



Episode 281: Building Resiliency, Mindset and
Doing the Impossible With Joel Runyon

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Katie: Hello, and welcome to "The Wellness Mama Podcast." I'm Katie from wellnessmama.com. And I'm here today with a new friend I'm excited to share with you. Joel Runyon is the founder of Impossible, which is a performance lifestyle company focused on helping people push their limits and transform mindset through hard physical challenges which he has some experience in. As an endurance athlete in 2017, he became the youngest person in the world to run an ultramarathon on every continent, including Antarctica. He's also the creator of the Paleo and Keto resource called Ultimate Paleo Guide, and Ultimate Meal Plan, as well as the daily movement and mobility coaching app, movewellapp.com. Joel, welcome and thanks for being here.

Joel: Awesome. Thanks for having me.

Katie: Well, to start, I would love to hear about Impossible as the brand and as the mission and just kind of walk us through what that is and how it was born.

Joel: Yeah, so the story it feels like, you know, it's been just a few years back but I actually started, I think back in 2010, I graduated school and did everything I was supposed to do growing up, you know, went to college, got a double major, traveled abroad. And I basically graduated in the middle of the 2009 recession. And so I did all these things you're supposed to do growing up, got all like my GPAs, and, you know, learned Spanish and traveled abroad, did sports. And then I graduated and then the next thing, you know, on that checklist is go get a job. And I graduated in that recession and I couldn't get a job for like nine months. And this basically, put me in a world where I was just questioning, you know, what the narrative that I had been fed for a while.

And it's a long story. I applied to a bunch of different places. Eventually, I got turned down at all of them, eventually was applying to places like Starbucks and couldn't get called back from Starbucks. And I was basically sitting in my parent's basement at the time, you know, wondering if this was it, this is what I signed up for, this is what I did all this work for. So I went to school got this piece of paper for. And I just felt bad for myself for a while. I didn't really do anything about it at first, I just kind of watched a bunch of Netflix, and drowned in my own sorrow for a little bit.

But I was writing down all these things that I wanted to do, I was still pretty aspirational about these things I actually wanted to do. And I saw some friends of mine, you know, starting businesses, getting jobs, traveling the world. And I wanted to do all these things, but I couldn't even get a job at Starbucks and everything seemed really impossible for me. And so while I was watching Netflix, I was kinda like making this list for a while. And I think I ended up eventually running out of Netflix shows to watch, it was 2009, 2010 not a lot of stuff on there. And eventually, you know, I finished, you know, kind of escaping into the world of Netflix and took another look at my list. And all the stuff on my list still seemed pretty impossible. I didn't have any money. I couldn't travel the world, I couldn't start my own business, I could barely...you know, I couldn't even get a job.

But one of the things on my list was run a triathlon. And I didn't have an excuse for why I couldn't run a triathlon. And so I decided, you know, there's no excuse for me not to put on my shoes and run around the block. And there's no excuse for me not to get on like my crappy old Middle School mountain bike and ride around the block and start training for this thing. And so even though I didn't know anything about triathlons, I decided I was going to sign up and do it. And I signed up for an indoor one at Life Time Fitness because I didn't wanna drown in the open water swim of a normal triathlon. And I was really nervous about it. I didn't really know anything about triathlons. But I signed up, I did it, and trained for two months, and I did it. And I remember thinking at the end of that, "You spent so much time telling yourself that this was impossible. What other things out there could you actually go out and do if you just trained for it and went for it?"

And so that kind of became like the inciting incident for me to go out and, like, start looking at this list that I had made that I thought everything felt impossible, but like, what if I went out and actually tried to do it. And so that was kind of the origin story. And so from there, I just kind of started challenging myself to do longer and longer races. I started realizing, once I started pushing myself that I could go a lot farther than I ever anticipated. And then I took that same type of mindset and applied it to like my job search. And then eventually how I approached a couple of the first jobs, I was able to actually get and work my way up. And then eventually, you know, leaving and starting my own stuff.

