

Jill Baughan

TRANSCRIPT FOR PODCAST EPISODE 69-FEED SOMEONE

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

This is Episode 69.

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)

Do you remember the family table of your growing up years? If your memories are pleasant, you might realize that that table...was about much more than a table.

Author Shauna Niequist says this about that:

*Many of the most sacred moments of my life have taken place around the table. Young or old, male or female, married or single, I think the table matters for all of us. And I think the table matters whether we're talking about a formal dining room set with matching china or a beat-up coffee table in a first apartment. What matters isn't the food or the table or the settings. **What matters is that we create spaces to see and hear one another...***

So, she says,

I want you to throw open your front door and welcome the people you love into the inevitable mess with hugs and laughter.

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I want you to stop running from thing to thing, and to sit down at the table, to offer the people you love something humble and nourishing, like soup and bread, like a story, like a hand holding another hand while you pray. We live in a world that values us for how fast we go, for how much we accomplish, for how much life we can pack into one day. But I'm coming to believe it's in the in-between spaces that our lives change, and that real beauty lies there.

Most of the time, I eat like someone's about to steal my plate, like I can't be bothered to chew or taste or feel, but I'm coming to see that the table is about food, and it's also about time. It's about showing up in person, a whole and present person, instead of a fragmented, frantic person, phone in one hand and to-do list in the other. Put them down, both of them, twin symbols of the modern age, and pick up a knife and a fork.

We don't come to table to fight or to defend. We don't come to prove or to conquer, to draw lines in the sand or to stir up trouble. We come to the table because our hunger brings us there.

The table is the place where the doing stops, the trying stops, the masks are removed, and we allow ourselves to be nourished, like children. We allow someone else to meet our need. In a world that prides people on not having needs, on going longer and faster, on going without, on powering through, the table is a place of safety and rest and humanity, where we are allowed to be as fragile as we feel.

If the home is a body, the table is the heart, the beating center, the sustainer of life and health.

And, I say, it's important to realize that sometimes the "table" is an end table or a coffee table or something that isn't a table at all, like a lap or the floor. Or a firepit.

Years ago, Ben's elderly Aunt Edith had a tradition of opening her door to the extended family on Christmas night. There were little cookies, and candy and green punch made of lime sherbet and ginger ale. Always the green punch. And of course, what I came to learn as the Holy Grail of Virginia, ham biscuits...This is where I started to realize how important food is. You too may have grown up with a must-have-Holy-Grail food that screamed, "I'm home!")

Anyway, the point was, at this much-loved gathering, NOBODY sat at a physical table. There wasn't space in her little living room for that. So people were on couches and chairs from assorted other places, and of course, the floor.

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And you know what? Nobody cared. Because we weren't there to be fancy. We were there to be together.

Sometimes some people--maybe you--have been hesitant to invite people to your table because you felt like your space wasn't nice enough.

In her book, *Bread and Wine*, Shauna talks about inviting people to their small first house.

We had a big Christmas party one year, and because the town house was so small, the only way to get everyone in and make sure they had access to food and drinks was to set up small stations of food and drinks in every room...

I realized that even those stations weren't enough, and that the only remaining space was our bedroom. Just before guests started arriving, I took a deep breath, shoved all of our clothes and shoes in the closet, and put a platter of sandwiches and an ice bucket with champagne on the piano. At one point in the night, I found a whole group of our friends lounging on our bed with sandwiches and champagne flutes. Later in the evening I found them trying on my shoes.

Or maybe it's not the adequacy of your physical space you wrangle with; maybe it's your prowess (or lack thereof) in the kitchen.

I won't lie, I struggle with cooking. If you do too, you will understand what I mean when I say I am massively insecure about my ability to feed people a meal.

I have unfortunate memories of cooking plastic bags inside of turkeys for 3 Thanksgivings in a row, serving up baked potatoes that crunched, bringing a 9x12 dish of lasagna into the dining room and, as I was setting it on the table, I tipped the dish just a leetle too much, and the whole lasagna slipped out of the dish and onto the table. Oops.

I get tense at the zero hour, no matter how much I plan and prepare ahead of time. Making sure that everything's hot and ready at the same time makes me hyperventilate.

And honestly, it doesn't just happen when I've tried to feed a crowd. I tend to resist fixing dinner for just a couple people. What if they don't like what I give them? What if I mess it up at the last minute?

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But lately, I've come to a profound conclusion:

I need to lower my standards. Maybe you do, too. Maybe you, too, have passed up opportunities to feed the heart and soul of a friend because you thought your ability to fix food just wasn't good enough for "company."

And even if you love entertaining, and love to cook and fix, there's a good chance that you too, feel a measure of stress when things aren't "just right," when they're not turning out as they were in your vision. Maybe you, too, my culinarily gifted friend, could find some joy in adjusting your standards.

Because here's the truth, as Shauna says, in her book, *Bread and Wine*,

What people are craving isn't perfection. People aren't longing to be impressed; they're longing to feel like they're home. If you create a space full of love and character and creativity and soul, they'll take off their shoes and curl up with gratitude and rest, no matter how small, no matter how undone, no matter how odd. (106-7)

So can you think of someone you know who might be longing to feel like they're home? For someone going through a terrible time, someone who needs just a little respite?

Can you simply put on some hot water, make tea, make coffee, go get some cookies somewhere, cut up some fruit or vegetables...pull out some crackers, make or buy that soup and bread and then open the door and just offer this someone or these someones some life-giving comfort...

Can you think of it—not as a presentation or a production, but rather as **creating a space** to see and hear someone who needs to be seen and heard?

A space that doesn't include dusted furniture or even one ounce of cooking prowess. Just attention. And a little sustenance for the body and the soul.

And so my friend,

May you forget the need for fancy and perfect,

May you lose your performance anxiety about "entertaining,"

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And may you change the question in your head from “What will we eat?” to “How does my friend need to be fed?”

Thanks so much for joining me.

If you know people who need a little encouragement to forget the production and just open the door, 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.

Create a space for somebody who needs one, my friend. And always, always remember, if you go looking for joy, you'll most likely find it.

Till next time...

NOTES:

Niequist, Shauna. “Come to the Table.” *Storyline* Blog, April 10, 2013.

Niequist, Shauna. *Bread and Wine*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2013.