

TRANSCRIPT FOR PODCAST EPISODE 152-WHEN YOUR BODY BETRAYS YOU...DECORATE
IT

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

This is Episode 152.

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.

Like you, probably, I have had to deal with a few bouts of body betrayal—times when the body does not cooperate with the desires of the soul.

Way back in Episode 38, I talked about my shock and dismay when I discovered I needed a hip replacement.

After a few days of whining, I engaged in a little (maybe toxic) positivity, and tried to focus on a few “bright spots” in the whole ordeal. At the time, I could only think of three, but they were really good:

1. If I had been born 100 years ago, I would be limping and in pain the rest of my life.
2. If I had been born a horse, they would have shot me. Truth.
3. Modern medicine rocks. My doctor asked if I would consent to not being put under general anesthesia. ("Yeah, sure!" I told him. I honestly thought he was kidding!) He preferred a spinal block and a sedative.

And what a fine sedative it proved to be.

When they rolled me into the operating room, I was under the influence, but awake...and that was A-OK, because I didn't care! No sirree, not one little bitty bit! Before the surgery started, I heard Lionel Richie singing their background music-to-operate-by: *Well, I'm easyyy...easy like Sunday morningg!* (and boy, was I easy).

Then I drifted off to dreamland.

But a little while later, I roused a little bit, and heard a noise. "Wow!" I said to nobody in particular, "that sounds like a saw!"

"Indeed," said the doctor, "that's exactly what it is."

Then I heard another noise.

"Wow!" I said again. "That sound like a hammer!"

"Right again!"

Then I remember looking up at the anesthetist; she looked down at me and asked, "Are you okay, honey?" And I replied, "Oh, I'm FINE!" And I really was. I felt so warm and cozy, and I remember thinking, "This is so fascinating. I can't wait to tell all my friends about it!"

Granted, that was not exactly a change in perspective precipitated by an unaltered mind, but still.

My recovery went well. I ended up with a hip that's younger than any other body part I own.

In fact, shortly after the procedure, I talked to my niece on the phone, and I remember her saying, "Aunt Jill, you don't *sound* like you had a hip replacement," and I said, "I didn't have a lobotomy, they just replaced a joint!"

So there! Body uncooperative, but it could've been worse, right?

Then came ten years of an undiagnosed need for a replacement in the other hip. It's a long, boring, ridiculous story, but suffice it to say, it was ten years of much pain and dysfunctional walking. Finally, we figured it out: I needed to have the other hip replaced. The news that time was almost a relief, so I made a another great effort to focus on the positive, and the fact that I wasn't a horse.

A few years after that, because of so many years of dysfunctional walking, I needed a knee replacement. I'll be honest, this was getting old. I was glad for the pain relief, modern medicine and, you know, the horse thing, but I needed some serious help in bolstering my spirits.

So I consoled myself with that third joint replacement by saying, "Okay, there's a fix of sorts for this; and it could be worse. Come on, I don't have cancer or anything."

Oops.

A few months ago, after the positive test results from a breast biopsy were delivered to me by a very compassionate doctor, I learned that you cannot un-ring that bell in your head and your soul. And one day, on a bad day, I stood in the middle of our bedroom and announced to my husband, “I despise my body.” My words startled even me.

But my body was not behaving in a manner acceptable to me, and I was over it.

You know how that feels. It doesn't have to be terminal to be life-altering.

It may be just about getting older when stuff starts to misfire and malfunction.

It may be the inability to get pregnant or sustain a pregnancy.

It may be temporary illness—like the flu or a sinus infection or motion sickness when you're trying to have a good time.

It might be a broken bone or a food allergy or a slow metabolism.

And menopause. Let's throw that mind-bender into the pile.

Sometimes it's a disease, sometimes it's a germ, other times, it's just parts misbehaving, formed wrong, all whacked out.

It's when your body frustrates you or frightens or feels like not your friend.

There are obviously no quick fixes in a ten-minute podcast for such a wide variety of reasons to feel betrayed by your body—some much less serious than others. But I want to share something with you that has helped me, inspired by the story of Shauna Niequist.

