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Mary Cain: I'm 30 years old and I look more like my 16-year-old self than my 19-year-old self looked to 16 in some ways, and it's just because my body was really fighting itself during that time.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: Hey everybody, and welcome to Set the Pace, the official podcast of New York Road Runners presented by Peloton. I'm Rob Simmelkjaer, your host and the CEO of New York Road Runners. And with me, I've missed her, haven't talked to her live in a while, Peloton instructor Becs Gentry. Hello, Rebecca. How are you?

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Rebecca Gentry: Hello, stranger. I'm good. It has been the longest. I haven't seen you in forever.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: Yeah.

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Rebecca Gentry: I feel like half the year has gone by.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: It really does feel like it. We had this thing where maybe you'll do one episode, I'll do another. We take a week off, we're traveling, we're doing the things.

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Rebecca Gentry: Exactly. It's that time of year.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: How's your summer been?

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Rebecca Gentry: It's good. It's fantastic. It's hot and wonderful. And I'm on the precipice of race number one this weekend. And then, yeah, then I feel like-

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Rob Simmelkjaer: Race number one for the summer?

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Rebecca Gentry: Yeah, essentially. Yes.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: Exciting.

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Rebecca Gentry: One of the first of the big, big boys are happening this week.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: Okay. Here we go. Here we go.

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Rebecca Gentry: Yes.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: We'll talk about that, but we'll talk about that after the fact, right?

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Rebecca Gentry: We will.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: Because that's what we're doing now. We're not drawing too much attention to ourselves before the races.

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Rebecca Gentry: No.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: Because we don't want that.

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Rebecca Gentry: We're just rolling.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: I'll talk a bit about my running too, but I'm excited to hear what you're up to.

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Rebecca Gentry: Yeah. No, it's been good. How about you? How is your running?

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Rob Simmelkjaer: It's been a lot better. Thank you. I've been getting back into it. It was crazy. My first Road Runners Race wasn't until the Mindful 5K at the beginning of May. I didn't run a race till then and that was good. And then since then I've been jumping back into it. I ran the Pride Four Miler in June. And I ran our 9/11 Memorial Race with the 9/11 Memorial & Museum a couple of weeks ago, which was a four miler, which by the way, Becs, was a really wonderful event. It was the first time we'd had that event partnership with the 9/11 Memorial & Museum this year, the 25th anniversary of September 11th, 2001. So it was a very meaningful event and I was really, really proud that we were

able to do that. And I also had a really great run, so it was awesome.

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Rebecca Gentry: Good.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: And I'm excited for more as well. I got more running planned. I'm going to try to run a couple more Road Runners races this summer. I've got Grete's circles.

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Rebecca Gentry: Grete's Gallop, we love it.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: That's right. That 10K. And I'm thinking ... It's been kind of a spotty running year for me with a little time off, but I'm feeling pretty good now, so I think I'm going to take a shot at a fast 5K. I kind of circled Jersey City October 4th to see if I can run a fast 5K. I haven't been able to get under 20 minutes in a long time, couple of years, so if I can feel good, and I'm feeling good right now. But the one thing we haven't talked about, Becs, was one of the most fun things I've done in the last couple of years when I did HYROX in June, and it was fantastic. I had the best time.

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Rebecca Gentry: Oh, good.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: It was great.

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Rebecca Gentry: Extended my commentary on HYROX (inaudible) .

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Rob Simmelkjaer: I know it's probably whatever, maybe it's competitive. I don't know how you guys feel about it.

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Rebecca Gentry: No, I think it's wonderful.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: I think it's probably very compatible with a lot of what you guys do at Peloton.

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Rebecca Gentry: Oh, for Peloton? Yeah. We have a HYROX partnership. We actually do offer specific training classes,

strength training, combination bootcamp classes for HYROX training. I think HYROX is fantastic. The varied people who do it in New York, I believe it was almost a, was it a 10-day event in New York?

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Rob Simmelkjaer: It was 10 days. That's right.

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Rebecca Gentry: It was 10 days of competitions of people of all backgrounds showing up and doing these events together with a team or solo. It's kind of like when running had its boom, it's renaissance, it's whatever you want to call it, it reignited the fire of movement to a lot of people who weren't moving before. And now HYROX is doing the same thing, it's reigniting or igniting the fire of strength training, and strenuous physical activity to people who may or may not have done that before, and I think it is wonderful. I never seem to find the right time to do it because I always am like, "Yeah, I'll do it." Then a running race comes up and I prioritize running all the time, but I love cheering my teammates, yourself included on in these endeavors because it's a feat. I mean, I've seen so many people throw up whilst doing walking lunges.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: I did the mixed doubles-

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Rebecca Gentry: It's wild.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: With a colleague of mine from Road Runners named Stephanie DiBrita, and we had an amazing time, and we complimented each other. She did a great job with some of the things that are hard for me. The walking lunges, you named it, that is by far my hardest event because of my knees. But then I would take more of the weight on some of the heavier things, because you had to do the men's weight if it's men and women doing it together, the men's weights apply. So I would do the sled push and pull, and the farmer's carry, but we just had the best time. I really recommend it.

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Rebecca Gentry: Yeah. I love it.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: I think what was best, if you're recovering from an injury like I was, you need that strength training,

and also for injury prevention. So it got me in a habit of really doing that strength work more than I ever had before because I had a goal. Anyway, I really recommend it for runners. We're fans of that, and it's good for runners to do other things.

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Rebecca Gentry: Absolutely.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: So that was fun.

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Rebecca Gentry: It really is. It really is.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: Yeah.

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Rebecca Gentry: We want a full all-rounded body. Talking about the everyday and the fantastic, I'm going to have to move on to the absolute fantastic, the elephant in the room, that if we don't talk about the British man who broke a 27-year one-mile record this past weekend. He has been on the podcast twice, I believe.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: Yes, I believe that's right.

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Rebecca Gentry: With us. He is a regular.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: We need him back now. Josh Kerr.

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Rebecca Gentry: Josh back please. He loves New York Road Runners events. We know that. We know he's been a regular at the New Balance 5th Avenue Mile, and he broke the one-mile record this past weekend, July 18th, at the Diamond Games in London, so on essentially home turf.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: In front of a packed stadium. I mean, it looked like the-

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Rebecca Gentry: A full, full stadium.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: It looked like the Olympic Games.

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Rebecca Gentry: Yeah.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: You see a stadium that size just packed to the gill. And I think everybody knew what was on the line. He had talked about it.

