

TRANSCRIPT FOR PODCAST EPISODE 51-HAVE SOME BIG DUMB FUN

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

This is Episode 51.

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.

Feeling a little "blah" lately?

May I suggest that there's nothing like revisiting some "big dumb fun" of childhood to teach you a lesson or two about God's gift of play, and give you a break from that "blah."

My opportunity came a few years ago when I met my childhood friend Val in uptown Bluffton, Indiana, for a week of immature behavior at the annual Bluffton Street Fair. The fair has been a tradition in my hometown for about a hundred years. Main and Market Streets are blocked off for a week to make way for a palooza of rides and games (Whack-a-chicken and the Mouse Game were my favorites) and parades of varying themes. I have great memories of the day we would be released from school early, and all school children would march in a parade. Looking back, I have to wonder why in the world people found this so fascinating, but it generated even more excitement than the farm implement parade--a grand succession of tractors, plows, combines, and manure spreaders. (I think you have to be from the Midwest to work up some enthusiasm for that one.)

Anyway, I remember being put in a row with seven or eight other kids; our teachers then gave us a long wooden rod to hold on to--either to keep us in a straight line or to keep us from wandering off when we passed the pony rides. Then we just marched--up Main Street and down Market Street, waving at people on the sidelines who were cheering at us like we were Neil Armstrong just back from the moon. It was indescribable fun, feeling like celebrities, being out of school, and looking

forward to eating the most exquisite junk food on earth and then hurling it around on a few rides.

Which brings me to my week of ultimate reminiscent play.

The week I went back to the street fair as an adult, Val and I met up and had contests to see how many fried things we could eat in a row--four! And so much to choose from: corn dogs, funnel cakes, elephant ears, fried potatoes, blooming onions, fried green tomatoes, onion rings, fried pork rinds, and one of my favorites, the giant fried tenderloin--a hunk o' pork about the size of your average Frisbee.

Then we decided to try a couple of rides we hadn't been on since we were about 12. Our first choice was the Scrambler. We thought this was a safe one to ride after eating four fried things, because it doesn't leave the ground, take deep plunges or flip you upside down.

We did not take into account the fact that it goes around in circles and violently heaves you to and fro. We also did not take into account that the guy running the ride thought we were cute and decided to put it in overdrive for an extra long time.

It was fun at first, getting tossed all over each other, hurtled about...but after a while, it was obvious that this thing runs much faster nowadays (really, I mean it) than it did when I was 12.

We started to feel reeeeeeally bad, but we were having such a goodtime in spite of it. Never before in my life had I wanted to laugh and throw up simultaneously--an odd sensation.

Anyway, when the Scrambler finally stopped, we staggered out of the car, thoroughly scrambled, and decided that what we needed to make us feel better was some ice cream. Yes, indeedy. So we ate ice cream. Then we went on another childhood favorite, the Tilt-A-Whirl.

Do I need to tell you that after four fried things and few scoops of ice cream, this one just about did me in? Still, I knew I would do it all over again if I had the chance. I just couldn't get enough. When the week was over, I had a cholesterol hangover and a permanent case of vertigo, but I couldn't wait for another go at it next year.

What made it such a memorable experience? I mean, this fair is not Disney World, or Six Flags Over Bluffton, but I was able to enter into the joy I experienced as a kid and, for a while, tap into a feeling of freedom, and abandon all the common sense that we lug around as the baggage of adulthood.

Often we think of childhood activities as just that--fun stuff that you could only do as a kid, but not any more. And okay, there are a few things that you might not be able to do now that you did when you were six.

Obviously, I can't find anyone brave enough to heave me onto their shoulders so I can see the parade above the crowd at the street fair. And while it's true that a revisit certainly won't be just like it was when you were a kid, it can revive the playful spirit inside you that's been waiting to come out.

For instance, when my was about 12, he and his buddies would ride bikes up to somebody's grandma's woods, with some camping gear, some food and their 22s (yeah, this was a long time ago) to spend the day exploring the outdoors, cooking over a fire and shooting frogs.

Now he hasn't had a burning desire to shoot frogs in a while, but he realized as we talked about this that what he loved most was the freedom of the outdoors...and that's what still feeds his soul today. Plenty of opportunities there.

And to make it big dumb fun, throw in the invitation from his cousin to venture into *his* woods and shoot at discarded toilets, blowing them to smithereens, and well... the fun doesn't get much bigger and dumber than that. At least in his family.

You may be in a serious need of some relief from your serious life right now; you may be longing for some excitement or some stimulating change or maybe you've been dealing with a lot of change that's far from stimulating, and you just want to be able to count on the stability of a few things.

What made your heart take flight when you were a child? Can you think of one way you could experience some reminiscent play that would weave freedom and fun into the tapestry of your adult days?

If so, do your soul a favor and cut loose.

And so, my friend,

May you take the time to revisit the heart of your childhood play,

And when you do, may you come away with a thankful and more joyful heart as a gift from God who is, without a doubt, the Author of fun.

Thanks for joining me.

If you know people who need to lighten up, 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.

Have some big, dumb fun my friend. And always, always remember, if you go looking for joy, you'll most likely find it.

Till next time...