah.

Sandra: We're all in this kind of similar situation where we keep trying to reenact the same beautiful feeling that we have with each race and the feeling of accomplishment. And so 2018, fast forward to 2019 and that was when I started the streak, the 5k streak because I had streakers in my feed. These freaking people who were talking about their streaks, it was on my feed.

And then the only thing I didn't like about the Runner's World Streak, which is one mile a day of running. So the only thing I didn't like about that was like, what if I don't feel like running but I feel like walking 5k? Like are you stupid? So I just thought, I'm like, I can't commit to running every single day because after a marathon, I physically can't run a mile the next day. I can't.

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Jill: Yeah.

Sandra: I'd end up in the hospital because of what my body went through for a marathon.

Jill: And it's not, it's actually not great for you to be running every day.

Sandra: No, it's not. No, 100%. 100%. But after the marathon I can walk from my hotel to my car. And then I could walk from my car to the restaurant and eat. I can walk from my car to Pike Street Market and eat. I can do those things. And it will be a very slow walk, but I can do them. So I was planning ahead.

Jill: Yeah, I love it.

Sandra: Strategically planning ahead and going, "No, no, that one mile a day thing, the run, no it's not for me. 5k walking, I guess." That was 2019, and we all know what happened in 2020. And I just kept walking, kind of like Forrest Gump. I just kept walking.

Jill: So when you first started were you like, okay, I'm going to do 5k a day for 30 days? Did you have a time limit on it?

Sandra: For the year.

Jill: For the year, oh my gosh.

Sandra: I know, I know.

Jill: So January 1st, you're like, "I'm going to do this every day for a year."

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Sandra: Yeah, so January 1st I met a friend in the park. And we're like, "Yeah, let's go for a run today." And then by that time I was a little bit more active on Instagram. And I was like, "Well, if I run today, I might as well run tomorrow. So I'm going to run tomorrow. And then I'll just announce to everybody on Instagram I'm going to do a 5k streak." Because if you announce it, you're a blabbering person and now you have to stick to what you said you're going to do.

So I had a couple of friends follow me or start doing the 5k thing with me on January 1st. And they stuck with it until about April or May. And there were a couple of just life things that got in the way. And they did it as much as they could, but there was something happening to me when I was doing those 5k's and I didn't realize it.

And I know I've said this to you before, but Jill, your podcast and a few other podcasts saved my life in combination with the 5k a day. And when I was listening to you, you were so articulate. The way you have with words is just un-fucking-believable. Like your coaching ability, but also the way you have the ability to explain what is happening in someone's mind versus what they think is happening.

So the mean girl, remember you talk about the mean girl and the inner mean girl, that was who I grew up with my whole life. I have anxiety, I've had anxiety my whole life, I just didn't know that it was this severe. And it became 10 times more severe after I had each child, and I had to be medicated about eight years ago. But those thoughts were so intrusive, they literally created these scenarios that just weren't real.

And then the more I listened to your podcast, and I even remember back in 2018, and sometimes I do it today too, like the other day when you were talking about endorphins and opioids and that. Like what I'll do is I would record it while I'm walking, but also let other people listen to what you're

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saying. And it's just true, we are our own saboteurs but we are also our own healers.

And, of course, nobody could make me go on the 5k if I didn't want to. But let me tell you how much I didn't want to. I would talk myself, or try to talk myself out of it. And as soon as I would put on one of your podcasts, or as soon as I would put on, like I think at one point I had listened to all of yours and I so there was none left.

At this point I'd be waiting a whole week and I'm like, "Are you fucking kidding me?" I'm like, "Seriously, you drop one a week? Get a life." So I'd throw other ones in there, right? Like *Rich Roll*. I'd just throw other ones in there. And so it was this combination of all these messages coming at me in combination with the 5k.

And I remember, so I have finished the first year and 2019 comes along. And my voice, so you would think after one year, yeah, you got this. This is like clockwork. In 2019 I remember lacing up, I don't know for whatever day it was. And this fucking voice comes in my head and it's like, "You're not even a real runner. You just do 5k. Whatever. Okay, fine. You did a full year and now you want to do a second year. Okay, whatever. You're a joke. You're not even a real runner."

That's the kind of shift that was talking to me, like the kind of voices that kept coming in my head constantly. So if it wasn't one layer of sabotage, it became this graduated new layer of sabotage. It was like my body was, I'm sure you've heard of Andrew Huberman and how he talks about the nervous system controlling the brain, and how our nervous system holds all the previous memories of things that have happened to us.

