

Ep #312: The Anti-burnout Approach to Running with Charlotte Rooney



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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, I am here this week with the one and only Charlotte Rooney. She is a leadership and anti-burnout coach who is on a mission to help women build wildly successful careers, become the leaders they want to be without sacrificing their identity, their well being or their mental health.

And if you're wondering why I have an anti-burnout coach coming on the podcast, well, first of all, I know all y'all have suffered from burnout at one point or another. Maybe you haven't realized it but it is for sure something that most women experience. And we are actually here today to talk about how running has been critical to Charlotte's own mental health, how work and life burnout can affect your running and what you can do about it.

So, Charlotte, thank you so, so much for joining me today.

Charlotte: It's a pleasure, thank you for having me.

Jill: So, I think, why don't we start out with a brief, like your history with burnout and running and what led you to become a coach to help women combat burnout in their own lives?

Charlotte: Yeah, I'd love to say that it was a nice, simple story, but coaching is actually my fourth career. So I started work life as a humanitarian aid worker. And I spent about a decade working in various different countries around the world setting up schools in Latin America, running health responses in the democratic republic of Congo. I taught Tibetan refugees in

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Northern India for a while. It was crazy, really purpose-driven, really intense.

And after about 10 years I didn't realize it at the time, but I was definitely in the early stages of burnout. I couldn't really get myself excited about it anymore. I kept focusing on all of the negatives of how the work we were doing wasn't lasting. I was questioning everything that I did about all of the value that we could provide. And at the time I didn't know about burnout, I hadn't really learned about that concept, I didn't equate it with that.

All I knew was that this career wasn't fulfilling me anymore and I wanted to be home and I wanted to be close to my family. So I did, I moved from, I was in the Congo at the time I think, moved to London where my family lived and had now idea what I wanted to do with myself.

So rather than taking some time out, reflecting, thinking about that, I did what I know a lot of high achievers will be able to identify with. I picked another really demanding, difficult career and jumped right in. And I became a management consultant, which, obviously, is not really a step down in terms of intensity when you're talking about humanitarian work going into management consulting.

And it was during that stage of desperately pursuing something to make me feel worthwhile, something to make me feel like I was achieving something, really desperately pursuing somebody else's definition of success is when I properly burned out to the point of non-functioning. And I hesitate to say properly because there's so many different definitions of burnout and it shows up in different ways for different people. But I mean properly in as much as properly enough that even I recognized it.

And I had to take some serious time off. I had wonderful mental health support, luckily, through my employer. But that is also the time when I

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switched my running journey from being one that was very much based around achievement and pace and doing better and improvement, exactly the same way I was really thinking about my work at the time, to a running journey that was actually about enjoying it and getting the physical and mental benefits of intuitive and gentle movement.

And then after that, I went back to work. I hadn't quite nailed the lower intensity element of work because I scaled a startup from three to 80 people in three years and watched a lot of people burning out along the way. It was an incredible organization with a really life-changing mission and it attracted the kind of person who wanted to give everything they had to make the world a better place. And they really did.

And I just kept seeing my staff members burning out and burning out. And that's when I decided that I really wanted to do something about that. I really wanted to help particularly women learn to work in a way that's sustainable for them, to define success on their own terms. And to have that include wellbeing and mental health and their whole humanity. And so that's when I set up my business as a coach. And here I am.

Jill: I love that. And I love all the parallels that you saw between your work life and how you approached other things, because I think that, what's the saying? How you do one thing is how you do everything. And so I think it's really easy for, you know, a lot of people say, well, running is my stress relief, running is my therapy, but then they approach it with the same intensity as work. And then I feel like it can almost double down on the burnout at that point, right?

Because I think within running we would call burnout, we would call it overtraining. And I don't know if there's an official definition for it, but I'm curious, what are the signs of burnout in your life, either your personal life

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or your work life? What are the obvious signs and what are maybe some of the not so obvious signs that people might want to be looking out for?

Charlotte: There is an official World Health Organization definition of burnout, but I have to admit I don't think that it's really as broad as people's experience of burnout actually is. They equate it exclusively with work burnout. And I think the symptoms and the experience that people can have from experiencing burnout that's not caused by their work are exactly the same and deserve the same recognition. So that's just something that I tend to not 100% agree with them on.

