



# The Joy of Ultra Running: Trail Sisters' Story



The  
*joyful*  
Movement  
Show

Episode 85

[00:00:00] Well, hello friends. And welcome back to the joyful movement show. If you're new around here, welcome. I'm so glad you landed upon this podcast. So I'm back from my summer slow down. Happy to be back with you here today with a fresh new podcast episode for you. I hope that you all had a great summer making memories and enjoying life.

[00:00:21] I had a wonderful summer too. And I'll share a bit about that with you on next week's episode, what I've been up to, and what's new with me and in my business. But for today's episode, I have a really special interview for you. I wanted to get this one out, because I've been sitting on it for a few weeks, and I know there's some people in my local community who cannot wait to hear this one.

[00:00:42] As some of you might know, I am part of a local women's trail running group called the trail sisters.

[00:00:48] We get together a few times a month and have just the best times together running through the Bush. It's one of my most favorite social activities. We laugh, we share, we support each other. We get muddy. We fall down. Me, especially. And we help each other back up literally and figuratively. It's a true community, and I feel so blessed to be a part of it.

[00:01:09] I mentioned in the episode here, how my relationship with running has really evolved over the years. From something that started out as a way for

me to prove myself having been, not athletic as a kid and made fun of for that. Learning to run was really instrumental in helping heal that part of myself.

[00:01:30] But then it morphed into purely a way to burn calories or lose weight. And that really killed the joy for the sport. So finding this group of women right at the time that I was doing all of that body image healing was really instrumental in helping me find my joy for the sport. And I just can't say enough how grateful I am for these ladies.

[00:01:52] Now all of us in the trail sisters group, we're all at different levels, which is a beautiful thing about this community. Some of us are beginners. Some don't even run. Hikers are more than welcome and nobody ever gets left behind in our group. But some of the ladies in the group like to run really, really far.

[00:02:11] And earlier this summer, five of our trail sisters participated in an ultra trail race called tally in the valley. And there were several options you could choose from for distances. But these women either did a 12 hour night race -running in the dark through a Bush, where you went as far as you could overnight.

[00:02:31] Or one of the women in our group did a 100 miler. That was Bethany, the leader of our group. She ran a hundred miles, which is 160 kilometers, in just over 24 hours. And then Robyn, Tanya, Natalie, and Jo, they all did the 12 hour night race, which is, it's just incredible. And what's even more incredible to me is that they liked it.

[00:02:55] And I know our whole group was so inspired by them and so proud of them, but maybe also questioned their sanity a little. I mean, maybe not really, but I know for myself, I was really curious about how someone can run that far and like it. I really wanted to pick their brains and hear all about it. The good, the bad and the ugly.

[00:03:17] And here's what came through loud and clear as these women shared on the podcast is that though it's not joyful every step of the way. There are certainly dark moments. There is joy in exploring and challenging your perceived limits. In doing hard things. And seeing what your body is capable of. And in true community.

[00:03:42] So I hope that you are as inspired as I am. As you listened to this conversation with Tanya, Bethany, Natalie and Robyn, and a big shout out to Jo

as well, who participated in the event, but opted out of the podcast. Let's jump in.

[00:03:57] **Kim:** Hey sisters. I was gonna jump into song there and do a little, Hey sister trail sister. Oh, I just did. Welcome to the show. I am very, very excited and looking forward to this conversation. I was thinking about, oh, there's just so much, I've wanted to ask all of you all week about the big race that you just did.

[00:04:19] You all competed in an ultra trail marathon last weekend. And there's so much I wanna ask you about that. but I thought, why not just bring you on the show cuz I'm sure other people would love to know about, well, ,how is it that you find running that far and that long joyful? And I know that you do.

[00:04:40] And I think that's one of the things that I'm so inspired by all of you is you really do find joy in distance running. I don't know, I'll talk about it at the end, how you've helped me find my joy for running again, but I just can't wait to hear all of your stories.

[00:04:54] So we've got Tanya and we've got Bethany and Natalie and Robyn. Big welcome to the joyful movement show. So glad you're here. All right, so let's get started. We'll do it one by one. And you can introduce yourselves and tell us a little bit about yourself. Anything that you feel is relevant and important to share. And, talk about the race that you participated in at, tally in the valley.

[00:05:17] Tanya, do you wanna go first?

[00:05:19] **Tanya:** Yep. Can you hear me? Sure. Can. Okay. Okay. I'm Tanya, Tanya Mabon. Um, they usually call me T. I don't know why, but anyways, T for Tanya. I've been running the last seven years and I just participated in my first ever 12 hour night time race. And I found it scary. I found it exhilarating. I found it tough at times and it was the best race I've ever done. I've never had so much fun. I can't believe that I completed it and

[00:05:54] I just had the best time and I went right outta my comfort zone.

[00:05:58] **Kim:** Yeah, totally. And I love that summary and you said four very different emotions and I love how, it can be all of those things all at one time. And we're gonna come back to all of that and I can't wait to kind of dig in with you to how it can be challenging and difficult and exhilarating all at once.

[00:06:14] So yeah, we'll come back and ask you all about that. Thanks, Tanya. Okay. Bethany, you let's go.

[00:06:19] **Bethany:** Uh, Bethany McRae. I'm a mom of four teens. Okay. One's 20 now. And the other three are teenagers. Wow. I'm at a slightly different age group with the kids and a lot of these ladies. Um, yeah, I've been running for about five years and keep dragging all my wonderful friends into running with me.

[00:06:44] **Kim:** the best kind of peer pressure. So, yeah. Amazing. Great. Well, we'll come back and hear more about your story in just a second too.

[00:06:52] Natalie, tell us a little bit about yourself.

[00:06:54] **Natalie:** Hi, my name's Natalie Miltenberg. I live outside of Lucknow. Um, I have five children, ages four to 11. And I've been actually running for about five years too now, consistently. Um, and I guess I accomplished, uh, 73 kilometers at the tally in the valley.

