

TRANSCRIPT FOR PODCAST EPISODE 39-LIVE A KINDNESS ADVENTURE

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

This is Episode 39.

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)

So. The holidays are comin' like a freight train.

And also like a freight train, they are loaded.

With hope. Or hopelessness.

With peace. Or stress.

Maybe you have too much to do. Or not enough to do.

Maybe you have family drama. Or not enough family to create drama.

Maybe you look forward to the next month. Or maybe you just wish it were over.

For sure, in some ways, this holiday season will be like no other, with unanswered questions about how we'll navigate cherished traditions in light of uncertainty and social distancing.

We are already missing loved ones we haven't been able to see or hug, and there's a good chance we'll feel that lack even more acutely in the next month.

But take heart, my friends. There is hope for us in this season and way beyond.

Because I have an invitation for you that can create joy, and also be some crazy good therapy for the blues you may be singing: Tap into a passion of yours and use it to bring joy to someone else in a Kindness Adventure.

I actually stumbled upon this amazing phenomenon a few years ago—at Halloween.

First, a little background:

My friend Sandy and I love to dress up. Not in a classy Audrey Hepburn way, but more like in a tacky Ronald McDonald way. And we've been doing this for the pure fun of it for years.

Sandy has been a clown; I been a cow. (You can listen to that story in Episode)We've helped people celebrate birthdays by dressing up in garbage bags and pretending to be the California Raisins singing *I Heard It Through the Grapevine*.

Another birthday, we did a parody of a Shania Twain song, dressed up like country singers (impersonating Shania Twain was way out of our wheelhouse), and called ourselves The Haggard Sisters. At one FJuly Fourth festival we made like the Statue of Liberty and the American flag. Though our husbands conveniently removed themselves from our presence, small children were captivated, and actually asked for our autographs.

At one time, we both dreamed of playing the part of Lady Luck, the representative for the Virginia Lottery, but that position wasn't open.

I settled for putting on my prom dress, fashioning a wand out of a dowel and a star covered in foil, and visiting a friend at her office as the "Take-You-Out-To-Lunch-To-Make-You-Feel-Better-Since-You-Just-Got-Dumped-By-A-Jerk" Fairy. Sandy got a job that required her to dress up like a ping pong ball, and advertise the Lottery in a convenience store in a super-sketchy part of town.

Yes, we are shameless. It is our spiritual gift.

You would think, then, that Halloween would be our favorite holiday. And it's true, we think it's a fine excuse to costume oneself.

But nobody was inviting us to their parties.

So, undeterred, on Halloween, we had an idea: We knew so many people who were either confined to their homes, or had been through some challenging times that year, we thought, "Why not do a *reverse* trick or treat?" We would dress up (of course), but we'd give out treats rather than show up at their door with an open pillowcase. It would be a small way to use our wiring to initiate a little adventure in kindness.

Sandy put our outfits together (we were Lucy and Ethel in the candy factory), and off we trotted—for two nights, since we had too many names to cover in one. Most of the time, we didn't just stand at the door, we went in and chatted for a while. Shared smiles and news.

Gave out treats.

It was a divine experience. And I mean that in the holiest of ways.

So the next year, of course, we wanted to do it again. We kept our antennae up for people who needed encouragement, and put our costumes together weeks before Halloween. That year we were both Minnie Mouse, since we were both captivated by the dress, and neither of us felt that Mickey's shorts were very flattering.

We have standards, you know.

The next year, we both wanted to be Wonder Woman, and set about cobbling together costumes from various questionable places on Amazon. We did have a choice to make as we pulled up the different types of Wonder Woman suits available: There was Ultra-Sexy Wonder Woman (with material covering the minimum of essential body parts), Modified Sexy Wonder Woman (with material covering enough body parts to allow you to be in a neighborhood parade and not get arrested), and Caricature Wonder Woman (with tights, T shirts, red tennis shoes and an expansive cape with enough material to cover all backside body parts).

Yeah, guess which one got our vote.

That year, we added friends in hospitals and assisted living facilities to our visits.

This year, we were so excited to begin, we put our costumes together months in advance. We were flamingoes, and flocked a lot of yards with ourselves.

Yes, we had to stay at a distance--no entering homes, no hugs. We couldn't go into hospitals or assisted living residences. But we learned that just the sight of joy brings joy--even at a distance. And that's a beautiful thing right now.

Maybe we'll actually make it a community Thing next year. If we send out teams of people, we could exponentially bring some happiness to many more folks because, as you know, there's no shortage of people needing joy these days. And maybe at the end of the evening, we'll all meet up and have our own dadgum party, thankyouverymuch, and EVERYONE will be invited.

Maybe eventually it will become a Global Thing. Or at least a Local Global Thing.

Maybe we'll start a Go FUN Me campaign, and offer (rather than ask for) thoughtfulness and good cheer.

We're not sure where this is going at this point, but it certainly is going somewhere. Somewhere adventurous. Somewhere kind. Somewhere out of our own heads and out of our own funk.

Of course, you may think that dressing up is a hideous way to spend an evening. But you have other gifts, other passions.

What's fun for you? What are you driven to do? Music? Food? Sports? Construction? Art?

How could you use your "wiring" to activate a Kindness Adventure this season?

Because with all the vitriol being spewed out and sprayed around lately, you probably agree that there's never been a time when people are more desperate for the life-giving power of a warm heart.

And also because God created you (even during this loaded season) to be kind...so that when any given person at any given time feels compelled to ask, "Who cares?" you can raise your hand and say, "Me."

And so, my friend,

May you tap deeply into whatever brings you joy...and find a way to share it with someone who's struggling right now. Which includes just about everyone.

And may you exit your own funk, if only for a little while, for the sole purpose of helping someone else exit theirs,

And in the process, may you both find your souls smiling because of the healing, elevating power of a kindness adventure.

Thanks so much for joining me.

If you know people who might be struggling this holiday season, 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.

Use your passion to elevate another soul, my friend. And always, always remember, if you go looking for joy, you'll most likely find it.

Till next time...