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Rebecca Gentry: Exactly.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: It had been talked about.

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Rebecca Gentry: He picked it up.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: He was making this attempt.

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Rebecca Gentry: He had so much confidence. Yeah. He was there. He knew he'd put in so much work for this, and he's always a very confident runner. That's I think one of his skills. He is very much in tune with his body, and I think he knows when he's got the fuel in him, and he knows also when he doesn't. He's very, very humble at times of being like, "I'm not in shape to do this right now." But he came flying in. Rob, it hurts my head to think about how fast this is, one mile on the track in three minutes, 42.66 seconds.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: Yeah.

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Rebecca Gentry: Doesn't that just make your whole body quiver in pain?

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Rob Simmelkjaer: It's so inspiring. It's so incredible. I mean, when you think back to what it meant the first time when someone even broke four minutes, Roger Bannister, right? Back in the day.

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Rebecca Gentry: Yes, back in the day.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: That was considered an incredible feat, and then to see that progress. And this last record standing up, as you said, for more than two decades, how special a moment that was to see someone come along and break that. To me, it's the most iconic record in running. I think there's two running records.

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Rebecca Gentry: I agree.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: I guess I would have to say three, that to me are truly iconic. The 100 meters, the one mile, and of course the marathon. Those are the iconic. I guess you could throw the 200 meters in there as well, but those are the iconic records.

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Rebecca Gentry: Yeah. Yeah, I agree.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: And that one stood for so long, so it was really incredible to see. Congratulations to Josh Kerr.

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Rebecca Gentry: Shout out to our Scottish listeners as well who are probably very, very proud of their man there. So yeah, Josh, let us know when you're recovered. I heard he had a beer and got up the next morning and went for 5:00 AM run as his way of celebrating.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: As a runner would. As a runner would.

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Rebecca Gentry: Exactly. We're all the same kind of.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: It was incredible. So great stuff. And by the way, speaking of track and field, we've got some world-class track and field happening right here in New York City this weekend. That's right, for the first time really ever, the US Nationals and Para Nationals are coming to New York City this weekend. This podcast drops on Thursday, that's the first day of this event, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday all happening out at Icahn Stadium on Randall's Island. We are so excited because we're one of the co-hosts of this event, Bees, along with Central Park Track Club, and the New York chapter of US Track and Field. New York Road Runners is hosting this, and we're really proud to bring

this to New York.

I mean, these are the runners, the sprinters, the field athletes that we're going to see at the Olympic trials in a couple years and representing the United States in LA in 2028, so many of them will be on that track. So it's going to be really exciting to see these incredible athletes. Noah Lyles is going to be out there, Sha'Carri Richardson, all the big names in US track and field will be right here in New York. And there's still tickets available to this, so if you haven't done it yet, go check it out online. The website is usatf.org. That's usatf.org. So make sure you go out, get tickets and come out to see these incredible athletes on Randall's Island.

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Rebecca Gentry: Absolutely. Enjoy. Enjoy. All right, shall we talk about our episodes, Rob? Because we're kind of doing something a little bit differently over the next two episodes here on Set the Pace.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: Yeah.

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Rebecca Gentry: It's one story that the team have decided will be better to be told over two separate episodes, and I think Rob and I both agree that it was a really different and very impactful way of telling a deep story, right?

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Rob Simmelkjaer: It is. It is a deep story. It's a complicated story. We know that running, and especially the professional side of running is hyper-competitive. It can be emotionally challenging and taxing for the athletes. And what we're going to do today is tell the story of a woman named Mary Cain, who we know well at New York Road Runners. She actually worked at New York Road Runners for some time. So we do this in two parts. On today's episode, Mary joins me for an interview where we really talk about her story as a pro athlete. So she's going to talk about that in our first episode with me, and then, Becs, it goes to you.

00:11:33

Rebecca Gentry: Yeah, it does. Essentially, we're talking about how Mary broke her silence, as Rob said, in 2019, and how these experiences that she unfortunately went through can help model a way for female runners to speak up, to change the narrative for future female runners, and hopefully serve as models for that change that really does need to continue to happen in all sports for the women athletes here.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: Yeah, there are some common themes. In Mary's memoir, she talks about a practice with the Nike Oregon Project where she locks herself in a bathroom crying because the emotional strain is so great. And she talks about the fact that all of her teammates just kept running, nobody stopped to check in on her, to talk to her. And Emily Richards, who you speak to, has a somewhat similar story. She's a college freshman. She wins an all-America title, comes home for the summer and no one from her team texts her to say congratulations. So there's this theme of really asking the questions, how can we, in this case it's women, I'm sure this can happen with men as well, be teammates and competitors at the same time? How can we compete and also support each other at the same time when we're in these situations? This happens in all kinds of sports to all kinds of people and all genders as well. And Becs, I'm sure you can relate to some of this as someone who's been a competitive female runner.

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Rebecca Gentry: Yeah, absolutely.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: Before we get into the conversation with Mary, we want to make sure that people know one thing. Mary does talk about self-harm and suicidal thoughts at one point in this episode, thoughts that she had during her years at the Nike Oregon Project. She talks about it directly, but we think with a lot of sensitivity. But if those topics are hard for you, our listeners, to listen to right now, you might want to consider not listening to this. Take care of yourself, protect your mental health. If for any reason you need resources or have had any suicidal thoughts, there are resources listed in the show notes. So please go find those resources if you need anything like that before, during, or after listening to this episode. So that's something that we want to hear... I want to make sure everybody hears. And now we will go to our conversation with Mary Cain.

00:14:20

Rebecca Gentry: Planning a trip to NYC for the marathon? Well, plan it with GetYourGuide because we know this city like you know your training plan. We've got authentic neighborhood experiences with expert guides in all five boroughs. And if you're not sure what to pick, you can browse millions of reviews from travelers just like you. Plus, if your plans change, stay spontaneous with free cancellation. Book your tours, tickets, and activities in the GetYourGuide app now,

the official travel experiences partner of the TCS New York City Marathon.

