

## Ep #298: Running Facts You Need to Know



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With Your Host

**Jill Angie**

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

Hey, runners. Have you ever felt hopeless about running? Like nothing was going your way and you just felt like, "Seriously, why do I even bother?" If so, this episode is for you. If you do the one thing that I'm going to teach you today, everything else is going to get a lot easier. And of course, that's actually my whole purpose with this podcast, is to make your running easier, to make your whole life easier for that matter, but we're talking about running today.

So if you want to run a 5k, I want to help make it easier for you. If you want to run a half marathon, same thing. That's actually why I created Run Your Best Life, which is my coaching program that helps you start running, get better and better at it, and build your self-confidence along with your fitness. So if you have not joined that, make sure you check it out at [runyourbestlife.com](http://runyourbestlife.com), okay? Okay.

All right my running friends, we are kicking off this episode with a great quote from Mark Twain, and that quote is, "Get your facts first, and then you can distort them as you please." And this quote was inspired by a client I was coaching a while ago who had finished her second marathon. I'm going to tell you her story in just a moment. But first I want to share the coaching structure that I use in Run Your Best Life, and when I say coaching structure, I'm talking about the mindset tools that we use.

And this structure, this model works in pretty much every situation in running, and in life too, but again, we're talking about it in the context of running today. And it consists of five elements: circumstances, thoughts,

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emotions, actions, and results. Circumstances are irrefutable facts, they are data, information, numbers, things that if you took a poll of every single human on the planet and everyone agreed, then that is a circumstance.

Now, our thoughts, the second part of the model, are our opinions and our beliefs, and our evaluations, and our judgments, and our assessments, right? Those are the ways we take the facts and then we have thoughts about them, right? Or opinions, judgments, beliefs, all those things.

So we know that something is a thought if not everybody would agree on it. And a great example of this is when you say, "I'm a slow runner." That's not a fact because there is no standard for what makes somebody slow and what makes somebody fast, right? Everybody's idea of what is slow and what is fast is different. So saying that you are a slow runner, you might think, "Oh, well, that's just factual, everybody would agree." Not actually. Not everybody would agree.

So circumstance would be the pace. The number that you see on RunKeeper, in your Garmin, wherever you're keeping track of your data, that's the circumstance. And then your thought about it is I'm a slow runner, I'm a fast runner, or whatever you think about it.

Now, we have circumstances and then we have thoughts, and our thoughts drive our emotions, right? Our emotions are our feelings, like happy, sad, excited, fearful, right? Our thoughts drive our emotions and every emotion that we have in our lives, every feeling that we have in our lives, comes from a thought that happens first. And it might not always seem like it, sometimes happens really fast, but that is how it works.

Now, these emotions drive our actions. So everything that we do in our lives is a result of an emotion that we're experiencing in our body. When you are feeling happy, you take different actions than if you are feeling unhappy, right?

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So if you imagine that you have a circumstance in which you ran a race, you ran a 5k and you finished it in 45 minutes, okay? So it's roughly a 15 minute mile. And you have a thought about that circumstance, that thought is going to drive a feeling and the feeling is going to drive an action, an emotion, right, that's going to drive an action.

So if your thought is, "I'm really, really slow and I'm not getting any better," you're going to feel defeated. And your action might be to quit running. If your thought about that same exact circumstance of running a 45 minute 5k, if your thought is, "Wow, I felt so good during that run," or, "I'm so proud of myself for finishing," you will have a totally different emotion than if you're thinking I'm so slow and I'm not getting any better, right?

If you're thinking, "I'm so proud of myself," you're going to feel proud. If you're thinking, "Wow, that run felt really good," you might feel pleased or encouraged, right? And then the action that you take when you have those emotions is more likely to just get back out there and keep running, right?

And so, again, we have circumstances, which is the data. And then we have thoughts about the data. And then those thoughts drive our emotions, which drive our actions. And then the accumulation of all of our actions gives us our result, okay?

And so, if you are thinking about that 45 minute 5k, if you're thinking, "I'm really slow, I'm not getting any better," and you feel defeated and you stop running, then the result is you're probably not going to get any faster.