And it was like my nervous system was like, "Okay, you know what? We'll let you have this, but we're not going to make you feel good about it even

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though you've done all this. We'll let you have year two of 5k a day. But, bitch, when you get to the end of year two, you're not going to do year three." And now, as year three went by, I no longer have those voices in my head.

That's how long it took to build that self-worth up. And I've talked about this before, too, with other people. Why do you need to prove something over and over again to yourself? And the reason is, is because I feel like there's two kinds of people in the world. It's such a generalization, but I don't mean there's only two kinds of people in this world. But I'm talking about like when you're a kid there's some people – Like how many degrees do you have? You have like two degrees or something? Okay, yeah. All right.

Jill: I'm one of those people, yeah. I'm using zero of them in my current career, but I do have three degrees, yeah.

Sandra: Doesn't matter, right? Yes, three degrees. Yes, I remember. I knew it was two for sure, but three. So you have three degrees. Why did you not quit on yourself? Whereas I don't have even one degree. I quit college because I didn't believe in myself. I didn't believe that I was worthy enough to work hard for that degree.

And so when I say there's kind of like two people in this world, in the sense of like you're either raised around an environment where you have no problem completing a degree, you have no problem with self-control, creating that habit pattern and finishing that degree. Doesn't matter if you use it or not. But you were able to do that, not once, not twice, but three times.

I haven't even been able to do it once. And so when I started the 5k, that was almost like my degree in myself.

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Jill: Right, you were like creating a new set of evidence for yourself.

Sandra: Self-worth.

Jill: Because I'm glad that you mentioned that it took you a couple years to really sort of knock those voices back, because I think when you spend 40 years talking smack to yourself and constantly belittling yourself and seeking evidence that you suck, then it's really unrealistic to think that, oh, 30 days of running a 5k a day and suddenly I'm not going to hear those voices anymore.

No, it really does take years to undo all of the stuff that you've practiced thinking for years before. Whether it was hearing it from a parent, or from a sibling, or from people at school, or teachers or wherever, it takes time to undo that. And so I think it's a testament to courage, to bravery, and to – I think we all have that within us, it's just a matter of what's the thing that we're going to be able to jump onto?

And for you, maybe having a degree, that wasn't important enough, right? Or the reason that I've gone through and gotten all these degrees is because my entire childhood and young adulthood it was just driven into my head, this is who you are, this is what you're going to do. So it wasn't like, oh, I have all this stick-to-itiveness. It was like, oh, I don't have any other choice, right?

So it's literally like a function of what I learned as a kid and the stories that I was told about myself. And then I just kind of applied them forward. And I kept getting more degrees because I was like, I don't know who else to be. I'm a person who gets degrees, right? And now I'm just like, well, crap, I got all these degrees and they are not so helpful to me right now.

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But it's so interesting, right? It's like we are just such a function, such a product of what we've been taught and then how we amplify those messages in our own mind, it gives us our results. And you have created the results of running 5k a day, or walking, running, covering 5k a day for four years, three months and 10 days.

Sandra: Yes. Yeah. No, I mean, you can't argue with the numbers, for sure.

Jill: Yeah.

Sandra: But I can say the same for you. You may not be using your degrees indirectly right now, but you're using your methodology that you used to get those degrees to get you to the place where you are now.

Jill: Yeah, for sure, for sure.

Sandra: And I hear it in the way you speak. And like I said, I really do, I honestly, out of all the podcasts that I've ever listened to, and I've listened to a lot of them, yours is always – Anytime somebody messages me in my inbox and they're like, "How do I start? Where do I start?" I have a copy and paste that says, "Go start with Not Your Average Runner episode one."

Jill: Well, thank you.

Sandra: Just go fucking start there. Call me in the morning, don't call me. I don't know what I'm doing, she does, just go start over there because I'm not going to reinvent the wheel. She knows what she's doing, go start with episode one. But when you said something earlier about seeking evidence.

Jill: Yeah.

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Sandra: And also, if I was 43 when I finally believed that I could run, and then 44 in 2019 when I started the streak. Imagine, let's say kind of like at the age of eight-ish or nine was when we kind of start realizing how our adults feel about us. Like they either think we're the shit or they're like, "Oh, you need some fucking improvement, okay?" Like when my mom had to take me shopping in the female adult section of the bay or Sears, she was so mad, right? She was like, "Ugh."