Jill: Oh, no, actually, I love that because it's such a sort of patriarchal viewpoint that the only way you can possibly burn yourself out is work and not in like mothering your children or doing volunteer work or any things that are traditionally considered, I'm using air quotes here, "women's work," right? Like it's only in work that we would consider it. So I'm so glad to hear you recognize that. That's so cool.

Charlotte: Yeah, I couldn't agree more. And particularly because so many women are filling multiple different roles at once, that stress which is the sort of basis of why you might burn out, could be coming from any number of places. So how can you recognize that you are burnt out or are burning out?

The first thing that I noticed, certainly, is that I became a lot more cynical and a lot more detached from things that I used to really care about. And so things that I used to find motivating and interesting and exciting to work on, I decided were worthless. And all I could do was see all of the reasons why it wasn't working.

And I noticed that that then sort of went even further to just sort of not really being able to enjoy any element of what was going on for me. In my work,

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outside of my work, there was always something wrong with it or it wasn't meaningful or I was doing it wrong. And that really pervaded my whole life.

And the other thing that I noticed in that detachment is it really affected my personal relationships. So I was suddenly just really uninterested in spending time with people. I couldn't motivate myself to meet up with people or to make plans. And so that was definitely a big flag for me, because I do really like spending time with people. It's one of the reasons that I moved to London.

Another thing that a lot of people will notice is things become a lot harder. So your efficiency goes down, if we're using job words, and you'll find that tasks that used to take you 10 minutes are now taking 20, 30, 40 minutes because you're not able to concentrate. And so you just can't focus on things and you can't do as good a job as you used to do.

You probably also find that your sleep patterns change, your eating patterns change, a lot of people experience just overall low mood. And it's very, very similar in a lot of ways to the symptoms of depression. So anybody who is informed about mental health will probably be recognizing a lot of these things that I am saying as, oh, those are things that you ask for for depression. And I think that's one of the reasons why the WHO put that work context in there, to really separate burnout from depression.

Jill: Are there physiological symptoms? So you've talked a lot about shifting in your thinking and maybe some of the actions that you're taking, are there any specific physiological symptoms that you might be overlooking when you're feeling burnout? Like getting sick more often or things like that?

Charlotte: Yes, yeah, definitely. Getting sick more often is one of them. Experiencing more frequent headaches. I know that, for example, the frequency of my migraines really increased. Disturbances in your sleep, so

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either insomnia, like not being able to sleep, or waking up in the middle of the night. Or sometimes you find just not being able to wake up in the mornings, or too much sleep.

A lot of people also experience a real change in their energy. So in really extreme cases you might find almost chronic fatigue-like symptoms where you can just never feel like you've got enough energy. And, I mean, at the very extreme end you start seeing people experiencing heart problems, and real serious medical issues that require hospitalization. Hopefully people are able to notice that things are going badly before it gets that far, but it's definitely not unheard of.

Jill: Yeah. And I think especially women, we are just taught to be like, oh no, just push through, you have to do all the things, be all the things to everyone. And we don't always realize what it's doing to us, that it's actually really creating physiological, mental health issues that we're going to need to recover from for sure.

Charlotte: Exactly. It's fundamentally physiologically chronically unmanaged stress. And so stress in small amounts, we're designed to have a little bit of stress in our lives and then to recover from it. And that can make you perform better under certain circumstances or it can sharpen your interest in something.

But when we just have this pervasive level of stress in our lives that we never physiologically recover from, so we never complete that cycle, discharge all the hormones and return to kind of a base state, that gradually over time absolutely does start to affect your physiology in many, many different ways.

But for many different people, I'm not a doctor, so I can't lay them all out and human bodies are all so diverse and so different in so many ways. But

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I would say certainly if people are feeling as though things have been a bit stressful and they are also noticing changes in their physical health, that would definitely be a red flag for me. That would definitely be a time to talk to your healthcare provider, your physician, your GP if you're in the UK, and get yourself checked out and make sure that everything is okay.

Jill: Yeah, because burnout is something that's fixable. It's something that we can recover from. What are the steps to doing that? So let's just assume that you're exhibiting a lot of the symptoms that you've just spoken of and you actually go visit a doctor or a mental health professional and they're like, yep, classic burnout. What are some of the things that they might suggest for you to do to heal yourself?