But if you're thinking, "Wow, that run felt really good," and you're feeling pleased and you take the action of continuing to run, then you're going to get better at running. You might get faster, you might not, but it's definitely going to start feeling easier.

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So that's the model. That's the framework that I use to coach my clients on all of their struggles inside Run Your Best Life. And a while ago I used it to coach a marathon client after her second marathon, okay?

So when we were coaching she had just finished her second marathon about 10 days earlier. When we met she was feeling, right, the emotion part of the model, she was feeling discouraged and frustrated. And she told me she was discouraged and frustrated because her running speed wasn't where she wanted to be.

So her thought was, "My running speed isn't where I want it to be." And she was feeling frustrated and discouraged. And she also, like her body was feeling kind of slow and sluggish and she had a lot of opinions about that, too. She was not happy without how her body felt.

Now she's explaining all this to me and in my mind I'm thinking, girl, you just finished a marathon. Your body is in recovery. This is normal. This is so normal. You trained hard. Your race took place under difficult conditions, right? It was not the best weather that day. And it's only been 10 fucking days, take it easy on yourself, right?

So this is what I'm thinking in my mind. But I didn't want to share my thoughts with her. I wanted her to tell me all of her thoughts. So I was like, "Lay it on me, give me all your thoughts." And there were a lot of them. The one that was really causing the most pain, the one that was making her feel the emotion of being really, really frustrated and discouraged was I should be farther along by now. Okay?

So the circumstance here is that she ran her second marathon 10 days before we spoke. And then she had done a few runs in the meantime and her body was feeling kind of slow and sluggish, right? So those are the circumstances, the facts. And then she was thinking, "I should be farther along by now." She kept thinking about it, she kept turning it over and over

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in her mind and it was creating some really, really uncomfortable emotions for her.

And I'm sure you can imagine, right? If you had that thought on repeat in your own head, how terrible you would feel. I should be farther along by now. It doesn't feel good to think that. And she thought it was a fact. She's just like, "Well, I should be farther along by now, right?" Like everyone would agree, but really, it was just an opinion that she had.

But the more headspace that she gave to that thought, and the more she focused on it, and the more she created evidence, the more she looked for evidence to support it, the more evidence she found that she was just totally failing as a runner, okay?

Now, remember, this is a woman who just finished her second marathon. A woman who had been running for over five years, had done at least a dozen half marathons, had brought her running speed down from just under a 20 minute mile when she first started, to about a 12 minute mile when she was in training for this marathon.

A 12 minute mile. That is really fucking impressive, right? Especially when you consider that she started at 20 minutes. So she almost cut her running pace in half. Or to put it another way, she almost was running twice as fast in the time that she had been training as a runner over the five years. I mean, come on, right? You and I both know, we're here, you and I here together are like that is the opposite of failing. That is like the most huge success.

But 10 days after her marathon she was running, she was doing her training and she was at like a 14 to 15 minute mile, which is slower than her 12 minute mile pace from before. But she was thinking, "Oh my gosh, nothing is right. I'm failing. This is terrible. I'm not where I should be."

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And so here's where Mr. Mark Twain comes in, get your facts first, and then you can distort them as you please, right? It's kind of a snarky way of saying like, hey, you can make it mean whatever you want, but make sure that you have the facts right.

So here's the thing, my client was not looking at all the facts. She was looking at the three recovery runs she had done in the 10 days after her marathon. So she was taking three runs and comparing them to years of training before and letting her brain distort those three individual runs into a really unfair story. Because for those three runs, she was running a few minutes per mile slower.

So once I knew what her painful thought was, which is, "I should be further along by now," we got all the data out, all of it, and we looked at it. And not just the training runs from the past couple months. We actually went all the way back to her first marathon and we looked at the data for the training runs immediately following that race.

And here's what we found. So in the first week after her first marathon she was about three to four minutes per mile slower than normal. In the second week she took maybe a minute per mile off of that. So she got a little bit faster. In the third week, she got faster again. And then after about a month, she was back to normal.