So Impossible, yeah, that's kind of the origin story of Impossible. But kind of the mission of Impossible is to use hard physical, difficult challenges, to transform your mindset and transform the way you both, you know, see yourself, but also see the world. And, you know, by putting yourself in those situations where they're hard, difficult or you're not quite sure if you can do them, you push through and you're able to do them anyways. You kind of come out the other side with a different perspective on what you're capable of. And so that was the origin story. But since you know, I've done a lot more, you know, I got...I basically tricked myself through triathlons into becoming a runner, started doing a lot of ultramarathons, ended up doing several different races for charity. And I think today we've raised almost \$300,000 for different educational non-profit. So that's kind of...you know, it's been eight or nine years or so, but that's like the quick couple minute overview of how it got started.

Katie: I love that story so much. And I love that you are doing this also to help charities as well, and to bring awareness, that's amazing. For anyone who isn't familiar. So I've ran a triathlon and that is to me, a tremendous accomplishment, it's no small feat. You now run ultramarathons can you just define what that is for anyone who doesn't know?

Joel: An ultramarathon is anything beyond a normal marathon. So if you run a normal marathon, and then you like run home, or you run the 7-Eleven, or anything, it's technically an ultramarathon. But typically, most ultramarathons are anywhere between a 50K, which is about 31 miles, and 100 miles. But now people are getting crazy and they're like, people are doing 200-mile races, multi-day races. And you know, kind of once you dive into this world, people get really nutty really quick, but typically an ultramarathon starts at 50K, and it will go, you know, as far as people will let it go.

Katie: What's the longest one you've ever run?

Joel: So the longest that one that I did was the 100K in Antarctica.

Katie: Wow. So you picked the coldest place to run the longest...

Joel: Yeah, so it was 62 miles I think that was that one, so. But yeah, like, once you get into the space, it's like, okay, it's like 100K, but there are definitely people who do 100-mile races all the time. And then it just raises your sights on what's possible and what people actually do out there. And that was one of the mind-blowing things for me was, you know, I kind of kept myself before I ever got in this world I was like, I don't even know if I can do a triathlon. And so I didn't even do like a sprint triathlon, I did an indoor triathlon. And once you kind of peek into this world, it just keeps going and going and going. And you realize what people are capable of when they decide to do it.

Katie: Yeah, that's amazing. And another thing you mentioned that I think it's important to talk about a little bit more is the education side, how you went to college, got the double major, you checked all the boxes you

were supposed to check. And I've heard this story so many times. And it's something I think about quite a bit as a parent now, because I'm gonna have kids before too long, who are at the age of deciding to go to college or not. And I get the feeling that the education system has drastically changed even since we were there. And certainly, since our parents were there. So I'm curious. Now, being on the outside of this, and having created this entrepreneurial life and this career that helped people, do you have a different perspective looking back on, for instance, going to college, education? And would you do it again? Or would you pursue other options earlier?

Joel: So the way I've said it for myself is I think we're like the last few years where you could kind of make the case for college if you like. Even since I graduated college has gone up dramatically. And I just don't see the ROI on it like from a financial...like, people wanna talk about, okay, there's an experience and, you know, you could talk about that. I think I would have much rather just taken the money and like...or even half the money and put it towards like experimenting in different entrepreneurial manners. Because all the things that I did in school like nothing really was super actionable. I think I probably could have paid better attention in like accounting class, and I would actually have been probably the more like, useful class that I had taken. But I remember we took like a class on entrepreneurship, and it was about putting a business plan together and pitching people, and it's like...and I haven't done a business plan like that yet, you know, most of my stuff has been bootstrapping. So it's been much more about like, gaining an audience and building traffic and creating products that people resonate with.

And so, for me, from an education standpoint, I think education, like a basic education, is really, really important. And that's, you know, the stuff that we do with Pencils of Promise, as far as making sure people have...you know, under-resourced areas around the world have the chance to learn to read and do math. And you know, learn these really basic skills that we kind of take for granted. But then when it gets to this higher education, and you know, there's some places where I think being...you know, if you're gonna be a lawyer, you have to do what you have to do, if you're gonna be a doctor, you have to do what you have to do. But for what I went to school for, and I kind of was one of those guys that went into school, and I was like, "I don't know exactly what I wanna do," you know, all these careers that people have had picked out since third grade, I'm not one of those guys. There was never any messaging for that person for me.

