TRANSCRIPT FOR PODCAST EPISODE 13: GET INTO MISCHIEF
(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.

When I was in middle school, nothing catapulted me to giddiness any faster than the prospect of a sleepover--also known as a slumber party back in the day--wherein almost no slumbering took place. Instead, we spent most of the night in hot pursuit of cheap thrills by telling scary stories, playing Truth or Dare, or--my favorite--making anonymous phone calls.

Few activities showed off our dazzling wit as much as calling boys we had crushes on, or even total strangers and mesmerizing them with charming lines, such as, "Is your refrigerator running? Better go catch it!" or " Is your house on Main Street? Better move it before a car hits it!" or my personal favorite, "Is Red there?" (Red who?) "Red pepper! Ain't that a hot one?" After each "good" call, we would collapse into gales of laughter and congratulate ourselves for another prank phone call successfully executed, thus making the world a better place in which to live.

Caller ID on everybody's phone has put the skids on that little preteen pastime, but that activity only whetted my appetite for harmless mischief. You see, I come from a long line of pranksters. One of my parents' favorites was to gather a group of friends at 5:00 a.m. on a Saturday, call someone they all knew, and say, "Hey! Good morning! We'll all be over at your house in about five minutes for breakfast!" and then actually show up with doughnuts and coffee in hand and bang on the door until granted entrance.

I remember being hauled around as a child on these outings, fascinated at the very thought of adults doing something this perfectly ridiculous, and awed by what my parents' friends looked like fresh out of bed, before they'd repaired the sleep damage. Anyway, I thought it was terribly adventurous, not to mention fun, and legal to boot.

My brother contributed to the tradition when I was six or seven, organizing a group (the two of us) he called the "Vacation Tricksters." Weeks before our family vacation, we would meet in a little room upstairs in our house. I would sit in a cardboard box (I have no idea why), and he would preside over the meeting. Actually, he called the meeting, formed the club and ran the show. I did everything he said (the story of my young life), but I was having fun, so why not?

Anyway, we met to discuss the tricks we would play on our parents on our vacation. Ted had ordered an assortment of rubber vomit, plastic ice cubes with rubber flies inside them, and a couple piles of fake dog poop. We were set.

On the actual vacation, in one particular motel room, he decided that we would use the rubber-spider-on-the-pillow trick. I, of course, couldn't keep my mouth shut ("Mom! Daddy! Isn't it time to *go to bed* and put your head on the pillow?") I couldn't wait for them to see the spider. I imagined them catching sight of it, screaming in terror and beat it to a bloody pulp with a shoe or something. Oddly enough, I have no memory of them ever having any reaction to even one practical joke we attempted to play.

Grandma Pinney, however, was a different story. Since Grandma thought we were perfect, she believed Ted when he told her that someone (he probably blamed it on me) had ralphed on her carpet, as he had strategically placed the fake puke right outside the kitchen door.

She came out, took a look, said "Oh boy..." and hustled off to get a rag to clean it up while we little goofballs were pounding the floor, thinking it was the funniest thing we had ever seen.

As I grew into adolescence, my brother instructed me in the exquisite art of toilet papering. Some people call it TP-ing; we call it rolling.

Now let me just offer a disclaimer here: I'd ask you to give me a little grace, and keep in mind that this was wayyyy before our current crisis which has inspired the mass hoarding of bathroom tissue. What I'm about to describe to you is really about showing people that you love them...

So. My first experience with this art form involved a set of ground rules. First, you roll the houses of only the people you love, and you never do it as an act of malice. And since this is not to be an act of malice, you should never roll a house if the sky threatens rain. This would be just flat-out mean, since extracting wet toilet paper from trees takes years. You either have to call the fire department or let it biodegrade.

Anyway, when I was a teenager, Ted (oops, did I just tell you his name?) consented to teach me how to roll a house properly. We started with our preacher's house, because we loved him so much. I'll never forget the thrill of crouching in the bushes, bounding around the yard, learning how to snap my wrist just so to send a roll flying over the roof and down the other side of a house...and, best of all, finishing up and admiring a job well done. it looked like a snowstorm had hit the house in July. Just beautiful.

