

Ep #311: Fat Acceptance vs. Anti-Weight Loss



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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, hey, runners. This episode was inspired by some comments that I've heard recently, actually over the past maybe a year or so. But most recently I was at the no BS weight loss camp in Nashville a couple of weeks ago to speak on a panel about not waiting until you lose the weight to start doing the things you want to do.

And it was a little bit weird for me to be in a room of hundreds of people who were working on weight loss. But there were four of us on stage with Corinne Crabtree, who's an amazing human. If you don't know who she is, look her up immediately. Corinne Crabtree, one R, two Ns. But anyway, there were four of us on stage with Corinne and we joked that it was the happy fat woman panel because each of us is fat and has also decided that our body weight is not really relevant to chasing our dreams and showing up in our lives in a powerful way.

Now, the reason we were all invited to be part of this panel at an event for women who are actively working on weight loss is because women tend to say, "Oh, I'll do that when I lose the weight." Whether it's shopping for fashionable clothes, or taking a trip, or starting a fitness routine. There's this sort of sneaky belief that your life doesn't start until you are, I'm using air quotes here, "at your goal weight."

And I believe that all of our lives have already started and let's just get going and live them to the fullest, regardless of weight. Let's just start right fucking now and have some fun. But since most of us have been raised to believe that it is bad to be fat, that it is shameful, that it's embarrassing, that

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you're somehow less worthy as a result of being fat or even 10 pounds or 20 pounds over what the ideal weight should be, and again, ideal weight in air quotes.

And because of that, it can be really hard to think about living your best life now because we're sort of taught to think that life starts at a goal weight. I mean, that's what I was taught and I spent my whole life chasing it. It's exhausting and very, very unrewarding. So basically, what I teach on this podcast, adjacent to the stuff I teach about running, is fat acceptance, okay? And fat acceptance is the belief that all bodies, regardless of shape or size, are inherently worthy.

So whatever your weight, you're inherently worthy. Whether you are an apple or a pear or whatever fucking fruit shape you are, whether you have an hourglass shape or a different kind of shape, it's all inherently worthy, okay? You don't need to be smaller to be a better human, you don't need to have the certain proportions to be a better human. It's not a sliding scale where the tiniest of people are the most valuable and the largest are the least valuable, right?

We are all worthy, all valuable, all deserving of joy, pleasure and equal treatment. And I also don't believe you have to lose weight to feel confident and attractive and athletic and smart and funny and sexy or whatever else you want to feel. A number on the scale will not give you those things, they come from your thoughts about yourself.

How do I know? Well, first of all, I have my own life as a great example. I've been all over the scale in my life, and the times that I was the smallest after going on diet after diet, those are the times I felt the worst about myself because I believed that losing weight would solve all my problems and when it didn't I was miserable.

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Sure, I looked in the mirror and I was happy that I was smaller, but I was still hyper critical of everything, maybe even more critical in a smaller body than a larger body. I still didn't have the love life I wanted. I was still lonely. I still felt like I was failing at life. I was fucking miserable. It didn't matter how much I starved myself, how small I made my body, I was still miserable because my body was not the reason I was unhappy in the first place.

And right now I'm the heaviest I've ever been, and guess what? I'm also the happiest I've ever been. I'm living a life I absolutely love. I mean, I just got back from two weeks in fucking Alaska, which is amazing. And that is something I probably would not have done when I was smaller.

And when I say when I was smaller, meaning the thoughts that I was having about myself when I was smaller would have kept me from doing it. And the thoughts that I have about myself now are that my body size is, again, irrelevant to me living my life so I'm just going to get out there and live it. It's awesome.

So that's sort of my belief about weight and fat acceptance. And y'all have been hearing that, I think, all along. But somewhere along the way while I've been shouting into the void about accepting the body you're in right now and not waiting to live your best life, starting to run in the body you have right now, there are folks who have interpreted that to mean that I am anti-weight loss and that I believe you shouldn't ever pursue intentional weight loss and that I disapprove of you if you do. And that is 100% false.