And so I wouldn't have...I don't think I would have, if I had the chance to go back and you know, spend that money again and spend those four years, I think I would have done it in a different way. And, you know, with costs going up the way they have, even since I graduated, I definitely don't think I would spend the money that they're charging these days unless it was a just a top-tier school. And at that point, you're just basically buying into the group of people that you...you know, the network that you wanna be in. And so we can go...I've got this whole...you know, I've got a much longer rant on that, but I just don't see the ROI for the types of classes that I took. And I think there's a lot of other ways that I could have invested that time and energy and learned skills that were a little bit more practical.

Katie: Yeah, I agree with you wholeheartedly on that. And as someone who's also a really good student, and I was very good at the game of taking tests and all of that in school, like I did what I was supposed to do in the education side. And then in the adult world, and especially in the entrepreneur world, I realized there were still a lot of skills I had to learn on the fly, and especially things like tolerance for failure and resilience. Because those things are not built, and at least they weren't built into my education, especially if you're a decent

student and you don't have to fail very often. I feel like that's something that was really a big jump for me at the beginning of my entrepreneurial journey and in parenthood because there's a lot of struggles built in there as well. And it's something I know you talk about quite a bit is, you know, building resiliency, and how do you develop that tough mindset. And I think for all the parents listening, that's something really important to impart to our kids that are probably not getting necessarily from the education system. So let's talk mindset a little bit and how you were able to make that switch personally, and then now how you help people do the same.

Joel: Yeah, so one of the core things that I talk about is like trying to get people out of their head and into their bodies. And, you know, a lot of people have digital-related jobs. So they're doing jobs where they're sitting behind a computer all day, or, you know, even if they're not, they're looking at their phone all the time, and we live so much of our lives, in our head. And we have all these mental stresses that just live in your head they're not like out in real life. And, you know, even like 100 years ago, if you're like actually stressed at your job, it was because you're doing physical labor or something. And at least then you'd get like some sort of endorphin rush from, you know, the actual physical workout. And so people end up being stressed all the time, mentally from these different situations, but they're not able to like, get it out, they're not able to do anything with it, because they're just like confined at their desk.

And so, for me, I found I was like having a real hard time when I was in my parent's basement, trying to like deal with the stresses of life and figuring out how to, like, navigate this new world. Because I didn't have any way to like...I didn't have any outlet, I didn't have anything to do or to focus that, you know, kind of energy on and it just kind of spiraled for lack of a better word. And so for me, what I found is taking on these physically difficult, hard challenges, does wonders for when teaching you about doing hard things, whether they're actually physical or they're mental. Once I realized, like, I can go run 50 miles, and it's really hard and a mile 30, and mile 40, and mile 45, I'm gonna wanna quit, but I can keep going anyways. I was able to take that mindset and take that to pretty much everything else like to entrepreneurship, to relationships. To go realizing that like just because something is hard just because something's painful, doesn't mean it's necessarily bad. And doesn't mean I can't do it, it just means it's gonna be, like slightly painful for a while.

And, you know, when people talk about running these ultramarathons or, you know, running these far distances, you know, they could say like, "Oh, it's so far, it's so difficult, I can never do that." But if you like, zoom out, and you're like, "Okay, well, I'm gonna be going, you know, I'm gonna be moving for 8 hours, I'll be in like, maybe a lot of pain for 8 hours, or 12 hours or, you know, 16 hours, or whatever the number is." But it's just 16 hours. It transforms your perspective on what you're able to do and what you're able to deal with. And when you go through those things, and they're actually physically difficult, where you're like, I remember at mile 45, when, like, my back seized up and like I didn't think I could keep going and I just wanted to go home and I quit and then I didn't. You can take that reference point, you can take that specific memory that real-life thing that happened, and remind yourself in other areas of your life that, "I can go out and I can do this hard thing too."

And so, you know, that's a lot harder to do if you never have like real physical experiences, and you just live in your head or you live on your phone or you live in your computer. And if you're able to, like, go out in the real world, have a real, meaningful, difficult experience, and be able to point to that, it's a reminder to yourself that you can do hard things. And for me, that was the biggest thing like I still don't...you know, when I finished

that first triathlon, part of me still didn't believe that I did it. I was like, "No, you couldn't do this, other people could do this, but you couldn't do this." But then I had like the results list and I had the times, and I pointed it on the sheet, and I was like, "Well, actually, you know, no matter what you think about yourself, you just did that. So you are now the person that can do that type of thing." So what's the next thing that's on the list? And what can you go do next?

