

Jill Baughan

TRANSCRIPT FOR PODCAST EPISODE 91-TIGGER UP YOUR EYORE

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

This is Episode 91.

Friends, Christmas is coming soon, and you might have-gift giving on your mind. If so, I have a gift for *you* that might help you with that: It's a guide to making a Joy Box for someone you care about.

Do you know someone who's going through a hard time right now? Do you want to celebrate some goodness that's happening in a friend's life? Do you need to express your appreciation for a job well done or a kindness extended during this past crazy year? Or maybe someone needs to know that you love them? Or even like them?

If so, this guide offers up some ideas for making a joy box that will definitely brighten the day--and maybe even the life--of someone you care about. I've saved you the headspace of trying to "think up" a special gift of encouragement.

Just head on over to my website at jillbaughan.com, sign up for this free download and, as a bonus, you'll also receive the podcast in your inbox every Monday morning--which can be a very good thing all year long, but especially during this season...because

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.

Are you a Tigger or an Eeyore?

These iconic characters from A.A. Milne's Winnie the Pooh have come to symbolize polar opposites who are very good friends. Tigger is the bouncy, perky, eternal optimist; Eeyore is the gloomy, pessimistic original Mr. Glass Half Empty.

If you don't know which character you most closely resemble already, here's a short quiz, developed by author Gretchen Rubin, to help you figure yourself out:

Check the statements that apply to you:

1. *If you're a Tigger, you say things like*

_____ *"Happiness is a choice."*

_____ *"Look on the bright side."*

_____ *"Smile!"*

_____ *"Fake it till you feel it."*

2. *If you're an Eeyore, you say things like*

_____ *"No one can be cheerful all the time. It's fake."*

_____ *"Thinking the glass is always half-full isn't realistic. It's self-deception."*

_____ *"If someone asks me, 'How are you?' I'm going to tell the truth, even if people don't want an honest answer."*

_____ *"Authenticity is important to me. I hate phonies."*

To be honest, I think we all have a little of both Tigger and Eeyore in us, but most people resonate more deeply with one or the other.

And that can cause a little relational tension sometimes.

Rubin says, *"Tensions arise when a Tigger and an Eeyore strive to convert each other. The more they try to convince each other to adopt a different perspective, the more the other resists. Tiggers fear being dragged down by the Eeyores, and Eeyores feel resentful and irritated by the Tiggers' insistent cheer."*

Tiggers: remember, you can't make someone happy. Let your happiness naturally rub off on the Eeyores, but don't exhaust yourself trying to jolly them along. Telling Eeyores "Cheer up!" or refusing to acknowledge anything negative won't make them cheerier. Your effort will just drain you, and it will irritate the Eeyores--in fact, they'll probably hold more stubbornly to their worldview, and may become even more intensely negative to counterbalance your positivity

The opposite of what you want!

They may feel that you're being intolerant of people who think differently from you, and that you want to deny and invalidate their point of view. Your attempts to bring cheer may feel intrusive and suffocating.

Eeyores: remember, you believe you're "realistic" and "honest," but Tiggers may find you gloomy and critical. Because your downbeat emotions are catching (a phenomenon called "emotional contagion"), they dread being sucked into your negativity.

*Remember, too, that while you believe that some Tiggers are "fake," their extreme cheerfulness may be in reaction to **you**, --yes, you may be inciting the very Tiggerness that is driving you crazy!--as a counterbalance against your attitudes; or the extreme cheerfulness may be in reaction to some major happiness challenge elsewhere in their lives. Cut them a little slack.*

For both Tiggers and Eeyores, a good strategy is not to try to make conversions.

So--when it comes to joy, are the Eeyores of the world doomed to gloom?

People have asked me, "Aren't some people just naturally more joyful than others? Isn't it just more difficult to drum up joy for some people?"

To which I say, "I believe it is."

There's been significant research about the possible genetic predisposition for joy, and I'll link to an article about that in the show notes. You can geek out to your heart's content reading about this. But here's the bottom line: Markham Heid, in the article "Are We Hardwired for Happiness," says, "Long story short, genes play a part in a person's capacity for joy. But that part is anything but straightforward."

More than one study has indicated that, at most, 40% of the variation in human well-being is dictated by genetic factors...but, says one researcher, "A 40% genetic influence on well-being implies that environmental influences account for 60%, which is much larger. So if you are able to create a well-being-stimulating environment, you do not have to struggle with your levels of well-being."

"Plainly stated," says Markham, people may be able to reshape the structure or activity of their genes in ways that promote happy, joyful experiences. The gene research thus far argues that, while some measure of a person's joyfulness is genetic, DNA is not destiny. Joyful emotions are almost certainly things that a person can cultivate..."

Whether you're a certified Eeyore or you're just acting like one, especially during this season, you might be needing to ramp up your joy a bit. The good news is, there are a few things you can do to alter your environment that can help you Tigger up your Eeyore a notch.

