

Shelby Stanger: In 2017, LaToya Shauntay Snell was running the New York City marathon. 22 miles in, she has one thing on her mind, finishing the race. At that exact moment, she hears a comment from the sidelines.

LaToya Snell: "It's going to take your fat ass forever. Why are you even out here?"

LaToya Snell: When you hear that you're like, "What? Did I hear what I think I heard?" And it takes you a minute to process it. And as a New Yorker, as an old school New Yorker, I immediately turn around, I was like, "What did you say?" And he repeated it and it was the look on his face, it was just so smug. So the next thing I know I turn into an old school New Yorker and I just started going back and forth. We just started like cursing at each other and two other people who are running the race must've saw this happen. And one lady pulled me to the side and she said, "Ma'am, it's not worth it. You're four miles away, why stop here?" And I'm like, "You know, you're right."

LaToya Snell: But the thing that I recognized a lot, especially when I read these articles in the media about, particularly plus size people, they tell you to be the bigger person, turn the other cheek, dismiss it. Act like sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me. And it's the biggest lie that we can tell people, to tell people to brush off something that naturally comes to us. It is okay to be angry, to feel emotional. I am so tired of people weaponizing this, like we're not supposed to walk around here with emotions. It is okay to be vulnerable in that moment and say, "This situation is not okay." And from writing that for The Root and they said, "Hey, can you put that in 800 words?" And I was like, "I'm going to try because I'm very long winded." And I remember writing those words that night and I had my husband read it. And I was like, "What do you think? Do you think this is too abrasive?" Like I was so worried about being portrayed as the angry black woman who happened to get heckled at a race and I was scared that people would want to just tell me to get over it. And my husband was like, "I'll let you know what I think." And he hit the send button and I was like, "What are you doing?" And he's like, "Trust your words. If they reached out to you, they trust you as a writer to be able to articulate this." Two weeks later I went from probably about 1,500 people follow me on Instagram and my collection of friends to waking up and I'm like, "Holy crap, why am I getting letters from people around the world telling me thank you for this letter?" And, "I was so touched. I was so angry for you." And then they started sharing their stories. And I was just like, "Wow, I did not expect this." It happened so fast. Like you just never know what are the things that you're going to say that might have a huge impact on someone, especially when you're not trying. And it scared me so much to have that much attention. I was like, "I'm not trying to be a hero. I don't want to be a hero." I realized how much that story came up that I can't be angry or irritated of talking about this event. Instead, I really need to listen to the bigger message that came out of it. What did people gain from this? Did people find a voice through this?

LaToya Snell: And out of all people that kind of gave me my reality check, it came in a version of a kid. I met this little girl and she saw me and she said, she's like, "You're

inspiring, you're an inspiration." And I was like, "Don't call me an inspiration. I'm not trying to be," I'm like, "I'm not trying to be anybody's hero." And she said to me, "How could you not want to be an inspiration for someone who wrote that letter? You were trying to inspire someone with those words. Sometimes people don't choose to be heroes."

Shelby Stanger: For her response, LaToya was launched into the public eye. She was in People Magazine, on Refinery 29 and she appeared in a handful of TV interviews. As a self-defined, proud plus size, openly bisexual African-American athlete, LaToya Shauntay Snell wears her heart on her sleeve and she doesn't let anyone put her in a box.

Shelby Stanger: I'm Shelby Stanger and this is Wild Ideas Worth Living.

Shelby Stanger: LaToya Shauntay Snell is a Brooklyn based runner, chef, mother and she's the blogger behind Running Fat Chef. LaToya is an advocate for body positivity or body politics as she calls it, and inclusivity in the world of running. LaToya's had plenty of obstacles thrown her way. She grew up in Brooklyn at the height of the crack cocaine epidemic. Her father battled drug addiction, she dropped out of high school before working to build a career as a social worker and a chef. And in 2012 she was diagnosed with disc degeneration and sciatica. But in early 2014, a friend convinced her to sign up for a half marathon.

Shelby Stanger: Running has been a big part of your life and has allowed you to sort of enter this conversation in a much bigger way. Talk to me quickly about how you found running.

LaToya Snell: I always tell parts of this story and I realized I actually met the person that actually got me into running. And when I met him physically in person this year, he says, "You've completely neglected one main detail." So 2003 I was on MySpace. I'm like this ancient little-

Shelby Stanger: [Laughter.] Sorry.