And I think that's really, really important, and really underutilized. Where, like I said, most people I think live in their head, and they're scared...they get stuck in their head. Because so much of our stuff is on our phone or on our computer, or, you know, you're just processing it mentally. And when you're able to put it out into the physical, into the real world, there's something about it that lets you completely change how you look at a certain situation, and what you're capable of.

Katie: Yeah, exactly, like, I think there's so much right now that's popular about doing all of the inner work and the mental work and then how that's gonna manifest in your life. And I think the only thing really why is about, just doing it with your body, even if your mind hasn't quite caught up and then letting your mind learn from that. And like I said, I've only done a triathlon. But the mindset part you talked about actually just reminded me of labor with my babies, because it's like you said at 16 hours in my case, usually like 24 hours. But it's just 24 hours, in my mind I tell myself that like I can do anything for 24 hours, I can do this. And then the mindset like that mental toughness on the other side, when you accomplish it is incredible. And you get to keep that with you. And it's such a good reminder when you have struggles, any other struggles that come up that are smaller than that, you're like, "Well, I already did that, so, of course, I can get through this."

I love the idea too how you talk about an impossible list, because you know, like everybody has their like bucket list? But that's like the things you do before you die, which is kind of depressing. I love this idea of an impossible list, which is kind of like fun challenges to conquer. So I'm curious, what are some of the things both on your own one right now and that you have people in your community? Like what are some popular things people put on this impossible list?

Joel: Yeah, so the real quick delineation between a bucket list and impossible list is that a bucket list, kind of people tend to making a bucket list, and they get real excited about making a bucket list. And they're like, "Hey, here's all the things I'm gonna do before I die" and they make it, they get all excited. And then they get real excited when they make it and then they don't do anything on it.

An impossible list kind of really started from that first triathlon. There's like a couple things I actually felt impossible. And it wasn't a big list. It wasn't, you know, anything crazy, but like an indoor triathlon was on my list. And the goal was, do something that actually feels impossible right now. And don't worry about everything else. Don't worry about making like 75 things on it, you know, add a couple things right now that feel impossible, and go and do them. And then once you go do them, your understanding of what's possible continues to expand.

And so the difference between an impossible list and a bucket list is a bucket list you kind of make one time and then, you know, maybe or maybe not you would like you cross everything off as you go. And the goal of

the impossible is basically to continue to grow with you over time, and get bigger and more expansive as you kind of become bigger and more expansive. And so this is actually kind of been an interesting problem that I had because I had...you know, I basically went from doing these indoor triathlons, or I did one indoor triathlon, did a bunch of other triathlons and got into running and ultra running. And I did all these ultramarathons on every continent like we talked about a little bit. And now, one of the things that I've actually struggled with a little bit is how do you do...what's next after you do such a big thing?

And so, you know, for a lot of people in the community, a lot of people start off with the triathlon, running kind of paradigm where they... The nice part about the running community is it's set up in those stages, where you could say, "Hey, I'm gonna do a 5K, I'm gonna do a 10K, I'm gonna do a half marathon, I'm gonna do a marathon." And it's very gradual and it's very specifically well laid out.

For me, right now, I've got a couple different races that are on my radar, but they're a little bit logistically difficult to coordinate and organize. So one of them is called the Red Bull X-Alps, and it's a race, it's an ultra-running race/paragliding race across like the Swiss Alps. It's like sponsored by Red Bull. And it's awesome. And I don't even know how to paraglide, but I'll learn it and I wanna do it. And then there's like a seven-day ultramarathon across Iceland that I wanna do. And those are kind of like the next couple things for me, but a lot of people in the space, they'll start with different shorter races. And for some people who...you know, some people will say, "Hey, I'd love to run a marathon. But you know, I'm 100 pounds overweight, or, you know, it's gonna take me even if I wanna run a marathon, it's gonna take me 20 weeks to get started with that."

And so one of the things, and this kind of ties into what we just talked about. One of the things that I have a lot of people do is, you know, if they're just starting out, and they just wanna get used to doing something difficult or uncomfortable or challenging. But they're not ready for like a marathon or an ultramarathon is I call it cold shower therapy. I did a TEDx talk on it a long time ago. But since like Wim Hof has, you know, blown up with ice baths. And I know you're a big cold therapy fan, but I tell people to do like five minutes of freezing cold showers, or just five minutes of ice baths. And what I've found is that's like a super simple way for a lot of people to get started doing small, physically uncomfortable activities. And, you know, it's also just five minutes. And you can...anyone can do anything for five minutes.