Charlotte: Most likely they're going to suggest that you take some time off. And really time off completely, like stop doing all the things. People will end up taking some time off from work if they do work. And also, it's a good idea to just take all the pressure off yourself for anything at all. And for your listeners, for my clients, that is one of the hardest things in the world, just like wait a minute, I don't have to do something?

Jill: Yeah, I was just thinking that. Well, and also I'm imagining like, well, I can't just quit my job, I can't just stop taking care of my family. How the heck am I supposed to make this happen, right? I'm sure you get a lot of folks with that kind of dilemma as well.

Charlotte: Yeah, it is a tough one. I think, and this will all depend on where you are. In the UK there's relatively good employee protection for sick leave and so people are often able to take a significant amount of time off and still be getting an income from their job. I know that is not the case for everybody and that definitely makes it harder to take some time off. But certainly I would recommend, if you can, take as much time off from your work as possible.

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And then the other thing to do is really to work on the element of allowing whatever you're able to do to be good enough. And that might look like, you know what? Today I was able to get out of bed, I brushed my teeth and I got dressed. And then I was exhausted and I went back to bed and I took a nap. That's okay. At some point, you know, I'm hesitant to give a path to recovery because everybody's journey is a little bit different and certainly the amount of time that it takes you to go through all the stages is different.

But when you're feeling ready for it, movement is a great thing to help you with your mental health and with your recovery. But again, it's about not doing it in that way that says, well, I've got to be doing five miles a day at 10 minute miles, and I'm looking at my running watch every five seconds to check that I'm on pace. And I've got to have this much up and this much down and heart rate between this zone and that zone, because that just creates extra stress.

So it's all about finding that balance of how can you remove as much stress from your life as possible, allow your body to re-acclimatize, and really remembering that although the symptoms of burnout can often feel very mental, a lot of the recovery is physical as well. And so you do need to allow your body to rest. And when it feels right, start getting back into movement, sunlight, drinking water, eating as healthily as you are able to under the circumstances that you have and in ways that make your body feel good.

I would also recommend for anybody who can, absolutely get some support from a therapist, counselor, coach, all of the above if you can, frankly, because it can be so isolating and so demoralizing. We very quickly associate the fact that we've burnt out with a failure in ourselves. And you really need to surround yourself with a team of people who are going to help you to see past that and support you to see the benefits of taking care of yourself now so that you can move forward.

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Jill: Yeah, I love that. So can you talk a little bit about your own personal journey of how you shifted your thoughts about running? Because you said in the beginning you had a lot of expectations to be running at a certain pace and in a certain heart rate zone and all those things. And that it was kind of the same approach to running, you took the same approach to running that you did to your work and kind of ended up burning out in both of those areas.

But then you sort of started accepting yourself differently as a runner as you were coming back from burnout. So I'd love to hear some of the shifts that you made, some of the things that you noticed, and just kind of how did that play out for you? And then what role does running play in your life now? That was a very long question, I'm sorry.

Charlotte: Yeah, I'm trying to think about what's the best way to kind of come at this. So kind of in parallel to as I was burning myself out at work, I was really dialing up in my running. I had never been a particularly serious runner. In fact, I quit sports in high school at the point when they told me I was going to have to run outside training to get fit. I was like, who wants to do that? I quit.

So for a long time I didn't do any running at all. I picked it up basically as I moved to the UK because I really wanted to celebrate the fact that I was in an environment that was safe, where I could run outside, which is not something that I'd been able to do in a lot of the countries that I had been living in beforehand.

And, of course, I started just by, oh, can I run a bit? I joined a beginning running group, it was wonderful, it was really happy. It very, very quickly devolved into a competition for me of I had to be the best of the beginners. I had to be the fastest of the beginners. And I couldn't be at the back of the

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pack with anybody else. I know some people will recognize that kind of thought process.

And then that course took me to running five miles. And that was the furthest I had ever run, I was quite proud of myself. But I wasn't really proud of myself because there were some people who were doing it faster. So I decided that obviously what I had to do was win in another way. And I decided that I would try to run further, so I signed up for a half marathon.

All of this at the same time that I was trying to build a career in management consulting, which is a very competitive environment to work in. It was a huge shift mentally from working in humanitarian relief to being really kind of at the center of corporate culture, which was something that I had never experienced before. And I was finding that really hard and I was trying to use success in running, using air quotes on that success, to compensate myself for the fact that I felt like I was not doing as well as I should have been in the race to be the best consultant.

