

Thank you, New York. Today we're reminded of the power of community and the power of coming together. Athletes, on your mark.

The first woman to finish for the second straight year here in the New York City Marathon is Miki Gorman, a smiling Miki Gorman. Why not. 2:29:30, the time for [inaudible 00:00:27].

Look at the emotion of Shalane Flanagan as she comes to the line.

Pointing to his chest, pointed to the USA, he so proudly wears across his chest. A great day for Meb Keflezighi.

Hey everybody, and welcome back to Set the Pace, the official podcast of New York Road Runners, presented by Peloton. I'm your host, Rob Simmelkjaer, the CEO of New York Road Runners. And as our listeners know, this is a special day for us here at Set the Pace because, not only do we welcome Peloton, but we also get to welcome my brand new co-host you've heard her on the podcast before and many other places, Becs Gentry, Becs, so awesome to have you back on the show this time as my permanent co-host. It's great to have you.

Thank you so much, Rob. That felt really real with you saying it just then with our team here. And yeah, I'm truly honored to be your co-host on this incredible, incredible podcast, Rob. Thank you.

Well, it's so exciting to have you. Obviously we've had such a great run with Meb from the time we launched to here. And by the way, Meb's still going to be around, so all you Meb fans out there, don't be sad. He's still doing the Meb Minutes and the Member Moments, you'll hear from him later in the show. But Becs, you've done such a great job developing a community of runners at Peloton. Everything you've done to get people inspired to run is such a great fit for what we do at New York Road Runners helping and inspiring people through running. So we're just so thrilled to have you as a part of this and you've brought along a pretty awesome colleague as well. We'll talk about that in a second, as our guest today is one of your folks over there at Peloton. But Becs, you're just perfect for this and it is going to be a lot of fun.

Thank you so much and great weekend to join after.

It sure is. So, of course, last weekend, those of you in the New York area know we had the Real Simple Women's half-marathon in Central Park, a tremendous turnout, about 8,000 runners on a beautiful day in New York City, and Becs, you know a little something about that race you

finished in the top three last year in that race, took the year off this year, but you know what it takes to run those two loops around Central Park.

Oh yeah, that is one of my all-time favorite races of the half-marathon distance. I remember last year doing those loops around Central Park and the camaraderie amongst the women running that day is wonderful. You feel it to your soul, just women cheering each other along, supporting each other around those two hilly tough loops of our favorite park in this city. And our guest has also come off the back of that. But also, I mean, Rob, we do have to mention, if people want a little bit of a preview of how our thoughtful instructors run outside with New York Road Runners, we have just released some incredible scenic content with New York Road Runners, right?

Yeah, absolutely. For those who are on the Peloton tread and the devices, that was a big part of our partnership is giving folks the chance to actually run the marathon course on a Peloton treadmill. So we just released that last week. You can check it out. We posted it on the social, and all the places, and it's incredible. You get that runner's eye view of running the marathon and every single bit of it is the actual racecourse. So Becs, what's that going to be like for the runners that you work with on Peloton to actually have a chance to run that course?

Oh my gosh. The feedback I have had, already, from our members is elation, pure elation. For people who can't possibly travel to New York, who live in other places, other states, other countries, perhaps, they are in love with the two options. You can take 150 minutes, straight up run a scenic view, and there are five 30 minute classes that are led, individually, by my colleagues: Jeffrey, Robin, Selena, Mariana, and myself.

Becs before we get to our guest, it is so beautiful outside today and spring is my favorite time of year to start a new workout routine. With the weather warming up, it just feels easier to get into the rhythm of things. Whether you've got 20 minutes or an hour for a Pilates class, or an outdoor guided walk, Peloton has everything you need to help get you going. Get a head start on summer with Peloton at onpeloton.com. Speaking of Peloton, and you mentioned her already, let's bring in our guest today Mariana Fernandez, who anybody in the Peloton world knows very well. Mariana is in the middle of back-to-back race weekends, fresh off of her run at the Real Simple Women's half-marathon and revving up for this coming weekend's Mindful 5K in Queens. And so she's going to join us to reflect on last weekend also to give us a little extra special training for this coming weekend's Mindful 5K, so can't wait for that.