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Mary Cain: I can't stop smiling on our walk back to Alberto's car. As I slide into the driver's seat, I replay in my mind how Alberto called another girl, who has run fast all year, fat. He took me on. He must have faith that I can be skinny. He doesn't have faith in her. I might not be there yet, but he has faith. That has to mean something.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: Mary Cain grew up in Bronxville, New York. As a teenager, she was the fastest girl in America. At 16, she joined the Nike Oregon Project under Coach Alberto Salazar. The following year, at 17, she became the youngest American ever to reach a world track and field championship final, finishing 10th in the 1500 meters in Moscow. A few months after that, she signed her first professional endorsement deal with Nike. But by 2016, Mary had quit the Nike Oregon Project and moved back to the East Coast. Three years later, The New York Times published a video essay of hers called I Was the Fastest Girl in America Until I Joined Nike. Mary's video essay was shocking to many fans, and even professionals, and it really changed the conversation in and about the sport of running. Mary's memoir, This Is Not About Running, came out this past April from Mariner Books. Here's my conversation with Mary Cain.

So, Mary, take me back to the day that Nike first signed you. You were 17 years old. What did your parents understand about what you were stepping into? What did you understand about it?

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Mary Cain: Yeah. So when I signed at 17, I had already been a part of a Nike program for about a year. I first started working with Alberto Salazar when I was a junior in high school or 16 years old. Over the course of that year, I qualified for world championships where I finished 10th of the world, and I'd had a really, at least at the time I felt like really great experience with my team. So in many ways, being able to sign a professional contract was just an opportunity for me to be paid for my work, because 10 years ago or really more like 13 years ago at this point, the NIL did not exist. There was no opportunity for a collegiate athlete to make money. I also was being pressured by the Oregon Project to really only run for the University of Oregon, and I didn't feel that that school was really the right fit for me, both academically and also athletically.

So in many ways it felt like a great opportunity, and then

in other ways, it kind of felt like it was one of two options for me if I wanted to continue running in the way that I had been. So I think in many ways I signed it in a way that any minor signs a contract, which is having no understanding of what that means other than I hope things keep going how they're going. And I think in many ways my parents, it was pretty similar, because most of the language from the folks at Nike, and also my agent, and my team was that, like, "Everyone's going to take care of her. This is a long term. We're a family. This is kind of just a way for her to make money." Versus really always thinking about it quite from the legal backing that none of us had.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: You mentioned Alberto Salazar. Can you talk about some of the things he would say to you as you were working with him, and some of those statements, those comments you talk about that really it seems began to trigger issues for you when it came to your body and weight, and things of that nature?

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Mary Cain: Yeah. I think it was in some ways a gradual buildup to conversations that became much more direct and much more explicitly toxic around how I looked. And I think because there was this kind of slow rolling development, it made it almost seem less like all of a sudden he's calling me fat, which I think would've been more jarring, and maybe I would've been more able to push back against, but instead it started with this like, "We're trying to get you to be lean and mean." It kind of started in these cliché sayings that I think we really normalize within sport. And I think there was a period of time before he really started very explicitly talking about my weight where he was like, "It looks like you're losing fitness. It looks like you're not the same as you were before."

It was kind of this code word in retrospect, so that was all about just how I looked and my weight, but that I interpreted as like, "Oh, he doesn't think my form's the same," or, "He doesn't think I'm running as fast." Even though in retrospect, going back and writing this book and looking at my training logs, I'm like, "Oh, my gosh, those workouts were the best I'd ever done in my life." But there was just this constant negative language that was his version of synonyms to, "I think you look fat." And then gradually it developed into him more explicitly saying that to me, but by that point I was kind of numbed to any form of negativity.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: Yeah. And you wrote about a drive back from a workout with him where you replayed the fact that he had called another girl fat with you there and how that made you feel. Can you talk about that?

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Mary Cain: Yeah. I think it was one of the ... There's a few memories that I have of Alberto and also other folks, whether a part of the Nike Oregon Project or part of the Nike Sports Marketing Team, where they would very explicitly talk about other women's bodies. And I think one of the things in crafting this memoir was that I kind of wanted to admit the moments that I regret and that I have shame over. Because I think when you're in these abusive systems, it's really normal, unfortunately, for people to almost hear the same language that's directed at them and almost feel relief. You feel almost glad that that language is being directed at others instead of standing up for these other people and saying, "Hey, this is really problematic." It's part of the reason that abuse is perpetuated in the way that it is, and it's because there's a real, almost toxicity that's kind of directed at everyone within the system, even other people who are going through it.

So that specific instance, it was a moment where another athlete who was ultimately signed by Nike with a different team was being spoken about, and Alberto was just using really toxic language about the way that she looked, and that being the reason he didn't want to take her on. In that moment I felt almost like, "Well, at least he's not saying that about me, and at least he still wanted me. So there must be something he sees in me." And I think if we never address that kind of piece to it, then I don't think we often see why this perpetuates, and it's because if everybody is almost fighting against each other for a spot instead of lifting everyone up, then there's going to be this really toxic mentality.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: Yeah. The level of insecurity that must exist for these athletes just has to be immense. I mean, you're in a highly competitive situation when it comes to just how fast you're running, and then you add to that the competition, to be perceived the right way by sponsors, by coaches. So all of that, I'm sure, leads to the kind of phenomenon you're talking about, where you could have these weird reactions that you might look back on with all this distance from that time and realize, "Yeah, that probably wasn't the right reaction for me to have to that."

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Mary Cain: Exactly, exactly. And I think it's important too, because I think sometimes other athletes, when they read memoirs like mine can almost feel defensive because they know all of the things they thought about me, they know the things that they said about me, and hearing me call that out is reacted to with like, "Oh, she's being negative. She's being mean. She's being this." Instead of saying, "Hey, I get it. She's even admitting she had negative thoughts. How can we almost all come together and admit that sometimes in abusive situations, even those of us who are victimized can almost perpetuate some form of toxicity? And how do we break the cycle?"

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Rob Simmelkjaer: You have written that you look at photos of yourself from those years and you see things now that you couldn't see then. Can you walk me through one photo? What do you see, and what didn't anybody else see at that time?

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Mary Cain: Yeah. I think there's two different things that I see. I think one part of it is I just see how skinny I was, and how much during that time I was being told, not only from Alberto, but from my coaches, from my teammates, from the media, from competitors, that I was fat. I think... You know, I laugh, but I laugh because it's one of those things where it's like you either laugh or you cry, because seeing those images, I was so clearly underweight. And the fact that people felt that they could talk about me in a way with such vitriol is just really disturbing to be now as an adult person. But then I think the other piece to it is there's skinny, and then there's when somebody really clearly looks physically unwell. And the thing I always like to say about eating disorders is there's not one look. It's not you have to be a certain weight or you have to have a certain physique in order to have an eating disorder. People of all different body types can struggle with body dysmorphia and disordered eating habits.