And I ran my first half marathon a couple of years after I came back to the UK and I nearly managed to do it in less than two hours and I was so disappointed that I didn't do it in less than two hours.

Jill: Oh my gosh. Because if you run a half marathon in less than two hours, I mean it probably puts you in like the top 5% of half marathoners. But I can relate to being like, it's still not good enough, it's still not.

Charlotte: And I think that thought, right, it's still not good enough or it is never good enough was absolutely central to me burning out in the end because I never, ever gave myself any credit. I never let up on the pressure. It wasn't good enough. Nothing was ever good enough. And eventually your subconscious mind and your body override that conscious

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part of you and they're just like, no, it is enough. It's enough now and we're stopping.

And so, yeah, I mean, in terms of running I kept doing half marathons, two a year, to try and beat that two hour time limit. I never did it. I kept getting slower. Every time I did a half marathon my time was slower. And every time I started the training I hated it a little bit more because I was putting so much pressure on myself that I had to be running, nine minute miles was too slow. And I can barely run a nine minute mile for one mile, let alone any longer than that.

And so I dreaded the training, I didn't really have time for it, I was overworking hugely, you know, 80, 100 hour weeks and then also trying to train. I remember at one point I was on a treadmill at 11 o'clock at night in a hotel in Cairo where the air conditioning was barely keeping the gym at like less than 35 degrees C. And still I was like, this isn't fast enough, you can't stop.

So how did that change? Well, eventually I had to stop. I couldn't keep working. I had been to the mental health professional, they had told me to stop working. I had told them that I did not need to stop working, I was absolutely fine.

I kept working for another four months and eventually, yeah, just completely broke down. I couldn't function at all. And I had to stop working and I had to stop running as well because I didn't have the energy. I couldn't move. I really was at that stage where if I got out of bed, made it through the shower and into clean clothes, that was a win for the day.

So it was painful. I mean, I have to admit, it was really hard to go from, I'm going to get promoted as fast as possible and I'm going to run even faster than I've ever done before, and I'm going to do them all at the same time,

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to oh my goodness, it's a win if I can get into the garden today and do some weeding. And it was a very forced mindset shift.

And one of the things that really changed for me was the community of people around me that were talking to other people I knew who had been through something similar. And just having that validation from them that where I was was normal. And that it was okay to not be doing anything at all.

After a certain amount of time doing that I began to feel the need to move a little bit more. And I was really keen to get back to doing some running. I mean, I do enjoy it. It feels great. When your body is moving the way that it should, it's like it's built to run. There's that moment when you're flying, one foot has come off and the other foot hasn't come down yet and it's absolutely wonderful.

And I found, I think it was a combination of a running app and a mindfulness app where it was like mindful running. And my therapist kept telling me that I needed to do mindfulness and I really didn't want to because I didn't want to sit around and concentrate on my thoughts, which is what I thought mindfulness was at the time. And so I was like, oh, well, maybe I can combine these two things because I still wanted to be an overachiever.

But that's how I kind of got into it. And through shifting the focus from the external to the internal experience of running, that was when I began to really understand the value of it, not as medals on the wall, but as genuinely a tool for making my life better.

Jill: I love that. And I'm just curious, so your whole mindset shifted from go, go, go, I have to do all the things, I have to be better, I have to be faster, go farther, all the things. To what? Like what would you say your current

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approach is now, your current thought about the amount of work that you do, the amount of running that you do and your approach to it?

Charlotte: It hasn't completely gone. I have to admit there are still moments when that old thought pattern comes back. You're not doing enough, you should go faster.

Jill: Yeah, which I think that's natural because it's a thought pattern that you've had in the past. But what would you say, what's your ideal way of thinking now? If your prefrontal cortex was in charge 100% of the time, what would you be thinking?

Charlotte: Yeah, I think the thing that I have really shifted around is what is my definition of success, what is my definition of winning? And bringing that much more into my own experience, rather than some external measure. So I still love to see progress in my running. I'm always trying to do a little bit more, a little bit different. I mean I'm currently most of the way through Couch to 5k for like the fourth time this year because I keep getting stuck halfway through and losing it.

So I do still want to improve, but the difference now is that I'm not embarrassed about the fact that this is the fourth time that I have started and that sometimes it goes wrong and I go back to the beginning. And I don't, when life gets in the way or I just can't get there, I don't force myself to come back to where I stopped. I just acknowledge, okay, you know what? Let's start again, let it be easy. And just be gentle about the way that you're moving forwards.