Has a few suggestions from writer Dustin Wax that might help:

Stop saying that! *How many times a day do you tell people how tired you are? When you screw something up, do you tell people around you how stupid you are?*

For some reason, we feel obligated to undermine ourselves as part of our normal conversation routines. Well, stop. If you're really tired or stupid, you're doing something wrong and need to have a long conversation with yourself — maybe you're in a bad job, a bad relationship, a bad place in your life. But usually, we're just passing time — do so with something positive instead. Tell people how excited you are about whatever you're working on — excitement and energy are contagious and who knows? You might even catch some of it back.

Don't "but". *Replace "but" in your vocabulary with "and". "But" is our way out, our excuse — "I know I shouldn't do this, but...". "And" doesn't give any leeway — it demands action, it orders fulfillment. Try to catch yourself on the verge of letting yourself off the hook with a "but," and see what happens when you put yourself under the thumb of an "and" instead.*

Stop worrying about the weather. *Or anything else you really can't do anything about. There is a wisdom in the Alcoholics Anonymous admonition to accept the things you can't do anything about — use your energy to solve the problems that actually arise instead of fretting over the thousands of problems that might happen.*

Acknowledge and move on. *Despite our best efforts, bad stuff happens. Give your mistakes exactly as much attention as it takes to acknowledge and learn what needs to be learned, and then put it behind you. Don't dwell — dwelling on the negative undermines our confidence and energy and can easily lead to worse mistakes down the line.*

Don't be chipper. *This may seem contrary to my message here, but there's a difference between not creating any more negativity in our lives than life itself throws at us and going through life oblivious to the real negativity that does, in fact, need to be dealt with. Life has a way of throwing us curves, and when come we need all our resources and abilities to deal with them. Don't avoid dealing with the stuff that needs to be dealt with in a vain attempt to insulate yourself from the negative.*

Kind of like, as I mentioned in Episode 38, when I found out I needed a hip replacement. I was forced to face reality when I had an instructional session with the nurse, who showed me exactly what goes on in this surgery. It was wicked sounding, I won't lie. Then she gave me a surgical release form.

If you've ever seen one of those things, you know that it forces you to confront the risks of surgery. This one detailed all the nasty stuff that could happen with this procedure, such as, *neurovascular damage, dislocation of the hip, loosening or abnormal wear of the prosthesis, pulmonary embolus, death, fracture, leg lengthening and blood clots or infection, which could in rare cases lead to the loss of the limb.*

Notice how they sneak *death* in there in the middle or everything else, like you won't notice? But I saw it, people, I saw it, and I didn't like it. I wasn't too crazy about the loss of limb part, either. I left her office that day, begging God for a miraculous healing.

Instead, as He is often wont to do, He offered me an opportunity to exercise a little mental discipline, and change my perspective. After a few days of whining, I decided to accept that offer, roll my eyes as I felt I was risking sounding like Tigger on steroids, and think of all the positive things about having this surgery at such a tender age.

I know, I know. It sounds cheesy and ineffective, like a Band Aid on a gaping wound. However, it honestly helped. And every time I felt myself lapsing into a pity party, I turned my focus to two things:

1. If I had been born 100 years ago, I would be limping and in pain the rest of my life.
2. If I had been born a horse, they would have shot me. Truth.

So there. I Tiggered up my Eeyore, and it really did help. It might help you, too. *Yes, says Markham Heid, a portion of human joy is likely dependent on genetic wiring. But one of the fundamental and ultimately hopeful lessons of the past decade of genetic research is that, when it comes to mental outlook or affect, human beings have the ability to improve their lot.*

And so, my friend,

May you embrace the Eeyore heart you may have been born with. You are wonderfully made.

And may you embrace the Tigger heart you may have been born with. You are wonderfully made.

But may you also acknowledge that, since we could all use a little lifting up at times, *"Joy is out there for the taking. Your DNA can't stop you from reaching out and grabbing it."*

Thanks so much for joining me.

If you know people who might feel better with a little more positivity, I invite you to share this podcast with them, and subscribe yourself on iTunes, 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.

So Tigger up your Eeyore, my friend. And always, always remember: if you go looking for joy, you'll most likely find it.

Till next time...

NOTES:

FREE DOWNLOAD: *Make a Joy Box for Someone You Care About:*

<http://jillbaughan.com/joy-box/>

Heid, Markham. "Are We Hardwired for Happiness?" *The Power of Joy: TIME Special Edition*, 2021.

Rubin, Gretchen. *Are You a Tigger or an Eeyore Plus a Few Points to Consider.*

<https://gretchenrubin.com/2010/10/quiz-are-you-a-tigger-or-an-eeyore-plus-a-few-points-to-consider/>

Wax, Dustin. *Don't Be an Eeyore.*

<https://www.lifehack.org/articles/featured/dont-be-eeyore.html>