And so yeah, those are...that's kind of a quick overview of the impossible list. But one of the things that I've found is that some people get really intimidated when they're like, "Oh, you know, impossible list means I have to run an ultramarathon tomorrow." It's like, no, you can do it in small ways, you can do it in small formats. And you can start where you're at. And the list will grow with you over time and that's what's cool about it.

Katie: I love that. And you touched on something that I think is worth highlighting, which is kind of the idea of getting comfortable with discomfort, which is not something that's common in our society anymore, like we have the ability a lot of times to just comfortable all the time. And I'm so with you on the cold, I think, actually, it's been one of my best teachers, because I was never great at meditation or like quieting my mind because it's just always going in a million directions. And when I get in, you know, 40 or 38-degree water, I'm instantly

able to have singleness of thought and just breathe. And it's been a great teacher for me. And it's also that mental teacher of that I can do this for five minutes and I'm not gonna die from this.

So I love that. I'm curious what your, just out of curiosity, what your training regimen looks like, especially for some of these more obscure races where like it's paragliding, or it's more than just running, how do you train for that?

Joel: Well, the paragliding one I don't know yet. I need to go take lessons or something. But that's an interesting challenge where you're like, "Oh, I'm gonna become a beginner again and I'm gonna be really bad at this." And I think that's always a little bit scary, especially once you've gotten slightly proficient at something to go be bad at something again or remember how it is to look stupid and mess up a bunch. So right now, my training regimen is just actually, I really focused on just lifting weights a lot, the last few years, over the last year probably. But while I was doing the ultramarathons, this is something that's actually interesting is I launched this 777 Project, a while back, and seven ultramarathons, seven continents, and we wanted to build seven schools. And when I first started, I was just like, "I'm gonna just start running all the time. I'm gonna run when I wake up, I'm gonna run before I go to bed, every single day, run, run, run, run, add a bunch of more miles, get time on your feet, I gotta get used to going these distances."

And so I was training, I was actually in really great shape. And I go down to Patagonia, Chile to run this first race. And 26 miles in, I come around this curve, where there's a tailwind, so there's a 25 mile per hour tailwind and so it's kind of boosting you along the course and you're feeling really good. Twenty-six miles in, I come around this corner, the wind shifts and basically blows me across the road. I'm running downhill and end up trying to catch myself basically, as I go downhill, end up rolling my left ankle, really bad. I've been an athlete for a long time, I've rolled ankles before I was like, "Okay, I'm just gonna, you know, suck it up and, you know, walk it off and finish this race." Spoiler, I couldn't actually run the rest of the race. But I did finish it, I like limped through the rest of the way home and I thought, "Okay, I'm just gonna ice this and I'll be fine. You know, when this is all said and done."

And it turns out I got back home after the race. And I went from running 20 miles to barely being able to run like two blocks. And I was like, "Oh, no, something's wrong." And what happened was, I basically severely sprained my peroneal tendon. I didn't quite like snap it, but it was pretty bad. And I started realizing that like, "Oh, just running all the time is not the answer." And so what happened was, I had to do six months of rehab to get back to the point where I was able to run again.

And then when I was finally able to actually start training again, I ended up running actually a lot less than I had previously been running but doing a lot more cross-training and a lot more mobility, and recovery work. And what happened was that allowed me to basically run the next six races, within a period of like, three, three and a half months. And what I realized was like, there's a lot more to running and staying healthy and, you know, a full like training protocol than just running all the time. And so I've really tried to kind of maintain that. I really like the overall idea of being functionally fit. And not just being like, "Okay, I've got, you know, big muscles or I could do whatever," but like, being ready for any adventure that comes my way. Like, I never wanna be able to...I never wanna have to turn down an adventure, because I'm not in like, the shape I need to

be to go and do that. Whether that's like, you know, climb a mountain, or, you know, do this ultramarathon, or go see these random parts of the world that you can only get to on foot.

