

TRANSCRIPT FOR PODCAST EPISODE 195: MAKE FRIENDS WITH NOT KNOWING

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

This is Episode 195.

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 knowing is hard sometimes.

I want to know stuff, don't you? I want to know about people's checkered pasts. I want juicy details about people's stories, and reasons why some people can't do right, and explanations for why they do what they do.

And I don't think I'm alone here. Remember the *National Enquirer's* advertising theme years ago: "Inquiring minds want to know"?

And being curious and eager to know can be beneficial and exciting and brain expanding. But surely you have had an experience where you found out more than you wanted to know. A TMI situation that you can't unsee or unthink. And it makes you realize that some things are just better left unknown.

When Ben and I were students at Purdue University, just beginning our relationship, we had a habit of studying together every evening. He would pick me up at my dorm at 6:30, and take me to the grad house where he lived, and there we would study. People do not believe me when I say this, but honestly, this is the truth. He was putting himself through grad school, and was the only person I've ever met who had the potential of over-studying. So of course, I studied too, and made the best grades of my college career that semester. Anyway, along about 10:30, we'd take a break and...uh...go play pinball. Yes, that's what we did.

One evening, he had to go to a meeting for an hour, so I just stayed in his room and, of course, studied. Until I was distracted by the spiral-bound calendar lying on his desk. A calendar that, no doubt, contained notes of his schedule and his commitments and possibly

people involved in those commitments. Okay, specifically dates he may have had with other girls. Naturally, I was curious, since I felt there was still much to learn about him.

And, I reasoned, because we were in such a promising relationship, did I not have the reason—nay, the *right*—to know about his business? And this was a calendar, not a diary, for Pete's sake.

Something inside me—probably God—told me that snooping around in his closed calendar was a dumb thing to do, but after about 15 minutes of restraint, I gave in, got up, moseyed over to the desk, picked up the calendar, opened the cover and learned more than I wanted to know about not only his academic pursuits but also about every date he had with every girl for the past six months. The worst part of it was, these ladies were friends we had in common, and I had no idea he'd been out with one in particular, meeting on the 7th floor of the Math Science building to finish "school work," then doing who knows what else afterward?

Immediately I wished I didn't know any of this. I was jealous, suspicious and afraid. What if he decided he liked any of them better than he liked me, and started "studying" with Miss One-In-Particular again? After more than a few minutes of compulsive, tortured perusing, I slammed the calendar shut, and hopped back to my books just before Ben walked in the door.

"How was your meeting?" I asked, trying to act like I hadn't committed a desperate relationship crime.

"Good, good," he said, settling in with his own books. But then he stopped, looked up at me and asked me a terrible, horrible question: "Did you learn anything?"

"What do you mean?" I said, trying to look all innocent, but I could feel my face flush and my heart pound with guilt, since I knew exactly what he meant.

"When you went looking in my calendar," he grinned—smugly, I might add—and I knew I was busted. No use lying about it.

"How did you *know*?" I asked.

"It's in a different place than it was when I left," he said, which made me wonder if he'd planted it there as a test, but honestly, I'd learned my lesson. I didn't want to know. I still don't.

Because sometimes, you just have to relax into not knowing.

For instance, I know that our daughter does not want to know what's in the subsequent letters that Ben and I wrote during courtship/engagement. The ones that steamed themselves open in the mail. The ones that will make Jamie throw up in her mouth some day.

So how about you? What's best for you just not to know? Maybe you share some of the sentiments of Reddit readers when they said they didn't want to know

Movie spoilers

Depressing predictions

What's in a hotel room that can be detected by that special kind of light

What my grown kids used to do when they were teenagers

What I really weigh right now

When I'll die

How I'll die

How or when Shrek dies

The day I'll have the next flat tire again

The exact circumstances upon how I was made

Exactly how much of my life I've spent online

My exam results

The true nutritional value of Twinkies

How much time I have spent playing video games in my lifetime.

How delis make ham salad.

How much money I've spent on coffee

The last digit of pi; that thing is scary

What my dog is eating right now

What scrapple is made of

Why my "check engine" light is on.

How many hours I've spent online in my life so far

My IQ

What absolutely everybody is thinking about me. Constantly.

Right. Some things are best not to know.

But what about things we want to know but don't...and can't?

I want to know why God lets unfair things happen—

Why my father died when I was ten,

Why babies die,

Why so many people suffer in so many ways,

When the other shoe is going to drop.

I want to know the meaning of the weird parts of the Bible. I've always struggled to read the Bible through, because I have so many unanswered questions. My daughter suggested one time that I write each question down on a sticky note, put them on the wall, then group the notes into categories and search for wisdom that way. I told her that there was not enough wall space in my entire house to accommodate that many sticky notes.

So there's that.

Surely you, too, have questions about this life in general; surely you, too, sometimes struggle with

The whys,
The whens,
The “How long, O Lords,”
The what ifs
And the why nots.

All those questions whose answers are the same: “Don’t know. Probably never will in this life.”

So how can we relax into the not knowing?

It helps me to remember that God is our Father, and how, like human parents, you know how much information your child can handle. For instance, tell a very young child the unedited version of the “facts of life,” and see how *that* goes. Talk about trauma. Too much information too soon, and the poor little thing would think you were making it all up, and spend the next few years trying not to think about it at all. Or tell a child exactly what she’s getting for Christmas.

Like when I was little, and went searching the house for my presents, and actually found one: the Tumble Bug set I’d asked for, hidden in my parents’ closet. I was happy for about sixty seconds, then started crying because I knew the joy of Christmas morning would be majorly diluted.

So maybe, in the same sort of way, God as our Father knows what knowledge would traumatize us, what knowledge would steal our joy.

Of course, sometimes it makes exactly zero sense to us that we are kept in the dark about so much. But it’s hard to deny that it’s all an Olympic exercise in trust. Simple as that. Not easy. But simple.

And so, my friend, when you find yourself frustrated and dismayed by all that you don’t know,

May you take a deep breath, and lean into the mystery,

Then may you determine to actually make friends with your unanswered questions,

And then may you come to trust the God who, as you know, knows it all.

Thanks so much for joining me.

If you know people who might need to relax into a little not knowing, 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.

Rest in your ignorance, my friend. And always, always remember: if you go looking for joy, you'll most likely find it.

Till next time...