

TRANSCRIPT FOR PODCAST EPISODE 154-BE NOT AFRAID TO BUMBLE.

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

This is Episode 154.

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.

Once upon a time, I was feeling rather stale, in need of some of freshness, and became convinced that one way to do this was to inject a little novelty into it. My venture, I decided should probably be something small and simple—like downhill skiing. I had always wanted to learn, and though I was afraid that I might be too elderly, I nervously signed up for a church ski trip anyway.

I rode the bus to Snow Land, rented the skis, and took the beginner lessons Here they taught us one method of stopping: the snowplow, when you point your feet inward till your ski tips touch and form a wedge shape.

“Cool,” I thought. “Sounds like an easy way to control my speed. I’ll be shushing in no time!” Of course, being a nonathlete, I took quite a few spills at first, but after a few hours, I was snowplowing my way down the bunny slopes without breaking anything. When I’d had enough for the day, I made my way over to a wide expanse of snow, where all the trails converged and led to the lodge. It was pretty high up, but I figured I could snowplow my way down and be okay.

Big mistake. I do not recall anyone telling me that you cannot, you must not, try to snowplow down a steep hill. But I didn’t know any better, so down I went. At first it was okay, but as I picked up speed, I could see that this technique was going to be ineffective at best, and lethal at worst, because at the bottom of the hill were five hundred people, or so it seemed, milling around, waiting in lift lines, partying down. Little did they know just how down that party was about to be.

I tried snowplowing harder, but my legs just kept spreading farther and farther apart, until I couldn’t even fall over. I could only keep going, faster and faster.

I tried yelling something like, “Comin’ atcha!” or “Look out belowwww!” or “Fire!”— although it’s hard to remember exactly what I screamed, because none of my warnings succeeded in parting the multitude. I was terrified, thinking that this must be what it feels like to run into an oncoming train.

And then I hit them, full force, my already-spread-apart legs spreading even father. Can you say, “Wishbone?”

My body parts became their body parts in a painful, chaotic tangle of humans and skis. I also heard a few choice words aimed at describing my athletic ability and aptitude.

“Sorrysorrysorrysorrysorrysorry!” I yelled at no one in particular. Like that made an actual difference.

Miraculously, no one was seriously hurt, although I was severely stretched. And I went on that day to take another ski lesson. By the end of the weekend I could navigate that hill just fine. Still, I’ve always felt bad about the distress I caused all those victims of my colossal misjudgment.

No doubt you yourself have misjudged, bumbled about, and generally made biiiig mistakes your share of times, and, good news, Chris Haigh, writer and co-host of the podcast “North by Nerdwest” has a few suggestions for us all to help us deal with our mess-ups.

He writes: *Maybe you said the wrong thing in the heat of the moment, or did something you never would have if not for your emotional state. We’ve all been there, and it’s agonizing. The key, really, is figuring what to do after the deed.*

1. Apologize immediately.

Saying “sorry” really is the best policy when it comes to committing a screw-up of any magnitude. Staying indifferent is insulting and implies that you don’t even care, which comes across as deeply rude.

Okay, I did this, although it was a pretty quick apology, yelled almost in advance of the accident. And I’m not sure exactly how many people took it to heart...but at least I didn’t come across as “deeply rude.” A few points for that.

2. Get some perspective and a reality check.

Hopefully, the situation you’ve just instigated isn’t too serious (i.e., something that will result in a stint in criminal court or your family never speaking to you again), and if so, it helps to try to logically and objectively evaluate what you’ve done...Chances are you haven’t ruined anyone’s life.

I do remember yelling, “I’m a beginner! Just learning! Only know how to snowplow!” into the ensuing chaos I’d just created.

3. Take a break.

One of the best things to do is to get yourself out of the environment in which the mistake occurred, to stop your mind from dwelling on the situation...Mulling over the mistake you made is only going to cause you to lose your focus...and end up in a shame spiral.

Go take a breather. Get yourself out of that negative headspace that will continue to haunt your mind and affect your ability to be a normal, functioning human being. Take a solid 15 minutes to gather your energy and strengths. Then

4. Make sure it doesn't happen again by crafting a plan.

Decide exactly what you did wrong, and really think about what you can do in the future to help prevent that from happening again. Learn something, remember something, put something into place—make a concerted effort. After you've sorted your plan out, go to the person you offended or affected with your screw-up, tell them what you're going to do to prevent it from ever happening again.

Oh good advice. And while I couldn't get back in touch with the horde of people I'd "offended," I did tell a more experienced ski buddy what happened, and asked her how in this world anybody descended that slope without injuring anybody. "Oh no," she said, "You can't snowplow down a long steep slope!" (Duh.) "Go across, from left to right and descend that way to control your speed." Voila. I had a plan.

5. Be kind to yourself.

Finally, Chris writes, practice a bit of self-compassion following a moment of sadness over a mistake...Don't go beating yourself up, and don't dwell on your mistake to the point of it having a detrimental effect on your mental health.

I obviously still feel bad about causing so many people so much momentary distress. It did, however, make for a good lesson and a memorable story. But I must tell you that most memorable bumble I made happened later that night when several friends and I were clomping around in our ski boots, trying to get from the main lodge to our bunkhouse.

It was dark, so we couldn't detect the expansive sheet of ice that covered the parking lot we were trying to cross. And as you would expect, we kept falling, over and over, slipping and sliding and crashing to the ground. It was funny at first, but at one point my keister was getting weary of the abuse. I hauled myself up one more time and all of a sudden, a man appeared in the dark, a staff person who had seen us struggling and had come over to help.

One by one, he escorted us across that ice field.

And I will never forget, in the middle of my clumsiness, the feeling of being held up.

Somehow, he was sure-footed on that glassy surface, and said, "Just relax. I've gotcha." So—finally--I did. And when I relaxed into his strength and sure-footedness, I could trust him to get me across that treacherous territory.

And that night I couldn't help but think, "Kind of like God."

Sometimes he lets us crash, spread-eagle into disaster.

I don't know why.

But somehow, in the middle of it all, He looks with compassion on us and our ignorance and spills and colossal misjudgments.

And so, my friend,

Whether you have fallen off, fallen back or fallen down,

Whether you did when you shouldn't have, or didn't when you should have,

May you remember that God is there with you in the dark, offering an arm around your shoulders, and an invitation to relax into His strength and trust Him to get you across the treacherous territory of a day.

Thanks so much for joining me.

If you know people who are discouraged because they have screwed up big time, 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.

Be not afraid of the bumble, my friend. And always, always remember, if you go looking for joy somewhere in there, you'll most certainly find Him.

Till next time...

NOTE:

Haigh, Chris. "Don't Panic! 5 Things To Do When You've Messed Up," *Lifehack*, March 9, 2023.

<https://www.lifehack.org/articles/productivity/dont-panic-5-things-when-youve-screwed.html>