

TRANSCRIPT FOR PODCAST EPISODE 193-GET BY WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM YOUR FRIENDS

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

This is Episode 193.

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.

Oh, how we hate being needy.

And by "we" I mean me, and quite possibly you. Maybe your first inclination in difficulty, like mine, is to announce, "I'm FINE!" to the general public, even if you're not.

Fall down a flight of stairs? You're FINE!

Just have a baby or two? You're sleep-deprived, hormonal overwhelmed and exhausted, but you're FINE!

All manner of mayhem swirling around you? There are ways that someone could assist you, but you don't ask because you don't want to bother anyone and besides, really, you're FINE!

If you are that person, let me invite you to take a deep breath, and consider the possibility that you might not be entirely FINE.

And you just might need to ask for help.

And you just might have trouble doing that. You may go to great lengths and discomforts to avoid asking for assistance. Why is this?

Maybe you don't want to "be a bother," by inconveniencing someone.

Maybe you don't want to be one of those "needy" people.

Maybe you don't want to appear incompetent.

Maybe it's just hard for you to give up control.

Or you might be afraid of the embarrassment of being turned down.

Whatever the reason, you have plenty of company. It pains many people to make even a simple request for help.

Often—bottom line— it's a matter of pride.

My husband is generally known as the common-sense, left-brained one of our partnership. And when we were in Boston one year, taking care of our daughter who was recovering from a big surgery, he was constantly concerned about leaving me in the city to roam the streets, doing errands for Jamie, since I am slightly direction-impaired. So when he had to go back to Virginia to work, he jokingly made me a nametag that said: *My name is Jill Baughan. If found, please call this number. No known allergies. Easily distracted. Does not carry cash.*

Yeah, I didn't think it was funny either.

Two weeks later, however, Ben came back to join us, and was busy doing all the chores on the (left-brained) list he had made. One day, he went to take out the trash; the receptacles were located in a giant iron cage behind Jamie's apartment building. A few minutes after he left, my phone rang. It was Ben. He had gone in to throw the trash away, and the gate had shut and locked behind him. There was no way out from the inside, no space big enough to reach outside. Yes, folks, Mr. Levelhead was stuck in jail with a week's worth of garbage, and was forced—sheepishly, desperately, repentantly—to beg me, Miss Easily Distracted, to bail him out. Which I did, of course. Right after I took a photo.

Seriously, it just about destroyed him to ask for that kind of help.

Debbie Sorensen, writing for *Psyche*, says

*For many of us, the tendency to not ask for help has been strongly reinforced over time. Many of us live in cultures in which individual performance and independence are prized. Certain branches of my family were American pioneers who set off for a new life in covered wagons. They imparted a stoic disposition, in which vulnerability and dependence on others were to be avoided, and this was passed down through the generations. My mom still shoos everyone out*

*of the kitchen when she cooks holiday meals because it's easier for her to do everything herself. By the age of seven, my daughter had internalised the belief that asking for help, even with a small task, would reveal her weakness.*

*And yet, the ability to ask for and obtain help is a valuable life skill. Over time, carrying a heavy load without enough support can lead to burnout – the exhaustion and disengagement that results from the chronic stress of having too many demands and not enough resources. A lack of perceived social support has been associated with poorer mental and physical health outcomes. Research suggests that everyday acts of benevolence can increase the wellbeing of both the recipient and the helper.*

*The help you need at any given time might range from something relatively minor, like covering a work shift, or getting a ride somewhere, or a word of advice, to something weightier, like help with caring for a child, or financial assistance, or support for a medical or mental health issue. **No matter what the challenge is, recruiting help from others can save us time and effort and provide much-needed emotional support, reassuring us that we don't have to carry the load all on our own.***

Asking for help can be an art though, one that we may need to practice and learn. So here are some guidelines—not that you would ask for help in asking for help, but whatever:

**First of all, be specific about what you want.** Do you need someone to listen to you vent about something? Do you need to talk to a mental health professional to help you deal with a loss? Do you need a ride somewhere? Do you need advice for a particular dilemma? Do you need help with a leaky faucet?

A couple years ago, we were preparing for a visit from our grandchildren, and we needed a crib. So we asked our friends if we could borrow theirs, and if Bob would help Ben put it together. He said yes, brought over the pieces of crib, and Bob and Ben went right to work, so proud of themselves for figuring out how to get the thing together. Until they realized, when they were done, that these two very smart people with engineering degrees had “built Bob into” the middle of the crib frame, and he couldn't get out. Sometimes asking for help can be slightly surprising, yes? Still, a lot more fun.

**Second, it's important to decide who to ask.** It should be someone you trust, of course, *who has the ability to help you*: a counselor, a friend who's a good listener, a friend, a family member, a spiritual leader or mentor, a support group, someone with skills or a car.

A few years ago, I was newly post-major surgery. Ben had to be away on business, so we needed to someone to stay with me to make sure I didn't hurt myself getting around, but also to perform the uber-undignified task of emptying my potty chair—a unique request you don't make of just anybody. So I called my nurse friend Nancy, who had told me once that the only thing that truly grossed her out was cleaning up vomit. Yay. I figured she'd be safe with me. She was.

**Then, choose the right time and place** if your request requires that. Or maybe a phone call or a text to meet up for coffee would be just fine. Depending on the request—if you can't make the request on the spot—you might say, "I'd like to talk to you about \_\_\_\_\_. Is there a good time for you?"

**Finally, to help them help you, give a clear picture of your situation, and be as specific as you can.** Years ago, when we were moving from one home to another, we didn't want to hire movers, so we decided to enlist the help of friends. To do this, my husband did a brilliant thing. We told everyone we were moving, and in response, quite a number of people said, "If you need help, let me know!" as people are inclined to do. So every time someone said that, Ben rather surreptitiously put their name on a little list. About a week before moving day, he called up the rather surprised "volunteers," asking them if they could help us move, telling them, "I've put all the helpers into groups, so we'll only need you for two hours. Then we'll switch out to another group of fresh mules." (Not the best term to use for your friends, but they took no offense.) It was a great day, nobody was overworked, we provided food and drinks for them during the move. And two weeks later, we had a cookout for everyone to thank them. (If possible, it's nice to include a little celebration with your request. Win, win.)

You may have seen the vintage photo of Julia Child filming *The French Chef* in 1963. Jess Wilson, in her *Diary of a Mom* blog, describes it like this:

*There are 5 people - FIVE - sitting on the floor of the set, crammed behind her kitchen island, hidden from the camera's view. One of the five is holding at the ready a pie tin, which will undoubtedly be magically transported into her hand momentarily.*

*Heck, even Julia Child couldn't cook like Julia Child. At least not alone.*

And so, my friend,

May you also remember that *you* shouldn't do *you* all alone,

May you find comfort and support, not embarrassment or shame in asking for help,

And may you thank God for the people who are most delighted to be His hands and feet for you...if you'll only ask.

Thanks so much for joining me.

If you know people who might need a hand, but hesitate to ask for it, please 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](http://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.

Get by with a little help from your friends, friends. And always, always remember, if you go looking for joy, you'll most likely find it.

Till next time...

NOTES:

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