

Jill Baughan

TRANSCRIPT FOR PODCAST EPISODE 66-PUT YOURSELF OUT THERE

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

This is Episode 66.

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.

Have you ever been hesitant to “put yourself out there”?

For our purposes here, let's define “put yourself out there” as a willingness to make yourself known in some way.

For instance, you may have lived a story that could really help someone—or a lot of someones—and “putting yourself out there” would involve your willingness to actually tell it.

Yes, it makes you vulnerable, maybe nervous about what people will think of you, or insecure about your ability to articulate it well or stand in front of people to share.

And yet—putting yourself out there in this way could change a life—or many lives.

There are other ways of putting yourself out there, too—like maybe sharing your art if you're a musician or a decorator of a visual artist.

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Granted, none are without risk.

Elizabeth Gilbert, in her book *Big Magic*, tells this great story about someone who was willing to take that risk. She says:

Twenty years ago, I was at a party, talking to a guy whose name I have long since forgotten, or maybe never even knew. Sometimes I think this man came into my life for the sole purpose of telling me this story, which has delighted and inspired me ever since.

The story this guy told me was about his younger brother, who was trying to be an artist. The guy was deeply admiring of his brother's efforts, and he told me an illustrative anecdote about how brave and creative and trusting his little brother was. For the purposes of this story, which I shall now recount here, let's call the little brother "Little Brother."

Little Brother, an aspiring painter, saved up all his money and went to France, to surround himself with beauty and inspiration. He lived on the cheap, painted every day, visited museums, traveled to picturesque locations, bravely spoke to everyone he met, and showed his work to anyone who would look at it. One afternoon, Little Brother struck up a conversation in a café with a group of charming young people, who turned out to be some species of fancy aristocrats. The charming young aristocrats took a liking to Little Brother and invited him to a party that weekend in a castle in the Loire Valley. They promised Little Brother that this was going to be the most fabulous party of the year. It would be attended by the rich, by the famous, and by several crowned heads of Europe. Best of all, it was to be a masquerade ball, where nobody skimped on the costumes. It was not to be missed. Dress up, they said, and join us!

Excited, Little Brother worked all week on a costume that he was certain would be a showstopper. He scoured Paris for materials and held back neither on the details nor the audacity of his creation. Then he rented a car and drove to the castle, three hours from Paris. He changed into his costume in the car and ascended the castle steps. He gave his name to the butler, who found him on the guest list and politely welcomed him in. Little Brother entered the ballroom, head held high.

Upon which he immediately realized his mistake.

*This was indeed a costume party—his new friends had not misled him there—but he had missed one detail in translation: This was a **themed** costume party. The theme was "a medieval court."*

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And Little Brother was dressed as a lobster.

All around him, the wealthiest and most beautiful people of Europe were attired in gilded finery and elaborate period gowns, draped in heirloom jewels, sparkling with elegance as they waltzed to a fine orchestra. Little Brother, on the other hand, was wearing a red leotard, red tights, red ballet slippers, and giant red foam claws. Also, his face was painted red. This is the part of the story where I must tell you that Little Brother was over six feet tall and quite skinny—but with the long waving antennae on his head, he appeared even taller. He was also, of course, the only American in the room.

He stood at the top of the steps for one long, ghastly moment. He almost ran away in shame. Running away in shame seemed like the most dignified response to the situation. But he didn't run. Somehow, he found his resolve. He'd come this far, after all. He'd worked tremendously hard to make this costume, and he was proud of it. He took a deep breath and walked onto the dance floor.

*He reported later that it was only his experience as an aspiring artist that gave him the courage and the license to be so vulnerable and absurd. Something in life had already taught him to just put it out there, whatever "it" is. That costume was what he had made after all, so that's what he was bringing to the party. It was the best he had. It was **all** he had. So he decided to trust in himself, to trust in his costume, to trust in the circumstances.*

As he moved into the crowd of aristocrats, a silence fell. The dancing stopped. The orchestra stuttered to a stop. The other guests gathered around Little Brother. Finally, someone asked him what on earth he was.

Little Brother bowed deeply and announced, "I am the court lobster."

Then: laughter.

Not ridicule—just joy. They loved him. They loved his sweetness, his weirdness, his giant red claws...He was the trickster among them, and so he made the party. Little Brother even ended up dancing that night with the Queen of Belgium.

This, Gilbert says, is how you must do it, people.

Maybe, for you, "out there" could involve public speaking, playing your music for someone, starting a business, letting people know you have a business, a skill, a gift, a desire for fun that you'd like others to join,; maybe it would be about doing work you love, teaching

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people how to do something you know, taking a class, learning to dance, making new friends, joining a meetup group for hikers or anything else you've been wanting to try. Maybe it would involve seeking a relationship..

Offering yourself and your gifts and interests.

About her own gift of writing, Elizabeth Gilbert says, I have never created anything in my life that did not make me feel, at some point or another, like I was the guy who just walked into a fancy ball wearing a homemade lobster costume. But you must stubbornly walk into that room, regardless, and you must hold your head high. You made it; you get to put it out there. Never apologize for it, never explain it away, never be ashamed of it. You did your best with what you knew, and you worked with what you had in the time you were given. You were invited, and you showed up, and you simply cannot do more than that.

They might throw you out—but then again, they might not. They probably won't throw you out, actually. The ballroom is often more welcoming and supportive than you could ever imagine. Somebody might even think you're brilliant and marvelous. You might end up dancing with royalty.

Or you might just end up having to dance alone in the corner of the castle with your big, ungainly red foam claws waving in the empty air.

That's fine, too. Sometimes it's like that.

What you absolutely must NOT do is turn around and walk out. Otherwise, you will miss the party...

And so, my friend,

May you stay in the castle, and enjoy that party, no matter what,

And may you remember that you were created to light up the world—at least your corner of it

And to do that, may you be willing—even eager—to joyfully make yourself known.

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Thanks so much for joining me.

If you know people who need a little encouragement to share a gift, a message, a skill, a story-- 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.

Put yourself out there, my friend. And always, always remember, if you go looking for joy, you'll most likely find it.

Till next time...

NOTE:

Gilbert, Elizabeth. *Big Magic*. New York: Riverhead Books, 2015. (pp. 260-264)