But I think some of the ways in which my body was physically changing, like my gums were receding, my hair was thinner, even just the way my face developed. Often people who are severely under eating can almost bloat in their face where they're holding more water weight. It's just all sorts of physiologic changes that now I really recognize in those photos, in a way that I'm 30 years old and I look more like my 16-year-old self than my 19-year-old self looked to 16 in some ways, and it's just because my body was really fighting itself during that time. I think that's really upsetting. Also, then on the back of the fact that I so clearly looked just underweight, period, to realize that

people were not only directing this really negative toxic language at me of being overweight, but it was like I looked ill. I looked like I had an issue. And the fact that articles were written about me where competitors talked about the way that I looked, I just find that much more disturbing.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: Yeah, that is pretty disturbing. It's amazing when you think about that kind of dialogue happening. I feel like we've moved past that. I hope we've moved past some of that, but this wasn't that long ago when you really think about it. Can you think about a workout where your body was telling you something specific? What was happening physically, and what did you tell yourself it was at that time?

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Mary Cain: I definitely ran through injuries in ways that was deeply problematic, not only then, but even now for my body, but I think even just ... One of the things I find so interesting looking back is that there were a lot of workouts that I ran where I essentially had emotional breakdowns at the end. In retrospect, I think it was because I was a mix of actually physically exhausted because the workouts were that level of hard, but also I was balancing being yelled at and told constantly throughout the workout, like, "You're failing. You're doing horrible. Other people are beating you. Why do you look the way that you did? You gained five pounds overnight." Just real vitriol, that I was emotionally being expected to maintain when both underfed, under-fueled, and exhausted, and sprinting all out. I think what was really interesting was I gaslighted myself at the time to be like, "Wow, you're so weak. You're not finishing these workouts. You have such a problem." Just all this just self-hating language.

And when I look back at my training logs I was like, "Today people have super shoes. Today people are taking all sorts of weird supplements and stuff, and that's why times are so much faster." And to today's standards, my workouts were insane. So the ways in which I was being told, like, "You are failing," when so clearly that workout was insanely competitive, I just find so interesting because even at the time I really taught myself that even pushing yourself to your limits wasn't enough, and that that was in some way not what you should be able to do. I think just the emotional gaslighting that was done to me, and therefore that I perpetuated onto myself, I think is just really deeply disturbing, and I think is something that, unfortunately, a lot of folks can really empathize with.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: Yeah. There must have been people around you, doctors, teammates, friends, family who kind of saw what was going on with you. What did they say? Or was there a silence in some cases that contributed to some of this?

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Mary Cain: Yeah, really the only people who were horrified by it were my family, and my parents in particular. When I was out in Oregon specifically, I was really isolated from them because I would get in trouble if I called them, and I would be told like, "You're a professional. You're an adult. You can't be calling your mom and dad." It got to a point where I really stopped talking to them in the way that I used to, but it was so clear even from afar from people who loved me and cared about me that my body's changing. I'm not the same personality I used to be. It was a pretty clear change. I think, they as a result, even from afar, were constantly trying to kind of intervene when they could, and the times I would tell them things, they would immediately get on the phone.

When I first moved out to Oregon, I told them that Alberto kept talking about my weight and it was really upsetting me. And they called the individual who I was told was a sports psych who was not, and my coach to say like, "What are you guys doing? Why are you talking about weight with her? You're not professionals, please stop." The response was just to get mad at me and tell me that I can't talk to my parents about that sort of stuff. And then my teammates just witnessed all of it, and honestly, either egged it on or just didn't do anything. At best, they were just silent bystanders, and at worst, they treated me really cruelly. When it came to doctors and other folks in the ether, very few competitors were kind to me. Sprinters and field event athletes were always awesome. They were the people who got me through meets. But when it came to support people, most of them were just Nike folks, or Alberto's friends, or people who in retrospect didn't actually have the degrees to handle helping me.

At least in one instance, there was a woman who was the assistant coach's wife who worked as my nutritionist, and I understood she wasn't a nutritionist. But honestly, even to this day, I don't always fully understand the degrees required for some kind of roles like that. She was a PhD and a scientist, and so I still thought she would be somebody who could give support, but she just fed into really the system telling me that I needed to lose weight and that something was wrong with me.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: Mary, you wrote about actually cutting your legs at times when you felt they were failing you. What do you remember about doing that? And what do you think was really, to the extent you can analyze your past self, what do you think was really behind that?

00:31:50

Mary Cain: Yeah. I mean, I think at this point I've done a lot of therapy in a way that it's like I don't think you always fully can understand what's going through your mind in the moment in retrospect. But I think, at least how I understand it, at least today, is that I really internalized so much of the vitriol that was being directed at me from all of these different experiences. And I think I just developed such a sense of self-loathing and self-hatred that when really toxic, misogynistic, cruel language was being directed at me, I didn't think, "Wow, that's so messed up that that person's saying that to me." I internalized it as I am in some way wrong, and I feel that, at least my experience of it was I could have such a physical reaction. I've always been somebody who, like if I'm really upset I get an adrenaline rush. I think I can be ... I always kind of joke I have high sympathetic tone.

And I would have such a buildup that in retrospect was probably anger, that instead of directing it at the people who were cruel and horrible, and writing things about me, I would instead direct it at myself. And for whatever reason, for me, that developed in a way that was self-harming, and also negative self-talk, and other forms of self-directed negativity. But I felt that self-harming became this kind of release in a way. And part of the reason I've talked very publicly about this is I think a lot of folks who have experienced some form of self-harming are taught societally to feel a lot of shame, and to feel like they're somehow wrong and this is something you can't talk about. I feel like that stigma often prevents people from really getting help, and understanding that very often this self-internalization is in some ways societally and externally derived, and being able to learn how to, in healthy ways, channel that anger, that sadness, whatever that feeling is that you're turning into yourself is really important.

00:34:13

Rob Simmelkjaer: Yeah. One of the stories you tell, which I think goes a long way toward explaining the environment that you were living in was one day your teammates saw you lock yourself in a bathroom crying and they kept running. They just kept on with the workout, which is hard to believe. Walk me through that. I don't know, what does that tell the reader of your book or someone who's trying to understand

your journey about what that environment was like?

