TRANSCRIPT FOR PODCAST EPISODE 207-LOOK FOR THE CHILD

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

This is Episode 207
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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.

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

What were like as a child? Shy? Outgoing? Happy? Miserable? Brave? Fearful?

Personally, I remember myself in many ways, among them:

Naïve: We once had a beautiful cut glass candy dish that had the worst stuff ever in it: little pieces of old, hard, colorless, candy that looked and tasted like sugared nothing. It stayed in there for a very long time because, big surprise, nobody was compelled to indulge more than once. But one day I had a brilliant idea: why not give it away? Get it out of our house to make room for good stuff like Tootsie Rolls and Laffy Taffy and Pixie Stix. Surely, I thought, *someone* would be delighted to have it simply because it was free. And so I made a sign that said FREE CANDY, posted on the outside of our front door which exactly nobody could see from the road, and sat INSIDE at the door, all afternoon, candy dish in my lap, waiting for some delighted passerby to make a sudden turn into our driveway, bound up to the porch, ring the doorbell, and gleefully, gratefully accept my offering of the crummiest candy on the planet.

Alas, the afternoon passed, and to my disappointment, nobody came. So, over the next week, I bit the bullet and ate it myself, confident that the candy dish would magically fill up with the good stuff if there were just room in it.

Also, I would believe anything my older brother told me: “There are robbers in your closet,” he would say (I slept with the closet light on for years), “You have to get a polio shot today,”

he would say. And there was the time he yelled to me, "Daddy's home!" I'd heard the back door open and close, so I ran into the kitchen and threw myself into the arms of the Fuller brush salesman. I was old enough to be embarrassed. That brother of mine.

Brave: Just for kicks, I climbed up on the roof of our two-story garage, sat on the apex and took pictures of the house, and the cat and the basketball goal from the top down.

Fearful: One Palm Sunday I was in the bathtub when tornado warnings were issued on the radio. The following morning, the devastation was all over the local news. After that, I wouldn't take a bath on Sunday night for weeks.

Quirky: I was a thumb sucker till I was at least six, and a chronic bedwetter. And remember those bowl covers people used to use to keep leftovers fresh? I loved to parade around with them on my hands and my head. There are pictures of this.

Insecure: after a boy named Tommy called me Big Truck in kindergarten (I was tall) and a boy named Butch, who pitched me a kickball on the playground, watched the side show as I missed the thing entirely, my dress catching a breeze and blowing up in my face, and called me Big Panties in front of the whole world.

Wounded: from the death of my father.

Creative: When I was little, I had two imaginary friends, named Toady and Joan Myers. Toady, as I recall, was egg shaped and wore little shorts on his stick legs. He looked a lot like Humpty Dumpty. Joan Myers looked like the farmer's wife from "The Farmer in the Dell"—an elderly woman with a printed scarf on her head. Where in the world I dug up these names and images I have no idea; I only know that the three of us were very close—so close that my brother and his friends knew that the one way to make me cry was to tell me they were going to force Joan Myers into the kitchen one day and make her crack Toady over a frying pan and scramble him into oblivion.

I was a child of many faces and feelings…and I'll bet you were too.

So you might want to join me in remembering what you were like as a child. Why? We can find some insight about this from one of the greatest theologians who ever lived: Mr. Rogers.

Writer Emily P. Freeman tells about a time when some doctors asked if Fred Rogers would write a manual to teach them how to talk to children. Because of his schedule, he asked for help from a woman who was extremely knowledgeable in child development.

She worked hard on the piece, including all her child development knowledge and hard-earned perspective in the field, but when she handed it to Fred Rogers, he crossed out the words of her educated introduction and replaced it with these six words instead, "You were a child once too."

So it pays to remember what you were like as a child. To remember your vulnerability, your bravery. Your naivete. Your fears. Your quirks. Your imagination. Your wounds. Because, well, you're pretty hard on yourself as an adult, and you forget that that that child still lives inside you, and sometimes needs a little attention. A little acknowledgement. A little sympathy. Sometimes that little child needs to be forgiven. Celebrated. Set free to play and laugh and believe that surely somebody somewhere wants your candy.

And maybe remembering could help you be a little more compassionate toward yourself. And maybe toward other people.

Emily Freeman goes on to say that *What Mr. Rogers taught us is that the dignity of a person is not dependent upon anything except the fact that they exist and are made in the image of God. His or her attitude, opinions, political affiliation, education, race, gender, or even their words or actions are not the defining factor of their person even if we disapprove or disagree, even if the person is arrogant, ignorant or annoying, even if the person does things differently than we would do.*

And it helps, when we struggle with this, to look for the children—as Mr. Rogers would tell us—not just the little ones around us, but in ourselves and the hidden ones within each other.

This episode airs on the day before Election Day—a loaded, tricky time for everyone currently. But then, oh what the heck, all of life can be pretty much loaded and tricky, right? And if these days and all days you find yourself agitated with people who just don't seem to be acting right…it just might help to take Emily's advice and

Look for the child in the person across the political aisle, in the brother who you can't get along with, in a customer who refuses to bend, in the partner who won't see it your way, in the person on the other side of the jail cell. Look for the child behind the eyes of your opponent, your teenager, your spouse, your boss, your Uber driver. Look for the child in the person who disagrees with you, who stands against you, who offends you. Look for the child when you can't seem to come to a resolution, when your family differences are so strong you can't see straight. When the list making and the round and circle conversations don't seem to be getting you anywhere, look for the child in them.

You don't have to embrace them, befriend them or even trust them. But God invites you to see them as He does and to regard them accordingly. We can still have safe boundaries, but we don't have to let hate win…

And so, my friend,

As you discern your next right thing in the presence of God and other people,

May you remember to look for the children in the people around you, and be kind to the child within.

Thanks so much for joining me.

If you know someone who's challenged by the behavior of others these days, 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.

Look for the child, friend. And always, always remember, if you go looking for joy, you'll most likely find it.

Till next time...

NOTES:

Freeman, Emily P. *The Next Right Thing* podcast, Episode 330: "Mister Rogers and Decision-Making." May 28, 2024.
https://emilypfreeman.com/podcast/330/