By the way, before we get to Mariana, our member of the week this week will be welcoming a powerhouse runner, a life coach, and an Achilles running member, Valerie Hartman. She'll be on with me a little bit later on. And Meb will also be joining us for our Meb Minute today, starting with the pre-race rituals he leans on to make sure he's in the best mental space for the race. This, of course, mental health awareness month. That's why the Mindful 5K is helping kick things off for us at, Road Runner. We're so excited to be recognizing mental health month all

month. And to introduce Mariana, Becs, I got to hand it to you. She's your colleague, do the honors.

Thank you. I'm thrilled to be here welcoming this wonderful human, one of the most bright souls I've ever had the pleasure of meeting and working with, practicing yoga with, and, for me, selflessly running miles with, and that is the beautiful Mariana Fernandez. Welcome my friend.

Thank you so much for having me. I have been a part of New York Road Runners on and off since 2012, so it's really exciting not only to hear about this partnership, but now, getting to join you on this podcast. So, thank you.

So Mariana, how was your run in the Real Simple Women's half? How'd it go for you?

So, this is the race I come back to year after year and, yes, last year, Becs, I think this was maybe one of your first races back after having Tallulah. And so, I watched Becs podium, and to see Tallulah, see her get her award. But it is just one of those races that inspires camaraderie. It's fierce female forces all coming together. It's such a challenging course. Those two laps around the park are no joke, but there's something very empowering about it. And this year, it was my first race after the New York City Marathon, the TCS New York City Marathon back in November.

And so, putting in some training, different kinds, I wanted to see where I was at. It was a tough race, but back in New York, I remember before the race started, I saw New York Road Runner's Christine Burke at the start, and then I saw her right when I finished, and then I PR'd at the New York Marathon and then I saw Christine right before the race started this time around. And then I saw her at the finish line. I was like, "You are my guardian angel," because I PR'd in this one. So it ended up being a good race.

Wow.

Wow. Fantastic. Congratulations, too. Christine, Running Angel. It should be her new name, her new email sign-off. Mariana, you talked about the TCS New York City Marathon, and I know how important that race is for you. The first time you ran that race, you ran it with Mamichi. Yes. That's a family name which Mariana allows us all to call her mom, Mariana's wonderful mother, who is, in her own right, probably one of the fiercest runners I've ever come across. And, going back to that, how important has your mom been to you, Mariana, in your running journey?

I watched her find running later on in life and that was where she really found her second wind and a different kind of purpose. So even growing up, just seeing her sign up for male-dominated races and taking a podium spot there, just allowing herself to take all these challenges and let this serve her in this really extraordinary way to the point that, with four children, she would bring us along to races and we would participate, to some capacity, in the kids' races. She has always been a north star for me and I've always been in awe now that she's 71, and she's still running marathons, and she's still placing, and never in a way that she held some kind of expectation for us. She just really taught us how fitness and running served her and imparted that, inculcated that to us so that we grew up and all four children at some point in our life have run a marathon, not because it was expected to, but because we saw the power that it had.

And so, when I had moved to New York and I was in a very lost place in my life and trying to find a sense of grounding, I remember calling her and I asked her, I was like, "Will you do this race that I've always wanted to do?" I thought I had been in marathon retirement, but I had cheered at the New York City Marathon for a few years and I was like, "I want to do it now." And so she came along for the ride and we ran it together in twenty-seventeen, and crossed that finish line together. And that was her third TCS New York City Marathon and my very first one.

Mariana, you referenced being in a lost place when you came to New York, and we love to talk to people about the origins of their running, what started them on a running journey, and you talk about having a loss, having a period of loss that led you, in part, to running and how running helped you through a difficult time. Can you talk about that? There's so many people out there I've met in my time at Road Runners who have been through similar things and found running through something like that. And not only did it get them through that, but then it really launched them into a new stratosphere of life.