And in my work, I mean, now that I run my own business one of the things that is really critical to the way I think about it is, how can I make this fun? I want to help women feel wildly successful, protect their mental health,

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avoid burnout, achieve everything they want to achieve without the pressure. And I feel like that means I have to model that too.

I have to model not putting myself under pressure, not saying to myself, “Well, you’ve been in business for two years now, so you should have achieved A, B, and C.” Just going, well, this is what I have achieved. And this is where I’m at. And what sounds like fun for me to do next, so that I can move towards that guiding star of being able to help as many women as possible become wildly successful without having to turn into a person that is not them?

And with running, it’s the same. It’s like how can I enjoy my next run? How can I go out there and get all of the enjoyment that comes from that feeling of flying without worrying about it? And sometimes, I mean, it’s as simple as leaving my running watch and my phone at home so there’s no possible way of knowing how far, how fast, how long, none of those things.

Jill: Yeah.

Charlotte: Just knowing how it feels and starting when I want to start and stopping when I want to stop.

Jill: I love that because I think most people who are at risk of burnout/overtraining or are actually experiencing it would say, if you ask them the question, how can you enjoy this run? Their answer would be, well, if I hit a certain pace, or if I go a certain distance, then I’ll be enjoying it. They’re kind of putting their enjoyment on the result and not on the process, which I think is a mistake that a lot of new runners make as well. Because we’re taught, if you look at the fitness industry it’s all about results and very little about enjoying the process.

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But without the process, you don't get the results. And if you're suffering through the process, then the results aren't as enjoyable or you get that fleeting moment of like, yeah, I had my under two hour half marathon. And then like five minutes later you're like, okay, now what? Now what do I need to do to kind of keep myself feeling good?

I'm also kind of curious, what part does trauma play in burnout? Or is it unrelated? But have you noticed that people who have maybe past trauma or are experiencing trauma are more prone to burnout? Or is there no correlation between?

Charlotte: I am very new to understanding all of the theory and practice about trauma. In fact, if you'd asked me not that long ago I would have been very dismissive of the whole idea and kind of, well, just labeling everything trauma isn't helpful and it just turns people into victims.

I have been doing a lot more exploring and understanding and learning about that recently and I do believe that everybody has traumas that they have experienced. Everybody has trauma responses that they are playing out based on things that have happened to them. And certainly there can be trauma responses.

Like I think that that desire to always be doing better is often a trauma response based on the idea that we have learned at some point that to be accepted, to be valued, to be seen and safe we need to be constantly improving, or we need to be constantly the best and that's where validation comes from. And I think that thought pattern is really central to most of the people who I know who have experienced burnout.

Or also the idea that everybody else's needs and desires come before yours, which is really common. A lot of women have been taught this explicitly and also through our culture. And I think that similarly, that idea of

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being kind of eternally in a fawn response, of a people pleasing like I must do everything for other people can absolutely be a trauma response and can actually also lead to burnout.

And the experience of burnout itself can be traumatic. And so then there's also that piece. All that to say, definitely not an expert, but from what I do know, it certainly looks to me as though there is a relation between the two things.

Jill: Yeah. Thanks for sharing that because I think you're right. And I just can imagine how you explained that a lot of the drive to succeed and overproduce is often a trauma response, I think is really true. I mean, I see it in people I've worked with. I see it in just people in my life in general that that desire to like I have to be the best is often a response to past trauma.

And then it creates its own level of trauma. Because I think it's traumatizing to be an overachiever and then have to suddenly shift your identity, not necessarily willingly, but if you want to continue living your life. That, in and of itself, I think, has got to be pretty traumatic to just be like, oh, okay.

I keep thinking of this episode of Friends. I don't know if you guys are as obsessed with friends in the UK as we are in the US, but there's this one episode and it's like an alternate universe where Phoebe is like a hedge fund trader or something like that. And she's like burned herself out that she has a heart attack and she's literally in the hospital and trying to take phone calls from work.

And they're just like, you just need to stop. And they're trying to take her phone away and everything. And she's literally having another heart attack while he is trying, but she cannot let go of that identity of being the overachiever. And, I mean, it's kind of a silly example but I do think that that's hard.

