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TRANSCRIPT FOR EPISODE 33-FORGIVE SOMEBODY

I'm Jill Baughan, and you're listening to the podcast called Find Joy...No Matter What.

This is Episode 33.

If you're in a tough place right now, your joy may seem like it's hiding--or gone.

I understand. But it's still there, I promise, just waiting to be resurrected. And this podcast is designed to help you do just that...no matter what else is going on in your life.

For just a few minutes each week, I'll tell you a story--one that just might inspire a way to uncover a piece of joy you might be looking for. Then, we'll consider how it might speak to your life, because even though you'll hear quite a few of my stories during our time together, I believe you'll find your own in every one of mine.

Finally, I'll offer a benediction to send you into your day--or into your night.

So. If you're up for doing joy shots with a friend today...have a listen. (Music fades)

Somebody do you wrong?

Trick question. I know the answer.

Because if you're breathing, somebody somewhere at some time has done something to hurt you.

So here's a non-trick question: Have you forgiven the perpetrator of your pain?

Let me be clear about what we're dealing with in our time here: There's the big stuff, the stories of amazing people who have forgiven the hideous injustices, unthinkable acts and life-altering wrongs slapped against them. That is a subject that has filled entire volumes, by people who know way more than I do about forgiveness on an epic level.

But I'm inviting you to start small.

I'm talking about the little things that nestle into your memory for days or months or years; stuff that doesn't exactly make you or break you; it just bends you out of shape and sends you on a weird trajectory...maybe toward a strained relationship or dark thoughts about your general worth as a human being.

You know where your tender spots are...what it takes to take you down.

For instance you want to knock me lower than low? Use words. So I have recently decided that I need to let a few words go--and I am more than slightly embarrassed to admit that some of these words have been rolling around in my spirit for decades.

Oh, you too?

Well, join the club, pal. We all have our stories.

Back when I was young and foolish, my husband, Ben, and I went to a Halloween party dressed as John Travolta's character, Danny, in Grease, and Mickey Mouse. (I just couldn't pull off Olivia Newton-John's look.) We had a great time, and came home with some extra un-consumed refreshments from the party, most notably an enormous jug of cider.

As we pulled up to our house, I grabbed the cider, and Ben said, "Now don't drop that."

Let's pause right here.

Ben is a caregiver by nature. He was born to be a parent. Unfortunately, over the years, he has at times tried to parent his wife. Which has made his wife a teensy bit defensive.

So I shot back, "What do you think I am?? A child?? You think I'm not capable of transporting a container from the car to the house?? You think I'm gonna lose it *on purpose*?? You think I'm saying to myself, 'Hey, I think I'll drop this big ol' glass jug of cider on the sidewalk just so I can watch it shatter into a million pieces?'"

Pause again.

I am a dramatist by nature. I was born to overreact. Unfortunately, over the years, I have at times overreacted to about 50% of whatever my husband has said to me. Which has made him alternately irritated and amused.

This time, he was amused. He looked at me with the faintest of smirks, and said, "Just reminding you," to which I snapped, "Really DADDY, I don't need reminding."

So I hopped out of the car, jug in hand, trotted up the porch steps with my big mouse ears flapping in the evening breeze and...

Oh, you know where this is going.

I dropped it. And it shattered into a million pieces.

I looked at Ben who, being an inexperienced husband would say the ONE wrong thing: "I TOLD you NOT to drop that!"

And the neighbors were subsequently treated to a fine, if not bizarre, spectacle that night, watching the altercation between John Travolta and Mickey Mouse on our front steps. Actually, the spectacle was mostly me, because Ben was still smirking away, enjoying the whole thing way too much, which made me even angrier.

Anyhow, we got out the broom and the hose, and cleaned it all up. I was carrying a dustpan full of glass shards into the kitchen when Ben, still being an inexperienced husband, said another wrong thing, intentionally baiting me, with a snarky smile: "Now don't drop that in here."

Oh boy, that did it.

I grabbed the first weapon I saw, which happened to be a bag of unpopped popcorn, and threw it across the kitchen at him.

He ducked, of course, so the bag hit the cabinets, burst wide open and sprayed a million kernels of popcorn all over the kitchen

Again we retrieved the broom, got out the vacuum and cleaned it all up. (Yes, he actually helped clean up the mess I made. And yes, with that cocky grin still on his face.)

And that little incident, folks, has been sitting around in my psyche for decades.

But, since I'm on a roll now, other people, too, have said things that need my exoneration, so right now I'm inviting you to join me in a little exercise in forgiveness.

So here goes, as God and you and are witnesses:

I forgive you, Little Twit, who called me Big Panties on the playground in the third grade (You can listen to that whole story in Episode 5.)

I forgive you, Dear Lady at the preschool my daughter attended, when you saw me buttoning up her coat at the door one day. You looked at my precious three-year-old and said, "What a beautiful little girl!" Then you looked into *my* face and said, "She must look like her daddy."

(Really?)

I forgive you, That Guy with whom I had a blind date as a senior in high school, who promised to call me at college. Thank you, by the way, for making good on that promise. I was so excited. I'd only been at school a couple of weeks. We talked for a good twenty minutes when you said, "Hey our dorm is having a Big Event soon. (Be still, my heart...)"

And, uh, I saw your roommate's picture in the Freshman Register. Do you think she'd go with me?"

(Whaaat??)

And I forgive you, Ex-Boyfriend, when we were going through a tough time, and you said, "I don't know why I keep hanging around you. You're sure not the prettiest girl I've ever been out with."

(Oh yes he did.)

All these words (plus a few more) from my past have been festering comfortably in a corner of my mind for many years. I've written about them, even laughed about them...but part of me still hurts when I think about them.

But I've decided that it's time to experience the joy of letting those wounds heal at last. Somehow, giving my intentions words and sending them out to you has been my first step. I feel lighter already.

So. Someone has lobbed a few zingers at you, too.

Or somebody used no words at all when you needed them.

They didn't speak up or show up.

Or somebody let you down. And then failed to pick you up.

A parent. A spouse. A son or daughter. A friend. Even a stranger.

The ways and reasons why we hurt each other are endless.

But there's hope in that bleak newsflash, since forgiveness really can be a joyful adventure.

There's risk, of course. We have to let go of some really comfortable indulgent self-pity and fill our minds and hearts with something else, since giving up all that wound-licking should leave a lot of space.

And aren't we often afraid that if we forgive, we're conceding that what that numbskull did is okay by us? Which it is not. Ever.

But here's the remarkable part: "Earth is forgiveness school," says Anne Lamott. and it's entirely possible at any given time for us all to move up a grade.

Even if it means saying, "I forgive you, Precious Man whom I promised to love for better or for worse. If--all those years ago--your goal in using that irritating arrangement of the English language was to make me angry, congratulations. You succeeded." Mwah.

Fortunately, one does not have to forget to forgive.

And so, my friend,

May you know the joy of letting go of that angry, squinty-eyed resentment that's been, unfortunately, alive and well for some time.

May you find it in your heart to say, "I forgive you," and allow your own soul to breathe again,

And may you remember, all the while, that somewhere along the way, just maybe someone has had to forgive you too.

Thanks so much for joining me.

If you know people who need a little encouragement to finally forgive a rather minor but still hurtful infraction, I invite you to share this podcast with them, and subscribe yourself on Apple Podcasts, or wherever you listen to podcasts. Or you can go to my website at jillbaughan.com, click on a podcast episode and sign up to receive episodes in your inbox. Just don't miss a single one, because I so look forward to being with you again soon.

Set your soul free, my friend. And always, always remember, if you go looking for joy, you'll most likely find it.

Till next time...