Yes, I consider running probably one of my healthiest relationships I've had throughout my whole life from when I was a kid into keeping it up during high school, college, graduate school. But after I had put myself into marathon retirement, after my third marathon, and I was living in New York, and after just some hard blows, I would come back to running. I knew that that was the one thing I had for myself, that no matter what was happening, I could put those tennies on and go into Central Park, and that it would serve me, and it would bring me back to a sense of relief, a sense of checking in with my heart with how things were, and in that way, that's where I felt like this is a healthy relationship that I have with something I've had my whole life. And after a massive breakup and the loss of a dear friend through suicide, really not finding anything with that could give me a sense of clarity.

And I remember putting my tennies on and just being like, "Let me just go outside and see what I can do, and see if I can move, and see if I can find a sense of solace." And I know that running, and finding movement, does that for so many people in so many different ways. And it can give you the highest high and allow you to experience joy, but also help you move through

grief when you experience that. And I found that to be one of the biggest movements of hope in my life, and to come back to allow me to come into a new chapter of my life and I keep coming back to it. High highs and low lows.

That's so beautiful. And I know, personally, because I get to work with you and consider you a close friend, I know how many people's lives you touch on a daily basis. And when you joined Peloton, you were our first bilingual instructor, so Mariana teaches in English and in Spanish, so her range of helping people through yoga, meditation, and running is growing, and growing, and growing. How important to you was that you were able to come on and be our first bilingual instructor?

I'm very grateful that I've such a close relationship to my family, to my mom, to Mamichi, that she always reminded me how much ... Where we were from. Born in Mexico, I grew up there, but then we had to move and we left our family. How that connection would serve us in everything that we would do. So whether, when I was in theater, Spanish, my connection to Mexico, always was a foundation of who I was. And so, even in interviewing with Peloton, it's like we have such a massive Latina, Spanish-speaking community here that take these classes. I hope, if there's any possibility, to bring some of these classes in a language that either a lot of members grew up with are learning as a part of their culture. So, once I started on this platform, I realized the magnitude, also, of hearing a lot of members native tongue, of listening to music that they possibly grew up with, and how that served and represented a large component of our members.

I just wonder, Mariana, some of the stories and some of the things you must hear from runners in your community. I mean, you have such an inspiring story, you're open about telling it, which is a really important part, and that's so much about what is getting better about mental health, and just in general in our society, is people are more willing to talk about grief, and depression, and struggles, and how something like running has helped them get through it. What kinds of stories have you heard? What kind of outreach have you had from people in the Peloton community? English-speaking, Spanish-speaking, whatever it may be, to talk about the impact that what you're doing is having on them?

It's so wild to see how mental health, as a whole, has shifted and we are now finally experiencing a much more sincere narrative about it, and taking away the stigma and taboo that surrounds it, I know that, as an immigrant, here, to this country, but especially, I know within the Latina culture, it still is something that is so not talked about, that you put it to the side. We don't give ourselves permission to let it be a part mental health be a part of our holistic wellbeing, and coming on to this platform and teaching yoga, and meditation, and now even through running how I know Becs knows this, it was referenced in Ross's book about how running is her own way of meditating. It is our own moving meditation. We have these different sources of where we allow ourselves to check in and see the state of our own mental health.

So, it's breaking down those stigmas, and once people take these classes, or feel a shift within, they've reached out and been like, "Oh, this was the first time I knew it was okay to feel this, or I knew it was okay to talk about this, and to let myself experience this and to let myself acknowledge that I'm not so okay right now. And so, it's tearing down those barriers that there's no judgment around this, that this part of our human experience, that we can feel all the things, we can move through them, use different sources to help us in our healing in our own way to deal with things. And then, ultimately, what I feel like has given me the most sense of gratitude about it is when people share, and members share, and say, "On this run, I was able to release whatever it was I was holding onto," Or I gave myself permission to feel this as I was moving on the mat.