[00:07:13] Um, yeah, and very like Tanya said, there was so many emotions about it, but, very excited and, just feeling very accomplished about it.

[00:07:23] **Kim:** Amazing. So good. Bethany, I think you forgot to tell us what you accomplished at tally in the valley.

[00:07:29] **Bethany:** Yeah, I went for a little run, I ran my first a hundred mile ultra.

[00:07:35] So the race we were doing was the seven kilometer loop. so that was 23 trips around the race course. I'm never running that race course again.

[00:07:46] **Kim:** you see enough times now?

[00:07:47] **Bethany:** Seen it enough. I know every rock and route and tree, but, uh, it was very magical to watch it change. Cuz I started at nine o'clock one morning.

[00:07:55] It ended at 10 o'clock the next morning. So to run it through an entire day, that was pretty magical. Pretty amazing.

[00:08:00] **Kim:** Amazing. Yeah. Yeah. And Natalie, you also did the 12 hour night run, right? So 73 kilometers. And you ran that overnight.

[00:08:09] **Natalie:** Yeah. From 9:00 PM to 9:00 AM. Yeah. and this was also my first ultra as well.

[00:08:13] **Kim:** Yeah. Amazing. Okay, Robin, you're up next? Tell us a little bit about you.

[00:08:20] **Robyn:** I'm Robin McClinchey and I also have been running for about five years with these wonderful ladies. I participated in the 12 hour, night race as well, and I was very lucky enough to be co running with Natalie. So it made a difference having someone to talk to and to, uh, you know, when you're up and when you're down and the other person's at the opposite, it helps push things along.

[00:08:45] Yeah. Um, Yeah. So I have three young kids, busy kids and definitely trail running is my therapy.

[00:08:54] **Kim:** mm-hmm . Yeah. And that's something I wanna talk about too is, what got you into running in the first place? And all of you said you haven't been running for really long times, like seven years.

[00:09:05] I think Tanya said was yep. You're the longest in the group. Um, so yeah, let's go around the table and ask what initially drew you to the sport of running. What was your initial like why for getting into running? Tanya, you could start us off.

[00:09:20] **Tanya:** Well, mine was Not, not a real good time in my life. I was going through a split and then I joined CrossFit. I used to run when I was younger, like 20 long time ago, years ago, and CrossFit got me into running just at the group.

[00:09:35] And I remember my first race was run camp kintail, the lane 3K. Okay. Look how far I've come in in seven years. So that's yeah, what got me into running and I just kept going and going. And then I joined, I think the trail sisters in 2019, so that. That's been my running and I've just kept it up and then that's it.

[00:09:56] **Kim:** Yeah, the sky's the limit. Oh yeah. and I know for you, There's no stopping you. Like, you'll just keep on checking goals off your list. Okay. So

it started off as a stress reliever for you. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Okay. What about you Bethany?

[00:10:12] **Bethany:** Oh boy. So I started and quit running multiple times. I would pick it up and I'd run for a couple weeks or a month or two. And. It would get cold outside or something would hurt or whatever. And I would stop and I always loved it, but I figured I wasn't gonna be able to be a runner. Right. Things never worked out.

[00:10:31] Um, and then I had a health procedure done a few years ago on my leg and they weren't sure if I'd be able to walk quite right afterwards or not. And I was. But I had it in my head that once this was done, I wanted to run. And that was sort of just became a thing that I wanted to do. And yeah, I think that just sort of engaged that stubborn streak and got me going and with running, once you get past the first three weeks, it starts getting easier.

[00:10:58] And then once you get three months in, you've really got momentum, then it just sort of becomes this habit, or routine or just part of your daily life. And there's a point where it's not willpower and you just keep going. Yeah.

[00:11:09] **Kim:** So was it stubbornness or was it that when you couldn't run and you realized how much you missed it or was it a bit of both?

[00:11:19] **Bethany:** It was both because some of the times I had tried running and not been able to had been linked to the issue with my leg. as they figured that out. And it's almost like we want what, we can't have more. I think it just really lights that spark in a way. and I feel like it just gave me a gratitude when I was able to start running that I haven'tlost, like, I love it.

[00:11:40] It's such a gift to be able to get out there and power yourself on your own two legs. Yeah.

[00:11:46] **Kim:** Yeah. I hear you. That's amazing. Okay, Natalie, what about you? What drew you to the sport of running?

[00:11:52] **Natalie:** I've always been into athletics. I've played soccer, baseball. I've always played them throughout my school. and then I've always wanted to run, but I've loved the idea of running, but hated doing it. And then in 2008, the year I got married, I did a 5k and an eight K. and I really just did it for weight loss. Um, hated it. I got shin splints. I was like never running again after that. And then back in 2017, I always loved the idea of the triathlons. Um, so I did my first one at 17 weeks pregnant in Goderich actually.

[00:12:23] Wow. And, uh, uh, that was a woopsie

[00:12:26] **Kim:** in August when it's so hot and, uh,

[00:12:29] **Natalie:** so I did triathlons. And I started dabbling in the sprints and the try a tri's and I really loved the dynamics of the three sports. Um, I started coming around to liking the running. Um, I didn't have to run far, which was really nice.

[00:12:41] and then, I guess 2020 hit. And there was nothing, no triathlons going on, so I had joined a gym virtually again to lose weight, and they were doing a running competition and I had started running a little bit longer distance from 12 and 15 Ks. And then I really loved the idea of running a half marathon, but I thought, well, when I lose 20 pounds, I'll run a half marathon.