LaToya Snell: Former social media. Yeah, you got to go get a laugh like, "Oh, my God."

Shelby Stanger: You were friends with Tom, okay.

LaToya Snell: Yeah, everybody was friends with Tom. But yeah 2003 I was heavy into open mikes and writing like poetry and I was super passionate about it. And somewhere along the line, I met this London-based poet who spoke so passionately about issues that existed in communities of color. And this is a white guy, this is before it became like super, super trendy to actually talk about those things. Long story short, we kept on this friendship. So he says one day on his post, "I'm signing up for a half marathon." And somehow we end up having this personal exchange where I was like, "Well, if you sign up for a half marathon, so am I." So I sign up for a half marathon. I had no idea of how to run.

I didn't know how to run my first mile, my breathing was crap. It was just like amazing of how I got into this because of someone else. Around this time, my focus was weight loss. The idea came to mind around October 2013. By this point, I had lost 50 pounds on my own that I had started in May. Like I was just losing it back to back to back and I got really addicted to it. I was like, "Great, I can do all these powerful things," not realizing that I was using weight loss as a placebo to be this adventurous person that I've always wanted to be in my imagination.

LaToya Snell: I just thought that adventure is synonymous with being smaller. You can't jump out of a perfectly good airplane unless you are a certain size. There's no way that you can go out there and hike up mountains unless you're physically fit. And what my mindset was, physically fit meant that you had to be smaller because there was no representation that was thrown in my face. It wasn't crammed in commercials, it wasn't something that I saw in brochures of plus size people hiking. And I really didn't see too many people of color when it came down to athletics. So I was just like, "Okay, here I am." And I'm going to speak frankly, I was just like, "Here I am about to tap into this white girl sport." I'm like, "The only time I see people of color is the Kenyans." They're the ones who won races, the stereotypes. And I realized that through the last six years my reasons for running have evolved into this weird thing of I've been trying to not only combat stereotypes in the public eye, but I've been trying to combat the stereotypes that I grew up with for 34 years of my life. And he was my gateway and my introduction into running. But what kept me here was the community that I did not know existed in running. So one day I went to the track and this is like 5:30, 6:00 in the morning, it's dark outside. And there was a group of like probably like five or six women, they're going in the park, they are all happy. But for me, I'm a old school Brooklyn woman who knows what it's like to grow up during the 80s and 90s and know what the violence looks like. So I'm just like, "I see a pack of six women, they are about to rob me." So they came over to me and they're like, "Hey, how are you doing?" And I'm just like, "Okay, why are these people so happy?" Those people became my extension of a family now. And that was Black Girls Run.

Shelby Stanger: The Brooklyn chapter?

LaToya Snell: Yeah.

Shelby Stanger: Okay.

LaToya Snell: The Brooklyn chapter.

Shelby Stanger: The Bed-Stuy chapter?

LaToya Snell: Yep. The Bed-Stuy chapter.

Shelby Stanger: Okay. So in 2013 you find running basically off of a MySpace dare from a friend. And you find this amazing group of women running at 6:00 in the morning. So you got MySpace friend and Black Girls Run. You had told me life wasn't the greatest, but then you find running. So just tell me a little bit about more about the running experience and how it changed you right away.

LaToya Snell: So of course there's always like the physical attributes that people always talk about. "Oh, yeah. I feel like my lungs can take in more air. I can open up my stride. I feel like I'm a gazelle in my head even though I feel like I'm dying by mile six." All these things kind of kicked them there. But the biggest thing that I noticed was more of my mental. I got into yoga probably like the same year, but when I think about running as like an active meditation, then I'm able to take myself through. And the first year, I remember just grieving every time I hit around mile nine and mile ten, like that was my wall. People always talk about the metaphorical runners wall. And for me, it was more like I can give myself permission to grieve over my dad, my dad's been gone ... it'll be 11 years. And I realized that I've been harboring all of these mixed feelings about my dad. Running allowed me the opportunity to sort through those feelings, running allowed me to have conversations with people while we're out there struggling. Like when you get to a point where you hit that wall, you meet the most interesting people out on the road or on the trails. And the one thing that I now, especially this year, I've ended up racing in a lot because people heard 46 races and they're like, "What? Why would you sign up for that?" And I'm like, "There's things I can tell you in this things I can't tell you. And the one thing that I can say is, every time that you go out there, you get to talk and meet people and connect with people that you probably would've never met." Running gave me the opportunity to channel my voice, it's given me the strength to tap into other things. Like I'm known for my running, but I've tapped into hiking, I've tapped into now I want to learn how to swim. It's my gateway to becoming greater than just one thing. Running gave me a community, it allowed me to create a sisterhood. Being with Black Girls Run, they gave me the community for healing, not just on the pavement but off the pavement. These are people that I can contact and say, "Hey, listen, I'm going through a crappy mood." And they'll say, "Let's go out for a run." So running became my gateway drug to creating better friendships, having a healthier relationship with people, being able to sort through my thoughts. People like, "Oh, there's no such thing as a crappy run." No, there's days where I have crappy runs. Where crappy runs would mean that I'm doing a ten miler and then it's higher time. I am angry but it's not a run that I actually regret, it's more like I needed this run to give myself some form of clarity.

