TRANSCRIPT/NEW INTRO. FOR PODCAST EPISODE 30-TURN YOUR BODY BLUES INTO JOY

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

This is Episode 30.

Hey friend,

Ever feel like you need a little joy shot first thing in the morning while you get ready for your day? You can absolutely get one now as you listen to the audio version of my new book, *No Matter What: 90 Devotions for Experiencing Unexpected Joy in Tough Times.*

In the time it takes to brush your teeth, you can listen to a devotion that just might lift your spirits and propel you into the shower with a smile on your face. Even if you're not a morning person!

You can find it on most audiobook platforms, like Audible, Spotify, Amazon and more.

I had so much fun recording this book for you because, as you've heard me say before, I just love being in your ears. And I treasure our time together 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 may 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.

Can we talk about what you look like?

My guess is, you're already cringing, which is sad because sometimes our perception of our own looks can keep us from a life of joy and, may I just say, ain't nobody got time for that.

If you're a regular person, there's probably something about your appearance that isn't okay with you, that you wish were different. We're often very hard on ourselves in this department for a number of reasons.

If you have a few years of living behind you, you can't help but compare the "you" of today with the "you" a few decades ago.

Or maybe there's something about you that's not like (your perception of) "everybody else's." Maybe you have a lazy eye or thinning hair or a wonky gait or crooked feet, some extra fluff, or any one of countless possible bodily irregularities.

And these days, there's a whole lot of photo shopping and filtering going on, coming at us from just about every existing form of media, so that doesn't help any normal person's self esteem.

It's incredible the things people will do to alter their appearance.

Our body blues can lead us to some strange and destructive places...

Alas, my life has been no exception.

I began to not eat like a normal person the summer I was 19. That was going to be the summer, I decided, when I would finally lose weight. Not just a couple of pounds, mind you, but significant weight. I set my sights on a number that was 20 pounds less than the weight the scale registered the first week of May; then I began a long journey toward wrecking my relationship with food.

Although I could have joined a weight loss group or chosen any of a number of other ways to lose weight, I, of course, wouldn't consider a reasonable method. For pity's sake, why be reasonable when you could be radical and stupid?

So I counted calories, setting my daily limit at 900. (Most diets at the time set the limit at 1000, so I thought going lower would help me lose weight extra fast.) I memorized my calorie counter and tested my mother's culinary creativity (as well as her patience), as I ate practically nothing for breakfast, lunch and dinner. In an effort to get a little something sweet, I remember putting liquid sweetener (remember Sweet 10?) on dry toast. Yuck!

For ten weeks no dessert passed my lips--nothing fattening, nothing fun. I woke up every morning angry, because I knew I was beginning another day of deprivation. But, by golly, I was dedicated to it. In a couple months, I had lost 20 pounds, all right...and a significant portion of my mind with it.

Before my sophomore year in college started, I was so desperate to be nondeprived, I actually looked with lust at a few stewed prunes my mom was cooking on the stove. Prunes, I knew, though good for you, were not exactly low in calories, so I tried to point my mind in another direction. But alas, it didn't work. It was like trying not to think of pink elephants.

Before I knew it, I was frantically retrieving every prune in the house and throwing them in a pot of heated water. Indeed, I thought, they were magnificent--which is very sad. Even as I

write this, I think about how sick it is to finally bust out of a diet with something like stewed prunes. Before my whole food orgy was over, I had eaten 26 of them.

Yes, that's right. I ate 26 stewed prunes. Do I even need to explain why I had to plead "sick" at my summer job the next day?

Shortly after that, it was 32 chocolate chip cookies. My system rebelled and I turned a lovely shade of green.

As unfortunately happens with many young women, I was stuck in a destructive cycle that wouldn't let me go. Back at college, I began starving myself during the week, then eating so much on the weekends that I would end up physically ill. Although I was never anorexic or bulimic, I was always either empty or overfull. It was a crummy place to live.

