

TRANSCRIPT FOR PODCAST EPISODE 113-LEAVE A STICKY NOTE

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

This is Episode 113.

Hey friend, do you know someone who's going through a tough time right now? And maybe you'd love to be an encouragement to them, but you aren't sure how? If so, I have something for you that can help with that. Just click on the link in the show notes, and you'll get a free gift from me: ideas for making a joy box that will definitely brighten the day--and maybe even the life--of someone you care about. And--bonus--getting that little bit of goodness will automatically sign you up to receive these podcast episodes in your inbox every week. You just might need a boost yourself.

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 might inspire a way to uncover a piece of joy you've been looking for. Then, we'll consider how it could 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.

One day, I came home to find a sticky note on the counter. It said, "Aphrodesiacs in the freezer."

My husband was at it again.

He'd been to the grocery store, and as I peeked inside the freezer, I found the four containers of Breyer's chocolate/peanut butter ice cream he'd bought, hoping that my favorite treat would catapult me into an amorous mood.

Well, at least it made me laugh. And realize the power of a sticky note to bring a little joy.

Adam Sherman, a teacher at Spoto High School in Hillsborough County, Florida, can vouch for that.

There are dozens of different scenarios that play out in my high school classroom, he says. I often see students with their heads down, texting, not turning in their homework,

or talking back. This behavior is usually followed by weeks of frustrating conversations with students, begging them to pay attention and get back to work, and then the ever-dreaded phone calls to parents.

One day I found myself having a particularly frustrating day—my hands covering my face as I stared down at my disheveled desk. But suddenly a pack of bright pink sticky notes caught my eye, and I thought back to one of my favorite college classes.

I'd been having a terrible day, and I was completely disengaged. I had no idea what the professor was discussing that day. Suddenly, a classmate slid a piece of paper across the table that said, "Are you OK?"

I'd never talked to this classmate before, and I didn't know how to respond. But I wrote as much as I could on the note—"No"—and passed it back. Though the note didn't solve my problem, I immediately felt better knowing that someone had cared enough to ask how I was doing.

It also gave me the answer I needed for the blank sticky notes I was now staring at on my desk.

As I looked around my classroom, one student caught my eye. He had his head down and showed very little interest in what was happening. So I grabbed a sticky note and wrote the same question, "Are you OK?" on it.

I walked over to the student and placed the note lightly on his desk, patting him on the shoulder and walked away without saying a word. I returned to my desk, made eye contact, and watched as the student wrote back. He walked back to my desk, handed the note to me, and I saw the familiar response: "No."

I looked around to make sure no one else was listening to our private moment and said, "Whatever is going on, you know that I am always here to listen. I know it's hard to think right now, but try to use your work as an escape from whatever is going on. If it's too tough, you come back and tell me." He nodded and returned to his desk, sat down, and finished his work.

Since that moment, I've always made sure my desk is well equipped with sticky notes.

It's easy for teachers to become wrapped up in making sure the lesson is done, rather than making sure every student understands the lesson. In this scenario, I could have called home or sent him somewhere else. But that simple gesture let the student know I cared about how he felt. I found out in a later conversation that that was all he needed—his parents were in the middle of a divorce at home and attention was lacking. It was a nice reminder that kindness is more than respect or the golden rule. It's mutual understanding between two people.

Everyone needs affirmation, and the power of such a tiny gesture can be mighty, indeed.

You can leave sticky notes for your children, a parent, a friend, anywhere they'll be sure to see them: on a locker, a pillow, a book, the TV, on their phone, the front door, the bathroom mirror, the steering wheel of the car...

And you don't have to even personally know the recipient of your note of encouragement.

On a recent trip to New York City, my friend Tamara Letter, author of the wonderful book, *A Passion for Kindness*, stopped at a little café close to her hotel and wrote encouraging messages on sticky notes to place around the city. She left them on bathroom mirrors, gift shop shelves, subway seats and inside books. They said things like "You are loved," and "Smile, you're beautiful!" on the mirror. In fact, her car is always stocked with pens and sticky notes. What a great idea.

And author and artist Liv Lane's life since the fall of 2018 has been *quite the roller coaster ride, with thrilling highs and the lowest of lows. After a few weeks of feeling a squishy lump under my armpit, she writes, I decided to get it checked. After tons of tests, I was shocked — and so were my doctors — to be diagnosed with a rare and aggressive form of breast cancer called triple negative (TNBC).*

A year of grueling treatment and surgeries put my cancer in remission (a huge win!), but created a mountain of complications in my body. While my doctors monitor me closely due to TNBC's high rate of recurrence, it feels like we've also been juggling knives with the ridiculous amount of scary developments.

Last January, she had a post on Instagram that I couldn't forget:

I found a way to relieve my anxiety over having yet another procedure down at Mayo Clinic today: I wrote notes to fellow patients and left them in random places. Spreading a tiny bit of kindness and thinking about the people who might come across each @postit note was a great distraction. I took pictures of a few of them.

Two things inspired me yesterday to do this. First, I literally get choked up by a bumper sticker I saw on the highway that said, "I hope something good happens to you today"—in a world full of pushy, brash bumper stickers it surprised me in the best way. (I had a similar reaction to a photo I saw of a guy wearing a T shirt that said, "Dear person behind me: I hope today doesn't suck. Love, the person in front of you") And second, I saw someone on Twitter share that SHE had just been at Mayo for an appointment and was deeply touched by a "you are loved" note scribbled on a dirty window of the parking ramp. Those two moments inspired me to spread some kindness too.

As Brad [her husband] and I left these love notes behind, we talked about how every single person there was either a patient or a caregiver. Literally everyone who lands at Mayo is hoping for healing and could use a little love and encouragement, I think. So it felt good to help do that.

I'm home now, had a long nap and am still feeling pretty icky and ouchy. But sharing these little day brighteners is already making me feel a little better. I think maybe I needed them too.

The notes in her photos said this:

*I am sending love to your anxious heart. Another patient
I hope this note finds you right when you need the reminder that you are amazing.
Wishing you a day of good answers and great care. A fellow patient
You are stronger than you know. Hang in there. (on a bathroom stall door?)
Hoping you can find ways to feel good today. You are amazing. (on someone's rear view
mirror)*

This makes me think that **leaving notes in places of particular need** might make it extra special--especially **if you happen to be sharing that need**...in a hospital...the parking lot of a nursing home or assisted living residence...or--anywhere encouragement is so desperately needed like, for instance, the disrobing room of a women's center where mammogram anxiety runs pretty high.

Where do you find yourself in the company of people going through a difficult time?

Where do you find *yourself* during a difficult time?

And so, my friend,

May you always be aware of opportunities to encourage
Someone you know
Someone you love
Even a complete stranger who just might be a fellow traveler on the same difficult road as you...

And may you then lift spirit of that person--and maybe yourself--by firing a sticky little joy shot into their day...or night.

Thanks so much for joining me.

If you know people who might be inclined to give a smile the size of a PostIt, 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 an episode, because I so look forward to being with you again soon.

Leave a sticky note my friend...for someone, somewhere. And always, always remember, if you go looking for joy, you'll most likely find it.

Till next time...