

TRANSCRIPT FOR PODCAST EPISODE 135-BRING A CLOWN

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

This is Episode 135.

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. (Music fades)

Few would argue with you about the benefits of having one or more people around to give you emotional and physical support.

The challenge for a lot of people—and maybe you're one of them—is rustling up a willingness to be proactive in calling these people into action when you need their support.

Why don't we---maybe you--ask for support when we clearly need it?

Maybe you don't want to "bother" anyone with your challenges, and you feel like asking for support would be an imposition.

Maybe you're the type of person who thinks that asking for support indicates that you somehow are weak, and you'd rather be perceived by yourself and others as perennially, omnipotently strong.

Maybe you're an "overgiver," feeling as though you can only be a "good" person if you only pour out, and never ask to be filled up.

Maybe you have a little self-esteem issue, thinking that no one would want to support you, that you're not worth supporting.

But friend, God gave us to each other for a reason. He created you for connection with humans, and designed you with a need to feel supported. Also other people need to feel valued by their ability to help you.

It's a win/win situation, pals, so it's important to be proactive in seeking some supportive company along the road.

Like a guy named Josh Thompson did in a crazy way in 2019.

According to BBC News (I can't believe I hadn't heard about this before now), *When copy writer Josh Thompson received an ominous email from his bosses asking to discuss his role at the company, he knew he was facing redundancy.*

The human resources department at FCB New Zealand encouraged him to bring a "support person" to help cushion the blow, an option that is legally required in New Zealand.

But rather than bring a family member, a friend or even a pet, the part-time stand-up comedian decided to splash out NZ\$200 (£100) on a clown called "Joe."

"I was working - because I had a job back then - and I got an email and the email said: 'Hi Josh we'd like to meet with you to discuss some matters in regards to your role,'" he told the BBC from Australia, where he has been "making the most of not having a job".

"Basically I sensed that this was going to be a redundancy (a firing) ... so I thought I might as well try to make the best out of this situation," he added.

"Joe" accompanied Josh for the redundancy meeting, where the clown made balloon animals, although he had to be told to stop a few times as it was difficult to hear above the screeching of plastic.

"Boy, oh, boy, are they noisy," Josh said.

When Josh was finally delivered the hammer blow that he was to lose his job, the clown reacted accordingly.

"He nodded his head along, (and shed a few fake tears) when I received the bad news as if he was also receiving the bad news," Josh said. "Professionalism at its finest, really."

Josh said he'd highly recommend hiring a clown as support for any suspected redundancy meeting.

"If you've got family, friends, step mums, stepdads, step kids, bring them by all means," he said.

"But if there's a clown available, especially Joe, I'd definitely recommend it."

I have no words to express the brilliance of Josh's idea.

And even if such a stunt isn't your thing, actively engaging some support can be simple. When I found out I needed a hip replacement, which was a surprise at best, I was disbelieving and afraid and dismayed. So I called every person I knew who'd had the same surgery, and formed a posse of people who answered questions, assuaged fear and cheered me on for the weeks before and after surgery.

We all need this.

In fact, I believe that God's grand design includes this kind of rallying across the board—even in the animal kingdom. Elephants in particular seem to have none of our hangups about accepting support. Singer Nichole Nordeman shared this about that: *Did you know that in the wild, when a mama elephant is giving birth, all the other female elephants in the herd back around her in formation. They close ranks so that the delivering mama cannot even be seen in the middle. They stomp and kick up dirt and soil to throw attackers off the scent...*

They surround the mama and incoming baby in protection, sending a clear signal to predators that if they want to attack their friend while she is vulnerable, they'll have to get through 40 tons of female aggression first.

When the baby elephant is delivered, the sister elephants do two things: they kick sand or dirt over the newborn to protect its fragile skin from the sun, and then they all start trumpeting, a female celebration of new life, of sisterhood, of something beautiful being born in a harsh, wild world despite enemies and attackers and predators and odds.

Scientists tell us this: They normally take this formation in only two cases: under attack by predators like lions, or during the birth of a new elephant.

This is what we do. When our sisters are vulnerable, when they are giving birth to new life, new ideas, new ministries, new spaces, when they are under attack, when they need their people to surround them so they can create, deliver, heal, recover...we get in formation. We close ranks and literally have each others' backs. You want to mess with our sis? Come through us first. Good luck.

And when delivery comes, when new life makes its entrance, when healing finally begins, when the night has passed and our sister is ready to rise back up, we sound our trumpets because we saw it through together. We celebrate! We cheer! We raise our glasses and give thanks.

And so my friends, whether it's to celebrate good news or encourage each other through a hard time, or sit and surround yourself with people who will grieve with you, or meet a challenge that can only be met as a group,

May you be inspired by a certain bunch of first and second graders, my grandson's football team, who call themselves "Lightning." I watched them practice one day and thought they were very young to be outfitted in helmets and shoulder pads, and careening into each other with what looked to me like total nonsensical abandon.

But even with all that crazy energy, I realized they were learning something much deeper when, at the end of practice, I saw them huddled together, arms around each other's shoulders, praying. And when they had finished, as a most exuberant postscript to "Amen!" the coach shouted, "WHO ARE WE??" and the kids shouted, "LIGHTNING!!" Then the coach shouted, "HOW DO WE WIN??" and the kids screamed, "TOGETHER!!"

Oh yes, young ones. Yes we do.

Thanks so much for joining me.

If you know people who might need to get over themselves and accept a little support, I invite you to share this podcast with them, and subscribe yourself on Apple Podcasts, 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.

Round up a posse...or just bring a clown, my friend. And always, always remember: if you go looking for joy, you'll most likely find it.

Till next time...

NOTES

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