

## TRANSCRIPT FOR PODCAST EPISODE 134-PLAN FOR JOY

I'm Jill Baughan, and you're listening to the podcast called Find Joy...No Matter What. This is Episode 134.

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.

There's a lot to be said for spontaneous joy, and keeping yourself open to it. But no less exuberant is an invitation to planned joy.

Rabbi Steve Leder tells this story:

*I once saw a grown man jump for joy. It happened during a small holiday party at his son's home. I was there under the guise of being a guest, but the truth was otherwise. Once all the invitees had arrived, the man's son addressed the gathering.*

*I know you all think we invited you today because we were going to announce our engagement," he said, looking at the woman he had been dating for two years, "but you're wrong. We aren't getting engaged today."*

*He paused to make sure all the air was out of everyone's emotional balloon and then, with impeccable timing, shouted, "We're getting married, and here's the rabbi!" pointing at me. That was when I saw his father jump up and down, again and again, clapping his hands and shouting red-faced with joy, "Hooray!"*

*The next thing you know, the groom flung open the hallway closet, pulled out a marriage canopy and six tuxedos for his father and friends. All the pants were too long, so I grabbed a stapler from the home office desk and stapled each pant leg to the right length, and we had ourselves a wedding. It was, in a word, perfect.*

*I will never forget witnessing the pure exuberance and transcendence of that sublime moment in that man's life. But was it really just a moment, or was it something else?*

*We tend to think about joy as a singular, spontaneous fragment in time caused by external factors we do not control...But the religious understanding of joy views it as part of a process, the distillate of mindful living day after week after month and even after decades of intention.*

*...as opposed to happiness, which is the result of luck and external factors, sudden and fleeting, joy is the fruit of a slow-growing tree. That man was jumping for joy because that moment was not a moment but instead the result of decades' worth of the commitment, anxiety, frustration, laughter and love that is parenting, resulting in the ecstatic, proud moment when he knew down to his bones that he had succeeded...*

*Even joy that seems spontaneous is the result of careful planning...*

*Much like a birth, a graduation or a wedding, these moments of joy were the result of considerable planning, thought, daily observance and commitment.*

And even though there's a lot to be said for inviting joy into the day without a lot of thought and effort, we mustn't forget that sometimes we can actually plan for joy.

One of the most fun and delightful experiences of my life was in the planning and execution of a fiftieth anniversary party for my in-laws.

Let's be clear: anyone who has spent 50 years on this earth married to the same person deserves more party than I could ever hope to throw. But Ben and I decided we'd take a whack at it. We spent weeks trying to figure out a fun way to celebrate this occasion and all the years of joy and sorrow and everything in between that led up to it. Finally, we hit on an idea.

After we enjoyed a down-home dinner of roast beef, mashed potatoes, green beans, hot rolls and that nostalgic dish from everybody's past that I refer to as 'Jell-O with things in it,' we met in the church sanctuary to take the "Arlene and Arthur Happy Anniversary Multiple Choice Quiz," illustrated with slides we had made from old photographs.

To set the scene, we had to tell the story about the interaction that characterized their relating pattern. I've mentioned this before, but it bears repeating. On their wedding night, Arthur said that he gazed at his beautiful bride next to him, her hair shimmering in the moonlight, her face flushed in the afterglow of marital bliss, and whispered tenderly to her, "Sweetheart, would you like a glass of water?"

Lovingly, she gazed back at him, touched by his thoughtfulness, and said, "Why yes, I believe I would."

"That's wonderful," he replied. "While you're up, will you get me one?"

And so it went, for the next 50 years.

The night of the party, with the help of the quiz, we celebrated one of the most unique relationships I have ever observed. For instance, we marveled at their amazing powers of communication with this one:

It's a typical evening. Arlene and Arthur are settled in, watching *Wheel of Fortune* on TV. Arthur grunts. That means he would like

- A. To buy a vowel
- B. To change the channel
- C. To have Arlene make him some peanut butter crackers (We counted. She made well over 300,000 of them in 50 years.)

Or this one, that helped us celebrate Arthur's dependence on Arlene for other things as well:

Arthur is known far and wide for his

- A. Fashion sense.
- B. Horse sense
- C. Nonsense.

The answer could have been any one of those, but we were looking for A, fashion sense.

Many times when he dressed himself, his clothes, according to Arlene, weren't quite right. One day, Arthur had had enough when Arlene told him for the umpteenth time, "You're not going to wear that, are you?" He did the only thing he knew to do. Later when Arlene realized she hadn't seen him for a while, she checked throughout the house and finally found him, all right—in the bedroom, sitting on the bed, defiantly (and completely) unclothed, saying, "Okay, I'm not moving until you tell me what to put on."