And so that was maybe nine months before the second marathon. Okay, so she did her first marathon and then it took her about a month to get back to the pace that she was before she ran the marathon, which by the way is completely normal, right? A marathon puts your body through a lot, it takes a while to get back.

So, nine months before her second marathon that she was feeling so bad about she had done this first marathon, all of that had happened. Then she trained for another one. She did a whole ton of speed work, actually

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clocked some of her fastest miles ever during that training cycle. And then she ran marathon number two, okay?

And again, just like marathon number one, in that first week afterwards she was a lot slower than normal. But here's the fun part, in the week following marathon number two she was faster than in the week following marathon number one.

So even though she was running a 12 minute mile before her second marathon, and then afterwards she was running like a 14 or 15 minute mile in that week or two afterwards, she was still faster than she'd been the week after her first marathon. So all of that drama about how she wasn't getting any better at running and she wasn't where she was supposed to be was not true, right?

The data was very, very clear about the progress that she had actually made. And this is very unusual, by the way, to train for a marathon and also increase your running speed at the same time. So not only was the data showing that her pace had gotten faster, but she's also like busting the odds because, really, most people don't improve their running pace while they're training for a marathon. You're working on distance, you're not working on pace. So she was really showing a lot of progress.

And when we sat down and looked at the numbers, it was like, oh, okay. So I tell you this story because I want to make sure that you are always clear on the facts before you let your mind run amok, okay? Especially when it comes to your running. Let your legs do the running, don't let your mind do the running, okay? Don't let your mind run amok.

And I say this all the time on the podcast, our brains are assholes, right? They're total jerks sometimes. They're like cats who keep knocking shit off a shelf for no reason. Our brains ignore the facts and they make up stories. We're just wired this way, right?

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If your brain does that, congratulations, you're a fine example of a human. It's just all drama. Drama sucks, drama causes problems, drama is avoidable if you train yourself to stop and look at the facts before you go off on a whole big, long story about how you are the worst runner in the world.

So, in Run Your Best Life this is what we do. We are all about the numbers because numbers don't lie. And that is why it's so important to keep a running journal or use RunKeeper or your Garmin or something like that. Track every single run because then you can look back over time and see the truth, okay?

And if the data tells you like, okay, you actually aren't making the progress you want to see, then fine. That's when you can say, all right, this is the situation, and this is what I want to do about it. Instead of having no idea really, because you're just like, I don't know, I just don't feel good about my running. No, no, no, let's get the numbers and let's let the data show us what's really going on.

Please don't spend hours berating yourself about something that's not even accurate. Don't spend hours berating yourself ever, but definitely not about some bullshit story that your brain is making up, okay? Fortunately my client had me to call bullshit and bring out that microscopic view so that we could look in the weeds, look at the details, and appreciate the actual progress that she had made over the past year.

That is the power of coaching. And sometimes we can't see the forest. All we see is the huge tree in front of us. And we're like, "Oh my God, the path is blocked," when really, we just have to step a foot over and walk around the tree.

When we're in that place of telling a story, we can create kind of a really icky feeling about how much we suck because of that stupid tree. We're like, oh, I did it again, I'm stuck in front of the tree, right? It's like I can never

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find my way through the forest. And meanwhile, the forest is literally just like six inches over and you'll be able to find your way out.

So a good coach will help you step back or step to the side, see the whole forest, and find your way. One of my favorite things to do as a coach is to help people dig into the actual facts of their situation, to find the trends, and then decide how we want to think about it.

So that's what I want you to do, if you're feeling like you're struggling to make progress with running, take a look at your data first. All of the data. And then I want you to decide on purpose what you want to make the data mean, okay? Okay, Make sure you join Run Your Best Life as well so we can work on it together. We can work on clearing up your thinking, get you out of your own way.

So you can just head over to [runyourbestlife.com](http://runyourbestlife.com) to learn more about how you can join this amazing coaching program. And that is it for this episode, my friends. I love you, stay safe, and you know what I'm going to say. 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 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](http://runyourbestlife.com) to join. I would love to be a part of your journey.