So first of all, I'm not anti-weight loss. I'm really not. I'm anti-diet culture, okay? I think the diet industry is predatory and harmful and lies to us by teaching that a smaller body is the solution to all of our problems. And I also think it low key, and sometimes high key, teaches that you can't be attractive without being thin and that you should be ashamed of your fat body.

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It teaches us that thinness is what all of us should be striving for and that you should be apologizing if you're larger than the expectation or if, God forbid, you should eat something unhealthy in public, that we should be apologizing for that. And I think that's gross. I do not like that.

Again, I think it's harmful and predatory. And I mean, in short, I think most of the diet and fitness industry is pretty awful. And it creates little results besides shame and eating disorders and all while gleefully taking your money and setting you up to fail and then have to come back around and they will take your money again.

And honestly, don't get me started on the success rates of most diets. It is really, really low. I have seen the statistics. I have also seen the results of dozens and dozens of people in my own life who have lost weight and then gained it back and then lost it again and then gained it back over and over and over again. And these are people who get to a goal weight or they get close to a goal weight and they think, oh, finally I've solved the problem. It's keto. Keto was the reason that I gained all this weight, right, or whatever it is.

They get to their goal weight and a few weeks later or maybe months later, the pounds kind of start creeping back up. Our bodies are very clever, they don't like to be starved. They will jack around with your metabolism until you're at their happy weight, right? They kind of call it a setpoint. And that would be fine if we said, okay, this seems like where my body wants to be. I'm just going to hang out here and nourish it and love on it. And, hey, it might be 20 or 30 or even 50 pounds above what I want, but I'm going to hang out here.

But we don't do that, right? We get to our goal weight and then we gain some of the weight back and then we start panicking. And we think, oh, I just need to be more disciplined. I just need to double down. And so we double down on the restriction and then our bodies double down on trying

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to maintain the setpoint and we're back in the shame spiral. And then we say fuck it, I'm going to eat whatever I want as kind of like this rebound effect. And then a year later we start the whole process over again.

I don't know if this sounds familiar to you. I think it probably does to at least some of you. It's definitely happened to me and at least 20 other people that I could name off the top of my head, right? This is not an unusual thing.

Whenever I see somebody who loses like 100 pounds and is just like, "Oh, this is what I'm doing, this is the solution," I think in my head, there is a good chance that you are going to gain some if not all of that weight back. And it breaks my heart, right? It is not me with schadenfreude, whatever the word is when you are excited about the failure of others, right? That's not what this is.

That is me thinking the fucking diet industry has bamboozled yet another person. And I think, oh gosh, I hope it's not true for this person, but statistics show that most people who lose a significant amount of weight are probably going to gain at least some if not all of it back.

And so I can see why me talking about being anti-diet culture and talking about the dangers of a lot of the diets that are out there comes off as anti-weight loss, I get that. But I assure you, I don't have an issue with anybody pursuing weight loss because, first of all, it's your body, it's your choice, right? I 100% believe in body autonomy and you doing something with your body that I'm thinking, oh, that's not the best idea, but okay.

It's none of my business, right? I want the best for you. And if you want to lose weight on purpose and you've decided this is in my best interest, you have at it, okay? Just seriously, go for it. I just want you to go into it with your eyes open and recognize that there are some pretty destructive weight loss plans out there. Really, oh my goodness, I'm pretty sure I've tried them all.

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And if you're going to pursue weight loss, I just urge you to find a program that addresses all of the emotional pieces and doesn't require you to eat only a limited list of foods or do like two-hour workouts every day. That 75 Hard bullshit, I can't even with that thing, right?

