

## TRANSCRIPT FOR PODCAST EPISODE 120-SAY YES

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

This is Episode 120.

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.

When you're presented with an opportunity, is your first response usually a "no"?

Maybe you'll change your mind later, but is your typical knee-jerk a negatory?

Or maybe you know someone like this, and think, "sure glad that's not me." But that mindset is very common, and most of us have at least a little "nuh uh" in us, if we're honest.

So maybe we all could use a lesson in improvisation, like this writer's description:

*The first thing you learn in improv is the importance of "Yes, and..." in moving scenes forward and making them work.*

*In improv, there's no defined script. We play with other players and work together to co-create something. It flows when we truly do collaborate, respect other people's contributions; listen and observe; stay present--and stop trying to "own" or control the outcome.*

*"Yes, and..." is anchored in accepting "offers." What's an offer? In improv it might be a provocative line; infusing a new idea; a character or plot suggestion; an intense emotion; really anything that we can work with to move the scene along in a meaningful way.*

*The antithesis of "yes and..." is "No but..."*

*Where "yes and's..." inspire, energize, invite collaboration, instill trust, "No but's" take the air out of the scene or the possibility.*

If you're listening to this, *you might already be relating this to your own work and life. After all, isn't life and work filled with Improv opportunities? Think about our interactions and relationships in all contexts of work and life: partners, team members, peers, employees, bosses, clients, family, friends, neighbors...*

*"Offers" in life and work come in so many shapes and sizes: proposals, suggestions, ideas and even casual remarks...they aren't always obvious--you have to pay attention and notice when an "offer" is being made.*

*What would be possible if we paid more attention to how we respond to the offers we get daily from our relationships? What would open up if we framed our interaction in a "yes and...." vs. an automatic "No but"?*

*Distinction: I hope you trust that the "yes and..." is not about making you a "yes person"--i.e., passively accepting full-out every suggestion, idea, remark, proposal that comes your way. Absolutely not! Rather, "Yes and..." is about accepting the premise that someone has made an offer. You can use that as a starting point...*

A few years ago, I actually took an improv class; I thought it sounded like fun, in a slightly scary, fairly vulnerable kind of way. But it really was a blast in a slightly scary, fairly vulnerable, really fun way.

Part of the course description included information about the "showcase" that was scheduled after we'd completed the course. This is where all the neophytes put on an improv night, and invite all their friends and family and any random strangers to come and be entertained for the evening.

The prospect was a little terrifying to me, and I determined on the first night of class that I was inviting no one but my husband to watch me bumble around as a newbie, and possibly bomb in a big way.

I completely enjoyed the course, and when it was finished, the night of the showcase, we played a game called "Freeze," where your team members were improvising a story, and you could yell, "Freeze!" at any time, stop the action and insert yourself wherever you wanted, then continue the action. I was on the sidelines, and my teammates were playing a husband and wife, when I got an inspiration, yelled, "Freeze!" and temporarily lost my mind.

I dropped to the floor, lunged at the "husband's" feet, wrapped my arms around his legs, and pleaded, "Don't leave me, please don't leave me! Please don't leave me!" as he dragged me to the edge of the stage, trying to walk. And then he stopped, looked down at my pathetic character, and said, "For crying out loud, I'll be home from work at 5:00!"

Oh, brilliant teammate. And at that moment, I was so glad I'd said "yes" to improv, and wished so much that I had said, "Yes," and invited everyone I knew to witness the brilliance of that act of teamwork.

What else does “Say yes” look like?

It might look like Shonda Rhimes--one of Hollywood’s most powerful women. At one time, she was the creator of three hit shows on television (including *Grey’s Anatomy*) and had three children at home. According to her, she’s an introvert who, at one time, had plenty of reasons to say no when invitations arrived. But one Thanksgiving, her friend Delorse spoke six words that changed her life: “You never say yes to anything.”

It was a wakeup call, and a challenge, and soon after, she began her Year of Yes project: she committed, for one year, to say Yes--to things that terrified her (like giving the commencement address at Dartmouth and an appearance on the Jimmy Kimmel Show); to things that were difficult, like necessary conversations and taking her health seriously. And, according to her book, *Year of Yes*, to explore, empower, applaud and love her truest self. The Year of Yes, she says, changed and saved her life.