[00:13:05] and then I started running, got comfortable. It got easier probably cuz I was doing a bit of strength training with it. and then I actually had ran my half marathon in this challenge I was doing, didn't lose 20 pounds and I did fine. And it's kind of just gone from there. And I joined the trail sisters in 2020, it was this time, last year, actually 2021. So I've only been with the trail sisters for a year, and I joined that so that I could do the bad thing race. That's a local race that we do, so I could train with them and it's just been a great experience since

[00:13:44] **Kim:** mm-hmm , remind me if I forget to come back to your relationship with running now and how it's maybe changed. I can relate so much to your story. When I first started running, it was all about weight loss and that really impacted how I would run. I would really push myself and punish myself and like not listen to my body. And, it was always about getting a certain speed, getting a certain distance because I needed a certain number of calories to lose the weight. And, I'm so glad that I've shifted away from that because in doing so I found the joy for running. But, we'll come back to that.

[00:14:17] Robyn. It's your turn. Why don't you tell us about, how you got drawn into running?

[00:14:22] **Robyn:** For sure. So, I've obviously been on another episode. And I've kinda told my story on that episode, but I was in a car accident a number of years ago, where I was walking with a Walker and a cane and kind of similar to Bethany, never thinking that I would be able to run.

[00:14:45] I didn't really like running when I was younger. I played sports, but I didn't like to just run . and so, again, going back to like something being taken



away and, and then the determination to want , to be able to work through it and to do it for yourself. And then Bethany and I actually kind of started similar timelines.

[00:15:09] Um, the trail sisters evolved and they are so inspiring and so amazing. And it's truly a sisterhood and I love it.

[00:15:19] **Kim:** I agree. It really, really is. So. You all had different reasons for starting. We all had different reasons. I'll include myself in this conversation. And then things evolve, as they do. So time passes and you're all still running. And I think what we've all realized is there's so much more to running than just burning calories. So what do you actually love about running? And not so much ultra running, like, we'll talk about the joy in ultra running in a bit, but like where what's the joy for running in general for all of you? Tanya, you're up first.

[00:15:57] **Tanya:** I just love Pushing myself and seeing how far I can go and how far I've come and to tell anybody that you can do anything you put your mind to. I'm like Bethany, I'm stubborn. I don't quit. I'll think I wanna quit, but I don't. I don't give up without a fight. And I really do think running a lot of it, a lot of it is mental. Your mind gives up long before your body. And my famous saying is I run with my heart. Yeah. Like I just run with my heart and I just know that I can do it. And I just believe in myself and I just love to run.

[00:16:32] Like you know, there's been times I think, what the hell, what am I out here for? and you know, you're alone. Sometimes you don't see anybody for miles and you're just, you're all alone. But you know what? It's just the best thing it's changed my life. And I can honestly say at 42, when I started running again, I didn't ever think I would run an ultra. So I just want to tell people that you can do anything you put your mind to.

[00:16:53] Yeah. And I don't know. I just, I just love to run.

[00:16:57] **Kim:** Yeah. So it's knowing it's s not a punishment thing, but it's a pushing yourself to celebrate what you're capable of. Yeah. Right. And knowing like I can do hard things. Yep. Yeah. I love it. What about you, Bethany?

[00:17:10] What's your big, biggest joy for running?

[00:17:14] **Bethany:** Running's just fun. Um, it's just

[00:17:16] **Kim:** fun.



[00:17:17] **Bethany:** sorry. It's I know for me, I guess I could sum it up as balancing. I feel like running is when I get my head and my body in alignment. and you're just, you're just you in the moment and you're you in nature and no matter what kind of day you're having or have had, it's just like, everything comes back into balance, right?

[00:17:40] It's like a fresh, a reset every time you get out there.

[00:17:44] **Kim:** Yeah, I agree. I love that. Mm-hmm what about you, Natalie?

[00:17:49] **Natalie:** I'm same as Tanya. I, um, that sense of accomplishment that how far you've come, how far you can go, the pushing all like you. I mean, five years ago, I didn't think I was gonna run more than 5k ever.

[00:18:01] like, that was a feat, you know, and I just ran 73 kilometers. And as well, the community. I don't know a community where you can go and talk to someone and feel like you've known them for years. And it's just a great community That we have.

[00:18:19] **Kim:** You're absolutely right.

[00:18:21] I feel the same way. What about you Robyn?

[00:18:26] **Robyn:** a mixture of things. So I said previously that trail running is my therapy and it really is. It's my me time. as a mom, it's my social time with the trail sisters. It's being in nature. It's pushing myself to see how far I can go and what I can do.

[00:18:47] That we can do hard things. And that's one of my mantras and we even said it at tally. Natalie and I talked about it, you know, like we can do hard things and we do do hard things and it's awesome.

[00:18:59] **Kim:** Yeah. I love it all. And I would agree with you. Like, I felt the same way as all of you at different points during my running journey.

[00:19:06] It's a really empowering feeling to challenge yourself and see what you're able to accomplish. And especially when you didn't think that you could. And, I love the mind clearing benefits of running, especially in nature. It is very therapeutic. And I mean, I can't say enough about our community and how supportive it is. I joined the trail sisters, I think in maybe 2019 before the pandemic. It must have been because I remember we all went through that yuckiness together and made it work somehow with our runs.

[00:19:35] So I relate to everything that you said, and yet when it comes to the idea of ultra running I'm like. So I guess just for definition sake for our listeners, I think that ultra running is anything more than 50 kilometers.

[00:19:48] Is that right? Yeah. And that's where my brain goes. Nope. like, no, there's no part of me that ever wants to take that on. Like, I just think there's a limit for me, like where it's joyful and where it's not. So I would love to know what's your why for ultra running? And what's the joy in running that far?

[00:20:12] Tanya, you wanna go.

[00:20:14] **Tanya:** Well, um, I did my first back in May with Robyn and Bethany was our awesome crew leader. And I had Natalie and Lori, they came and met me halfway and I ran the Goderich rail trail from Milverton to Blyth. And I, and I tell you, we had the most hottest spring day ever, but we did it.

[00:20:36] And i, I don't know. I never thought seven years ago I would be running an ultra. I was just lucky I could run three K without huffing and puffing. and just, you know, I just I'd love the fact that I could do it and I could push myself and the sky's the limit. Like I just, I don't know. I just wanna go further.