Shelby Stanger: So wait, let's go back. Black Girls Run, can you tell people, for those who don't know, really quickly what the group is?

LaToya Snell: So Black Girls Run is actually around the country, I believe they started off in Atlanta. It started with two women who wanted to create a group to combat the stereotypes of black women don't run. Additionally, they wanted to increase awareness about some of the health issues that plague particularly the African

American community. We're battling obesity, we're battling people who are not mobile. So it started off as one location and now, like literally when I just traveled to the Route 66 Marathon in Tulsa, Oklahoma, I'm an east coaster, I'm from New York and I was able to go to another state and I was able to meet members. I met members at my last race in Dallas and they cheer for you through and through. But they offer services like running your first mile, running your first 5K. If you're looking for that sisterhood, if you'd want to travel to a different state, maybe you're out for like a week and you're like, "Hey, I want to go to the different state and I want to be able to network with someone." They provide that, they have that through Facebook groups, they have an actual website, Blackgirlsrun.com, they have certain races that they partnered up with different race organizers and they have like races that are pretty much on the calendar. Like about ten to 12 races a year where you can just go from state to state to state and have these meetups. I think is super important to have those things, to have that connection. As much as people hear, "Black girls running," they're like, "Well if I'm white or I'm Latino, can I get into these groups?" Absolutely. We do have white members, we do have people who are from different backgrounds. Don't ever hear the name Black Girls Run and think, "Oh, wow, I can't join this group." You can absolutely join that group. And I just love what they embody. That's why I've stuck to it. I'm a stuck to this group since 2013, when I found out that they were available online as well. It increased the people that I'm able to tap into because people just kind of get this idea like, "Oh, you're in a public eyes so you just know everything." No I don't. When there's something that I need to ask, I can rely on that community to say, "Hey, listen, how can I get my breathing a lot better?" Or, "I'm going through like this pain. I went to my doctor, they told me to practice this, this and this." That's why these communities are exceptionally helpful.

Shelby Stanger: Since her first race in 2014, LaToya's run over 180 races from four milers to a 100Ks on both the road and the trail. I wanted to know how she does it.

Shelby Stanger: Let's dive into this 100K you did. So you started with marathons. Somehow you get convinced to do an ultra marathon. I've never even done a marathon. I competed in college and running, like I am so impressed. Like what do you say to yourself to keep going?

LaToya Snell: I lie to myself. I would admittedly say, I lie to myself during marathons, during ultras. I tell myself this crazy scenario. Because people are like, "What? Like what do you mean you lie to yourself?" And I'm like, I told myself crazy scenarios. Anytime I do a marathon, particularly the New York City Marathon is my mental marker in my head because it's home and I've done it five times so I know what the course looks like. So when I do the New York City Marathon, I tell myself, "Hey, I'm going out for a five mile run. And this five mile run, I realize two and a half miles in, I left my keys at home, so now I have to turn around. So now I have five miles before I'm supposed to.

LaToya Snell: Great. Now I can go back to work. So I'm going to run back out to work. Crap, I left a pot on the stove. So now I've got to go back home." And these are the lies

that I literally would tell myself. Everybody has their own little crazy strategy. Mine is a little abstract, but I kid you not, people are like, "Wait, hold up. There's nothing more to it that you tell yourself?" Like, no, I really tell myself a pack full of lies and tell myself just keep moving one foot in front of the other. So when there's times where I'm like, "I cannot, I don't think I can physically do this." I know that I trained long enough that my body is going to do whatever my mind tells it to do. So I just need my mind to not give up on me. So if my mind knows that there's two ways to go home in this, so the only way to go home is either I'm going to keep moving, whether I have to walk it, whether I have to hike it, whether I have to run it, I still have to make it home. Or I can get pulled off as somebody can drive me and I don't have my dignity when I do it because I knew I had miles in me, I just physically didn't want to do it. So if the only thing that's holding me back is my mind, then there's something wrong with that. If it is not a physical ailment, if I am not sick, if it is not to a place where I'm putting myself in danger, I can go through anything. I can walk through fire if I desire to. But that's if my mind allows it.