How do you, personally, as somebody who, as you say, you're an immigrant into this city, in this country here, same, and how you run, you have a very fast-paced job, you are always out. How do you feel, genuinely, you as Mariana?

No, it's important to see because I think we can always advise or recommend something, but it's truly what lands with the person. So if you have a hard time sitting still or finding a place, my solace, and we were coming from a post-pandemic world, but I remember for a long time we were stuck inside and the last thing I wanted to do was sit inside.

So, I would go out and take a lap around the block or head into the park and clear out that mental space, do a full check-in, where it wasn't about running, or logging in miles, or that was part of my day, as well, but giving myself a true opportunity to journey, and to have the how are you? Where are you? What's coming up? Similarly to when I had experienced that while sitting, but I knew that it served me most if I could get outside, get some fresh air. And that was no judgment. I know that there are worlds where you have to meditate in this way, in this moment, in this ... No. Meditation is yours. So you find what works for you, and for me, going outside, walking, that is my moment of meditation.

That is so perfect. Okay, can I ask you, so, do you believe that you can get into a meditative state whilst running and walking?

A hundred percent.

Yay.

A hundred percent. There is, funnily enough, somebody, one of my good friends was working the water stations as a volunteer over the weekend for the Real Simple Women's Half, and she said, "I saw you go by and I was yelling your name," and I didn't have music, I was in it, and not ... I remember it was this one point up on the Upper East Side, but I was in my own moving peace. I don't know what was going on around me clearly. I didn't even hear. But that's when you know you can just shut down the outside world truly. Noise, sounds, hearing your name

being screamed, because you are allowing yourself to be fully reflective, be fully with you. And so, those are completely transferable when you're running. If you're on a bike, if you're sitting, it's what works best for you.

That's what we call the zone, Mariana.

Exactly.

Sometimes you just get in that zone and nothing else is there. Can you do that with music in your ears or do you need that kind of silence to get into that meditative state while you're running or walking?

Again, it's up to you. Sometimes, people, and you hear even with our runners, there are runners that swear by music and there are runners completely the opposite. I absolutely cannot have anything in my ear, so it's truly what allows you to function best. I remember for the 2021 TCS New York City Marathon, I was so scared that maybe my air pods would die through it because they were a last model that would run out of battery really quickly. And so, I had music on at the very beginning, and then due to the crowds and the people, I turned the music off. I was like, "I don't need this."

You hear the sounds of footsteps, of the crowds, of your breath, which is always so impressive once you hear yourself breathing, something that you do so naturally. And then we hit that beautifully dreaded Queensborough bridge where the silence is deafening. And that was the one singular moment that I popped on, put on a song that I knew that was going to help me carry through the whole bridge into Manhattan. And there was the one singular moment that I put music on. So, it's this nice security blanket that you can have, should you choose, to use it or, to your point, when you feel like you don't need, it's shut off and you can experience it without.

One of the hugely important things I know for you is the importance of representation and diversity in the wellness industry. How do you believe that you advocate for inclusivity in your work? I know you're always looking to inspire. You have a huge family, or your nieces and nephews who you're incredibly close with, and to keep the Mamichi proud. How does it come through your work?

I just know that, for a long time, I had the really unique experience of having an example right in front of me in my household. But once I stepped outside of that world, whether it was going off to college in Texas or in graduate school even in Indiana, I was like, "Where are we?" Why aren't we a part of this fitness industry? Why aren't we part of talking about mental health? And it's that visibility of knowing that we can very much be a part of different aspects of our world. So, moving to New York, I was even surprised because New York is supremely diverse, but back in 2011, I was like, "Where are we in yoga studios and running?" And so for me, that's been a huge part of outreach, and not only knowing that we exist within these platforms, within these disciplines, but for maybe someone who didn't grow up with it to see you can exist here.