[00:20:56] I just wanna see how far far I can go. Yeah, I don't know.

[00:21:01] **Kim:** I just, so there's a, there is a real passion. There's a real, yeah. Um, Yeah. Sense of thrill in, in challenging yourself and seeing what you can accomplish. Yeah. Yeah. Cool. Okay. What about you, Bethany?

[00:21:15] **Bethany:** I'm still working on the why.

[00:21:21] Maybe I'll keep running until I figure out the why. for me, I think. It just goes into that weird emotional place where it's just processing and celebrating, being alive and stuff that you've come through. And I find it really healing, which is kind of funny, cuz you're breaking down your body. But I think probably like a lot of us, I grew up with a lot of really negative messaging around my body and a lot of really limited ideas about opportunities and roles in life and what was available to me specifically as a woman, and physical activity was not something that was encouraged.

[00:22:05] It wasn't part of my identity at all, as a child. And nature was, I would go out hiking a bit with grandparents and that I think was kind of the

seed for that trail part of it. But I think the ultra running has just been an exploration of that whole side of me, of who am I and what can I do?

[00:22:25] And yeah. Just that child like joy and I'm doing the thing yeah, I'm out there and I'm doing it and it just feels like you're, uh, I don't know. Maybe it's a bit of a play thing.

[00:22:35] **Kim:** Well, for sure, for sure it is. And then that, that's a part of it that I love, especially hanging out with you girls is like, it feels like we're just little kids running around in a Bush, but I also love, like that sense of exploration and figuring out your own identity. Like, breaking down those societal stereotypes and norms that we're supposed to ascribe to. And then just like finding what you want, what brings you joy and breaking down the barriers. I love it, Natalie. What about you?

[00:23:03] **Natalie:** I actually got this, asked this question a couple times when I told people I was doing this race. Um, and my goal was to run 50 miles. They're like, why would you ever want to run 50 miles? And I kind of thought about it for a minute. And I've been reading lots of books and ultra runners seem to have these great stories. They've overcome addiction or like tragedy, um, or they're just really good at running.

[00:23:25] Uh, and I'm like, I got nothing. I got five kids, 400 goats, and I've got nothing crazy, awesome story, except for why not? Why not do it, like it's definitely brought out so much strength in me that I never knew I had. Um, so I guess, yeah, that's my, why

[00:23:47] **Kim:** I think why not is just as good of a story as any other. I don't think you could sum it up any better, like why not?

[00:23:54] Other than just, you want to, and it seems like something fun for you.

[00:23:58] **Natalie:** It's persuasion. Bethany is a really good persuader.

[00:24:02] **Kim:** we're lucky that she's pushing a healthy habit and not , she's very influential. okay. Robyn, what about you? What's your joy for ultra running? Um,

[00:24:15] **Robyn:** I'm kind of, again, mixed up with, I sometimes I'm feeling like I'm still trying to find it.

[00:24:23] other times it's like, Ultra running is really cool in that, you know, you go through so many different phases and, you know, it can be really exhilarating and it can be really hard and it can be really frustrating, but then you come through it.

[00:24:44]and I think that just the ups and downs are, it's like a roller coaster.

[00:24:49] Right. It's it's fun. And it's, um, Yeah, you're challenging yourself, like beyond what you ever thought you could. And I think that that's really.

[00:25:00] **Kim:** Yeah.

[00:25:01] **Robyn:** And I second that Bethany influences .

[00:25:06] **Kim:** So I'm hearing like, it's, it's largely a social thing, right? Yeah. A little bit of peer pressure, but mostly we just really like hanging out with each other.

[00:25:16] So there's that . But it sounds like,I heard a little bit about the opportunity to learn about yourself and explore your emotions. Which is something that we're gonna talk about here in just a sec. Because we know it's not joyful all the time. I'm always talking about joyful movement, but we know that exercise/ movement, whatever you want to call it, isn't always sunshine and rainbows all the time.

[00:25:42] Like that's not really the goal. But there should be a sense of all the things that you're talking about. Pride and accomplishment, and, learning of yourself and, celebrating what your body can do and gratitude for what your body can do, and all of that. But there are those moments where it's pretty dark.

[00:25:59] And I can imagine in a run of the distance that you ladies all did, that there might have been some dark times. So, if you're willing, could you maybe take us through one of those dark times during your tally event and what your self talk sounded like? Like the good, the bad, the ugly, and, how you talked yourself through the darkness.

[00:26:21] Tanya, do you wanna go first?

[00:26:23] **Tanya:** Yep.I had a goal of nine loops. So I'm pretty proud I finished at eight loops. but I got to about maybe six, the six loop that was starting to, you know, wee hours of the morning, it was gonna be sunrise soon. And I was looking at, no, my watch cracked out after a marathon.

[00:26:45] And I was like, oh, I don't know the time. I don't know what's going on. And, am I going to get my goal? That was just my personal goal I had. And. I think that once, um, I got the sun started coming up. I just thought, Tanya, you're out here. You're doing it. I got to the seventh loop. Then I got to Maybe I could maybe maybe get a loop and a half in.

[00:27:07] I wasn't sure for my time and the sun started coming out. It was so beautiful and, you know, like tons of people going by and, you know, just doing their thing and chatting. And it was just so pretty. I started to cry. I thought you've, you've done it. You've made it through the night. It was kind of scary at times.

[00:27:24] alone at times. Other times you had tons of people, like a few people with you and other times you didn't. And I just, I honestly, I was proud. I tapped out at 11 hours and 15, I had 45 minute left. It's kind of haunted me. I thought I could have got a few more K in, but it is what it is. I was proud.

[00:27:43] And that was my, it was my darkest moment was the last loop cause I was done. I was done in, I was tired. I was, you know, getting cranky. I was excited. I was happy. I had all these emotions and I think the last loop, a lot of it, I walked, I didn't run. I was kind of sore. I was tired and I remember seeing, I looked for Bethany all night and I finally heard this little is that you, T? and that was my little pick me up.