I really like that kind of personal challenge, because, you know, I've never thought about myself as a runner. I'm not a small runner guy, you know, a lot of runners are, you know, 5'5" and like 120 pounds or something like that. I'm like 6'2" and 210, like, I'm a big dude. And so for me, like fitness and these challenges have always been about, one, what can I find out about myself during these ultramarathons? And then, two, what can I see in the world that I would normally never get a chance to see? And those two things combined are just...like it's a much better reason to me to be fit and to get into shape. And to be able to be functionally, you know, healthy to do all these different things than just to be like, "Hey, I'm going to go flex in front of the mirror for, you know, like, a couple hours." I like the idea and the challenge of going out in the world and doing these types of things. So I don't know if that answers your question, but that was a little bit of a ramble if you will.

Katie: It does. And as someone who also does not feel like a natural runner, and pretty much anytime I run, I'm just like, "Oh, when is this gonna end?" I much prefer weight training. And I've read some interesting studies actually, and from coaches in different types of sports that are using really heavy weight training, actually, to train their endurance athletes or their sprinters. Because it's supposed to actually increase certain muscle fibers and the ability to, I guess, have increased endurance and fast-twitch fibers. Have you seen any of that data? Or has that been true in your experience? Like are you able to get those same benefits without having to do as much endurance, because I know there's also some data that extreme endurance and extreme cardio all the time can be detrimental over the long run as well.

Joel: So I found that the weight training, actually, like muscularly balanced me out, because I'm a very...like, if you look at me, I'm very quad and calf heavy. I'm like very happy with, you know, the way I run even, like, I'm just a quad and calf heavy person. And what actually I found out, you know, this freak accident that happened in Patagonia, was really...it was a little bit of a freak accident, but it was kind of just like waiting to happen. Because long story short, I've super tight hips, I've kind of weak hamstrings and glutes. And so what was happening was my stride was getting off. And, like, you know, this would have happened one way or another. But basically, one hip was tighter than the other, one stride is a little bit shorter.

And it was basically, I was just kind of reinforcing, like, once you have a weak muscular group or like a specific area, and you don't do anything to address it, it just kind of digs yourself a rut, if you will. And so what happened when I started weight training was I started actually rebalancing myself a little bit, I started building hamstring and glute strength. And I started like actually changing the way, both my form and kind of how my overall running gait, like the performance of my overall running gait. And so that on its own, like beyond, you know, people wanna debate the merits of strength training versus cardio and all this other stuff.

And for me, I found...and I think you're seeing a lot of runners really start to realize this is that it's really easy to develop bad habits while running. And if you're able to put in the time, even three times a week, to do some strength work along with that, you really...you kind of insulate yourself from a lot of the injuries that runners get from just repetitive running over and over again, because they're never taking the time to address the weaknesses. And so if you can do that with strength training, I think the combo is really awesome. And for me, again, you know, the goal being, functionally fit to go out and do adventure in the world. I need both, you

know, you need to be strong, you need to be able to have endurance capacity. And just picking up a boulder and putting it down or, you know, being able to like, lift something that's incredibly heavy, but not being able to run for 20 minutes, like that's not a good end result for me.

So what I found is when I started doing that strength training, and I started adding some mobility work on top of that. That kind of gave me the best of both worlds, where I was like, "Hey, I'm able to do these, you know, hard endurance challenges, but I'm also preventing myself from injury. And I'm not really, you know, just letting myself create these bad habits without having to address them on a daily or a weekly basis."

Katie: That makes sense. And you also have the MoveWell app, right, which is for the mobility and movement side. Is that helpful as well, especially for people who are training at that level?

Joel: Yeah, so this is something that we actually created a lot of. A lot of my businesses come from things where I'm like, "Man, you need to do this, and like, you need to be better at this." And so when I got hurt, I was going to like physical therapy maybe two times, three times a week, or something like that. And it's like 60 bucks a session or it's like 100 bucks a session. And I'd go into physical therapy, and I'd be really good about doing all the work that they told me to do. And then they'd give me homework, and I'd go home, and I would not do any of it. And I feel like a lot of people are kind of like this, where everybody's got a foam roller or everybody's got, you know, like a lacrosse ball or a tennis ball that they know they should be doing something, maybe they're not even an athlete, but they're sitting down all day. And they've got lower back pain, or they've got specific issues. And one of the things that I just realized is like, you know, I'm really good, you know, going back to the education thing, if I've had someone tell me exactly, you know what to do, I'm really good about doing that. But if I'm just left to my own devices, and coming up with my own routines and what to do with a foam roller, I'm not as good at that.