Shelby Stanger: So I just appreciate that you're the first athlete that's ever admitted that their training tactic was lying.

LaToya Snell: Yes. [Laughter.]

Shelby Stanger: I've never been able to explain this to my partner. He and I run and I'll lie to him and I'll tell we're going much further than we are going so that he's cool with it. And then we'll end it, coffee and then I'll be like, "Hey, let's just go get coffee." And he'll just be so excited and so proud of himself and I'll do that to myself.

Shelby Stanger: I'll lie to myself and say I'm going much further than I am and like I have to count so many ... I run by the beach and I have to count so many surfers catching so many waves. I'm like such a weirdo when I run. It's like so fun to meet another - sorry, but you're kind of a weirdo, too.

LaToya Snell: No, no, no, no. Weirdo is a great word. Like I tell people like my son, that's something I tell him, I was like, "If somebody calls you a weirdo, tell him thank you."

Shelby Stanger: Yes. That's a great thing.

Shelby Stanger: When we come back, LaToya talks about her history as a chef and the blog she started about running and cooking. Plus, she talks about how she reinforces her own self compassion and self-love.

Shelby Stanger: Hoka One One produces premium performance footwear for athletes of all types. Born in the mountains, Hoka shoes were initially distinguished by their oversize mid soles. And today they're designed with the same enhanced cushioning, inherent stability and problem solving inspiration to meet the running, walking, fitness and outdoor needs of a wide variety of users. With a

bold and often unexpected approach, Hoka empowers athletes of all levels to feel like they can fly. To experience Hoka's signature cushion and ride on the road, try their Rincon Road running shoe. With ample cushion and a shockingly lightweight, the Rincon is light enough for race day, but supportive enough for long miles on the road. Ultra light and uber cushioned, try a pair at your local REI today.

Shelby Stanger:

On her blog, Running Fat Chef, LaToya shares openly about her journey in fitness, health and in her personal life. In 2017, LaToya miscarried with twins and she was subsequently diagnosed with 21 uterine fibroids as well as endometriosis. She nearly quit running and writing, but the support of her community pushed her to keep going. Today, LaToya uses her platform to spread her message and provide community for others. So you share your writing, your truth on Instagram and you have this blog, Running Fat Chef. I love the name. So tell me about the blog, the name and when you started it.

LaToya Snell:

Yes. So I'm crazy, I'm a crazy person about dates. So I started this blog on August 17, 2016. And I created Running Fat Chef because I had a group of friends who kept reading my ramblings on Instagram. And like at the time, I didn't really see anyone write really long statements on Instagram. And they're like, "Girl, this is not a blog." And I'm like, "Who says so?" And they're like, "This is a place for pretty little pictures and videos and that's it." And I'm just like, "Well, why can't I do that?" And they're like, "Because people are only going to look at the screen for about 15 seconds and they're going to do that double tap so they can like it and then they're going to move on about their business." And here you are, writing these long crazy stories." And I've found myself getting people to be fully engaged with these crazy rants that I would talk about, "Well, here's my one time of going to the gym and this guy tried to help me and this is what happened." And they're like, "Well if you're putting out all these interesting stories, it would be great for you to put it into a blog." And it was almost like full circle because I haven't done that since MySpace. So my friend basically talked to me, he's like, "Hey, listen, look at one of these websites, go onto Weekly.com or a WordPress or one of these places and just pick out a random title that kind of speaks to you and create a blog. I'm pretty sure you'll love it." And I was like, "Well, the only way I'm doing this is if it can be an open ended diary." I want to be able to document my progress. Because that's literally how, even to this day, is still what I look at Instagram and Facebook for. I looked at it as a way to be able to document my workouts, to document my mental health, to be able to say, "Wow, look at that moment that I was able to be successful and look at that moment where I was kind of drowning, but that's okay, this is how I overcame it." So I came up with Running Fat Chef because I was like, "Well, I am a runner, I am a chef." But I deliberately chose the word fat because people weaponize it so much to a point where I know I walk into the room and it is part of my descriptor. I've had people sit down in front of me and they're like, "Oh, you're cute for a plus size girl, for a fat girl." Or, "Wow, you run fast for someone that size." I was just so tired of people weaponizing a descriptor. I was just like, "Why is fat looked at as such a negative way, when in the culinary industry, when we think about fat, when we say rendering fat, fat is essential to make something