[00:28:12] And I got to see her and I, after she left, I didn't tell her. I kind of had a

[00:28:16] tear and I thought there's our leader, you know? Oh. And I thought, you know, I can go, go farther. And I did, I finished my loop and then I was proud I tapped out. So it's just, you girls are so inspiring.

[00:28:28] **Kim:** Aw. I'm a little teary to you listening to your story.

[00:28:33] Take a second.

[00:28:34] **Tanya:** Like, you know what I mean? It's about being a group, we all support each other. We all, you know. Yeah. Like that little voice is at you, you know, that just gave me a little pep and she just said, keep going. You're doing great. And then I just got a little pep and I actually ran a bit more of that loop.

[00:28:48] And then I walked and then I ran. You know, it's just, it's just being with the girls, you know? Yeah. It just shows you can do anything. Yeah. I just

want you to know that you can do anything you put your mind to in your. You can do it.

[00:29:00] **Kim:** No, , I'm, you're doing great. I'm sure it can get pretty lonely and, and a little scary being out.

[00:29:07] It is at night in the dark, your out there by yourself. Yeah.and running like 12 hours, like just how defeating that is to the body and mind and spirit. And I could, I could see being like, almost at rock bottom, and then hearing the voice of a friend in your ear. Yeah. I heard. There's just something you need

[00:29:25] **Tanya:** when I looked for her all night.

[00:29:27] **Kim:** Aw. Yeah. Little angel showed up just when you needed her. Yeah. Our little leader. Yep. Oh, oh, wonderful. Okay. So great. Wow. Bethany, do you wanna take us through a dark time during your hundred miles?

[00:29:42] **Bethany:** Oh boy. There were a few. I just have to say that that loop was actually special for me too. We were all sharing an aid station tent.

[00:29:49] Right. We had all our stuff at a tent and I was asking the guys that were there, my husband and Robyn's husband, every loop where's Robyn. Okay. Where's Natalie? Where's Tanya. How's everyone doing? And then they had said, Tanya had left just about 20 minutes or so before me on that one and that loop.

[00:30:04] Again, I'd been struggling. I was able to push more that loop cuz I'm like, I gotta catch her. I gotta find her out there. I hadn't seen her the whole race and I knew she'd be done soon. So it was kind of fun. I think it was a boost for both of us and yeah, it's that, that community is magic.

[00:30:19] Right. Having those connections with those people. Um, lowest moment. There were a few . I was out there for 20, a little over 24 hours, so it was a roller coaster. You would cycle through some real low lows and then you would come out of them and you'd be good for a while. And then you'd get low again.

[00:30:38] I think one of the lowest was right around the halfway mark and my stomach had gone. So I was nauseous and I was getting blisters and I tried a few things and the blisters were just, I was accepting that they were there to stay. my tummy was queasy. We were right through the heat of the day at that point.

[00:30:58] So I'm sitting in my lounge at the tent, lounge chair and popping pepto taps and drinking, I think water or Dr. Pepper. What is it? I dunno about that combination, but I was 11 hours in, and that's when the girls showed up for their night race right at that time and they happened to come up to the tent.

[00:31:19] I was doing my reset and that was the emotional reset that I needed. Like physically I was trying to get things in line, but just that boost of knowing that they were there and knowing that even though we weren't gonna be running the same paces that they were out there in the night too, was really powerful.

[00:31:34] I think my other, can I have two low moments? Sure. Yes.

[00:31:42] **Kim:** I run that long. You can you take as much time as you want.

[00:31:46] **Bethany:** I don't remember when it was during the night. I think I was around 120 K in, at that point and things are hurting. And throughout the race, I try and take the pain as just the

[00:32:06] check engine light. so what does that mean? Okay. Maybe I need more salt. Maybe I need to eat. Maybe I need to drink, right. It's not an alarm signal. It's just pay attention to this. And I'd kind of gone through everything and I'm like, you've got everything you can do, body. I've given you everything I can.

[00:32:21] Right. And it was starting to just get kind of frustrated with why can't, you know, and then I had the moment of just going, you know what, thank you. like, we're out here, we're doing this. Right. And so for the rest of that loop, I'm like, my ankle would hurt and I. Thank you ankle and I'd have my quad. It would just be thank you.

[00:32:41] We're still moving. Thank you for that. I dunno. It was just one of those things you get into in your head, but yeah, just trying to flip it

[00:32:49] **Kim:** around. Yeah. It's an important reframe, right? Like I'm sure you're checking in going, like, do I have to stop? Like, is this the type of pain where I need to actually stop or is it just my body letting me know that.

[00:33:00] It's feeling things it's

[00:33:02] **Bethany:** allowed to feel things



[00:33:03] **Kim:** at this point. Yeah. yeah. Yeah. It would be normal to hurt a little bit. Right. And then there's that fine line between once it is too far, but it sounds like you're listening to that. Yeah. okay. Great, Natalie, let's talk about yours.

[00:33:17] **Natalie:** Like Robyn mentioned, we got to run together, which was probably a total game changer.

[00:33:23] unlike the other girls didn't have a partner to go with. I would say we didn't have any dark moments, or low, more negative. I think, I can't remember what loop it was. I actually think it was about, we were about six. We had three hours left, so it was about six in the morning. Um, and we were kind of doing the math of like how far we were going to get.

[00:33:44] and 50 miles was like my goal that I had set. so that 80 kilometers. and we kind of knew we weren't going to get to 80 and we, but we knew we were gonna get more than 70. And I kind of was pretty bummed out at that point. I never said that to you. Sorry, Robyn. We were supposed to be honest with each other. I never said that, but I was very bummed out.

[00:34:06] and then I think it was the last loop. I was like, we just ran 73 kilometers. Like that's something to be proud of. so I came outta that like, and it was good with not meeting that A goal, cuz we still met that B and C goal. So, and then another, I think it was about the same time, actually it was 6:00 AM.

