



The Keynote Chronicle

Humor News from Jan McInnis
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Listening to Your Inner Voice

(or "How I launched my career because of \$39 bucks")

Have you heard about the latest plastic surgery people are getting? "Rear end implants." That's right. . . rear end implants! And they cost like \$5000 dollars! I'm thinking, hey, a box of Twinkies is three bucks! It might take longer, but it'll taste better. Okay, maybe Twinkies cost more than three bucks now that they're out of business, but that's a funny joke from my comedy act and it gets a big laugh. And to come up with that joke, I didn't sit down and spend time writing a joke about rear end implants; I just listened to my inner voice. When I heard the cost of said implants, my inner voice screamed at me that Twinkies will do the same thing for a lot less—and poof! The joke is made, and it still cracks me up.

My inner voice has helped me a lot. I've developed a ton of humor from it, built a great career around it, and chosen some wonderful friends with it. In fact, with my comedy career, my inner voice has come in very handy.

Back in the 80s when I started out in comedy clubs I had one strict rule for booking work: I'd work for anyone with a pulse. That's the kind of rule you have when money is extremely tight and you're new to the business. And as such, I ended up working for a club owner we'll call CB (for Crazy Booker). CB had lots of work, and many of us comics worked for CB even though CB was known to have issues: sketchy payment issues, messed-up booking issues, and all sorts of general "bad-things issues." But when you need to pay the mortgage, you do what you gotta do. Plus I didn't have any problems with CB (at first) until one night when CB cut the money on me. "Cut the money" is a nicer, comic term for "cheated." I was booked to perform shows Thursday through Saturday, but the Thursday show at CB's club had no audience. (Apparently marketing wasn't a strong suit of CB's.) At the end of the weekend, CB decided to take \$39 bucks out of my pay for some kind of punishment even though I wasn't in charge of marketing--I'm supposed to bring the jokes, not the audience! I was emceeing at the time, and \$39 bucks was like \$39,000 bucks. It was a huge amount!

The six-hour drive home that night was awful and only further depressing because around 2 a.m. a big pink bus drove by me with the word "Dolly" on its side. Dolly Parton was passing me literally and figuratively! I thought to myself, "I bet Dolly's not dealing with people like this!" And then it hit me: my inner voice said "And you don't *have* to either." Then of course that "other" inner voice, the scaredy cat voice, jumped right in with "But you need money badly and CB has all that work!" Voice one countered with "Work? Yeah, you're working all right, but you're not getting paid!" Scaredy cat screamed back "But everyone works for CB! You're barely making enough to eat now, what do you mean you're going to stop working for the biggest booker within a seven-hour drive?" and my inner voice finally won out with "You got into this business to have fun, work for people you respect, and enjoy life. You are doing none of those things by working for CB...plus you're still broke! You cannot work for CB anymore."

As frightened as I was to do it, I stopped calling CB for work. I figured I'd try it for one year, and if I was desperate at the end of the year, then I'd swallow my pride and dial CB's number.

It is an understatement to tell you what a huge move this was. As a new comic who had few connections, I was considered one of the lucky ones because I got "approved" for work in CB's clubs. There were comics who were begging to get into

Spotlight

Jan's Keynotes:

- *Finding the Funny in Change* - Learn to use humor during change to diffuse tense situations, kick off tough topics and facilitate communications.
- *Finding the Funny in Communications* - Learn how to use humor in your business communications to connect with clients/coworkers, sell your product/idea/service, get people to listen to you and be memorable.
- *Hilarious Hosting* - Keep your audience engaged and keep the program running smoothly on schedule with Jan as your emcee.
- *Cubicle Comedy* - Clean, customized comedy focusing on work, family and day-today life.

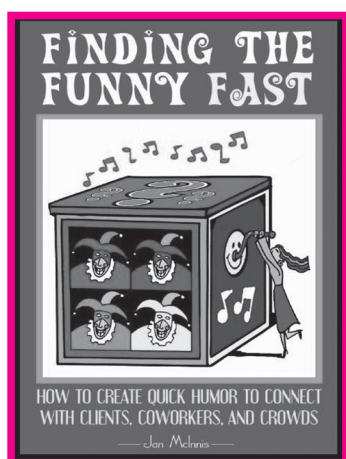
Feel free to pass this newsletter along and refer me!

those clubs and there still were other comics who had been cheated by CB but who continued to work for CB because they “needed the work.” But my gut check told me that I just couldn’t.

And so the year went by, and not working for CB did impact me financially: I actually made more money! I had to look for work elsewhere, through expanding my connections, and my bank account grew during that process. And in a weird move, CB actually called *me* to find out why I wasn’t calling for work (club owners never do that). I can proudly say that I never burned the bridge by telling CB what to do with that \$39 bucks; I just said that I was not available for work because I had been booked. And I was.

I’m telling this story not just to impress you that I can walk away from \$39 bucks (I still pick up pennies on the sidewalk), but to remind you that you have more power than you think you do. And when your gut is screaming at you to do something, even though it goes against what your head is telling you, maybe you should listen to your gut anyway. My mom used to say that “Things always work out fine. . .” and I’ve added “. . .and usually better than you expect.” I truly believe that with all of my heart.

We’ve got a new year ahead and there are a lot of CBs still out there. Here’s to listening to your inner voice in 2013 so that you can thoroughly enjoy what comes your way!



Jan has shared her customized humor keynotes with thousands of associations and corporations. She is also the author of “Finding the Funny FAST; How To Create Quick Humor To Connect With Clients, Coworkers And Crowds,” and she was featured in the Wall Street Journal and the Washington Post for her clean humor. From a recent client: “On our evaluations, people really welcomed you as a speaker. I thought it worked out well, for you to demonstrate all those humor techniques on us (the audience); then tell the audience what you just did in the form of the main tips you just demonstrated. One other idea for the future: Have people do a “reality check” on their own state of mind towards the end of your presentation. On evaluations, people implied that they felt “lighter”; more ready to receive information for the rest of the day.”

Baby Boomer Comedy Show; Clean Comedy For People Born Before Seatbelts, Safety Helmets, and Facebook

Jan McInnis co-stars with Kent Rader in the Baby Boomer Comedy Show for theaters and private events around the country. This is a hilarious 90-minute laugh-fest, with clean humor on topics that the “boomer generation” can relate to - family, kids, work, do-it-yourself projects, dieting, aging and all. Check it out at www.BabyBoomerComedyShow.com to see when they’re coming to your town, or contact them to book the show at your event!

The Baby Boomer Comedy Show is Appearing at the Following Locations:

- Rural Alliance for the Arts, Batesville, IN – January 26, 2013
- Theatre Winterhaven, Winterhaven, FL – February 26, 2013
- Venice Little Theatre - Venice, FL, March 17 & 18, 2013
- Largo Cultural Center, Largo, FL – March 23, 2013
- Rio Grande Theatre, Las Cruces, NM – April 6, 2013
- The Grand Opera House, Dubuque, IA – April 12, 2013

“It has been a real treat having you as our “inaugural” professional presentation. We have enjoyed the visit and your entertainment. Here’s hoping that we can work together again in the future.”

— Sandy Wilson, Kaleidoscope Theater



TECHNOLOGY TEST CONTEST

Scan your smart phone QR code reader over this QR code, and see my short 50 second video. You might win something Dolly Parton-ish. Good luck!