And I was a tall child, I was like I'm 511. So yeah, of course, most of the children's clothes aren't going to fit me past 10 years old. So yes, I'm going to have to go into the women's section to get my fucking confirmation dress. What do you want me to do about that? But it's the disappointment in other people's eyes that we then reflect onto ourselves.

And like you said, if for 40 years you're seeking evidence that you are a fucking loser, you will find it. And so how long does it take? Of course, it's going to take almost another fucking 40 years to correct all that. Not 30 days, not 60, not 90, not one year.

Jill: Yeah.

Sandra: I'm in year five and I think I'm doing okay, but there's still days where it's not necessarily me internally, it's how I kind of react to external things that happen that I have to check myself and go, "Whoa, whoa, whoa, why did you react like that?" We still have an unhealed part of Sandra. Yes, we do. It fucking doesn't, like 5k a day for 1,500 days doesn't fix everything.

Jill: Yeah.

Sandra: The only thing it does is it helps you cope a little bit better.

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Jill: Yeah, I mean it bathes you in endorphins for a little bit everyday, which feels really, really good.

Sandra: Yeah.

Jill: And it gives you a little bit of evidence every day. But yeah, it's hard to undo that programming. And you have a huge presence on Instagram. How many followers do you have now? It's insane.

Sandra: I think I'm at like 49 something.

Jill: Okay, so with that many followers, you must get the occasional person who's like, "Oh, she's too fat to run," or "You're going to destroy your knees" or what have you. Because this is like every person that's ever, every fat woman who's ever wanted to post about her running on Instagram and is worried that somebody's going to come out and criticize her or whatever. So how do you handle that? What are the thoughts? And has that changed over time?

Sandra: So I think because I was spending quite a bit of time on Instagram, I knew that the sign of success on Instagram was a troll.

Jill: Yeah, for sure. You're like, "I've made it."

Sandra: Yeah, as soon as I got my first troll, I fucking celebrated. I was so happy because I was like, "Oh my God, it's gotten into the general public." A troll is the first sign that you've gone viral.

Jill: I love it.

Sandra: It's something to celebrate. You've got to make a reel of it, you've got to make a green screen of it. Usually they don't have pictures because

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they're keyboard warriors and they're probably who knows what, but you've got to take a screenshot of that troll comment and then you make a video and you celebrate because it's almost like a little Emmy, wouldn't you say?

Jill: Yeah. Yeah it is. If you're somebody who's trying to build an Instagram following, yeah, it is definitely a milestone when you get your first hater. You're like, "Oh, obviously I'm irritating somebody out there, I'm doing something right."

But, first of all, let's talk about the funniest – Can you think of the funniest troll comment that you've ever gotten, that you were just like, "Damn, that was creative" or something like that?

Sandra: Well I mean, God, there's so many. But here, I'll pick a few. Not like there's so many, so many. But there's about 30 I'd say in the last three years, right? One of them was absolutely creative use of an emoji. It was the pig emoji. Just one pig emoji. I was like, okay.

Jill: You were like, okay, that's simple, to the point. Okay. Props for that. Low creativity though, because I mean, right? But still simple. Okay.

Sandra: Solid, yeah. And then the one that I was kind of the most shocked about was this woman. This fucking tit of a woman who – You didn't know I was a potty mouth did you? Yeah, well.

Jill: I had a feeling.

Sandra: This fucking tit wrote on my Instagram after I posted a reel. And she wrote, "What's that to be proud of? I do like 15,000 to 20,000 steps in a day when I run around after my kids." And I was like, "Wow, you're such a fucking bitch." So then I went and found her and I was like, I found her on Facebook because she used her fucking real name. And I thought to

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myself, you are just the fucking definition of what's wrong with women today who don't support other women. You are the fucking definition of it.

And then she went back and forth with me. It wasn't just one comment, Jill. She went back and forth, back and forth. And I'm like, "Dude, get the fuck off my page."

Jill: Yeah.

Sandra: Like are you kidding me? You're coming after me because I'm just exercising? So that one was like a shocker kind of.

Jill: It is always shocking when you're just kind of out there doing your thing and trying to help other people feel good about themselves and build confidence. And then people are like, "How dare you?" And you're like, "How dare I try to help other people? Like I'm confused."