00:34:42

Mary Cain: Yeah. I mean, I think it's so funny because people will be like, "Wow, that's so shocking," and I was like, "Not if you meet these people." I think sports is set up often to portray publicly a team experience when it's not one. And I think as a young person, I really thought these people will be my teammates, and that was something I had not experienced in a long time because I had a very negative high school experience at Bronxville. So I think I was really craving friendship, camaraderie, and all of these things. There's some ways that I look back and I'm like, "Wow, most of these people were 30." So maybe me at 17 thinking they were going to be my best friends was a childish perspective because I was a child. But then in other ways, as younger than some of them were at this time still, I'm like, "Gosh, I can't even imagine treating a child in the way that they treated me." I think the reason though often people did was because it was a very individual sport.

At the end of the day, if I wasn't serving them in some capacity, whether it was for social media likes, or for money, or for pushing them in a workout, then I was just draining resources. I experienced that in a more acute way even when I was ... I wrote about this in my book, but we were at a Navy SEALs training camp, and it was supposed to be a team bonding experience. And Galen Rupp, who was a teammate of mine at the time just shamed me in front of everyone, talking about how I needed to grow up and stop acting so emotional at workouts. At this point I was 18, and at this point had been told over many years that he used to cry out during every single workout in Oregon. For some reason there was a double standard that what I was doing was somehow problematic, even though at least I never threw things.

00:36:45

Rob Simmelkjaer: Yeah. Yeah, it's a team sport until it's not, right? That's what happens sometimes with sports, there is that competition between teammates. And in a sport like running, which is fundamentally an individual sport, you are actually running races against your teammates at times. I could see how that could get even trickier. Mary, this is a sensitive topic, but you talked about having suicidal ideation during some points while you were with the Nike Oregon Project, and you wrote passages of how you thought to yourself, "I'm not going to kill myself, not today." What got you through that period of time?

00:37:30

Mary Cain: I think there were really two things. I think part of it is I am religious, I am Catholic, and I think that helped give me pause during some really acute moments. There were at least two instances I was very close to killing myself, and the second thing was my family. I think, for me, the idea I have two younger sisters and an older sister, and two incredible parents, and I think the idea of causing them harm by causing myself harm was something that ultimately made me stop during one of the attempts. The really sad thing is those were the only things. I didn't stop for any other reason other than them. It's now sad for me to look back at pictures of myself and see what I now know to be clear signs of under-eating. Old photos of me with puffy chipmunk cheeks especially show me just how hard and how long my body was fighting itself.

00:38:43

Rob Simmelkjaer: So you eventually left the Oregon Project, but you still were having some effects, right? Your body wasn't behaving. You realized at one point you couldn't feel your leg. What was going on at that point?

00:38:58

Mary Cain: Yeah, I think it was a few things. I think, first off, having been a part of that program for so long, when I left I didn't leave thinking it was problematic. So a lot of the self-loathing, the language, the training mentality didn't just go away because I suddenly thought it was bad, it kind of continued because I just thought I was a failure, not this program was abusive and horrible, and really inappropriate and should not be continued. So at least for a few years that was part of the problem. And then the other thing is, when you damage your body it doesn't overnight heal, and so I got into a cycle of bone stress injuries and issues. And then, ultimately with my leg I developed something called functional popliteal artery entrapment syndrome. It's a condition where the artery in the back of your knee essentially gets functionally compressed, meaning at rest it's fine, but if you're doing anything like movement-oriented, it gets compressed so you have less blood flow in that whole area. We think nerve impingement as well, creating neurological symptoms.

Part of the problem was that it took a really long time to get diagnosed because I was often walking into doctor's offices and kind of being written off because I had mental health conditions written on my chart. It was always kind of habitual where somebody, and this was not just doctors, this was folks of all different health professionals, whether massage, PT, et cetera, would see that, they would often all of a sudden become language of like, "Hey, trauma lives in

the body." Stuff that I both believe and understand, but also recognize that they were seeing a young woman come in who at times was emotional, and writing it off as something in my head versus an actual physical problem.

00:41:08

Rob Simmelkjaer: In 2016, you were told that you might have something called the Female Athlete Triad. What is that?

00:41:15

Mary Cain: So the Female Athlete Triad is a concept that was created to kind of explain low energy availability in female athletes traditionally. Now there's also an understanding that this affects men, but it's the idea that you can have low bone density, you lose your period, and you have an eating disorder are kind of the three points of the triangle.

00:41:41

Rob Simmelkjaer: Got it. And how did you react when you were told that?

00:41:49

Mary Cain: That didn't make any sense to me essentially, and I think ... Since when I do advocacy work, working with folks who are nutritionists or doctors, what I often explain is that when you have a young person in particular come into your office with an eating disorder, they don't always understand that that's what they have. So I was coming from this experience where there was literally a Runner's World article out in the world where coaches and competitors were talking about the fact that I was heavy. So to me, it's not just Alberto Salazar saying I'm heavy, it's not just my teammates, it's not just the Nike folks, this is on the internet in ways that is honestly even more than just your toxic running forums who always perpetuate misogyny. This was from individuals who, by all accounts, made these claims against me and was more valid because it was like, "Wow, this is a universal understanding that I am heavy."

00:42:55

Rob Simmelkjaer: Yeah.

00:42:56

Mary Cain: And so when you—

00:42:56

Rob Simmelkjaer: It was like objective truth basically out there in the world you felt.

00:43:00

Mary Cain: Yeah. So I'm like "These neutral third parties who are also experts in sport look at me and think I'm fat." So when you go into a doctor's office and this is the language that you're surrounded by on a day-to-day, and somebody's like, "Oh, you have a bone stress injury? Oh, yeah, you have the Female Athlete Triad." Now, in me saying this that's not to say that I didn't. In retrospect, I understand that I did. But as a patient, as somebody who was going to go through treatment, there was this big language disconnect, and this large kind of misunderstanding from provider to patient because I was thinking, "No, there's one whole piece to this triangle. Is it me?" But the RED-S diagnosis was something I was more open to hearing. Thinking about running, and food, and my body in terms of energy made it all feel less personal.

00:43:58

Rob Simmelkjaer: At some point, the way that your condition was described changed. You were diagnosed with something called RED-S. Can you explain to folks what that is, and why you were more open to hearing that?