So in my opinion the only time it's appropriate to eat in a restrictive way like that is if you have a medical reason to do so. Like you have celiac disease or an autoimmune disorder, or you literally have a doctor who has said the reason that you're getting these headaches is because of these three foods, or these food groups that are causing you physical pain, don't eat these anymore. I'm all in for that, okay? I'm not going to take the place of your doctor here, but I do think there's a lot of bullshit restriction weight loss programs out there that don't address the emotional pieces.

And you might not be an emotional eater, but you for damn sure have emotions related to your body weight. You have thoughts about your body weight that are creating emotions, and you've got to address that as you're losing weight or you're just going to struggle with the same thoughts at your goal weight, okay?

So find a coach, or a nutritionist to work with you on creating a plan that works for you and your life. And a plan that sets reasonable expectations too, because guess what? You're going to have loose skin, you're going to have stretch marks, and many people don't think that through when they start losing, right?

They're like, I'm going to lose 100 pounds, I'm going to be so hot. I'm going to wear all the sexy clothes. And then bam, they get to their goal weight and they're super disappointed because their body is not perfect, right? There's stuff sagging and hanging and nothing looks the way they expected. They've got to wear all kinds of shapewear to keep it tight.

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So, honestly, these are things you need to be thinking through. A professional can help you with that, with the emotional side of things and can really just kind of make sure that you're not tipping over into that area of like, well, if I eat as little as possible I'll lose weight faster. And that's just, it's not a good brain space to be in, okay?

So basically, to sum everything up, I believe deeply in fat acceptance, in worthiness for all bodies, and also in your personal choice to do whatever the fuck you want with your body. I am not anti-weight loss. I am not judging you if you have decided to lose weight, even if you have picked a shitty diet that has you eating nothing but grapefruit and cabbage, right?

I'm not judging you. I don't disapprove of you. I am, however, strongly anti-diet, culture and everything that comes along with that. So if I see you going down that road, I'm going to be kind of sad. I'm just going to be like, oh, I know what's coming. That's going to break my heart a little bit, right?

So that's sort of my position. For anybody that's been like, oh, that Jill, she's anti-weight loss. I'm not. I'm fat positive. I am body autonomy positive. I want you to do it for reasons that you love. I want you to do it for reasons that light you up, and not for reasons of like, well, I'll stop being lonely if I'm thin or I'll get the job I want if I'm thin, because there's no guarantee of that, right? There's no guarantee of any of that, okay?

I want you to be as happy and healthy as you desire, and I know the latest juice cleanse is not going to be a permanent fix for you, okay?

And also, next month, August 2023, in Run Your Best Life I'm teaching a whole ass class on body confidence. Like what it is, why you might want it, how to get it, even if you're fat. It runs the entire month of August.

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We actually are going to have four additional dedicated coaching calls just for this bonus class. There's new lessons each week, there's going to be a dedicated discussion group just for this class. Everything is recorded in case you can't make it live. If you are a member of Run Your Best Life, this is already included for you.

If you want to be a part of this class, all you have to do is join Run Your Best Life, okay? That's it, join Run Your Best Life and you get this class included. It is just \$49 a month to join, or if you want to sign up for a full year it's only \$390, which is basically you pay for eight months and you get 12.

But either way, you can do the monthly plan, you can do the annual plan, join, you get immediate access to everything in the membership. All the coaching, all the training programs, all that, plus you get the whole body confidence class, all right?

So if you go to runyourbestlife.com, all of the details are there. It's runyourbestlife.com. And again, this class starts in August. Our very first dedicated coaching call in this class, I think, is on August 7. So if you're listening to this in the beginning of August, there's still time to join.

But honestly, this is going to be a game changer class. It's me distilling everything I know about how to become confident in the body you have right now. What are some of the pitfalls of working on body confidence? What are a lot of the hacks that I have? And really, how to create a journey for you that has you feeling pretty damn good about yourself, right?

So go to runyourbestlife.com for all the details. And yeah, I love you, stay safe, get your ass out there and run and I will talk to you next week.

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