flavorful, to make something pop." So I was just like, "Well, since people like the weaponize this word so much and they actually like to use it as a descriptor for me, how about I just use it for myself." I want to be able to take this word back and I want to be able to empower people, but I do want to make a statement and that's how I developed the title of Running Fat Chef. I did not think that it would turn into a huge thing where people actually identify me as that, but that's how I came up with the title.

Shelby Stanger: I'm curious, you're a chef, you worked in kitchens. How has it helped you in your running career? I mean, I imagine you make some pretty amazing pre-race meals.

LaToya Snell: Oh, yeah. The way that it helps me as a French classical trainee, through the training, I understand portion sizes, I understand the things that people don't want to read up about and say, "Oh, my God, do I have to measure this in a cup?" I'm able to look at something and engage it and say, "All right, this is how big of a meal I should have." Now, how can I get these things to work for my body? Because especially with the conditions that I have, like I have endometriosis, I have fibroids. Eating certain things can make my body flare up. Like soy products sometimes react to my body terribly. Or dairy products the day before race, if you want to be entertained and you want to hear a trumpet live on the course, give me dairy products the day before a race. So I had to find creative ways of essentially incorporating really good food without sacrificing. Because sometimes people have this idea that, "Well, if you're running, that means that you have to do it because of weight loss." And I'm like, no, you can enjoy the food that you want, but you also have to be strategic and you have to be smart about what you put into your body.

Shelby Stanger: So what do you do when you're running an ultra marathon? I mean, what do you eat for snacks?

LaToya Snell: I like real food. Don't get me wrong, I love like places like Scratch Labs. Like I like those gummies, the gummies are exceptionally well. But I like things that can go on my system really easy. Like they have tacos that you usually fill up, like bean burritos kind of style. So you can do like red beans and black beans. Those are like one of my favorite ones as out on the course. I love broth because you're able to get that sodium in really quick. There are times where your body starts to shut down. Realistically, if you're running for a certain period, anything like over four hours, it's like messing with your GI for a certain amount of time. Your body is doing so much work that you don't want to take in something that's going to take a long time to chew.

LaToya Snell: Some people prefer pureed food. I need that texture when I'm out there in the course, so things like bean burritos, that can go and really quick that can sit in my stomach and I know that I'm good for the next three or four miles until I get to the next aid station, especially as a slower runner, I need something that's going to be a little bit hardy but it's not going to slow me down. Like oatmeal is a hit or miss for some people. Some people they swear by it and there's other

people that's like, "This makes me heavy. It makes me want to stay asleep." I can't eat bananas the entire time. I can eat it in the beginning of a race, but in the middle of a long run like that, you sometimes, some people like me, I can't do things that's too sweet. I need something that's very savory, that it doesn't bother my taste buds. So what works for me is not going to necessarily work for someone else and it takes time. That's where the training process is very helpful. You need to be able to experiment with these things to see what works for you, for your gut and for your energy levels.

Shelby Stanger: Figuring out what fuels your body is just one part of your journey to fitness and self-love. LaToya's had to push through internal battles with herself, confidence and negative words from outsiders telling her that she's not an athlete or that she can't and shouldn't even try to accomplish the feats she's after. As I'm sure you've gathered, LaToya's not going to listen to that. She's a fierce woman and she's not about to let anyone stand in her way, but she wasn't always like that.

Shelby Stanger: There's this thing in your bio where you mentioned being a recovering self-defeatist in motion. I love that. So any advice on embracing more self-compassion and self love? Because I think a lot of people listening struggle with that.

LaToya Snell: I think that we get so many cliched things on how to practice self love that sometimes we just don't know how to listen to ourselves. Not every ounce of advice that you'll get is going to work for you. If you get to a point or a place where you're just like, "Why am I not succeeding like the next person?" Maybe it requires for you to shut off your social media, maybe it requires for you to detach. It means that maybe you are supposed to go through that ugly moment and you force yourself to look at your reflection and ask yourself, "Why do I feel this way at this very moment?" And in your raw state, ask yourself, "Why am I going through this?" Now I'm a very confident person but it did not happen overnight. There were times, like especially after I had my son, postpartum depression kicked in hard where I really physically could not get myself to a place where I can look at my reflection. I'm like, "My body has changed." And I realized that some of this commentary was not something that came from me. It was because I was too busy looking at everybody else's perceived success that I could not acknowledge my own highs. So all I saw was lows.

