

TRANSCRIPT FOR PODCAST EPISODE 142-ANTICIPATE JOY

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

This is Episode 142.

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.

Sometimes the anticipation of suffering worse than the suffering itself.

Ever seen a 5-year-old start crying before he even gets a shot?

That was sort of like me before my first MRI. I am somewhat claustrophobic, and was freaking out about being trapped in a tube for half an hour, my nose inches away from the "ceiling," with nothing to distract me from my overactive imagination, which had me dreaming about being in the machine, the hospital power going out and me feeling like I was trapped in a giant, permanently sealed can of Pringles.

In the two weeks before the procedure, I called the doctor's office three different times to ask if there was ANY way I could do this in some kind transparent contraption. Of course, the answer was no.

On the day of the procedure, my heart pounding, I walked into the room and was greeted by a sweet technician who said these magic words: "Would you like to listen to some music?" And I said, "Yes, please," right after I said, "Thank you, God."

I actually requested a radio station to help me feel connected to the world outside the can.

After I climbed onto the gurney, she plopped a set of headphones on my ears. Once the music (and a lot of clanking and banging) began, I estimated every song to be about 3 ½ minutes, and counted the songs as I calculated how many of the 30 minutes I had left. Also, I was surprised to find out that it was actually brightly lit in there (not ominously dark, as I

had dreamed up), and if I rolled my eyeballs wayyyy up in my head, I could just barely see the opening to civilization.

Not nearly as bad as I had feared. But I had spent days consumed with anxiety about the whole thing—days I could have spent doing something halfway fun.

Negative anticipation is powerful.

You know this. You have felt it in your own life. But hear this:

As powerful as negative anticipation is, living in anticipation of joy is even more potent.

And I'll bet you have experienced this too—at least on a temporary basis.

Maybe you're a little like Father Mike Schmitz in a recent interview on an Advent episode of Annie Downs' podcast, *That Sounds Fun*, in December. He said this:

*"I don't like surprises. In two years I'll turn fifty, and when people say, "Maybe we'll have a surprise party," I'm like, "Please don't. You would ruin my day...because—kind of like the anticipation of suffering is sometimes worse than the suffering itself, likewise, **the anticipation of joy sometimes amplifies the actual experience of joy itself.** The getting ready for the celebration is part of the celebration. It sounds like I'm a party pooper if I don't like surprises, but what I really mean is, I want to look forward to your visit, I want to look forward to your being here. And Advent gives us that chance not to celebrate Christmas before Christmas is here, but to enter into the preparation for the celebration of Christmas before Christmas is here."*

Every December, how many of us spend an entire month and a lot of effort finding ways to revel in the anticipation Christmas?

We're conditioned to live in anticipation of Christmas, and there are all manner of joyful opportunities available all of December.

Well, obviously, December is over now. But how can we use the lessons from Advent last month to cultivate our anticipation of joy all twelve months of the coming year?

We can, for instance, continue to immerse ourselves in our senses like we do during the holidays, by filling our homes with inviting aromas, with light (keep a string of party lights up year 'round), with sounds (music that lifts your soul), by surrounding ourselves with visuals and art that makes us smile, and making a special effort to have a little time to sit with God in the dark.

Another lovely benefit of living in anticipation of joy is the cold hard truth that the destination might not be all we'd hoped, and if that happens, you'll be mighty glad you enjoyed the prelude to the event.

For instance, maybe you saw TV shows or listened to music about being a teenager that painted a very exciting picture in your head about what awaited you in the hallowed halls of high school.

I shared in Episode 21 about how my own twelve-year old imagination was stoked by a book called *Fifteen* by Beverly Cleary: a sweet story about an ordinary girl named Jane, who spends most of her fifteenth year in adolescent angst, feeling uncool and inadequate, especially when she compares herself to the blonde, convertible-driving boy-magnet named Marcy.

Jane, however, develops a crush on ordinary nice guy named Stan, and the book is about their convoluted little journey toward each other. In my favorite scene, at the very end, Stan had just given Jane his ID bracelet, and was driving her home.

He took her hand in his as they went up the walk together, Cleary writes. Halfway to the house Stan stopped and turned to Jane. He put his hands on her shoulders and drew her toward him. "I'm glad we're going steady," he whispered.

"So am I." In spite of the reassuring weight of his bracelet on her wrist, Jane suddenly felt shy. It seemed strange to be so close to Stan, to feel his crisp clean shirt against her cheek. She could not look up at him. Gently Stan lifted her face to his. "You're my girl," he whispered... Then he hesitated and quickly bent his face to hers. Their noses bumped, but their lips met tenderly, clumsily, one side of his mouth against one side of hers. Jane had not known a boy's lips could be soft. Stan's first kiss--it was a moment to cherish. (pp. 202-203)

Well, believe you me, when I closed the back cover on that book, I thought, "If this is what high school is like, sign me up!"

Let's just say high school for me didn't come close to matching the blissful path of Jane and Stan. But I had so much fun in the "looking forward," the reading of the book. In fact I still have that book and reread it from time to time.

So—just in case the actual destination isn't quite what you'd hoped, if you've been anticipating joy all along the way, you still win.

So what if we approached each day anticipating joy? If we woke up every morning looking forward to delight? Even if life is going bananas.

What if—first thing every morning, when our eyes open, we immediately asked, "God please show me delight today," and then lived in confidence (and attentiveness) that He would do just that?

What if we put a picture of a joyful moment in a frame and set it where we could see it every day as a reminder—not only of delight we’ve already experienced, but also as a prompt to make sure we don’t miss the delight, however small, that’s waiting for us in the day ahead?

What if, last thing every evening, we wrote down a little piece of joy we did indeed experience that day, by golly?

What if we followed the lead of an 8-year-old boy I mentioned in Episode 71, whose mom shared this on Twitter: One day when the little boy was buckled into the back seat of their car, he asked her, “Is it okay to throw the confetti in my pocket?”

Her understandable response was, “No, not in the car! Why do you have confetti in your pocket?”

His answer: “It’s my emergency confetti. I carry it everywhere in case there is good news.”

And so, my friends,

May you always carry confetti in your pocket, (I carry mine in my purse in a little two-inch zip lock bag)

And may you—at all times—be alert for good news, however small,

And may you find that living in anticipation of joy amplifies the joy itself—all of your days.

Thanks so much for joining me.

If you know people who might need a boost along the way, 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 a single one, because I so look forward to being with you again soon.

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

Till next time...

NOTES:

Baughan, Jill. *Find Joy No Matter What Podcast* Episode 24: Persist.
<https://jillbaughan.com/2020/08/17/podcast-episode-24-persist/>

Baughan, Jill. *Find Joy No Matter What Podcast* Episode 71: Throw Confetti.
<https://jillbaughan.com/2021/07/12/podcast-episode-71-throw-confetti/>

Downs, Annie. *That Sounds Fun Podcast Advent Series: Father Mike Schmitz*, November 22, 2022. <https://www.anniefdowns.com/podcast/tsf-advent-series-father-mike-schmitz/>