[00:34:29] I just remember complaining about everything. I was like, my knee hurts the stupid Hills. I was just like, I was so angry and Robyn was so positive and talking so positive. in my head. I'm like, Why is she so positive? now looking back, I'm like, I think she was trying to get me outta that negative spell.

[00:34:48] and I think it happened probably for a loop that she was really negative. And I'm like, let's talk about the positives of this race today. And so very grateful that we had that and I don't think we got to have the dark and the lows, as everyone else did, because we had each other to communicate with and keep each other.

[00:35:09] **Kim:** Yeah. And that's what, what I'm hearing loud and clear from all of you is the, the sisterhood, the sense of community is what got you through. but talking about goal setting, I mean, I get that. I'm a type A, all the way, I'll admit it. And I attach to goals, and it's easy to let yourself get really critical of yourself when you don't hit your A goal. And make it mean something about you and interpret it as failure. But I'm glad for both you and

Tanya both had talked about goals that you were able to flip that, reframe that and celebrate. Like goodness gracious, you ran further than most people ever dream of. And that you were able to be proud of yourself and what you did accomplish.

[00:35:51] I'm glad you were able to reframe that. Hey Robyn, take us through your dark.

[00:35:56] **Robyn:** Um, loop five. I don't know. I don't know what it was. It was kind of halfway through. my tummy was going a little bit and that was the loop I was complaining about everything. Um, but I think that the nice thing about that race is like Bethany had said it's a seven kilometer loop.

[00:36:16] So every loop I was just like, let's get through this loop, you know, let's get through loop five and loop six is gonna be a new loop. It's gonna be better. Um, the nice thing that I've found. So this is my third ultra this year, which is, is crazy to think about because I've never done them before.

[00:36:36] wow. Is that like, you have those lows, but they don't last , you know, like ,something is gonna turn and, and I it's like, it's hard to believe, but you just have to trust that and, um, And proof of it, right. That, that it has. So it's that negativity and that low point, isn't gonna stay the rest of the race.

[00:37:00] Um, it's gonna ebb and flow and you can get through it. And yeah. Um, a big highlight was hearing those birds sing in the morning though.

[00:37:10] **Kim:** Oh, I bet

[00:37:11] **Robyn:** the birds in the sunrise. I think that was pretty awesome. But.

[00:37:16] **Kim:** Let me ask you a question, just something you said there sparked in me to ask, do you think that your ability to see those negative thoughts as fleeting has anything to do with the thought work that you've done yourself through coaching, that you can kind of see thoughts and not attach to them and know that thoughts are just sentences and this will pass

[00:37:34] **Robyn:** a hundred percent.

[00:37:35] I mean, like. Just separating them. Right. Like separating and knowing that they're not facts. It's a thought and, I don't need to be married to

[00:37:50] **Kim:** it. I don't need to. Yeah. Right. There's distance between you and the thought, right? Yeah. Amazing. Yeah. Oh man, you ladies are just incredible. Three ultras in a season, good grief. I love it. Okay. So. I know that all of you said in your social media post, after the event, that you learned something about yourself when you run this far. So I'd love to know what you learned. Like, what was your biggest learning about yourself, as you completed that event? Tanya? What, what, what did you learn about yourself?

[00:38:23] **Tanya:** well, we always say we can do tough things. that you can put anything, you put your, your heart and mind to cuz your body will carry you. It may not like you, it'll hurt. It'll suck; it'll whatever. But, um, not to give up, never give up. like I said, that last loop I completed it.

[00:38:48] I walked half of it, but you know what? I was out there and there was other people walking it too. So like walking as well. And I just, I don't know. I just learned that I can come outta my comfort zone. I've never done a nighttime trail race. Like I've run with you girls on the trail at. But I'd never gone 12 hours.

[00:39:06] I've never, you know, I went right outta my comfort zone, so I wasn't sure if I was gonna do it right. I didn't know if I was gonna back out, but I'm not a quitter. And I was like, oh, you know, I'm not sure. And, you know, whatever, but once you, I got the first loop in, it was just, I just kept saying to like Rob and everybody else, one loop one, Tanya, next loop, next loop.

[00:39:25] You know what I mean? You had to, you could revamp yourself every. so I've just learned that you can, right. You can do things outta your comfort zone. It's kind of good to try something new mm-hmm and it was a new adventure. And I want, I wanna do it again next year. I

[00:39:38] **Kim:** want, and I'm, I'm sure you will.

[00:39:40] **Tanya:** next year.

[00:39:41] That's what I wanna do. I want that course. I want, I don't wanna say redemption, but I wanna do my first 50 on there. So 50 milers. So yes.

[00:39:49] **Kim:** Oh, and I have, I have no doubt that you will cause yeah. I think what you personify, what you exemplify is that you can do anything you set your mind to. Like, I don't know too many women who are as driven, as dedicated as you are.

[00:40:04] I, I can cry. Well, it's true. It's true. Bethany, what did you learn about. Mm,

[00:40:12] **Bethany:** I think in this one, um, I think it was really about trusting my body. I think it's what this one came to and the whole year build up to it in training. Um, that was really a focus was just to listen when I need extra rest to take the extra rest.

[00:40:29] Yeah, right. Um, to really give myself all the food and fuel and yeah. Eat, eat, eat while I'm out running and just be as kind to myself as possible. Yeah. Um, and that's just a different mindset than I've trained with before. And it made the whole thing. Like there was hard days and hard workouts, but it was, it was fun.

[00:40:45] It was a celebration. Um, and then running, I didn't feel like I had to prove anything to myself. I didn't have to prove anything to anyone else out there. It was That trust I've had this feeling of like, you've done the work and now just. Just do it. Right. And it was just that yeah. That connection and trust in the body.

[00:41:05] Yeah. Yeah. That was pretty cool. I don't always listen to my body real well. So that was a good, growth one for me.