You can come and run in the park along with all of us. I get chills right now knowing that there was a huge component of our Latina community that came out, women who were like, "I've never run, and this is my first half-marathon, and I signed up, and I never thought I could do this." And there we all were wearing our own flags from our own countries and representation. "Yes, this is the example." And now they're passing it along to their daughters, their sons, the future generations, a lot of things that we didn't have growing up. So that is a massive goal of mine, whether it's been in yoga or through running communities. Like, you can do that, you can be a part of that world and sign up, and then once they accomplish it, they're like, "Oh, this is ours. We are just as much fit for this part."

We talked about meditation during the race. Let's talk about pre-race meditation, now, and this weekend, for the Mindful 5K, we're going to have one of your all's colleagues, Kristen McGee, my good, good friend who's been a yoga instructor for such a long time at Peloton and is so awesome. She's going to be leading a meditation before the race, which I'm really excited about. And Mariana, I know that this is something a little bit about, as well. So would you do us a favor and give our listeners a little meditation right here? This will be the first meditation we've ever had on Set the Pace, and maybe listeners out there can bookmark this and come back to it for the race on Saturday or other races. Do you think you could do that for us?

Absolutely, yes. And shout out Kristen. Kristen McGee was one of my first yoga teachers when I moved to New York City back in 2011. So it's been full circle to see her here and she just ran her first marathon. So I am really excited to get to share this 5K with her on Saturday. And this especially bringing to light mental health awareness month, mindfulness. And we see how we can apply it not just in moments of our day, but especially I consider this past Sunday how

useful it is prior to. So, something that I like to do, and if we can all do it here or take a moment, is just whether you're seated or standing, find a sense of grounding, of rooting down in your seat on the soles of your feet, and just take a deep breath in, sigh it out.

Nerves, jitters are going to come in, your mind is going to be talking to you, and expectation, and how it's going to go, and movement, but ultimately, remain connected to your breath, take another breath in, sigh it out, feel the nerves start to dissipate. Feel your shoulders start to release, come back to you, to everything you've done, to your process of getting to the start line. Knowing that we move step by step, [foreign language 00:28:14] like I like to say, take another breath in, feel it, sigh it out. The readiness is there. You've got this. Find that north star. Keep that intention, and let that move you in whatever lies ahead.

Amazing.

Wow.

That was so beautiful Mariana, thank you so much for doing that for us today.

It's just little reminders to yourself. No matter what comes up, and I had to say this, in the race this weekend, on the start of the second lap, I started to kind of go off course in my own mind and feel a little bit unsettled. So truly, you can just say breathe in, breathe out to yourself. It's one step, one foot in front of the other. [foreign language 00:29:10] that I keep reminding in everything that we do. [foreign language 00:29:13], then it becomes a little more attainable. Then you start to do away with other things that start to surface. So keep reminding yourself. It's a good tool.

We love that. Good call. You can always find more on Peloton, as well, if that gets you hooked on Mariana's meditations and you know where to find her friends.

Yeah, that's a great thing to do as you're getting ready for a race. No question about it. So I hope folks out there enjoy it. I hope they go looking for more on the Peloton app wherever you can find it. And we hope everybody out there at the Mindful 5K this weekend will join us, will join Kristen, and Mariana to get ready to race by calming the mind. I feel calmer, already. Me too. Way calmer already. Mariana, thank you so much for being with us. Thanks for joining us. This was awesome and we can't wait to see you out there in Queens this weekend.

Thank you. And thank you for allowing all of us to be a part of this incredible community that you fostered and cultivated, again, for many years. It has been a source of comfort and of racing for me, so I'm just glad to be a part of it and I can't wait to see everyone at our Mindfulness 5K on Saturday.

And it is time now for this week's member moment with Valerie Hartman. Meb, take it away.

Thanks Rob. Valerie Hartman is a former lawyer with more than 20 years of legal experience who is now a certified life coach. She's a former varsity tennis player at Dartmouth and still a big tennis player as well as golf, and of course, runner. Valerie has run 76 races with NYR since 2018, including a four TCS New York City Marathon finishes, and is just back from competing at the TCS London Marathon. Valerie, we hear you had a magical experience in London. Tell us about your run.

