

TRANSCRIPT FOR PODCAST EPISODE 114-STAY ALERT FOR AWESOME, PART I
The Classical Definition

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

This is Episode 114.

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.

We use the word "awesome" a lot these days--much to the irritation of some people.

The classical definition goes something like this: *causing or inducing awe; inspiring an overwhelming feeling of reverence, admiration, or fear, as in an awesome sight or an awesome God.*

But *HubPages* writer Shelly Watson gets reeeally irritated when people use it in a way that, as she says, *brings down the truly awesome things in our world and beyond; the word is, in her opinion, overused in its description of mundane, everyday, unremarkable things that happen in our lives.*

Which is one completely valid way to look at it. So in this episode and the next, we'll experience both definitions, starting this week, with the one that describes an experience of reverence, admiration and even fear.

Elizabeth Gilbert wrote about this kind in a story about an adventure she had in her early twenties while she was working as a cook on a ranch in Wyoming.

One evening, she says, I had stayed up late telling jokes and drinking beer with a few of the cowboys. These guys were all hunters, and we got to talking about elk calls--the various techniques for imitating a bull elk's mating call in order to draw the animals near. One of the cowboys, Hank, admitted that he had recently purchased a tape recording of some elk calls made by the greatest master of elk-calling in elk-hunting history, a guy named (and I will never forget this) Larry D. Jones.

For some reason...I thought this was the funniest thing I'd ever heard. I loved that there was somebody in the world named Larry D. Jones who made a living by recording himself imitating mating calls of elks, and I loved that people like my friend Hank bought these tapes in order to practice their own mating calls. I persuaded Hank to go find the Larry D. Jones instructional mating-call tape, and I made him play it for me again and again while I laughed myself dizzy. It wasn't just the sound of the elk call that I found hilarious (it's an eardrum-shredding Styrofoam-against-Styrofoam screech); I also loved the earnest twang of Larry D. Jones droning on and on about how to do it correctly. I found the whole thing to be comedy gold.

Then somehow [side note: they may have been in a slightly altered state of consciousness] I got this idea that Hank and I should go try it out--that we should stumble into the woods in the middle of the night with a boom box and the Larry D. Jones tape, just to see what would happen. So we did.

We were giddy and loud as we thrashed through the Wyoming mountains. Hank carried the boom box on his shoulder and turned up the volume as high as he could, while I kept falling over laughing at the loud, artificial sound of a bull elk in rut--interspersed with Larry D. Jones' droning voice--blasting through our surroundings.

*We could not have been less in tune with nature at that moment, but nature found us anyway. All at once there was a thunder of hooves (I'd never heard an actual thunder of hooves before; it's terrifying) and then a crashing of branches, and then the biggest elk you ever saw exploded into our clearing and stood there in the moonlight, just a few short yards from us, snorting and pawing at the ground and tossing his antlered head in fury: **What rival male has dared to bugle a mating call on my turf?***

Suddenly, Larry D. Jones didn't seem so funny anymore.

Never have two people sobered up as fast as Hank and I sobered up right then. We'd been kidding, but this seven-hundred-pound beast was decidedly not kidding. He was ready for war. It was as if we'd been conducting a harmless little séance but had inadvertently summoned forth an actual dangerous spirit. We'd been messing around with forces that should not be messed with, and we were not worthy.

My impulse was to bow down before the elk, trembling, and to beg for mercy. Hank's impulse was smarter--to throw the boom box as far away from us as he could, as if it were about to detonate (anything to distance ourselves from the bogus voice that we had dragged into this all-too-real forest.).

We cowered behind a boulder. We gawped at the elk in wonder while it blew clouds of frosty breath, furiously looking for its rival, tearing up the earth beneath its hooves.

When the elk finally departed, we inched our way back to the ranch, feeling humbled and shaken and very mortal.

*It was **awesome**--in the classical definition of the word.*

Oh my. Have you ever? Have you ever been consumed with awesomeness--this kind of reverence and admiration? Have you ever encountered a sight or an had an experienced that made your heart pound--and then practically stop beating?

My friends Bert and Brent, both avid deer hunters and best buddies, talked with me about how hard your heart pounds when a big buck comes into view, a pounding you can hear on a microphone if you're recording the hunt.

Bert said, "You hear something crunching in the woods to your left; you turn around and see the biggest deer you've ever seen in your life, and you're paralyzed for a moment. You just stare--in awe--and think, 'What do I do first? Do I thank God? Yes. Yes, I do.' You hear your own heart, thumping da-dum, da-dum, da-dum...Even in retelling it to you," he said, "my heart's pounding."

"Then," he went on, "you raise your gun. You shoot."

And what he said came next surprised me. I figured there was probably some running over to the kill and ceremonial celebration dancing around for a few minutes. But no...

"Then," he said, "you call your best friend."

Oh. So. The awe isn't only in the target of your hunt?

"There's nothing like going out in the dark, sitting, listening to the world wake up," said Brent. A woodpecker flies up and lands inches from your face? You can't get that inside. And getting a deer is amazing. But it all means so much more when you can experience it with someone else."

Obviously, as much as Bert and Brent love hunting--their favorite part is sharing the awe with your buddy, hands down.

And that, quite possibly, could be some of the best awesome there is.

So what about you?

Where is the awesome around you that you may have missed in the past, or may be missing right now? Is it in a view of the mountains or a lake or the beach...or a sunrise or sunset? Holding a baby in your arms? Watching the birth of puppies...or just about anything else? Seeing whales at play, or flowers emerge from bulbs buried in dirt all winter? Listening to music that has the power to change the chemistry of your mind with its beauty?

Oh, let this be your invitation to wake up and pay attention, and thank God for awe that surrounds us, that we're often too busy or distracted or worried to see.

And when you do that, my friend,

May your life be rich in experiences that embody the classical definition of awe; moments when, in Shelly Watson's words *your breath escapes you, when the scene, the actions, the achievement, is so incredible or astounding that only the pinnacle of words has the force and descriptive ability to illustrate and portray what you're seeing.*

Thanks so much for joining me.

If you know people who might benefit from rediscovering this kind of reverence, 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.

Stay alert for awesome, my friend. And always, always remember, if you go looking for joy, you'll most likely find it.

Till next time...