So basically, we built MoveWell, so I would have a portable coach at home with me. And the idea is that we do prescriptive routines so, and just instead of just saying, "Hey, roll out your hamstrings," we say, "Hey, what's your specific problem? Do you have like lower back pain? Are you getting ready for a run? Are you just like...you're trying to do everyday mobility and just trying to stay a little bit loose and you've got 10 minutes." We basically put together routines of specific movements that are, you know, 10 to 15 minutes long. And we have a timer, tutorials, and a coach and we walk you through all the different movements. So you're not just like foam rolling your left hamstring, and then you know, turning on the TV and doing something else. We try to make it prescriptive. So each routine has a specific goal for it. And you're not just doing kind of a one size fits all mobility routine.

So we started that, actually after I got hurt. And we're expanding it quite a bit this year. And we're really excited for what's coming up with that. Because I think that's one of those things where most people don't realize how much they can do. You know, on Impossible, I talk about pushing past your limits and doing more than you think you can. But one of the corollaries of that is that you also have to take care of your body, much more than you might be able to get away with if you're not pushing yourself. So if you're just doing your everyday thing, and then all of a sudden you start, you know, really pushing yourself really hard in the gym or running or anything like that. You have to really kind of step up your level of self-care and recovery and what you're gonna allow yourself to do.

And so, you know, we want people to push themselves, we want them to experience more things and do impossible things. But we also want people to take care of themselves and recover well. And there's a quote, I'm not sure how accurate it is but I like the message of it. And it's, "There's no such thing as overtraining, just under-recovery." And what I've found is a lot of people can really push themselves a lot further than they think they can. But you have to take care of yourself first. And if you're not focused on recovery, and that aspect, that's where injuries pop up, that's where things crop up where they'll set you back, you know, two, four, six months or something like that. And that's kind of what we wanna avoid.

Katie: And that's such an accurate, it's like correlation to life in general, is like, you know, you can push hard in any area, but you also have to put in the time for recovery. And whether it be self-care or to sleep, like most people don't even prioritize sleep anymore. I'm curious, do you have any sleep rituals? Because I guess training takes a pretty big toll on the body. Do you have anything that helps you sleep or maintain your sleep quality?

Joel: Yeah, I really like to take cold showers before I go to bed. Something about it calms me down, it's really hard to...I just moved to Texas. And it's actually really hard to take cold showers here. I just got the chiliPAD, I still haven't set it up yet, but I'm really excited about that. And then I have like Sleep Induction Mats, I've got a couple of different ones. I think I just have a general one. But then I just picked up the one from the Akuspike guys. And I love that, that was a game-changer for me. And a sleep induction mat is basically just this mat with a bunch of little spikes on it. And something about it, it just forces me to relax as I fall asleep. And then, you know, you lay on it for 10 or 15 minutes then you roll off. So I literally have the chiliPAD like right behind me, and I have to get it set up here sometime soon. But I'm excited about that.

And then the sleep induction mats to me were like...when I was traveling, I was traveling for two years straight and I travel really light and the sleep induction mat was so important to me that I was like, I made it a part of just my packing gear. And it takes up a decent amount of space. So it wasn't like a small commitment to my overall luggage, but it was that important. And it was that helpful with me getting sleep on a regular basis that I decided to keep it in rotation.

Katie: Well, I know where I stand, but you've got to get the chiliPAD out of the box. It's totally a game changer when it comes to sleep. I love it, like when I travel now, I like to use it so much, especially with anywhere warm, just like, "Oh, where's my chiliPAD?"

Joel: Like, call the hotel up ahead of time you're like, "Hey, do you have a chiliPAD you can set up for me because that would be great."

Katie: I have a friend who ships one everywhere he goes before he gets there.

Joel: Are you serious?

Katie: Completely. I'm not quite to that level yet but I love, love, love the chiliPAD. And they now have the one called OOLER which might be the one you have that's, like, you can program I think from your phone. But yeah, total game-changer when it comes to sleep. But I would think the cold shower idea would be a similar like thing cooling your body temperature, somebody who doesn't have a chiliPAD they could try that to start with for sure.