Wow. Well, first of all, it's such a pleasure to be here with you, Meb. London was magical. I'm definitely a little biased. The New York City Marathon is like none other, but I am in the process of chasing my Abbott world six, and this was my fourth. And so, I'd heard great things about London and London did not disappoint. It was incredible on so many levels.

You have been involved with Achilles International, both as a guide and a charity runner. Can you share a moment that really showcased the transformative power of the organization for you?

I call it running with a purpose. And I've had the great good fortune. I moved back to New York three years ago and I used to see all these runners in the yellow shirts and it was so inspiring and we were coming out of COVID, and I decided, since I was outside mostly in the park to ask them, "What are you all doing?" And I joined Achilles in January of '21 and I've guided marathons. I've guided lots of different races and we work out twice a week in Central Park. I would say it's hard to think of a moment, but I did the Queens, I guide a young woman. We've done three or two New York City marathons and I guided her in the Queens 10k.

And she was having a little trouble. She's a type one diabetic and I help her with her glucose levels. And we had a woman who finished with us right behind us, and she came up to her, and she said, "I saw you were struggling and this was my first race ever and I heard your coach, me, coaching you and how you weren't giving up. And it was such a powerful moment for my athlete to realize that she was inspiring somebody else to finish. And then she came up to me and she said, "Thank you for coaching her, because I got to hear you coach. And that's what got me through this race. So that's kind of the power of Achilles. We meet the athletes where they are, and we get them to the start line, and then we hopefully get them to the finish line and it inspires me every single time.

Well, you definitely have inspired many people. You often talk about turning fear into feel. How have you seen this transformation play out in the Achilles or the NY athlete that you have mentored or run with what you just described, almost?

Well, a lot of people do whatever they do from a place of fear. And it's because they're scared. They don't think they can do it. I mean, I was one of them. When I did my first New York City Marathon in 2018, I called up a friend who was on the Masters team at the BAA and I said, "Can I do this? Is this insane?" She said, "If you stick to the training plan, you can do this." I knew how scared I was and I just had to somehow believe that the training was going to do what it needed to do, and boy did it do it.

But I have taken that, and I see in so many people, they're their own worst Enemy. They don't think they can do something. And what I like to do, and the work that I do, it's called energy leadership. You take that energy and you turn it into fuel, and you take it step by step. And you realize that a marathon, or any kind of race, and life, is one step at a time. And if you can use that energy and turn that fear into belief and allow it to fuel you, you push yourself forward and you achieve your goals.

Valerie, fear does happen in all of us. I was so reluctant, so scared on my first marathon, which was also a New York City Marathon in 2002. But I have to lean on my teammate, Dina Castor, and say, "How am I supposed to go 26.2 miles when I can barely do 15 mile tempo run or race pace?" But sometimes, you just got put one foot after another. But your purpose, your father battle with cancer was a driving force behind the decision to run the New York City Marathon in 2018. How did that experience share your perspective on running or giving back to the community?

Well, in 2018, my dad was very, very sick. My mom had passed away about nine years before that and I knew that this was the end. There wasn't much time left and I got an invitation to do a charity run. I knew I couldn't qualify for the New York City Marathon, and I called my friend at the BAA, she said, "Go for it." And my father was a lifelong New Yorker and we watched a lot of New York marathons together, city marathons. And I thought, "If I could do this, this could be something we could experience together" I would train, he was in the hospital a lot, and I would go on my runs in Central Park, and then I'd come back and talk to him about it, and it was something we could experience together, which was not talking about the cancer. It was about living. And he could see that I was moving towards something and we could share it, in a way.

And when I did the marathon, he couldn't go. He couldn't come and see it. But he watched me. Thank goodness for New York City, for New York Road Runners the ability to track the race and he tracked the whole thing and he left a voicemail for me, which I still have on my phone, about how proud he was. And it was like we ran it together and he passed away three weeks later. So it was like the culmination, it was an extraordinary experience and it motivated me to see what the power of running, I call it running with a purpose. I also the power of it on so many levels. I decided that's when I started my marathon journeys.