Sandra: Yep.

Jill: It's fascinating.

Sandra: How dare I show people that it's okay to move in the body that you have. Wow.

Jill: Yeah, it's fascinating.

Sandra: Like I should be ashamed of myself.

Jill: I had somebody tell me once that I should be arrested. Literally, they're like, "You should be arrested." I'm like, I'm legit confused by this, because I'm just here on Instagram telling people that they can be runners. And this is somehow a felony? I just didn't get it.

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What would you say to somebody who – So put yourself in the shoes of those first few days that you were a runner, and you're Elegantly Filled on Instagram. Yeah, that gets props for creativity. Right, so you're like way, way back when, when you still really have a lot of that inner bully voice in your head and somebody posts a troll comment, right?

What do you want to say to that person? Or what advice would you give to the person who is not thinking, "Oh my gosh, I've made it on Instagram," but is thinking, "I need to hide myself. I need to shut myself down. I can't post this stuff because I feel so bad because of what people are saying." How would you help somebody who is struggling with getting criticism? And maybe it's not a troll comment on Instagram, maybe it's somebody in their life that needs a little lesson on how to be a human being.

Sandra: Honestly, I think it just goes back to knowing why you're there in the first place. Like why are you there? Why are you deciding to share a part of your life with everybody? Usually, it's because it makes you feel good, and it also makes people who are cheering you on feel good, because we're in this together. So does that reason outweigh the negative?

Jill: Yeah.

Sandra: In most cases it does. Because one drop of oil isn't going to spoil an entire barrel of water. It's just not, it's one little drop of oil or one little drop of bleach. It's not going to spoil the entire barrel. And if you hold on to that thought, and hold on to that thought as dearly as you can, usually that one little comment isn't going to impact you to the point where you're going to absolutely quit everything that you just built up because of one comment.

I mean, famous musicians have a whole hate club.

Jill: Yeah.

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Sandra: So if they can have a whole hate club, you can sure as hell have one hater comment, one troll comment every now and then coming your way. Because you know what? Then this is something that it's a saying in the country where I'm from, is that the day dust always settles after every good horse, right? So you know when a horse is running and there's like this dust flying up behind him? Every good horse has –

Jill: Has dust behind them, yeah.

Sandra: That's what I wanted to say. It sounds so complicated. It doesn't sound like a good saying, but in my language it does. So that's what I mean, if you're going to create a storm, if you're going to create an impact, if you're going to rock the boat, you are going to rock somebody's comfort zone. You're going to make ripples in the water.

You can't do great things without making ripples and pissing people off because not everybody wants you to be great. Not everybody wants you to have this platform. Not everybody gives a shit about what you're doing. In fact, nobody does, except the people that truly enjoy you.

Jill: Yeah. Oh, that's so beautifully said. I love that. I love that.

Sandra: Except the horse part.

Jill: So it was to – I know, right? Well can you say it? Say it in your language, let's hear your beautiful words.

Sandra: [inaudible].

Jill: Oh, that was so lovely. Oh, that was so lovely.

Sandra: After every good horse, the dust lifts.

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Jill: I love it. That makes perfect sense, right? Yeah, of course, there's always going to be dust behind the horse. Okay, so let's talk a little bit about the Run Your Life magazine because you're not just a runner who has done five marathons and 5k's for four years straight, right? You've actually taken it to the next level and created a magazine.

So can you tell us a little bit about this fine publication?

Sandra: So when I was a little girl, and from the time I was 14 when I got my first job at a restaurant as a bus girl.

Jill: Love it.

Sandra: You know that I ran to the store right next to the restaurant and got myself corn nuts and m&ms, okay. But that's besides the point. The other thing that I would buy after my job, after I got my tips was magazines. I bought thousands of magazines.

And I had a ledge around the entire perimeter of my room, that's just the way it was. And I had magazines lined up. YM, Sassy, Cosmo, 17, Mary Claire, what else was trendy back then? But anyways, every single month, every single addition, every year, from the time I was 14 until I was like 20.

Jill: Oh my gosh.

Sandra: So I had thousands of magazines. And I knew that I could never be in one of them, that I never looked like them. And my mom, bless her heart, was trying to help. So she signed me up into modeling school because I walk like a horse. And she literally told me that, every time I walked through the house she said, "You walk like a horse."

Jill: Were you just like, "Listen, let me tell you about horses, mom."

