TRANSCRIPT FOR PODCAST EPISODE 202-GET YOUR TOWANDA ON

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

This is Episode 140.

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.

Then I'll offer a benediction to send you into your day--or into your night.

This week, I'm offering you one of my favorite episodes of all time! Summer is winding down, and I'd love to send you into a new season with some extra boldness to finally answer the call of your soul and move forward with lots of spunk and gumption.

So. If you're up for doing some pizzazzy joy shots with a friend today...have a listen.

Where do you need some extra boldness this year?

I will say that when I'm in need of some courage, I have a little ritual that helps me: I love to take a deep breath and yell, "Towandaaaaa!" in my own head.

It all started when I saw the movie *Fried Green Tomatoes*.

Maybe you've seen it too, and remember when Evelyn (played by Kathy Bates) hears stories from long ago about Idgie, the main character, who *yells "Towanda," the name for the assertive, warrior-like alter ego she has created.* This usually happens whenever she does something bold and sometimes a little crazy, like swimming in a river with a bunch of boys, jumping off a moving train or driving a getaway vehicle that helps her friend escape an abusive husband. In fact, when she first meets that abusive husband, she introduces herself to him by saying, "Towanda to you."

Evelyn is so inspired by this battle cry, she starts using it as she begins to evolve from an insecure, sedentary, junk food junkie whose harmless but clueless husband takes her for granted on a number of fronts into a bold, active entrepreneur who vocalizes her feelings to her husband. In fact, she starts channeling her inner Towanda herself when she tears down a wall in her house to let in more light.

My favorite scene of the movie, however, happens when she's cruising the crowded Winn Dixie parking lot for a space, and spies a car backing out. Under her breath, she says

something like, "Finally. I thought I was gonna be here all day," as she begins to pull in—only to be cut off by a speeding Volkswagen that zips into the spot ahead of her.

Out jump two laughing young ladies. And when Evelyn says, "Excuse me, I was waiting for that spot," they say, "Yeah? Tough! Face it lady! We're young and faster!"

Sassy little things.
And they go bouncing into the Winn Dixie in hysterics.

Evelyn sits for a minute, irritated and helpless. But then her Inner Bold comes to life. She backs up, aims the front of her car at theirs, narrows her eyes into slits and resolutely growls, "Towanda" as she mashes on the gas pedal and rams her car into the back of the Volkswagen, over and over, four times over, laughing harder with each blow, throwing a "Yes, MA'AM!!" in there somewhere.

The stunned reaction of the onlookers is priceless, and when the girls come out of the store and see what she's done, of course they freak out and shriek, "What are you DOING? Are you CRAZY?" Then she says the most satisfying line probably of her life so far: "Face it, girls. I'm older and have more insurance."

Now.

I'm not saying that boldness should involve the destruction of personal property. Oh, no.

I will, however, admit that that kind of movie revenge I find to be enormously satisfying.

Evelyn has become one with the Great Towanda, declaring herself "Towanda! Righter of Wrongs! Queen Beyond Compare!" and we cheer for her...and maybe for ourselves.

Hey, 2021 the Women's International Network of Utility Professionals had a panel discussion they called "The Towanda Effect," defining it as *a battle cry for bold action that has been turned into a philosophy to inspire others.*

Yes, let's use that definition.

I got my own personal "Towanda" on one time.

You may remember in Episode 4 when I told you about my experience on the gridiron.

For years I'd been meaning to learn more about football. Then one Christmas Ben gave me a reservation in Coach Frank Beamer's Football Clinic. Yes, believe it or not, 700 people (mostly women) actually paid for a day at Virginia Tech to learn about playing with pigskin.

I know. There are lots of ladies who adore football, so it does sound a little sexist but, as attendance proved, there are plenty who are bewildered by it too.

The following spring, when we arrived on campus, I was really looking forward to a sort of "Football for Dummies" day. The first couple of sessions, however, were obviously for women who knew the game, since they were demonstrating the finer points of particular plays.

Being ignorant of the basics, though, I was drowning in a sea of sport-specific terminology. When these big, beefy men started tossing around phrases like, "push the pocket," "stick and rip," "outside hand knockdown skate rush," and "horizontal stretch on the defensive coverage," I wanted to raise my hand and ask where the remedial students were supposed to be.

On and on they went about "perpetrators," "ventilators," "agitators" and (I think) "defibrillators." At one point I did perk up a bit when I heard "tight ends," but then got lost again in "back ends," "side ends," "split ends," and "rear ends." Or something. I can't remember now.

What I was hoping to learn, in addition to the basics of the game, was sort of a behind-the-scenes, "unplugged" version of football—an insider's look at the life of a football player. What do they eat? How do they cope with the pressure?

What goes on in the locker room after a big loss? A big win? In the middle of the game? What all are they wearing under those jerseys? What kinds of mind games do they play with themselves and other players?
And I especially wanted to know more about intimidation.

For instance, when these guys are head to head, waiting for the snap, what are they *really* saying to the guys on the other team about their mothers?

Alas, my questions were never answered; however, it was a fun day anyway, learning more about my husband's favorite avocation.

In fact, the best part came at the end when we were allowed to walk through the weight room, into the tunnel and out onto the field.

We took a bunch of pictures: first Ben hanging around the goalpost, then me hanging around the goalpost, then me on Ben's shoulders hanging onto the goalpost for dear life. And even though I was still pretty much a football dummy at that point, I was looking back on the day and calling it a rousing success.

As we were getting ready to head home from football camp, I stopped one last time to appreciate the magnificent perspective we had, looking up into those expansive stands from down on the turf. And then I was seized by an irresistible urge. And a fear of looking ridiculous. But I went Towanda anyway.

“Ben,” I said. “Can you wait just a minute? I really want to run to the other end of the field.” I’m sure he felt like rolling his eyes, but he indulged me by saying, “Sure. Go for it.”

And I tore off (well, maybe trotted off; I’m not exactly “tore off” material), running the entire length of the football field and back, with my hands in the air, acknowledging the imaginary roaring crowd. It was fabulous.

I really did feel like—and Ben says I actually looked like—an official Rear End. Such joy.

So what about you? This year: where do you need boldness?

Do you have something you really need to say to someone? Is it time to take a step into some unknown territory? Is there something fun you want to do? Is there a wrong you need to right? Must you go somewhere physically or emotionally you don’t want to go? Is there a diagnosis you need to deal with? A boundary line you need to draw? Or cross? Is God telling you “Do this thing?” and it’s scaring you more than a little?

If so, my friend,

Whether it’s just for something fun, or whether you need to set a good example for someone dear to you,

May you listen to your heart, telling you what you need to do,
And may you listen to your heart telling you the right time to do it.

And then, since He is able to do more than we ask or imagine, may God give you a good old-fashioned kick in the courage compartment.

Thanks so much for joining me.

If you know people who might need a little bravery to do a thing they need to do, 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.

Get your Towanda on, my friend. And always, always remember, if you go looking for joy, you'll most likely find it.

Till next time...

NOTES:

Fried Green Tomatoes (7/10) Movie Clip, Parking Lot Rage, 1991.
https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=towanda

Magazine Americana. “Towanda!” August, 2001.
https://www.americanpopularculture.com/archive/film/towanda.htm

Women’s International Network of Utility Professionals. “The Towanda Effects—Unapologetic Boldness for Life and Career Success” (Panel Discussion), September 21, 2021.
https://www.winup.org/content.aspx?page_id=4002&club_id=537788&item_id=1510794