TRANSCRIPT FOR PODCAST EPISODE 122-EAT DESSERT
(JUNE 2023 EDITION)

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

And this...is gonna be a blast.

I have some great news to share with you: I have a contract from a publisher who has accepted my proposal to write a devotional all about joy. Like the podcast, there will be stories, there will be depth, and there will definitely be a sense of humor. Because God Himself has a sense of humor, I'm sure of it.

So please, if you're not already on my email list, go to jillbaughan.com and sign up so I can keep you updated on the progress.

I have long wanted to write a book for you, one you could put on your nightstand to fill your head and heart and give you hope for joy before your head hits the pillow at night, or when you first open your eyes in the morning. Also, I have long wanted to write a book that you could give to someone you care about, someone whose joy may have gone underground these days.

And now I have the opportunity to do that, and I am—of course—over JOYED.

So.

To give me the head-space and soul-space to do that, I will be giving book-writing my total focus this summer. But I have something very special planned for you during June, July and August. Each month, we'll focus on a different theme with weekly episodes that are Greatest Hits from the podcast vaults.

And this month—I can't wait—the theme for these episodes is…FUN.

And I know you need some fun in your life, because…

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.

Not long ago, I was in a local bookstore and came upon an irresistible title that I'm convinced you will love as much as I do: *Dessert Can Save the World: Stories, Secrets, and Recipes for a Stubbornly Joyful Existence.*

It's the kind of book I put on my nightstand to fill my soul with goodness as my head hits the pillow.

And really, in my nocturnal universe, this read gave new meaning to the phrase Sweet Dreams.

So I must share it with you. Prepare to smile--even at the back cover, which says, *Dessert connects us heart to heart like almost nothing else. Dessert brings us together in good times and bad, celebration and solace. It marks big and small milestones and creates memories of comfort and joy. And Christina Tosi, the founder and CEO of Milk Bar, believes it can save the world. Does the combination of sugar, flour and butter have some magical ability to fix all the craziness of our modern existence? Of course not. Tosi knows a cookie is just a cookie--but bringing the joy a cookie holds into every area of your life most definitely can. The spirit of dessert--the relentless, unflinching commitment to finding or creating joy even when joy feels hard to come by--is what can save us. And then we, in turn, can each save the world.*

Tosi, an award-winning pastry chef, describes the first bite of dessert--even if it's taken by chefs stuck back in the kitchen--as *straight-up joy.*

This book she says, *is for everyone who is crazy in love with dessert (which, based on my highly analytical calculations, is pretty much everyone) and for anyone who just plain wants more joy in their life (again, pretty much everyone). Think of this book as a big ol' party to which I've invited a bunch of stories, a few unorthodox recipes, and all the secrets I've discovered thus far that transform our outlooks, our relationships, our work, and our entire collective existence into something boldly optimistic and stubbornly joyful.*

She claims that dessert has superpowers; it *marks big milestones and reminds us to celebrate the small wins…It's a lightning rod of unadulterated good vibes and the light at the end of the tunnel, whether that means finishing your homework so you can go out for ice cream or running five miles to you can then crush a sleeve of Double Stuf Oreos while plopped blissfully on the couch. Hope, wonder, indulgence, escape, frosting…dessert has it all.*

Baked goods and treats connect us heart-to-heart like almost nothing else. Gestures of friendship and support have a habit of showing up as lemon bars or tins of fudgy brownies. Food, no matter how delicious is still fuel, but dessert is pure soul balm. Meatloaf and mashed potatoes can comfort our souls, but cinnamon rolls with cream cheese frosting mainline healing and love straight into our hearts. We say with platters of baked goods the comforting

words that fail us in hard times, and we send treats to let people know, "I see you…I'm here…I got you."

Furthermore, she says, *the joy trails we can trace throughout our lifetimes are very often paved by dessert memories. French fries dipped in a chocolate milkshake, apple cider doughnuts from the pumpkin patch, cookie dough licked from the spatula when no one's looking, strawberry shortcake…homemade peppermint bark stored in an old ball jar, local pastries devoured on an epic road trip…*Tosi loves the spark in people's eyes when they share these memories.

These tastes, she says, *forever light up the parts of our brains that make us feel safe and special, and then we grow up imprinted with the knowledge of how to give those feelings to someone else.*

That, she concludes, *is the power of dessert…You probably just never thought about how it's taught you to live a more joyful life and to spread that posi-vibe spirit to others…Dessert brings us together in good times and bad, celebration and solace. But most of all, dessert can bring us on home to love.*

I told you in a previous episode about the magic at my Grandma Ellis' house. She always had a stash of little Tootsie Rolls somewhere (I never did know exactly where they were hiding.) She also had a steady supply of little Cokes in glass bottles for us to guzzle at will. But the grandest treat of all? Frozen Milky Ways that she kept in what she called the "deep freeze"--a big freezer she kept in the spare bedroom. And before you ask, I'll answer: I have no idea why there was a freezer in the spare bedroom; I only know that when I spent the night with her, I always requested to stay there, where there was dessert at the ready all night long.