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Sandra: No. Yeah, that saying came much later. But yeah, she would have then taken my ears and then, you know. But she was trying to help me learn how to walk. So I went to this modeling school and whatever, nothing came of it. And when I was 20 I got a job at a magazine publishing company, which was so long ago.

But I learned how to put together a dummy. I learned how to put together where the ads and where the editorial would go. And I was just a production manager's assistant, but I still was surrounded by these magazines and the ads and it was exciting. And that was a long time ago.

And in 2018 when I started getting involved in running, I started buying Runner's World, of course, right? And then I thought, "Fuck, nothing has changed. Nothing has fucking changed in the 24 years since I was looking at these magazines." And through Instagram and through meeting other friends on Instagram there were two friends who took one of my pictures and put me on the cover of this picture. And I was like, "Oh my God, I could be a white Oprah, but for running."

Jill: I love it.

Sandra: I was like, "How the fuck am I going to do this?" And yeah, that's literally the thought process. The massive amount of planning that went behind that project was blurt it out on Instagram, say you're going to do it, and now you have to fucking do it. That's how Run Your Life started.

And I was like, what do I want to do? What do I want to tell other people to do? They have to run their life. They can't let their life run them like I had been. You have to take the reins, and you have to run your own fucking life. And so the magazine is this collaboration, it's not about me.

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It's about all these other people who have shared stories of cancer, of dismemberment, losing something, gaining something, coming out of this race, training for something, big, small, fat, skinny, whatever. It's about them sharing their story that they normally wouldn't be able to because they're not famous writers. They're not going to be published by Huffington Post or New York whatever.

It's literally a way for me to get these women together and for them to do something that will never be erased because it's in print. And it'll always be a small little part of history.

Jill: Oh, I love that. Creating a magazine, it flows so naturally from you've already figured out how to create this running streak that has healed you. So it only makes sense that you'd be like, "Okay, now what else can I do?" Right? I imagine that putting a magazine out is a bit like running a marathon.

Sandra: You're right, it is. You've got training, you've got to plan, and then you execute, right? And I'll tell you, you want to know what happened after the first issue. You know how there's marathon depression?

Jill: Yes.

Sandra: Okay. Well, guess what else they're fucking is now? There's something called publishing your first fucking magazine depression. After the first one in 2021, I had the same voices pop in my head like they did when I was doing the streak. "You're one and done, okay? You're not going to repeat this. Fine you did one. Okay, whatever. You proved you could do one, but you're not doing two. You're just not going to do it." Because that's how this bitch talks to me.

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And I fucking hummed and hawed. I was like, eh, eh. I hardly promoted it. Like I was like, meh, eh, eh, you know? And then at the end of 2022 I was like, "Fuck, I'm doing another one." I don't know. I'm just going to do another one, I don't know how it's going to work out. And it worked out, because you know what? I made my own rules.

Jill: Yeah.

Sandra: That was the thing. You know how we put this pressure on ourselves and we put these deadlines and the structure that we were taught in school that we think this should look like this, it doesn't have to fucking look like anything. Your business doesn't have to look like anything. It can look exactly the way you think it should look.

My magazine, that's why I don't have a subscription. Because it's like, I can't commit to you for four issues a year. Are you kidding me? You know what? Let's just go with the flow. You get it when you get it. What is that little saying? You get what you get and you don't get upset.

Jill: Yeah, I love it.

Sandra: But I have a full time job. I'm not going to commit to four issues a week. The next one I'm doing is perhaps September, but I think now that I've kind of said, "Okay, you've done two, girl. All right, you've done two, and we'll see what happens."

And if I decide I don't want to do this anymore, it's okay. If I decide, I don't want to do 5k anymore, there's no fucking guilt or shame like we've been taught to carry this guilt and shame for everything that we think we should do or that somebody thinks we should do. It's such bullshit.

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Jill: Yeah, and it must be a relief to drop that and realize that you can make your magazine look however you want. You can make your running practice look however you want. And I feel like the more, like as I've watched you on Instagram, the more you step into that energy, the more you show up as like, "Hey, this is who I am, take it or leave it," the more people are drawn to you like a moth to a flame, right? Because that energy is so powerful, right? So powerful.

Sandra: I was going to say or a fly to shit.