Maybe it looks like a side trip, a Plan B, a willingness to accept an invitation to embrace a Plan B when your Plan A isn’t working.

A couple years ago, we took a trip to Europe, and were closing out a day in Prague. My friend and I were going to explore the city, looking for appropriate souvenirs to take home to our special people.

We wandered those beautiful streets for a long time, unable to find just the right gifts. We were tired. We were running out of time, rapidly approaching hangry, and were ready to give up.

At the height of our frustration, however, we stumbled upon a totally magical place that, quite frankly, would have been worth the entire trip to Europe: A store called *Captain Candy*. The sign had a pirate on it, and I figured it was just a cheesy chain store designed to lure tourists in to buy candy made in Des Moines. But no. This store is only in Prague and Vienna (look it up), and one glance inside those doors was better than a trip to Disney World. It looked like a pirate ship on the inside, all wood and spotlights shining on barrels and treasure chests full of the most beautiful confections: bright red gummy strawberries arranged on a platter, beautiful bright gleaming blues and yellows and oranges; candy coated almonds that looked like solid silver. It was intoxicating, let me tell you.

And all I could think was, "If we had found what we were looking for, we would have gone home and missed Captain Candy." It's a metaphor for life that I shall explore further some day. Suffice it to say now, if you are willing to make a habit of saying yes to Plan B, a side trip you hadn't planned on, you may well stumble upon a (metaphorical) *Captain Candy* of your own.

Sometimes, saying yes looks like a little conversation with someone with dementia. When my Mom was still with us, and struggling in many ways, we were talking on the phone, and she was telling me about a book she was reading.

"I'm really enjoying it," she said, because it reminds me so much of you. It's funny, and the people in it remind me of people I know."

"What's the name of it, Mom?" I said. And she read the title to me: *Born To Be Wild: Rediscover the Freedom of Fun*. The book I had written. She had read it a number of times in the past. No wonder it reminded her of people she knew. Our friends and family were in there. I was in there. *She* was in there. And I was so tempted to start in with a back-and-forth, telling her she had read it before, and she would say no, she hadn't, and what would that accomplish?

So I decided to adapt a posture of "yes," embrace her current reality and say, "I'm so glad you're reading a book that's bringing you so much joy, and made you think of me."

And I was.

What about you, friend? Is your first, knee-jerk response "no" to "offers" in life--the offers that come in many shapes and sizes: proposals, suggestions, ideas, opportunities, relationships?

What would be possible if you paid more attention to how you respond to the offers you get daily? What would open up if you framed your interaction in a "yes and" rather than a "no but"?

I know. It's not always easy. Weird, bad things happen. Life takes unexpected turns.

And so, my friend, may you embrace the heart of Shauna Niequist's words, as she recognizes this cockeyed journey of ours when she writes:

*Oh, I feel that in my soul. Yes, and change course. Yes, and the future is different than you anticipated. Keep going, but keep in mind that all your plans and preparations just went out the window.*

*It reminds me of the improv rule "yes, and..." We want "yes, period," right? We're okay with moving forward, as long as we get to control what's coming next. But that's not how it works. Not in improv, not in life. Yes, and yes, and change course. Yes, into the unknown. Yes, even though everything's different. Still yes.*

*I still say yes to life...she says. I still say yes to risk, to adventure, to diving into the wreck, to making something beautiful from loss. I still believe in Jesus Christ...I still believe in forgiveness, laughter, pizza for breakfast, dancing in the kitchen. I still say yes to second chances, staying out too late, watching the sunset like a movie, holding hands, farmers markets, taking the long way home.*

*Is the world still beautiful? Still yes.  
Do our stories still matter? Still yes.*

*Am I still hopeful? Still yes.*

*Will I trust people?*

*Will I trust God?*

*Will I trust myself?*

*Still yes, yes, yes.*

Thanks so much for joining me.

If you know people who might be saying no a little too often, 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](http://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.

Say yes, my friend. And always, always remember: if you go looking for joy, you'll most likely find it. Yes, you will.

Till next time...