In her book *I Guess I Haven't Learned That Yet* (I've previously shared with you from this book because it's amazing. Go get it.) she shares about going through an extremely difficult season of life, physically and emotionally, enduring *chronic pain, living in a broken body with a broken spirit*.

But one day, her perspective changed with a piece of clothing she put on that rebellious body. In her words:

So it's dark and rainy, and I'm running down Tenth Avenue and back throughout the course of the day, from the workspace to Chelsea Market and back. I'm deep into my invisibility phase, and I barely recognize my own self with this short, silvery brown hair. But I'm wearing a nearly floor-length tiered hot-pink dress, nothing subtle about it, swirling around my ankles as I cross intersections and avoid puddles.

And by the end of the day, I lost count of how many people talked to me about that dress. An old man stepped aside with a gallant gesture on the sidewalk, as if to say, “Come through, my

lady.” One woman shouted to me from a bike all the way across the intersection, “You are rocking that pink dress, lady!”

Young people and old people, men and women, all talked to me about this ridiculously pink dress. I was simultaneously deeply uncomfortable and oddly energized. I was so deep into both chosen and experienced invisibility by that point. I didn’t feel seen and I desperately didn’t want to be seen, and the only reason, honestly, that I wore that pink dress was because I was running late and almost nothing in my closet fit well and the usual navy and black-and-white staple dresses were at the dry cleaner. The last thing I was trying to do was swan down the sidewalk like a human ice cream cone. That last thing I wanted was to be seen.

*But I was. I was seen, and apparently that vibrant color made people happy, the way flowers make people happy and outrageous hats make people happy, and it made me think about **how important it is to contribute to joy, even when—especially when—it takes a little bravery to do it.***

*It seems that in some small way that silly dress brought a moment of lightness to my neighbors, and that’s worth something. It made me think about all the years I kept myself hidden, camouflaged, in neutral colors and the most boring possible things in order to not draw attention to a body I don’t approve of. But what if another phenomenon is unfolding entirely? What if my willingness to be seen, just as I am, with my kooky new hair and my flamingo-colored dress, **isn’t about me**, but it’s a freedom and a lightness I offer to the people around me? Here’s something that will make you smile—not my own beauty, certainly, not my body or my face or my hair, but my willingness to show up in full color, in full bloom, one bright spot on a dark day.*

I ask you: Who can resist the idea of being a bright spot on a dark day?

Not me. So this morning, I went to my radiation appointment in my gym clothes, which included a crazy pair of tiger print leggings. As soon as the radiologist saw them, she smiled and exclaimed, “Oh I love those!” And I thought, “Well there ya go.” So I decided to wear a crazy pair of leggings to my every hot date with the linear accelerator machine—and generate some some sunshine in that room...and maybe beyond.

I’ll let you know how it goes this next month.

And until then, my friend,

May you, too, consider putting something on that rogue body of yours, something that might bring a little joy: a color, a print, a pin, a hat, some sunglasses, cool shoes—anything that might brighten the spirit of those you encounter.

And then when you do, may you, in Shauna’s words, be willing to *show up, unarmed and unfiltered and wildly imperfect, looking the reality of life full in the face. Willing[ness] to show up, not out of a place of strength, but out of a shared vulnerability. [saying] Here we are.*

Here's what's been broken along the way. Here are our bruises and scars, our fears and secrets. Here I am, showing up anyway.

A Light. From me. For you. Compliments of a bit of broke down and to' up.

Thanks so much for joining me.

If you know people who are feeling some body betrayal these days, 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.

Decorate that thing, my friends. And always, always remember: if you go looking for joy, you'll most likely find it.

Till next time...

NOTES:

Baughan, Jill. "Thank God for Weird Stuff." *Find Joy No Matter What Podcast*, Episode 38. <https://jillbaughan.com/2020/11/23/podcast-episode-38-thank-god-for-weird-stuff/>

Baughan, Jill. "Wear Your Joy." *Find Joy No Matter What Podcast* Episode 105. <https://jillbaughan.com/2022/03/07/podcast-episode-105-wear-your->

Niequist, Shauna. *I Guess I Just Haven't Learned That Yet: Discovering New Ways of Living When the Old Ways Stop Working*. Zondervan, 2022.