And it followed me, even after I was married at 22. Once, my husband bought a box of 125 Reese's Peanut Butter Cups at a 1970's version of Costco. He put them in the freezer, and every time I walked by, I heard them calling my name. I ate 125 of them in five days; that would be about 25 a day for five days in a row.

Obviously God, in an act of grace, had given me a cast iron stomach.

It took decades to repair the physical and emotional damage from that little ten-week foray into purgatory when I was nineteen. And even now, vestiges remain. Little reminders that a "deprivation mindset" could send me on a food free-for-all that may or may not end with my head stuck in the freezer for days and days.

I know what I'm capable of, folks, and it ain't pretty.

And it all started because I just wasn't quite thin enough.

Maybe there's something about your body that's bothering you.

Maybe a change of perspective is in order.

If so, please know that the view from someone else's eyes can be liberating.

In Alice Walker's essay, *Beauty: When the Other Dancer Is the Self*, she writes about being an adorable six-year old who loved attention.

It was great fun being cute, she tells us. *But then, one day, it ended.*

When she was eight years old, her brother accidentally shot her in the eye with a BB gun. The doctor told her that eyes were "sympathetic," that when one went blind, the other would probably become blind too.

This comment of the doctor's terrifies me, she says. ***But it is really how I look that bothers me most.*** *Where the BB pellet struck, there is a glob of whitish scar tissue, a hideous cataract, on my eye...For six years...I do not raise my head.*

At the age of twelve, she didn't pray for sight. She prayed for beauty.

Then when she was fourteen, her brother took her to a local hospital where the "glob" was removed. There was, she said, a bluish crater where the scar tissue had been, but the white glob was gone. She began to look up.

Still, when she was twenty-seven, she worried about the time when her young daughter would discover that her mother's eyes didn't look like other people's.

But every day, she says, her daughter *watched a television program called Big Blue Marble. It begins with a picture of earth as it appears from the moon. It is bluish, a little battered-looking, but full of light, with whitish clouds swirling around it.*

And one day, she says, her daughter looked her in the eye, took her mother's face between her hands, and said, "Mommy, there 's a *world* in your eye. Mommy, where did you *get* that world in your eye?"

Hearing that, she ran to the bathroom, looked into the mirror and realized that yes, *there* ***was*** *a world in my eye. And I saw that it was possible to love it: that in fact, for all it had taught me of shame and anger and inner vision, I* ***did*** *love it.*

If only we could see ourselves from a different perspective, see a "world"--an expanse--where we thought was only a lack. A deficiency.

Maybe

--you see the stretch marks and forget about the life they stretched around.

--you see crow's feet and forget about the thousands of smiles that made them.

--you see the scars or the limp and forget to remember the strength it has taken to endure pain.

Maybe you see something about yourself that's not like "other people's," and forget that the God of the universe knows you by your beautiful soul, not by the body that surrounds it. But maybe it would also help to remember that even the "imperfect" body surrounding that soul is giving you life.

Maybe if we viewed ourselves from the perspective of the One who created us, we would be quicker to embrace the grand adventures--and the exuberant joy--we were designed for.

And so, my friend,

May you heed Anne Lamott's wise warning when she says,

What if you wake up some day, and you're 65 or 75, and you never got your memoir or novel written; or you didn't go swimming in warm pools and oceans all those years because your thighs were jiggly and you had a nice big comfortable tummy; and you were just so strung out on perfectionism and people-pleasing that you forgot to have a big juicy creative life, of imagination and radical silliness...? It's going to break your heart. Don't let this happen.

To which I say, "Preach it, sister."

Thanks so much for joining me.

If you know people who need a little encouragement to embrace some bodily imperfection , I invite you to share this podcast with them, and subscribe yourself on Apple Podcasts, 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.

Find a space in your heart to celebrate your body, my friends. And always, always remember, if you go looking for joy, you'll most likely find it.

Till next time...