00:44:14

Mary Cain: Yeah. So RED-S is Relative Energy Deficiency in Sport, and essentially these are very similar concepts. There's a real synergy between these two, and people who do research in both often are very deeply connected. But the difference for me as a patient was that with RED-S, it wasn't this kind of harsh, like, "You are a girl. You don't have your period. You're underweight. We're trapping you in this triangle." Instead, it was almost a spectrum where it was like your life is more complicated than how much you eat and how much you run. There are stressors in your life that have nothing to do with this. You're also a college student. You also have relationships. You have all of these other facets to yourself, and you are having this relative energy deficiency, and it can be on the day-to-day, it can be chronic, it can be all sorts of things, but maybe the amount that you are fueling to do all of these things isn't what your body needs.

I think this immediately reframed it to me in a way that at the time I still had body dysmorphia, at the time I still felt I was overweight, but it suddenly felt less like, "You are just this girl with an eating disorder." It was more like, "Let's figure out how to fuel your specific body for your specific needs." There's probably some people who are going to be listening like, "Isn't the semantics?" And I'm kind of like, "Yes and no." I think it made it so there was suddenly this broader understanding too, that my health might be affected in more ways than just I lose my period

or I break bones. There's maybe more concerns, and now over the last few years there's been way more research into RED-S, and there's an understanding for stuff that men experience this too. So it was less of a gendered specific thing.

But also that in, at least mice models, organs shrink when this happens. It doesn't just affect reproductive organs in mouse models, there's more to it. So like, "How is this affecting your brain? How is this affecting your heart?" Or questions that now in science we're kind of asking, and that suddenly felt more like, "Whoa, I'm more than an athlete. How do I overall encompass my health?"

00:46:35

Rob Simmelkjaer: Yeah, it's very interesting. I can see how RED-S, it was just a little bit less gendered, a little bit less judgmental maybe in some ways, and so something you were able to hear differently. If you could go back to a doctor's appointment from before you knew about RED-S and you understood that framework, or you understood that at an earlier age, what do you think might have changed for you over those years?

00:47:01

Mary Cain: Yeah. I mean, I think had I at times been seen as more than my chart. By that I mean when you go into a doctor's office, and again, other providers, not just doctors, and they're kind of looking at your quick history and they're like, "Oh, she has these bone injuries, and she's got mental health. She's one of those." That was, I think, almost how I felt I was treated, and the problem with-

00:47:28

Rob Simmelkjaer: Put into a bucket of problematic or whatever, right? Not to be dealt with in the same way-

00:47:33

Mary Cain: Exactly.

00:47:33

Rob Simmelkjaer: As somebody else might be.

00:47:35

Mary Cain: Like she's probably hysterical kind of energy. I think the problem with that is it's just really not trauma-informed. I think it also really doesn't approach patients who come to the same end but get there through different means. Maybe somebody else is struggling with disordered eating because of their exposure to social media. Maybe someone else is because of their experience in their household. Maybe someone else is from this teen experience.

So this kind of blanket like eat more, run less language that I think can sometimes be passed around. It's not to say that that's bad, but it's like if you're not addressing the actual issue as a healthcare provider, then the idea of just eating more, running less isn't going to fix anything. Because again, if it's like social media consumption, well, that's not going to stop. So this person is still going to have those thoughts, they're still going to have that as a result outcome even if you're kind of Band-Aiding it.

So I think that's something that I feel very strongly could have shifted my own experience, is if there were maybe moments where there was just a few more questions asked that were kind of your standard. In medical school you learn it as SIGECAPS, which is a depression criteria. So anytime I went into a sports doctor the fact that nobody ever thought to be like, "Hey, let's do a broader mental health check. Let's do a broader," like, "Is this person safe? Have they been abused? Check." Those standards of care, at least within sports medicine. When I was kind of navigating this it just seemed to be really lacking.

00:49:13

Rob Simmelkjaer: So it's fitting I think that you are now going to medical school. You went through this period, the medical system failed you for a while, for sure, before it finally helped you. What from this experience, Mary, are you taking to this path you're on now studying to be a doctor?

00:49:38

Mary Cain: Yeah. I think one of the big things is bedside manner. I have always extended a lot of grace to physicians because my dad's an anesthesiologist. So I understand how exhausting this career is, how much kind of blame and shame is put on doctors when the actual problem is our healthcare industry, and how the government treats them, how health insurance treats people. All of those facets to it I think have always made it so that I understood, and gave grace to any provider who didn't necessarily give me that time.

But I think the really awesome thing about being in medical school right now is I do see this younger generation clearly wants to change some of that, and clearly wants to be those doctors who takes that extra two minutes in the room. Or maybe takes a step back and they're like, "Ooh, you have a stress fracture, but let me actually ask you a little bit more about everything else, and not just how much are you running." So I think that kind of ability to sit down and really see someone is what I'm really hoping my experience can kind of bring to my own future profession.

00:50:59

Rob Simmelkjaer: Yeah. And there are unquestionably girls running today who have what you had, undiagnosed, most likely in a lot of cases RED- S, under- fueled, not having a period, fighting their bodies. What would you want them to know if they're hearing this? And what would you want the doctors who see them to know?

00:51:21

Mary Cain: Yeah. I mean, I think one thing I often say, especially to the athlete themselves is like, "You will be a better athlete if you are healthy. You will run faster. You will do better. You will go further. You will go longer. You will have a healthy career and a happy career if you're healthy." I think that piece to it is sometimes really, really difficult for athletes to see because for a long time the role models who girls have looked up to are not healthy. They might tell you they are, but it's a small world and we all know each other. A lot of it's just the way that the industry is structured, whether it's through contracts or through coaching that has made it. So I think there's a lot of doubt that that statement I made at the beginning is true. But there are people out there who are doing it in a healthy and in a safe way.

You can also see this in other sports. There are women who are part of our US Women's Nationals Team out there playing basketball, doing tennis, who are just having these careers where they're continuing for much further on than we ever expected athletes to be able to continue performing. And it's because they're staying healthy, and therefore they have that longevity to get in the, at least from the running equivalent, get in the miles to ultimately have that sort of outcome. So from an athlete perspective, that's the kind of carrot that I try to dangle. And then I think from the broader medical perspective, I realized that medical curriculum changes a lot over time, and not everyone who an athlete interfaces with in a healthcare perspective is a doctor. So not everybody has the same educational standards.