[00:41:11] **Kim:** Good. Yeah. Amazing. We were talking on a dog walk about that too. And I said you just, you seemed like you trained so smart. Like you had the nutrition dialed in, like you never pushed yourself beyond where you were at at that time. And you took the rest and you challenged and , I think what you said is this time I just knew that if I was hungry, I was gonna eat. Right. Like, which seems so basic, but we do this. Like we think we have, we have to burn calories, so we, we don't eat the food that we need. Yeah.

[00:41:43] **Bethany:** And I had some struggles with that during training. Um, You know, you feel like you're running all this mileage, you're supposed to look a certain way or that whole runner's body, which is ridiculous. Right. Mm-hmm anybody who runs as a runner. and I don't remember where I heard it, but someone just talked about finding your strong, right?

[00:42:02] Yeah. And trusting that. And just that idea of, you know, You're asking your body to do something your body can, and it will. And the balance in that relationship is you giving your body what it needs to do that. Yeah. Right? Yeah. Without judgment and just, you know, Bodies are actually really amazingly good at steering us in the right direction.

[00:42:21] Um, we're just not always as great at listening. Right. It's so true. But

[00:42:25] **Kim:** yeah, it's so true. Yeah. And when we focus on listening, instead of, just following a plan, right. Mm-hmm like, yeah, our bodies will carry us. They will. And they'll ask for what they need. You just have to provide it. okay, Natalie, what about you?

[00:42:38] What is your biggest learning?

[00:42:39] **Natalie:** from the race, I think, um, just that you can hurt and you can still go. my feet were done at 50 K, and yet I still managed to run another 25 kilometers after. Um, so there really is. No, like you can keep going. I think is the biggest thing that I learned. From a training aspect, I think.

[00:43:01] I wasn't even sure how I was going to manage training for this. I mean, five kids, the farm life is busy. I think I really learned that you can do anything you want to do, you put your mind to it. there was times that I did workouts at 9:00 PM. There was times I didn't get a workout. And then that day, like during that week, I was pretty bummed out.

[00:43:20] I know Bethany was great for checking in and, and being like, how was your week? And I'm like, I missed a 10 K this week and she's like, don't worry about it. Like, you're fine. and so that was very interesting to still learn. Like I said, you, I think you really can do anything. You put your mind to.

[00:43:39] **Kim:** Yeah. It doesn't have to be perfect, whatever that is, right. Like you can listen to your body and you can make adjustments and you can take time off and you can rest and it will all be okay. And when you're talking about like, you can hurt and keep going, I just wanna clarify, like, It's not in a punitive way.

[00:43:58] Right? Like, it's not about like going out of your way to hurt yourself, but it's no that trust in your body that like,

[00:44:06] **Natalie:** yes, like you're achy you're I mean, running through the night, right? Like it's 2:00 AM your feet hurt? Your body hurts. Unfortunately, I had gut issues too, which did not happen during my training.

[00:44:17] I had a great training, 50 K run where everything was perfect. Yeah. I thought awesome. I've nailed this nutrition down. and not even, I think it was our fourth loop in my guts went completely AWOL and it was just like, you had to roll with the punches and, and we did, and we managed and we made it. And,

[00:44:36] **Kim:** um, so yeah, it's kind of a great metaphor for life, right?

[00:44:39] Like sometimes things go exactly as planned and sometimes they don't and you can adjust. Yeah, Robyn. What about you? What did you learn?

[00:44:49] **Robyn:** Um, I think it, it touches a little bit on the perfectionism, a little bit on the

[00:44:53] expect the unexpected, and about my like all or nothing. The work we've done with that, kind of throws it all at the window because there's no perfect ultra. There's no perfect training up to it because life happens. We are not professional athletes. And even if we were, life happens, right? Yep. Um, this

[00:45:18] is the first race I've ever had. An A, B and C goal. Like in the past, I've just been like, this is my goal and I'll be really upset if I don't hit it.

[00:45:29] And, you know, Nat and I both. This a B and C goal. And, and we accomplished our B goal and I was really proud of that. And so that was a big, a big turning mindset for me, I think. And about the perfection, right? Like it, it, there's nothing perfect

[00:45:50] about it.

[00:45:51] **Kim:** Nope. And you're right. There's no perfect. Like I've never done an ultra. You still have not inspired me to ever do one. But that there's no perfect ultra, is such a great line, right? Like, just to know that, and don't expect that. There's, there's no possibility of that, is a good one.

[00:46:06] **Robyn:** No, there's, there's so many factors that play into it. There, beyond your control. So it is roll with the punches. And, and like Bethany was saying, like, I think that that's such a great mindset while you're doing it is like they're warning signs and, and when things creep up, you're like, okay, well, what can I do here?

[00:46:26] and it's, it's learning all the way. And I think that that's what makes it fun. And that's what makes it hard and everything. Right like, that's what, that's what it's all about.

[00:46:38] **Kim:** Yeah, one of my mentors recently Helped me think about goals in a different way. Where it was always like you set the, A goal and you do the work and you hopefully achieve the, A goal.



[00:46:50] And if you don't, then that means something's wrong with you and you failed. It's how I would always interpret things. And what she taught me, that's really stuck, is setting a goal isn't about achieving the goal itself. It's about becoming the person you need to become in order to achieve the goal. Which is what I'm hearing all of you say is that it was in the journey of training and becoming the person who runs an ultra-marathon, where you succeeded. Doesn't matter if you got the kilometers or the miles, it's who you became in the process. And you've always been amazing women. But you've become more of you in the process.

[00:47:28] It's beautiful. I'm just so inspired by all of you. And like I say, I don't think you've inspired me to run an ultra. But here's what I do know is that I've had my own love, hate relationship with running over the last few years.

[00:47:45] And partly that's due to injury, but largely it's been related to my own body image work, and unpacking my relationship with running from burning calories and weight loss. But.

