TRANSCRIPT FOR PODCAST EPISODE 223-SHOW UP

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

This is Episode 223.

Thank you a million times over for your kind words and enthusiastic response to my just-released book, *No Matter What: 90 Devotions for Experiencing Unexpected Joy in Tough Times.* Maybe you know someone who could use some encouragement with a sense of humor. If so, I'd love it if you'd share the book with them. You can find it on Amazon or wherever books are sold.

And as you're busy encouraging someone you care about, be sure to tend to your own spirit too, 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.

A while back, a friend and I went bowling at Sunset Lanes. (It sounds like an alley at a retirement residence, I know. It was not.) My friend said she knew someone—let's call him Arnold—who worked there, but didn't know if he'd be on duty that night; however, he was a good friend and a great guy, and she was really hoping he'd show up.

We were just there for a fun girls' night, not expecting great scores, since we were both very mediocre bowlers. And for her in particular, these were not the best of times, so a little light heartedness, we thought, would go a long way.

Our first few attempts at getting the ball to make with the end of the aisle were a little pitiful. That is until her ball went poking down the lane, knocking over maybe two pins. But then, something magical happened. Out of nowhere, from above the pit, a hand holding another pin appeared, and took a huge swipe at the remaining pins, knocking them all down. Strike!!

“What in the world??” I said, squinting down the lane.

“Oh that must be Arnold on duty!” she laughed. “I’ll bet he recognizes me!”

And all through the evening, we could do no wrong on the scoreboard. No matter how rogue the ball was, even if it ended up in the gutter, Arnold’s magic arm would swing down and lob the pins into oblivion. Even the scoreboard was amazed!

And that’s not all. After a few perfect scores, when my friend’s ball came back, she stuck her fingers in the holes in an attempt to do no wrong yet again. But one finger wouldn’t fit. “Oh look at this!” she yelled, as she held up a piece of paper that said, “Have a nice game!”

Yes, Arnold was at it again, in a different form, but one that brought a lot of joy to an otherwise ordinary night at the alley. He stayed so busy knocking our pins over and sticking notes in our bowling balls, we were surprised he was still employed by the end of the night. We never did see his face that night, but the guy most certainly showed up for his friend in a most spectacular way.

Showing up is often highly underrated. And underdone. Sometimes we feel, if someone’s in need of a little encouragement, just showing up isn’t enough. And honestly, so many people in our lives are so in need of that encouragement, it can seem like “showing up” for everybody is an overwhelming, impossible task.

And let’s face it: we all want to be the kind of friend who appears at just the right time with just the right thing, but we get all caught up in asking ourselves, “What exactly am I supposed to do? What does this human need? Life advice? A TED Talk? A marching band?”

And sometimes, when we can’t think of an elaborate, creative or deeply meaningful way to show up, we just don’t. We put it off till we can think of the perfect way and time. And that perfect way and time more than likely just never materialize.

Well, rest assured you don't need to be a superhuman to show up. You just need to be, present...somehow. So here are some ideas for showing up in a simple, joyfully human way.

1. The "Hey, I See You" Text
No grand monologue needed. Just: "Hey. Thinking of you today.” And do it the minute you think of it. Because if you say to yourself, “I need to text so-and-so sometime,” often it doesn’t happen, right?

But when you give yourself permission just to text 3 or 4 words, Boom. You’ve just delivered what someone once called “an emotional latte with extra whipped empathy.”

2. Be a Human Post-it Note

Sometimes, showing up means reminding people how amazing they are. Tell your friend she's crushing it. Tell your brother he's not a total doofus. Tell a friend you like her outfit, or tell a coworker, “Nice job!”

Or—you can always pass a tangible note. Like on paper. Remember those from your school days? You can still do it as an adult. So much fun! Just be a little discerning.

When Ben and I took a little vacation out West one year, one of the most noteworthy parts of the trip was on the way home. We couldn't sit together, so I` took my window seat in 25F, while he was 6 or 7 rows back. About halfway through the flight, the flight attendant approached our row, reached across two people and handed me (in the window seat) a folded up piece of paper. On the outside in Ben's handwriting, it said_"25F" inside a heart with an arrow. I opened it up and read, "UR Irresistible." So sweet! I glanced back at him and thanked him.

About twenty minutes later, another flight attendant approached our row, reached across two people and handed me another note addressed to 25F inside a heart with an arrow. I opened it up and saw "Do you like me? Yes or No. Circle One." Haha. What a romantic guy! Again I glanced back, smiled and thanked him.

About twenty minutes after that, yet another flight attendant approached our row, and handed yet another note--to the lady on the aisle. She opened it up, read it, and screwed up her face, indicating that this one was either from some weirdo in the back of the plane, or the flight attendant had delivered the note to the wrong person. I'll spare you the details of its contents. Suffice it to say that it involved an "unscramble the word" activity that was super-easy.

So if you write fun notes, make sure they pass through intermediate hands on the way to their destination.

3. Master the Art of Just Sitting There Sometimes presence is greater than a pep talk. Just being present—quiet. No advice. No fixing. Just you. Years ago, when a couple we know lost their daughter, they were taking refuge at our pastor’s home. And his wife called Ben and me and said, “We need people over here. Just get some people and show up to sit with us.” And we did.

4. Know the Magic Words: "What Do You Need Right Now?"
This gives people a chance to make a request they may not have had the courage to make without a little prompting. It shows you’re ready to support them their way, not yours. Granted, they might say something like, “front row tickets to see Taylor Swift,” in which case you might have to get creative.

Also, there are times when you just need to see the need and meet it. Cut grass, bring food. Be discerning here.

5. Share Your Weird Little Joys

Send a meme. Especially a snarky or sarcastic or a funny one. Especially if you share a sense of sarcasm, snark or humor. Share a video or a photo. Sometimes joy is contagious, even in small, ridiculous doses.

6. Celebrate Their Wins Like You Won Too
Got a friend who finished a hard project or just made it through Monday without yelling into a pillow? Hype them up. Throw a little confetti. Or streamers. I just got a new purse, and I've discovered that one little package of streamers will fit in the side pocket. I can't wait for an occasion to spontaneously pop those things out when someone has good news. I also carry tiny zip lock bags of confetti packets to give away when somebody has something to celebrate. And it can be just a tiny bit of good news, like, "Guess what! No cavities!"

7. Keep Showing Up Even When It Looks (and maybe you look) Bad
Real support doesn't always sparkle.

Sometimes it's messy, boring, or involves holding space through someone else's ugly cry. But as Eugene Peterson once wrote, *Suffering is a mystery and...instead of continuing to focus on preventing suffering--which we simply won't be very successful at anyway--perhaps we should begin entering the suffering, participating insofar as we are able--entering the mystery [in protest and in prayer] and looking around for God...*

And so, my friend, whether to offer joy or comfort,

May you try not to be overwhelmed by the needs of people in this world and in your world, (because there are so, so many),

But may you ask God to bring to mind today one person who needs your encouragement, even in a small way,

And then may you not hesitate, not for a minute, to quietly, raucously, clumsily or simply just show up.

Thanks so much for joining me.

If you or somebody you know needs to be seen, 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, 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.

Just show up, my friend. And always, always remember, if you go looking for joy, you'll most likely find it.

Till next time...