But I think I would just always really encourage folks to be comfortable with the idea that they're constantly a learner, and there's constantly new information that's coming out. And even if they don't have to take an exam like I do, it doesn't mean you shouldn't be kind of a self- starter with trying to stay up to date with the most recent information. Whether you are just a high school coach or a PT or an athletic trainer, it doesn't matter who you are, I think almost having the humility to be like, "Just because 20, 30, 40 years ago, this is what I learned, it doesn't mean that science hasn't showed us that, no, losing your period isn't normal. It's not healthy. It's not going to set this person up for success." And just because you were told

that at some point doesn't mean that's where science actually understands it today. There is a troubling trend in sports. Brands would rather pay athletes to pretend problems have been fixed instead of putting money behind organizations actively creating change.

00:54:24

Rob Simmelkjaer: So in 2019, you published a video, The New York Times video, which went quite viral and was a widely talked about piece called I Was the Fastest Girl in America Until I Joined Nike. What do you remember about that piece and when it dropped? Where were you when it went live? And what were the kind of reactions that rolled in when that happened?

00:54:52

Mary Cain: I was home with my parents when it went live. And part of it was because I knew no matter what it was going to be really hard. I did not expect it to go viral in the way that it did. But I thought even if one person reads it, that's still heavy and I wanted to be surrounded by the people who had always loved me whether or not I ever ran. So that no matter what came of it, if it was really vitriolic towards me and really negative, I'd be with people who really supported me. And I remember just being kind of blown away by the actual positivity that came from it. I think that really surprised me, just having navigated the experience that I did for so long. And I think in some ways that made me very sad because it really reinforced what I already understood to be true, but yet hoped wasn't, which is that so many people relate to what I went through.

So many young people are abused in sports. It is so normalized. It's why girls drop out at the rates that they do. It's why so many folks when they're in adulthood want nothing to do with sports, and it's because they hold these really traumatic experiences from their childhood. And so in watching my piece, women and men could be like me too. I understand what you went through. And it really emboldened me to go down the path that I have over the last few years of being like, "How can I keep using the platform that not only my athletic talents, but also The New York Times piece afforded me to just help as many people as I can, and hopefully prevent this from happening to other folks?" Because it just seems like we know this is a problem, but the power players aren't really doing much to change it.

00:56:45

Rob Simmelkjaer: Yeah. A lot of folks probably wanted to be associated with you after that. You learned some things after that New York Times piece dropped about who to say yes to,

who not to say yes to. What was that like?

00:57:01

Mary Cain: Yeah. I think the two lessons I learned were within at least ... I think The New York Times piece made me feel like, "Wow, people really care. Look at all these people who care. Look at all these people who are passionate." But that doesn't mean the people who control money want to change the systems that they've already been benefiting from, and we societally understand this. We see this with government. We've seen this with so many corporate entities. So just because like 90% of the population is like, "Abusing kids is bad," doesn't mean the people who can prevent it ever really step in.

I kind of learned that the hard way, which was taking call after call with corporate entities talking about these issues and seeing them be like, "Yeah, that's great. Do you want to tweet that you talked to us?" I'd be like, "No, because you didn't do anything. You haven't actually enacted any sort of policies. There's no partnership here." This was just an education, like, "Do you want to support awesome nonprofits sort of experience?" And then there'd be like, "No, no, no, no, no, we don't. We want you to make us look good. We're not actually going to do anything." It was essentially what I started to understand within a lot of corporate spaces.

00:58:21

Rob Simmelkjaer: Virtue signaling as they call it, right?

00:58:23

Mary Cain: 100%. I mean, New York Road Runners understands this being in the nonprofit space, but that tension is really difficult to navigate. It creates a lot of burnout because you pretty quickly realize there's so much virtue signaling versus real, like, "How do we have community impact?" And then I think on the non-corporate end, more in the like, we'll call it influencer space, there was also a lot of virtue signaling. And I found myself becoming really disgusted by the behaviors of others who were almost using fraudulent advocacy, where they were just using messaging that they didn't privately in any way purport to get themselves paid versus actually doing any substantive community service work or fundraising. You and I could probably sit here and name so many people who's actually boots on the ground, done work within the professional or the influencer running sphere, so it's not to say it's everyone.

But, I mean, there were women who were naming me in their books, selling their books, pretending they were my mentors, and using my story to sell themselves. To at least one of those women's credits, she actually did reach out and

apologize after reading my memoir. So it's not to say some people can't maybe learn from those experiences, but I think I just reached a point where I was like this is deeply unsustainable to do outside of really volunteer work for me at this point. Because I think I'm just too, and honestly, it was always volunteer work, I was never really being paid for this, but I think it still felt like something where I was like, "I need to have boundaries here," because I really am deeply passionate about this work. I really do do it volunteer, and I'm just getting angry, and that doesn't serve me, and therefore it doesn't serve the work that I'm doing.

But I do think people need to be called out for doing that sort of stuff because rather than brands paying a nonprofit or an individual who really does true advocacy work, it's like influencers are propped up in a sports bra and they're like, "Look, it's a woman." Like "What?"

01:00:57

Rob Simmelkjaer: Yeah. Yeah.

01:00:58

Mary Cain: Sports was built on a system that normalizes mistreatment. To change sports, we need to build structures that establish safeguarding practices, give people a place to turn to when they're in trouble, and make it clear we no longer condone abuse.

01:01:14

Rob Simmelkjaer: So tell me about your decision to create Atalanta. What is it, first of all, and what led you to creating this?

01:01:22

Mary Cain: Yeah. So I created Atalanta really kind of on the backs of the experience that I had, both on the professional end of things, but also in the high school experience. Before I ever joined Alberto's program, I had a really horrible high school experience, mostly through helicopter parents, and just the jealousy and creepiness of adults, honestly. And I felt very strongly that to change sports you need ... there's two spaces we need to adjust. One is for professional female athletes, how we support them, how we build them up long-term. But also kids, whether or not they're ever going to go probably. Why does youth sports look like this churn and burn? We're only using it for the end game of making one kid ultimately do drugs to run really fast versus it being this lifelong, beautiful teamwork experience.

So I created Atalanta where we hire professional female runners in New York City to serve as mentors to girls in underserved parts of our community, and it's been amazing.

It's been truly something I'm very proud of, and kind of a bright spot sometimes on a low day to be like, "Wow, there's this incredible organization that employs women who I really respect and really admire." At this point I'm just on the board, and it still continues almost without me having to do the day-to-day in the same way. And I think there's something really humbling and really beautiful about that because it's really the first, and maybe only time I have felt that I've been able to put something in motion and other people can kind of grab the baton and keep going versus it only being off my back.