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If we've built our whole lives and our whole perception of who we are based on this is what I do and I'm always the best and I always do more than everybody else. To have that choice put in front of you like, well, you can continue to believe this and potentially permanently impair yourself or worse, or you can shift your identity. Neither one of those choices is going to sound like a lot of fun. And I think it's got to be really hard to make that decision in the moment or in the many moments as it's happening. And obviously, you can attest to that.

Charlotte: It is a huge shift. It can feel as though you're flying in the face of everything that you have been taught and everything that is expected of you, which is, of course, really scary and it feels really isolating. And it feels unsafe in a way that we are social creatures, human beings. We want to be part of the group, we want to be accepted.

And so to be sitting there and going, "Oh, I have to do something different," is really a difficult thing to do. Which is why I think it's so important to find a new group or to find at least one other person who can help you to feel safe and connected and not alone when you're going through that process. And that will help to diminish a little bit of the fear that you have of, oh my goodness, I don't even know who I'm becoming and I have to give up on everything that I was before. Which, as you say, it's not an easy decision for anyone.

Jill: Yeah, agreed. And I think when you said, you used the word unsafe, and that really resonates for me because I've had identity shifts over the years. And choosing to be somebody else when it feels comfortable because the person you've been is just who you've always been and you don't know how to be somebody else, it can feel unsafe and weird.

But then throw your mental health and physical health on top of it, yeah, that's a big deal, it's a big shift. But fortunately, there are humans like

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yourself in the world to help make it easier for us to kind of climb that mountain and make those changes.

And so I'm curious, if there's somebody listening who is thinking, wow, this sounds exactly like me but I don't know where to start, what would you suggest to somebody who thinks they're at that point of burnout and they need help to solve this problem for themselves?

Charlotte: Yeah, that's a good question. I think the first thing that I would suggest to anyone who thinks that is to, this is going to sound a bit odd, but congratulate yourself on noticing that that's what's going on for you. And give yourself some love and some compassion and support for being there for yourself, for being honest with yourself, for really tuning in. That is the first step, is really noticing, okay, this isn't okay for me anymore, I'm ready to make a change.

So that hopefully will help you to feel a little bit better right away. And the next thing that I would suggest that you do is speak to somebody who you trust and who cares about you about what's going on so that you can get that sense of support as quickly as possible. Even just having somebody else accept that you've had this breakthrough and that this is going on for you will really help.

And when you're ready, after that, reach out to a professional, your health care provider if you can, to see if you can get some support, whether you can take some kind of a break. If you can't, then I recommend having a look at what's on your plate and picking one thing that you can stop doing. And just slowly try to give yourself a little bit of grace, a little bit more space, a little bit more time for yourself so that you can start to slow down and start to reconnect.

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So I think those are the things that I would do to start with. Each person's journey is going to be unique, so finding someone who you trust and who can support you through that, it would definitely be a worthwhile investment of some of your time when you're ready for it. Don't put pressure on yourself to do it immediately if that's going to give you more stress.

Jill: Yeah, yeah, I can see that. It's like one more pressure that we put on ourselves is like, well, now I have to fix all the other pressures. And I can imagine it snowballs.

How do you work with people? Because you are an anti-burnout coach and you help women sort of deal with this situation that they have found themselves in. So how do you work with people to help them recover?

Charlotte: The first thing that I do with people when they come to work with me is we work on the initial relief of the stress, the acceptance of you are where you are, this is what's happening for you. There is no point in fighting against it or wishing that it were different, this is what's happening. And we work really strongly, to begin with, on taking the pressure off ourselves. So that internal extra pressure that we put on ourselves.

The voice in my head that was saying, well, two hours and three minutes is too slow, it should have been 1:59. Nobody else thought that, but it put a massive amount of pressure on me that then caused that extra amount of stress. So the first thing that we do is we work on that.

The second phase is really once we've removed some of that stress, because I believe that when we are in that very stressed state we are not working with our best self. We are not working with all of the talent and intelligence and insight that we truly have about ourselves because we are in that stress response, which absolutely sort of cuts off our prefrontal cortex because our body is just trying to survive.

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So you have to get out of survival mode first. And how long that takes, again, it really varies depending person to person. For some people it's just a couple of sessions and it really clicks for them and they are ready to move forward. And for some people it takes much longer.