[00:47:59] **Kim (2):** I don't think I would continue to run if it were not for all of you and the trail sisters, and not just those of you who are here on the podcast today, but the whole group, like that is what keeps me running is the sisterhood, the community. And, you know, I'm always talking on this show about how community is such a motivating force and we need people who will cheer us on, who are there for us, who are not judgemental, who are not competing with us, and looking down and comparing each other, like true sisterhood where we have each other's best interests at heart. And we cheer each other on whether you run a kilometer or a mile, or you run a hundred miles, or whether you hike or you walk or you, whatever, it, you're all accepted, and you're all valued. That's my why right now, that's why I continue to run is so that I can continue to be part of this amazing sisterhood of women. So thank you to all of you and to the others who I know will be listening to this podcast. You've all meant an awful lot to me. So let's wrap up by saying, what would you say to a listener who might be thinking of learning to run, but isn't sure that it's for them.

[00:49:08] Tanya, what about you? Um,

[00:49:12] **Tanya:** I would say. You can do it. Um, I started running again at 42, so I'm, I'm living proof and, you just go one step at a time, one day at a time. And I always say the hardest part is getting out the door, getting out the door and to start. Right. Um, it that's the hardest part once you're out there.



[00:49:34] Um, I think Bethany always says your feet are magic. Um, you just one step at a time, like. I, I don't know what, uh, what more to say that you can, you can do it and don't give up, you're gonna have shitty runs. You're not gonna have good days. the weather's gonna be bad, you know, whatever.

[00:49:53] It's just, you just gotta keep going. You pick back up. Life happens like, as Natalie says. I had some stuff happen in my training. I had a few days and stuff and personal reasons. And, you know, I felt bad, but I know I'm a dedicated runner and I just, I remember them just saying, just pick back up Tanya, and just start back at it.

[00:50:15] So you'll have days that you just gotta keep going, is what I'm trying to say. Don't give

[00:50:21] **Kim:** up. Yeah. Every run is a new run, right? Yeah. Every run's a new run. Amazing. Yep. Bethany, what about you? What would you say to that? That person who's sitting on the fence.

[00:50:31] **Bethany:** Oh, gotta just do it.

[00:50:32] Um, start slow. I think that's my biggest thing. Like, if you can't talk when you're running, you're going too hard. Right? so it's that slow. And when I started it would literally be like, I'd run, I'm making air quotes here. I would like run 10, 15 steps, and then I would walk them in it.

[00:50:50] And then I would run 10 or 15 steps and I would walk them in it. Yeah. And it, it will gradually build, it will come faster than you think it will. You're going to make progress faster if you just go really slow at the start. enjoy it and go somewhere pretty. don't don't hide somewhere Cuz you don't want anyone to see you. like go to a beach or a boardwalk or some beautiful trail and just let that inspire you.

[00:51:13] So you're not thinking about how awkward it all feels at first.

[00:51:16] **Kim:** Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Enjoy the experience right. Instead of just focusing on how hard it is. Absolutely. Yeah. Cool. Natalie, what about you?

[00:51:26] **Natalie:** Just so, you know, Bethany, when I started running, I used to run up and down my lane way, cuz I was so embarrassed about running it was not pretty

[00:51:35] Um, I, I, with all the girls, um, what they said, I agree you can do it. Um, start slow, be patient. Um, setting goals is big. Um, having a race, you know, to sign up for or something. But knowing what I know now set a few goals, not just that big goal, or maybe your goal will be just to finish that race no matter.

[00:52:00] And don't put a time on it. for my first time racing, I don't like putting big goals because it's your first time. And like Robyn said, anything can happen, there's so much unknowns. but, and if you can find a community, I tell you that really helps a lot. there is tons of running groups.

[00:52:18] And, um, if you can find some people. They will be your people.

[00:52:23] **Kim:** Yeah. Yeah. Um, Bethany trail, sisters, they're all over the place, right? Like there, there are chapters kind of all over north America.

[00:52:32] **Bethany:** Yeah. Tons in states, especially. there's only a couple chapters up here in Canada right now. but yeah, if you go trail sisters website, you can search by location and find groups and yeah, they are no drop, right.

[00:52:45] The goal is just to get more women out and enjoying the trails and enjoying nature. And they're not gonna leave you. You're not gonna get lost or stranded. They would love to see you. So check it out. And if you're near Goderich, come here.

[00:52:56] **Kim:** yes. By all means. Yeah. So if you're, if you're able to find a trail sister's community to latch onto, I mean, those would be your people, right?

[00:53:03] Like Bethany said, nobody ever gets left behind, but if something like that doesn't exist in your, in your community. Oh, I don't know, make one or, or there's meetups too, or, you know, other running groups, but yeah, that's a great way to get started having that community around you. What about you Robyn?

[00:53:18] **Robyn:** Um, just try right. Just try, grab a friend. and not use that friend, but use that friend to Share the experience with. You know, go somewhere beautiful, like Bethany said, and make it social.like, don't put such parameters on it that it's about your body or about weight loss or just it's it's about fresh air and it's about the trees and the sun and the birds, you know, just try to reframe it.

[00:53:55] **Kim:** Yeah. And just try. Yeah, right. Just try no expectations. Right. Just get out there. And it's true. Any physical activity is a lot easier and a lot more enjoyable if we're doing it with somebody or a group of people that we enjoy. Right. So, yep. That's one, a great way to set yourself up for success. All right.

[00:54:13] Well, ladies, thank you so much for sharing your time and sharing your stories and inspiring our listeners through sharing your stories. You're just so amazing, such inspiring women. And I just want you to know how special all of you are to me.

[00:54:29] **Bethany:** Thank you for having us Kim, letting us talk about ultra running and we probably made it sound really scary, but honestly

[00:54:37] **Kim:** made it sound funs. The weird thing.

[00:54:41] **Bethany:** Really? Sometimes it's more fun when you look back at

[00:54:44] it, but yeah. Is fun.

[00:54:47] **Kim:** amazing. Thanks so much for being here ladies. Thanks Kim. Thanks Kim. For everything.