After that, I was hooked, and went on to roll several more houses of people I loved. And only one time, when our buddy didn't realize that we were friends (as opposed to enemies) approaching did anyone ever shoot at us. Actually, he shot his gun up in the air to scare us off, which worked. He was the only guy in my Sunday School class who had the reputation of being "the boy who could not be rolled" and has it to this day, even.

Anyway, since then, I have rolled dozens of home of people I love. Sometimes we do the outside, sometimes just a room inside. (The trick here is to find where they hid the toilet paper--people have taken to hiding it when I come over for some reason--and roll them with their own paper so you don't have to go out and spend your own money.) One time, I persuaded a friend's daughter to give us the house key so we could roll the entire inside of the house while our friend was away. Oh, it was magnificent when we were finished.

I have also rolled offices and other workspaces, card and other inanimate object belonging to someone I loved. The key is to remember that this is an act off affection, and you must make sure the person knows that if you didn't love them, you would not spend the time and

effort to shower them with this artistic attention. In fact, that is the key to all truly successful mischief-making: affection, not malice.

It also pays to be a little careful, however. Consider the case of my friends Fred and Ethel (names have been changed to protect the innocent): Pranksters that they were, they decided it would be fun to take a sponge cake to their friends, Lucy and Ricky. And I do mean a sponge cake, as in made out of a real sponge. They cut the sponge to look like a layer cake, iced it up with some chocolate frosting, placed it on a decorative plate, and brought it to their friends as a gift. Then they waited a few days for a response.

In the meantime, Lucy and Ricky had some friends who'd had a death in the family and, as we all know, the first response of most people to death is "bring food." They were short on time, and decided to take Fred and Ethel's beautiful untouched "sponge cake" to the grieving family as a sign of their care and concern.

Days passed. When Fred and Ethel finally could stand it no longer, they asked Lucy and Ricky how they liked the "sponge cake" to which Lucy and Ricky had to confess, "Well, to be honest , we gave it to the grieving Cleaver family."

Fred and Ethel, appropriately mortified, told them the whole story, to which they responded also by being appropriately mortified...and they all wondered what in the world the grieving Cleavers were thinking of their crass sense of humor. When they finally got the nerve to apologize, they found the Cleavers to be most forgiving, if not fairly confused for a while.

All that is to say, mischief can be enormous fun, but only if 1) nobody gets shot at, 2) you don't "regift" food that comes from a questionable source (Fred and Ethel *did* have a reputation for practical jokes, and 3) you play tricks that inspire laughter on people whom you are certain will actually laugh.

So, let me ask you this: Could you bring joy to someone you love--or at least like--by engaging in a little shenanigan or two?

The writer of Ecclesiastes in the Bible, said that there's a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven...that there's a time to mourn and a time to laugh. Now, I will be the first to concede that this author probably did not have practical joking in mind when he wrote Ecclesiastes, but the heart of the message, to me is this: It's a beautiful thing to shower this kind of attention on a friend--when you're well enough acquainted with them to know that they would appreciate--and are maybe in desperate need of--a good laugh from somebody who cares whether they smile or not...

(*Expressive Piano eases in.*)

And so, my friend,

May you someday fall in a heap in a yard belonging to beloved friends, laughing, after you have felt the divine tension of trying to finish rolling their house while they sit blissfully unaware in their living room, watching TV,

or if that turns out to be totally inappropriate,

May you, with a mischievous grin of your own, coax a smile out of someone who hasn't for a while...

And may you, one day soon, stir up some much-needed joy in this world with a little...monkeyshine.

(*Expressive Piano* gradually fades out.)

Thanks so much for joining me.

(*Feeling Happiness* eases in.)

If you know someone who would be game for showering a little unorthodox attention on an unsuspecting but totally appreciative soul, 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.

Stir up a little mischief, my friend. And always, always remember, if you go looking for joy, you'll most likely find it.

Till next time...