Oh they were a pair. And celebrating their colorful life together was one of the greatest privileges of my life. They claimed they'd never forget that night, that everything was perfect, from the music to the multiple choice quiz and slides to the Jell-O with things in it.

That night, Ben and I fell into bed exhausted—from all the logistics of executing such a soiree, yes, but also from so doggone much joy.

Planning for joy, though can look entirely different than that. It can look like *Brad Ryan, and his 92-year-old grandmother, Joy Ryan, who visited all 63 U.S. national parks together.*

Caroline Kucera, writing for Good Morning America's newsletter, wrote that *The duo from Duncan Falls, Ohio, kicked off their adventure in October 2015, when Brad was looking for a way to spend a three-day weekend during veterinary school. He said the idea was sparked by a conversation he had with "Grandma Joy" about his past adventures on the Appalachian Tra*

*"I felt bad that she was always living vicariously through my stories, and so just knowing that she had never seen deserts and mountains and the ocean and these incredible wild*

*places on Earth, it just felt like a responsibility that I had to her to make sure that she had some memories to take away in her life story as well."*

*Brad invited his grandma on a weekend trip to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, anticipating it would be their only excursion together*

*"You don't assume going into that that your 85-year-old grandmother going with you on a camping trip is going to be anything less than challenging," Brad said. "That was my fault. That was my misperception of what age means and more importantly, what her spirit would allow her to do."*

*"I've always tried to be positive in my life and it didn't hurt to try something once," Grandma Joy said. "I didn't want to have to regret the next day that you didn't do it."*

One park then led to another until, as of this writing, they only have one more to go. Obviously, it took a lot of planning. But it yielded unparalleled joy.

You can check out their adventures on [grandmajoyroadtrip](#) on Instagram.

And planning for joy doesn't have to involve enormous amounts of engineering for a big deal. It can be a picnic, a hike, a little shopping trip.

Ingrid Fetell Lee, author of *Joyful*, says *Every year we sit down and plan how we're going to be better people.. **In the process, we forget to plan for joy.***

*As we train our sights on these distant hopes, the small joys can easily get lost in the shuffle. We forget to take the hour-long detour to the small museum, and instead waste the time scrolling on our phones. We forget to keep track of friends, and six months go by without a phone call. We forget about that new recipe we saw, and instead fall into a rut of making the same thing again and again.*

*When we're children, joy seems effortless because someone has planned it for us. As we get older, we can either believe that life has gotten less joyful, or we can take charge of planning it for ourselves.*

So she created a free downloadable "Joy List Planner" that can really help us with that.

It's divided into categories such as "Occasions to Celebrate," "People to See," and

“Outdoor Fun,” to help you brainstorm different ways to find joy by planning a little bit for it. I’ll share it with you by putting a link in the show notes.

It really can inform your calendar, and change your life, says Ingrid. *Maybe you want to make time for a weekly phone date with a friend. Maybe you want to make sure you celebrate a special someone’s big day. Maybe you simply want a little time for inspiration in your week. **Scheduling in joy is making a promise to yourself that it will actually happen.** Productivity experts suggest putting everything that matters to you on your calendar. If you schedule business meetings and exercise, you are calling these out as important. So why not also give your joy this same weight by putting game nights or reading before bed into your calendar too?*

And so, my friend,

Even if you’re not a “planner,”

Or even if you think you’re so busy, there’s absolutely no time to squeeze in the tiniest little bit of delight into your day,

Or even if you’re going through a terrible time and you’re just not in the mood,

May you do it anyway, and make room for joy where you thought there was no room because—I promise you—there is.

Thanks so much for joining me.

If you know people who someone who thinks delight only shows up by surprise, 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.

Put it on your calendar, my friend. And always, always remember, if you go looking (and planning) for joy, you'll most likely find it.

Till next time...

**NOTES:**

**JOY LIST PLANNER:**

Lee, Ingrid Fetell. "Plan for Joy, Not Just Goals." *Aesthetics of Joy Blog*, December 29, 2019.  
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Grandma Joy's Road Trip (Instagram): <https://www.instagram.com/grandmajoyroadtrip/>

Kucera, Caroline. "92-Year-Old Grandma and Grandson Are On a Mission to Visit Every US National Park Together." *GMA Newsletter*, August 25, 2022.

<https://www.goodmorningamerica.com/travel/story/92-year-grandma-grandson-mission-visit-us-national-88406209?fbclid=IwAR02QSj4mBvJ2tsit07d-qLl44Dy0jpPrVyd75QWvninfzMM70ieFSC>

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