LaToya Snell: When we compare ourselves to the next person, sometimes we're not comparing them with a real understanding of what they're going through. We just see the little pretty little pictures on Instagram. And I always ask people to have compassion, practice compassion in themselves by doing simple things like pulling out a sticky note. If you are one of those people that need to write down and see a list, get a sticky note, keep it by your bed, keep a pen by your bed and write down the three great things about your body or three great things about your mind. And if all you can come up with is one, then that is a successful thing for the day. And I want you to run with it and to take that as your joy and practice that every day. Whether it's a good day, whether it's a bad day, whether it's a day that you just cannot find anything possible, if that means that

you have to hold onto yesterday's sticky note and say, "But yesterday was phenomenal and I'm working on today," then that is what you do. We put too much pressure on ourselves by comparing ourselves to the next person or comparing ourselves to the old version of ourselves. Sometimes that's a detriment. We are human and we are evolving creatures. And last year's accomplishments may not be tomorrow's accomplishments, it's not supposed to be that way. We are designed to succeed and to fail. And when we can actually acknowledge that failure is progress, even if it doesn't not look like motion, it is still forward motion.

Shelby Stanger: I love that. Even failure is progress, it's all part of moving forward. LaToya's moving forward with her next big event, a triathlon which she's currently training for. I wanted to ask her about that plus some other fun questions during our wild round.

Shelby Stanger: Training for a triathlon, that's next. So is that still happening?

LaToya Snell: Yes.

Shelby Stanger: And how are you dealing with the swim?

LaToya Snell: Terribly.

Shelby Stanger: I think surfing is going to cure it, think about it.

LaToya Snell: Yes.

Shelby Stanger: What did you make for dinner last night? Because I keep seeing these amazing meals on your Instagram.

LaToya Snell: Oh, my gosh. I did a chicken and a mushroom white wine sauce. Spinach, asparagus. I actually made two meals, fried chicken for my family, because that's what they wanted, mashed potatoes. And I feel like I made some type of candied yams.

Shelby Stanger: Yum. What was the last workout you did that you loved?

LaToya Snell: Plyo pushups. I love anything that has me jumping, anything that has any type of air. So plyo pushups would definitely be that one.

Shelby Stanger: Okay. So you're doing a pushup and then you kind of leap up and almost do a clap or something?

LaToya Snell: Yes, yup, yup. That's exactly it.

Shelby Stanger: I love it. For those of you listening, LaToya has some amazing cross training videos on Instagram. So what else do you love to do to cross train?

LaToya Snell: I love cycling for a really long time. So on any given day, if I'm not in a gym, I'm not playing around the playground, I am probably on my bike riding around and doing donuts.

Shelby Stanger: What's the sentence you say to yourself to keep you going on a run?

LaToya Snell: Keep swimming. Keep swimming like just a little while longer. I don't really have a sentence, it's more like I have a soundtrack in my head, which is why I do it so much on Instagram stories. I usually choose a song of the day and I have it on loop in my head.

Shelby Stanger: So what's your favorite mid run snack?

LaToya Snell: Favorite mid run snack, oh, my gosh. If I really could have what I wanted, it would be salmon and potatoes. But mid run snack, I usually like peanut butter and jelly. I'm very, very simple.

Shelby Stanger: You know Patagonia makes those like salmon packets, right?

LaToya Snell: Oh, don't tell me that.

Shelby Stanger: Yeah, you can get them at REI, I bet. So speaking of REI, what's your favorite piece of running gear?

LaToya Snell: Oh, my gosh. It would definitely have to be sneakers. Like sneakers are a make or break for me. The strong second behind sneakers would be compression shorts. They have to be long enough that I am not going to chafe. I am so terrified of chafing, especially as a plus size girl with a lot of thighs, it will not be a pleasurable run if my attire does not work for me.

Shelby Stanger: So what do you say to people who call it Hoka One One?