Well he would be very proud of you. I see you just came back from London. You wearing the medal from the finishers there and I'm pretty sure he's smiling down, but Valerie, as we all also recording this episode right before the NYR Mindful 5K. With that in mind, what impact has running had on your mental well-being?

Well, in my coaching, I work a lot with the meditation and mindfulness, and I know of no other activity like running where it's literally right here, right now, step by step. You can't think ahead, you can't dwell on the past. You are in the moment. And that's what really meditation and mindfulness is all about. It's about coming back to the breath, and coming back to the present moment, and I have to say that I'm excited. I'm so excited the New York Road Runners has embraced this and this focus on helping and using running as a tool, and a skill builder, for a steady mind and for living in the present moment because that's really all that we have. And the ability to embrace that, running reminds me and reinforces that. And I'm really excited about this first Mindful 5K celebration, and I think it's the launch of something that's going to really be powerful moving forward.

I couldn't agree with you ... To be in the moment, I think that's what I think running is, again, especially as marathoners. We can't say 26.2 miles, but we got to break it down to, right now, this mile, next 5K, next 10K and be able to work together. Well Valerie, thank you for being a member of the New York Runners. It is an organization that stands tall. Both are the elite athlete in the middle of the pack or the back of the pack. They just inspire people to the sport of running and we're so wonderful to have you this week.

Thank you so much.

So Meb, we had two guests today, Mariana and Valerie, both talking about how invaluable running has been to their mental health, but running can be stressful, too, especially on race days. What are your tips for how to take care of your mental health on a race day?

Thank you, Rob. Mental health is so important that we should all address, to the best we can, especially on race days. Race day is being in the moment. 90% of preparation already done. 10% is just physically you have to be there. Now how do you execute good plan. You have to do the right warm up on race day, you have to do the stretches, you have to do the strides, or just be there in the moment, and you are able to just, as an elite athlete, we always said compose yourself to the best you can. The field is going to be strong. It's the best of the best. But only

one third of the field is going to show up. The other two third will sack themselves out or they have done over training. And mental is important because, as runners, we like to be in the moment.

You have to embrace the starting line. You have to embrace the crowd, breathe the air in that you're in, and also visualize the finish line. If you can do those things ahead of time at the beginning of your race, you can have a spectacular race and finish strong, because you are in the right mind of frame to be the best version of yourself. And that's why you are the starting line to show up, to be the best version of yourself. To say, "Hey, I am here. I'm going to do this. Whether it's 5K, 10K, half-marathon, full marathon. But it starts with one step forward and following with another. And you could keep it as simple as you like, but your mental status has to be in the right mind of frame. So mental strength and mental is important and you have to be able to just persevere during that race and the finish line is going to be epic.

All right, that does it for another episode of Set the Pace. Becs, thank you so much. How was it, your first official show as co-host?

I feel very relaxed, and calm, and ready to shake off my jet lag and get out there for a run. You've all inspired me to go and move my body and feel calm whilst doing it, but this feels phenomenal, Rob. I'm so honored and can't wait for our next one, already.

Can't wait, either. And I think we need to get Mariana back before every show. Just give us a little five minute meditation before we start the pod, and it would make me better.

Absolutely agree.

I need all the help I can get out here. All right, well thank you so much. Becs. Thank you to Mariana for Fernandez. Can't wait to see everybody at the Mindful 5K this weekend. Thank you to Valerie Hartman, our member of moment this week. And thank all of you for listening. If you like this episode, please go ahead, subscribe it, rate it, leave a comment from me, leave a comment for Becs. I know she's going to read them. She'll definitely appreciate a little review on her first performance as co-host of Set the Pace. You can leave those on whatever platform you're listening on and we can't wait to see you next week. Enjoy the miles.