TRANSCRIPT FOR PODCAST EPISODE 65-TAKE A VACATION BUT NOT TO ESCAPE (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.

Well, vacation season officially starts today, and I have a challenge for you: Next time you're in a roomful of people, shout, "Hey, anybody got a vacation disaster story?"

You'll be there all night swapping tales of woe, I promise. This is not to say that vacations are bad—I love them—only that the best way to get ready for one is to a) live the rest of your mundane life pretending you're on one, and b) avoid thinking that you're on vacation to escape reality.

Let me explain: a) Haven't you noticed that when you're on vacation, you wake up most days in a state of anticipation, looking forward to the day and its promises of delight? This is good; keep doing this. But b) remember that if you can't play well in the moments and days the rest of the year, my guess is you won't be very good at vacation.

The idea of taking a vacation to escape reality is, in my opinion, not only overrated, but also dangerous, mainly because…well…what if it all goes wrong? Or even a little something goes wrong? If you've seen the movie *City Slickers*, you'll remember the three middle-aged guys on a quest to escape from their real lives that were full of what most real lives are full of: jobs, financial concerns, and family responsibilities, with a lot of ordinariness thrown in on the side.

They had done everything from Baseball Fantasy Camp to running with the bulls in Pamplona, and were now getting ready for their greatest escape of all: a Western cattle drive. Of course, disaster strikes, and they end up finding out that life's meaning is not found in escaping life. Can I get a witness to that?

I'll bet I can—from everyone who has ever tried to make a break for it by taking a vacation that turned out to be less than the thrilling adventure they envisioned.

Cruises—while many people think they are fantastic—seem to be ripe environments for surprises. Our friends Waybne and Jeanne took a cruise once. They packed warm-weather clothes, dreamed of tropical beaches and got on a boat to paradise. But it just so happened, their boat was the last one to leave the port before it closed. A big storm was brewing.

It was a good thing they didn't know it. Well, they didn't know it until 20-foot waves started pitching their boat around. Most of the guests spent the next couple of days hurling into the Atlantic.

At least they had paradise to look forward to…but paradise turned out to be a lot colder than they anticipated. Freak weather. It almost never happened, claimed the natives. Jeanne brought only one pair of long pants. She wore them four days in a row.

Actually, planning an escape that depends on the weather is asking for trouble. What do you do when you go to the beach and it rains all week? ("Fight and eat," said a friend of mine who returned from six straight days of downpours. Of course, it cleared up as they were leaving.)

Most likely, though, we violate the true meaning of a vacation when we orchestrate and engineer the good time right on out of a good time. Our first trip to Disney World was a great example of this. Ben and I, as young parents, were set to give our six-year-old daughter a few days of relentless fun.

We stayed off the Disney property, so every morning we had to get up at 6:00 in order to get breakfast at 7:00 and be panting at the gates when they opened at 8:00, so we could race around the park till it closed. We never got around to dinner until about 9:00 each evening, but that was the time when we could talk about all the fun we'd had that day…right before we fell face down into our plates…asleep.

On the third day, we were on Paradise Island, waiting for a ferry to take us back to the Magic Kingdom for more fun. Jamie was having a fine time playing in the sand when the boat arrived.

"Come on, honey," we urged. "Time to go somewhere else!"

"But I don't want to go somewhere else! I want to play in the sannnd."

"No, sweetie, we don't have *time* to play in the sand. We need to fly out of Wendy's window with Peter Pan, and go through *It's a Small World* for the nineteenth time and watch Dumbo's ears grow for a while. Remember, we're leaving tomorrow, and we need to cram all the outrageous fun we can into the teeny amount of time we have left. Come onnnn!"

She protested. She cried. We hauled her onto the ferry anyway.

Then day number four dawned. On the monorail by 8:00 a.m., Ben and I were wide-eyed and ready for another day, our last day, and were happily telling Jamie what a good time she was having.

"Isn't this exciting, honey? Oh look! See the bushes shaped like animals? And over there! There's Mickey Mouse! And look! Cinderella's Castle from yet a different angle! Oh, honey, isn't this great? Aren't we having fun?"

To which she replied, "I wanna go to bed."

Oops.

Jim Molnar, writing for *The Seattle Times,* warns us about trying to engineer a true escape*: So what about our vacations when we head into artificial environments set up to produce calculated experiences and evoke standardized responses? Perfect beaches, perfect trees,*

perfect flowers, organized activities—different from but every bit as predictable as the routines we're on holiday from. No worries.

I suppose there's some fun in trading one unreality for another, he says. (And by the way, I'm not knocking Disney World or any other theme park here. I LOVE them.) *But ,*says Molnar, (and this is key) ***traveling properly is an escape into reality…It's seeing all there is to see, not just what we're supposed to look at.***

So true. A great vacation is not about escape or avoidance. It's all about tapping the joy that already sits deep inside every one of us, just waiting to surface, whether in a burst of enthusiasm or a quiet, blissed-out attitude.

In other words, if you are delighting in playing in the sand, and some well-meaning but clueless traveling companion says, "Time to go and have fun" you can calmly explain to that what you are doing *is* the fun, and they probably need to practice listening to their "funsense" at home so that they will be willing to let it surface while they are away from home.

So even if your vacation takes a couple of unexpected turns for the worse, you'll have a willingness to let delight surface at any unexpected, unscheduled moment that may not have made the agenda.

You may use my friends Bob and Nancy as your inspiration. They had driven to Yosemite from Virginia in June with their three children, and were expecting some degree of warmth, since Virginia is warm in June. *Big mistake,* they learned, as they lay in their sleeping bags one night, shivering in subfreezing temperatures.

Of course, as any good outdoors person knows, you lose a lot of heat from your head, so to stay warm, they searched for covering. Having no wool hats, they found a perfect solution. Well, Bob found the solution, and really it wasn't exactly perfect, since his kids threatened to leave the family if he *ever* told *anybody* that he had them all spending the night with their underwear on their heads.

But it did make for some light-heartedness (not to mention warmth) (and a good story later on) in a disappointing turn of events.

Oh, one of God's best gifts is a sense of humor, I am convinced..

And so my friend, this summer, all summer long,

May you not look to escape as much as you seek to enter into the joy that is already there, waiting to be discovered,

May you see all there is to see, not just what you're supposed to look at,

And may you keep your sense of humor, ever ready to put your metaphorical “underwear on your head…”no matter what.

Thanks so much for joining me.

If you know people who need a little encouragement to lighten up on their vacation mindset, I invite you to share this podcast with them, and subscribe yourself on Apple Podcasts, 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.

Best wishes for a fun, story-filled summer, my friends. And always, always remember, if you go looking for joy, you'll most likely find it.

Till next time...