Once we've gotten out of that survival state, it's a question of stepping into some reflection and some renewal of what is my identity and what is my definition of success? What do I actually want? As opposed to what I thought I wanted, because I've seen that elsewhere. And it's really about learning to – My clients really learn to trust themselves. They learn to trust their own judgment, they learn to trust that they will go at the pace that is right for them. That today is a run/walk day and maybe tomorrow isn't.

And they look across how they spend their time, how they spend their energy. We spend a lot of time looking at what brings them joy, what energizes them, what is something where they truly feel in their element, as opposed to those bits of your life where you sort of feel like you're swimming against the current and it's always a struggle.

And then the final stage is really thinking about how to embed all of that extra knowledge into the way you move forward. And what are you going to stop doing? What are you going to delegate to somebody else? What are you going to lean into and do more of because you're great at it and you really enjoy it? Even if that thing is not the thing that you previously thought you should be excelling at in order to be "successful."

And so, yeah. I mean, I've had some people who they've gone from I can't stand my job, I've just resigned to, I withdrew my resignation and I'm now loving this. And I've just volunteered to teach a whole bunch of extra classes and I'm going for a promotion.

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And then there's other people who are like, I am going for the C-suite, that is what I am going to do. And then we have a couple of sessions and they come in and they say, yeah, so I resigned. I realized there was nothing here for me and there was just no way that I was actually going to be happy doing that thing. And now I would like to talk about what I can do that is going to make me happy.

So each woman's journey is different and it's one of the things that I love about working with the people that I work with, is I never quite know where their journey is going to go and I get to discover that with them.

Jill: Oh, that's awesome. That's awesome, right? Because it doesn't mean, if you're experiencing burnout it doesn't mean you let go of your goals, but they might change. But then you also might let go of them. But it's like, yeah, I think if anybody's thinking, oh, well, I don't want to admit I have burnout because then I have to let go of my goals, it sounds like that's not necessarily the case. And it might just look different how you choose them or how you pursue them.

Charlotte: Exactly. Exactly.

Jill: Yeah.

Charlotte: It's an opportunity to reflect on those goals and why have I chosen them? Why is this goal important to me? Is that because I believe that if I achieve this goal I'm suddenly going to be a finished perfect person and everything will be sunshine and roses? Probably not a goal that's going to provide you lasting happiness.

But if it's a goal that you're like, actually, you know what? I do, I love this goal, it's still important to me to move towards this, it aligns with what I think is important, meaningful, purposeful, the change I want to see in the world.

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I just need to go at this at a little different pace or I just need a bit more help along the way and I need to work on how do I get that help? And how do I open myself up to asking for it without seeing the need to ask for help as a failure.

I mean, there's so many different ways this can turn out. But I love that you pointed out that it doesn't mean quit everything you're doing, never go back to it, you have to give up. It definitely doesn't mean that. But it does mean that it's time to reassess where you are and how you're going about it.

Jill: I love that. I love that. Well, I want to say thank you so much for joining me here today because I think this is, like I've learned a lot through this conversation. I hope that everybody listening has also learned a lot. And if there's anybody out there who thinks, hey, that sounds like me, I hope we've given you some ideas on how to change things up a little bit.

So how can people find you if they're interested in learning more about you, working with you and so forth? Where would you be located out there on the interwebs?

Charlotte: So I am on LinkedIn primarily, and also Instagram. And if people want to find out more about working with me, then the best thing to do is to send me a DM. Send me a DM, let's book a call and have a chat. I can talk to you about what's going on for you, we can decide what the next steps might look like for you. I mean, I've had people come out of those calls and change the course of their lives. And I love them. It's such a wonderful opportunity to connect with women who are looking for change.

So if you are even thinking, maybe, I just want to explore what might be possible for me, DM me on Instagram or LinkedIn and let's chat.

Jill: I love it. And what's your Instagram handle?

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Charlotte: I am Charlotte Rooney.

Jill: Okay. And then on LinkedIn, obviously, Charlotte Rooney. We'll have links in the show notes as well to all of that. But yeah, this has been so good. Thank you so, so much for being here today.

Charlotte: Thank you for having me. I have really enjoyed talking with you and having a major fan girl at the moment because one thing I didn't mention when we were talking about it, is one of the things that really helped me to shift when I was starting running again was finding your podcast and finding someone out there who was talking really openly about how you didn't have to conform to anything the fitness industry was telling you and that you could just be a runner because you were a runner. So thank you so much for that.

Jill: I love that.

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.