01:03:11

Rob Simmelkjaer: What do the professional runners who serve as mentors in the Atalanta program get out of it? What do the kids get out of it, of course? But what do the professionals get out of it? That's what I'm wondering, thinking back to your experience, and what you might've gotten out of something like that.

01:03:28

Mary Cain: Yeah. So I think the way we structured it was that they're actually employees of the organization who also work for the organization. So not only do they go in and do community work, which let's be real, is so fun and really rewarding, and I used to go to some of the sessions and just like ... you adore the kids, so that in and of itself I think is really additive. But also, these women are being empowered to run essentially like a small nonprofit. So whether it's through the marketing, through donor relations, through interacting with our community through other work, like coaching and other facets to how we both fundraise and organize, it's almost giving them tools to set them up long term for careers in ways that ... I mean, Leah just crushed it at the Jamaican National Championships.

So it's like these women are still running at this incredibly high and competitive level, but they're not going to retire as only runners. They're going to retire with a CV where they can say like, "I managed an organization that has thousands of followers Instagram account. I have the experience to work at donor relations." I see all of these women being able to one day come to New York Road Runners and say, "This is what I've done." And for you guys to be like, "Oh, wow, you could work here. You could work there." In a way that's so often we understand now more and more that so many athletes leave sport and they're lost because they don't necessarily have these transferable job skills. And then you see these incredibly inspiring people who never move on to be leaders in sport, and I think that kind of piece is almost my big audacious goal.

It's like to one day see these women maybe be in that sports marketing department that used to never have a woman, maybe be that coach when a program has never had a female coach. It's like, how do we empower women to be in those power positions?

01:05:37

Rob Simmelkjaer: Yeah. So how have you felt about the reception to your book so far? It's not an easy book to write. I'm sure for a lot of people, not an easy book to read. A lot of things said in there about people and experiences. What has it been like for you since the book came out?

01:06:00

Mary Cain: I think I am at a point in my life where I am really proud of what I wrote. The first time that I sat down, because I wrote my own book, you get so used to this editing process and being really in the weeds, and so the first time you actually just sit down and you're like, "Okay, I guess I'm going to read my book that I just wrote," was so beautiful. Because as I was reading it, I was like, "I really like this. I'm really proud of this. I think I crafted this in the way that I wanted to, and if someone else doesn't like it, then okay, you don't have to." I think that's something that going into it I knew. If I made one person happy and that person was just myself, that's pretty cool. I think beyond my kind of pride at this piece, it's been really positive overall the conversations I have with people.

I think knowing, similarly to The New York Times piece, that there are folks who read this and then reach out to me and say like, "I don't think I ever would've been able to come to terms with the experience I had unless I kind of read someone else really express what I felt." I don't think I could ever really describe how meaningful that is to me to know that I've really helped someone in that way. I think that's because it's kind of the only reason I wrote this book. It's not like a super fun, super flattering story. And I think the one thing I will say is that usually the negativity I have felt, and I don't read reviews and stuff, but it's usually just the stuff that gets back to me, is usually from people thinking me sharing my abuse is in some way petty. And I think more so for other folks who have experienced really negative things, I kind of want them to hear that you should never carry shame over the way others treated you.

I think if you feel in your personal life that people shame you for expressing defense of yourself to protect others, to protect yourself, to create peace for you, that

person is the one who needs help, not you in standing up for yourself. I would say that's something that I have done enough therapy, that usually when I have heard those comments I'm just like, "I hope you go talk to someone so you understand why someone admitting that they were treated cruelly makes you mad at that person." But really other than that, I've just felt a lot of positivity. I think the place that's usually the most lacking is within the professional running world, although I have had some really lovely people reach out. But I think it's not surprising that there's maybe some folks who have written memoirs that if you go through their comments section, you will see all of professional running celebrating it, and you won't see that for me.

But I think that's because often when you hold up a mirror for people, no matter how it's a mirror, whether it's my experience or they relate to the behavior of my teammates or coaches, whatever it is, I think that's something that I just hope continues to change. So hopefully nobody ever else writes a memoir like this, but God forbid in 10 years, I would hope there's more support from the professional running world.

01:09:53

Rob Simmelkjaer: Well, good for you for doing it. Well said. Bravery is not such a plentiful thing in this world, so you exhibited some in doing what you've done. So congratulations and thank you for talking with us. It's an important conversation. We appreciate it.

01:10:11

Mary Cain: Yeah, and thank you for having me.

01:10:13

Speaker 4: History takes the track this summer in New York City. Join us for the USATF Outdoor and Para National Championships, July 23rd through 26th at Icahn Stadium in New York City as the sport celebrates 150 years of outdoor championships. Watch America's best athletes compete for national titles and records at one of track and field's most iconic venues. Secure your tickets today at usatf.org/tickets. Again, that's usatf.org/tickets.

01:10:39

Rebecca Gentry: Peloton has got something for whatever running mood you're in. Try instructor-led runs and walks that are built to fit into your routine, with classes that help you stay consistent, build speed, and be in the moment. Track your metrics, see your progress, and train smarter. We've got it all to help you reach your goals and stay on track.

Peloton, the official digital fitness partner of New York Road Runners.

That was Rob's conversation with Mary Cain. Her memoir, *This Is Not About Running*, it came out this past April from Mariner Book. So if you haven't, go pick up a copy and learn a little bit more about this incredible woman.

01:11:18

Rob Simmelkjaer: Yeah. And Becs, Mary spent about 10 minutes at the end of our conversation talking about the team that she founded, Atalanta NYC. She mentioned that Atalanta is the first thing in her life she's ever been able to pass to someone else. And we're going to pass the next episode to you, Becs. So next week you're going to interview that very same Atalanta team.

01:11:40

Rebecca Gentry: Absolutely. Mary spent the last six years trying to change what it means to be a woman runner in this country, and we're going to find out if she has managed to do this.

01:11:53

Rob Simmelkjaer: Yeah. And one more thing, Becs, before we go. Mary is one of the runners who helped bring RED-S, Relative Energy Deficiency in Sport into public consciousness. Our friends at HSS, the Hospital for Special Surgery, have actually just published a four-part YouTube series about RED-S. If you want to go deeper on the science of that condition, she talks about it in this episode, then you can go to listen to HSS's episodes on YouTube as well. The link to those episodes are in the show notes. All right, Becs, well, that does it for this episode of Set the Pace. If you like the episode, make sure you subscribe, rate, leave us a comment, send us a question so others can find the show as well. Thanks to Mary Cain for joining us. We'll see you next time. Enjoy the miles.