Jill: Or a fly to shit. But truly, right? I think that when we drop all of the posturing and the trying to please everybody else and be what we think other people want us to be, when we just show up as ourselves and start writing our own rules, then other people are like, "Oh, wait a minute, maybe I can do that too." It's just a really powerful way to be, so I love it.

Sandra: It's so true. It's so fucking true, Jill. And even talking about, you know that most people that get into this running world, especially later on in life – I know you've been running for 18 years, for a long time. So you've been at this for a long time. But the handcuffs are taken off of you when you realize that you can run at any fucking pace you want. You can finish your marathon at any fucking pace you want.

I don't care that I did my Seattle marathon in six hours, even though I did a full training plan. And that if I do one again this year, it might take six hours again. I don't give a flying fuck, because I'm not out there to constantly achieve PRs. That's not my purpose.

Jill: Yeah.

Sandra: If that was my purpose, I'd lose 100 pounds so that I could be faster, but I'm not. It's okay to be exactly the way that I am. And that's the

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message that I want everybody to take from this is, the only goal you're setting for yourself is the one you set for yourself. Don't allow anybody else to set goals for you, and to intimidate you and to gatekeep you into something that doesn't feel comfortable.

Running should feel comfortable. Running should be easy. When I realized that after two years, like I only started realizing that like two years ago, so two years into the journey. I was like, why am I not running easy runs all the time?

Jill: Yeah, exactly.

Sandra: I started to become a better runner when I was running easy runs all the time.

Jill: Yeah. Right, it's because your body is just like, "Oh, thank you."

Sandra: Yeah, I can finally enjoy this.

Jill: Yeah, I love it. Because we enjoy it, I think then we do it more intentionally, and that is where we get stronger. So I love that.

Sandra: Exactly.

Jill: Well, thank you so, so much, Sandra, for joining me today. This has been an amazing conversation.

Sandra: You're welcome.

Jill: Where can people find you? And where can they get the Run Your Life magazine?

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Sandra: So my Instagram is BigFit_I_Run, and there's a link in that Instagram page for the magazine. It's available digitally and print, and that is where they can find me. And I just want to say one more thing, and I know we're signing off.

Jill: Oh, no, please, please.

Sandra: All I want to say is that, what are the chances of you returning to something that is painful and you don't enjoy? Zero. There are zero chances of you returning to something that's painful and you don't enjoy, versus returning to something that is delightful. Like a little bit of discomfort, but more enjoyable. The chances are higher. And that's all I want to say about running, is if you make it enjoyable and delightful for yourself, the more chances are that you will continue showing up.

Jill: Yeah. Right, and you'll continue to reap the benefits. And then you're going to be that 80 year old, 90 year old woman who's still out there on the track setting records. Every time I see a 90 year old woman, I just saw one that was 102 years old.

Sandra: Did you see that one?

Sandra: Oh my gosh. Her trainer, first of all, she's 102 years old and she's got a fucking trainer. And he's like, "Dianne, pump those arms." I'm like, this is it. This is what I want for myself. This is what I want my life to be like, 102 years old, my run coach yelling at me to pump those arms. Pretty sure she can run faster than me as well, 102 years.

Sandra: Yeah, I saw her too. She was phenomenal. She is goals.

Jill: Yeah, she is goals.

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Sandra: That is goals.

Jill: That is goals, right? And it starts now, right? It starts in your 40s and your 50s with dropping all of the expectations and creating a running practice that works for you, which is exactly what you've done. So everyone, please head on over to Instagram, say it one more time just so that it's still in everybody's ears.

Sandra: BigFit_I_Run.

Jill: Okay, but it's BigFit_I_Run. We will have a link to that in the show notes. Run Your Life magazine, if you're interested in grabbing a copy of that you can get it from Sandra's profile on Instagram. Thank you so much for joining me today. It's been a well overdue conversation and I'm so grateful for your time.

Sandra: It's my honor. And I am so humbled that you asked me. And I replied to you, it's about fucking time, but nobody is counting.

Jill: It's about damn time.

Sandra: No, the pleasure is all mine and I can't wait until you decide what date this is going to air because I want other people to listen to you starting with episode one. And just I want them to experience what I experienced when you were there for me even though you didn't know you were there for me, but you were there for me.

Jill: I love it. All right, thank you so very much.

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

[The Not Your Average Runner Podcast](#) with Jill Angie

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have always wanted to be. Head on over to runyourbestlife.com to join. I would love to be a part of your journey.