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Katie: So I knew this was gonna fly by so quick because you're so fun to talk to. But I can't believe we're getting near the end already. And there's a couple questions I really wanna hear your answers to. The first being if there is a book or number of books that have really changed your life or your mindset in some way? If so, what they are and why?

Joel: Yeah, so the book that I always tell people about is called "A Million Miles in a Thousand Years" by an author called Donald Miller. And this...I've read this a couple times over the years, but this is one of the ones I read when I was living in my parent's basement. And the author basically talks about looking at your life like a story. And he asked the question, you, "If your life was a story, or if your life was a book, would anybody want to read it?" And what I realized in my parent's basement was that if my life was a story, at that point, it was a

story about a guy sitting on his couch watching a bunch of other people like live interesting stories. And so I was like, "Oh, I need to change something."

And so that was probably the most impactful book just from a perspective shift. Because then anytime I come up to like a big obstacle or something that's hard or difficult, you know, like, it's not something...it's not all of a sudden something that's hard or difficult. It's just like a challenge in the storyline. And, you know, if you ever go watch a movie, and there's no big obstacle in the movie, it's a pretty boring movie. Like if there's no challenge the protagonist has to overcome, there's no reason for you to be at that movie.

And so that book's been super impactful. And it lets you kind of step outside your first-person narrative and look at yourself as like, in third person, and be like, "Okay, what would I want a generic character to do in this situation?" And then you're able to kind of like transport yourself into that character and be, like, "Okay, let's play first-person now and, like, let's go do the hard thing because that's what a good character does." And so that "A Million Miles in a Thousand Years" really recommend it, it's probably one of my favorites. And it's super helpful if you're looking kind of for a perspective shift.

Katie: I love that. And that's a new recommendation on this podcast. I'll make sure that link gets in the show notes.

Joel: Thank you.

Katie: Any like parting advice, words of wisdom that you leave with the listeners today?

Joel: I think, you know, this kind of what we've just been talking about the last couple, you know, last 40 minutes, or so. But I think people really undervalue the importance of hard physical challenges. And the more I think about and the more I do it, the more I keep coming back to that. And it's so easy to be comfortable. And it's so easy even talk about this stuff, you know, there's a million podcasts out there right now be like, you know, "Growth begins at the edge of your comfort zone." And, you know, people talk about or people post on Pinterest or Instagram, and they talk about getting outside their comfort zone. But if you tell someone to jump in like an ice bath, they'll fight you about it.

And what I found is just the...like the daily practice of finding something that's not just uncomfortable, but it's actually physically hard or physically difficult. But also, you know, if you can, physically difficult but meaningful, and that can be meaningful to you in whatever way that means. But I find those experiences that I've taken on that have been very, very difficult where I've wanted to quit multiple times, and I somehow dug deep enough to push through. Those are probably the biggest...the most transformative experiences I've had.

And I think we have a pretty big lack of them, like just in modern society. And so, you know, if there's like a specific challenge, I would say, you know, if people don't have an ice bath, or something like that, I always tell people to take five minutes of cold showers. If they wanna practice doing something that gets them

uncomfortable, you're already taking a cold shower, you're already, you know, turning the dial one direction, all you have to do is turn it the other direction, and do it for five minutes. And it might be hard, it might be difficult, and you might, you know, not like this guy on the podcast that you're listening to. But when you're done, you realize, it was hard, it was difficult, but it was just five minutes. And you can do anything for five minutes. And then you also realize, you're able to do other things that you think might be hard might be difficult, but you're able to do it. So that's my parting advice.

Katie: I love that. And it's like that's a perfect place to end, I'll make sure that we link to everything you mentioned, the 777 Project, and Impossible, and MoveWell, and all the places people can find you. But if people just want to stay in touch with you online or follow your journey and your marathons, where's the best place to find you?

Joel: Yeah, impossiblehq.com is the main site for Impossible. And then you can find me on Twitter, and Instagram @joelrunyon. And those are the best spots.

Katie: Awesome. I will make sure all of those are linked. Joel, thanks for taking the time. This was so much fun.

Joel: Thanks for having me.

Katie: And thanks to all of you for listening and sharing your most valuable asset of your time with us today. We're so glad you did. And I hope that you will join me again on the next episode of "The Wellness Mama Podcast."

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