But my favorite chapter in Tosi's book describes my personal favorite phenomenon: the dirty dessert secret. She describes it like this: *Weird, messy, lowbrow, childish, cheap, over-the-top, sweetened or dyed with un-PC ingredients…dirty dessert secrets are deliciously indulgent and thrillingly ours. They're a little bit scandalous, and we like it that way. That makes them all the more precious to us. These are the "slightly horrifying if anyone ever found out" foods and rituals that we keep hidden away, safe from prying, judgmental eyes. The only thing truly "dirty" about them is our belief that we need to be ashamed of them. In the grand scheme of things, does anyone really care if you love to leave your bright yellow marshmallow Peeps out of their package for three weeks after Easter Sunday so they get rock hard on the outside yet stay spectacularly chewy in the center? No, they don't, and I'll tell you why.*

Because everyone has a dirty dessert secret. Yes, everyone.

A lifetime of creating and collecting dirty dessert secrets has taught me this truth. I don't care whether you're ultrasuccessful or struggling to make ends meet, type A or easygoing, cultured or super casual, there is at least one dirty dessert secret that makes your toes wiggle. Don't even try to tell me there isn't, because I won't believe you. And whatever it is, I certainly won't

judge you. Trust me, I've heard them all! Spooning out the inside only of an entire pecan pie; mixing a packet of instant hot cocoa mixed with maple syrup to make "fudge"; gummy bears suspended in cherry Jell-O; Oreos used as a spoon to scoop peanut butter straight from the jar…it's all gloriously fantastically amazing.

One of the best things about a dirty dessert secret is that you don't have to share it with anyone--the dessert or the secret. You can eat as much as you want, however you want, wherever you want. It's a judgment-free zone, where no one knows or cares how much or how little you eat, or how you consume it. It's all yours--do with it what you want! You can eat one bite every hour standing in front of freezer or devour the whole thing while in the bathtub. Use a fork or eat it with your fingers. Mind your manners or have at it with reckless abandon.

Just one of my personal dirty dessert secrets is eating Breyer's Reese's Peanut Butter Cup Chocolate Frozen Dairy Dessert--directly out of the carton (why bother with a dish?), almost always when I'm standing up, leaning over the kitchen counter, and mining the pieces of peanut butter cup out of the ice cream, directly out of the carton. With a fork. For maximum dig-ability. It looks like a plowed up field after I've had my way with it a couple of times, and that other person who lives in my house must buy an extra carton just to get the goodies, but he doesn't seem to mind. Obviously, he understands how my important need for a solo experience with my dirty dessert secret.

And sometimes you'll even see evidence of a dirty dessert secret on TV.
Maybe you're familiar with the TV show, *The Middle*, where Frankie, the mom of the family, had a habit of squirting spray frosting from the can directly into her mouth--sometimes in a closet, so she could be alone--when life got too stressful. She also had a cookie stash in her bedside table. I loved this woman.

Tosi says that *Slowing down to indulge in these private moments is more than just important. It's essential. We all do and give so much--to our families, our work, our friends, our community--that we deserve to carve out a small space for these moments in our day and in our emotions. These miraculous dirty dessert secrets existed long before the idea of self-care ever hit the covers of women's magazines, and they will live on long after popular culture moves on to its next wellness trend.*

Self-actualization through frozen York Peppermint Patties eaten for breakfast in the car on the way to work? Bull's-eye, baby.

And even after all this talk about dirty dessert secrets being a personal and private thing, Tosi says that they can also be the *ultimate people connector.* That *nothing breaks down barriers between humans more than being vulnerable with one another! When we spill our dirty dessert secrets, others are usually so relieved to learn they're not the only ones who love something so utterly and hilariously weird or gross, that they'll fess up theirs in return. And that leads to explosive laughter and an inexplicable kind of bonding magic as one person's down-and-dirty tastes recognize another's. I'm not saying that speaking our truths about dirty dessert secrets can facilitate world peace, but I'm not not saying that, either.*

The sharing is so magical, she says, because *dessert is the anti-grown-up food. It's not serious or responsible. We all work so hard to keep up the personas and signposts of being sensible, mature adults, so it's phenomenally freeing to let all that go for a moment.*

The trick to getting people to open up and share their dirty dessert secrets, she says, *is to divulge yours first.*

So keep that in mind if you decide to have a few friends over for such an un-adult event. Just promise that there will be no judgment when you ask your guests, "Who are you when no one's looking?"

And so, my friend, when you find yourself in need of some life-giving levity in your day or your life,

May you chase after the *spirit of dessert: the relentless, unflinching commitment to finding or creating joy even when it feels hard to come by,*

And when find it, may you revel in it by yourself **and** share it in your own way, to let someone know, "I see you. I'm here. I got you,"

And as a result, with every delectable morsel, may you leave the world a little bit sweeter than it's ever been.

Thanks so much for joining me.

If you know someone who could use a measure of sweet delight right now, 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 an episode, because I so look forward to being with you again soon.

Go after some dessert, friend. And always, always remember, if you go looking for joy, you'll most likely find it.

Till next time...