LaToya Snell: Oh, no, it's called Hoka One One. Okay? All right? Don't get me wrong, I don't know, I'm like a snob about this ever since I learned ... don't get me wrong, I messed up the name too. I used to call her Hoka One One until they corrected me and they said, "Hey, well actually it was called Hoka One One for a little bit, but we went back to Hoka One One." So, yes, Hoka One One.

Shelby Stanger: One One. Yup. One One.

Shelby Stanger: So what style Hoka One One's are you wearing now?

LaToya Snell: Oh, Clifton. I wear the Clifton 6. That's what you can find me in any other day. But anytime that I am cross training, I've been gravitating towards the Tivra for the gym. Or my shorter runs, I've really recently loved Arahi. If you are going on a trail, though, I am a big fan of the Speedgoat Series because they just brought it into wides, so I am like over the roof about that.

Shelby Stanger: What's your favorite book besides Mirna Valerio's book, of course.

LaToya Snell: Oh, I'm more into poetry. Let's see if I can actually stick to a running book. *Living With A Seal* was freaking entertaining.

Shelby Stanger: Yeah. Jesse Itzler, that was a great book. I actually had Jesse on the podcast. He's amazing.

LaToya Snell: God, he is amazing. That book is like phenomenal. Anybody that really, I don't care if you're not a runner, pick that book up so you can laugh really hard about the sadistic things that happen in this book.

Shelby Stanger: I totally agree. What's the best thing about Brooklyn?

LaToya Snell: Oh, man. The culture, man. Like you can go to any neighborhood and you can get a little bit of anything. If I go into the right neighborhood, I can get a little bit of like I can get like some type of soul food, I can go to another neighborhood and I can get somebody that's dancing in the street. I have somebody that's playing 80s music, if you want that family vibe, you just get a little bit of everything. It's like I have the world map right here in 20 blocks in Brooklyn and I love that. It's unmatched compared to anywhere else in the world.

Shelby Stanger: All right. If you were not a runner, what sport would you take up?

LaToya Snell: Power lifting, for sure.

Shelby Stanger: Oh, yeah.

LaToya Snell: The crazy part is like I know like this is the first thing that I've heard this year, when I took on my first power lifting competition in September, I did not walk into this thinking that I would actually hit first place. I trained for it in seven weeks. I clearly am a natural born power lifter. I think my max power lift that I tested out to date, and that's on a scale of one to ten, that felt like a five or six to me. I dead lifted 405 pounds just for fun. And people were just like, "Why are you a runner if you can power lift like that?" And I'm like, "Because I find the joy in doing both." But I will never ever abandon the community as long as I have legs that will move.

Shelby Stanger: What song plays in your head when you're running?

LaToya Snell: Oh, the soundtrack has to be anything Daft Punk. Marilyn Manson, I know it's like a crazy mix up. But like *Harder, Faster, Stronger* is definitely one of my go-to's. And crazy enough, *Work Bitch* is one of the songs that comes to mind from Britney Spears. I don't know why.

Shelby Stanger: LaToya, You're the kind of person that everybody listening to is going to want to be friends with after this podcast episode. For sure.

Shelby Stanger: LaToya's strength, her fiery attitude - they're so much more than inspirational, it's no wonder she's become a hero to so many. I love talking to women like LaToya who keep coming back from injuries or mental setbacks to tackle their goals. Who do the things that some people think they shouldn't be able to do. They break the mold and show us that no matter who we are we can make our wildest ideas a reality. You can follow LaToya's races, adventures, plus get recipes, workouts and more on her blog, Runningfatchef.com. And on her Instagram, [lamishauntay](https://www.instagram.com/lamishauntay). That's I-A-M-L-S-H-A-U-N-T-A-Y. And you can also listen to her podcast, [The Long Run at Threehundredpoundsandrrunning.com/Podcast](http://TheLongRunatThreehundredpoundsandrrunning.com/Podcast).

Shelby Stanger: Thank you so much to LaToya for coming on the show. I had a blast talking with you. Thanks for making me laugh and I really can't wait until you come to San Diego and learn to surf, which I really think is going to help you prep for the triathlon swim. Tune in week after next as we talk to previous guest Shanti Hodges about making the outdoors accessible for kids and toddlers. Wild Ideas Worth Living is part of the REI podcast network. It's hosted by me, Shelby Stanger, written and edited by Annie Fassler and produced by Chelsea Davis. As always, we appreciate when you subscribe, rate and review this show or wherever you listen. And don't forget, some of the best adventures happen when you follow your wildest ideas.