



The Keynote Chronicle

Humor News from Jan McInnis
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Gin & Tonic



*Focus on your successes,
not your mistakes!*

“Can I have a gin and tonic?”

Years ago, you may have heard a comedian order this from the stage in a comedy club. The comedian most likely didn’t really want a gin and tonic, they wanted a problem to go away (namely a heckler). “Gin and tonic” was the code phrase to the bouncer to toss out a heckler who was ruining the show.

The next time you’re having a bad day, wouldn’t it be nice if you could just stand in your office and yell “Gin and tonic?” The problem would go away AND maybe someone would bring you a

gin and tonic? That would make life simpler. . . but I’m guessing your company has a policy about that!

Comedians know that it’s a big mistake to keep going back and forth with a heckler for more than a few minutes, because even if you “win” you may lose the audience’s interest and then your show tanks. Knowing how to avoid or handle mistakes is a skill that we all need to keep honing.

Mistakes come in many forms, of course. Companies make weird ones. I got to tour the traveling Museum of Failure – yes it really exists – and I saw some whoppers.

- Colgate, the toothpaste people, actually tried to market a beef lasagna. Most of us don’t usually think of Colgate products as something you swallow.
- Heinz developed purple ketchup only to find out that nobody wants grape jelly-looking goo on their fries.
- Bic invented a pen just for women. The big difference? It was pink. Never in the history of writing has a woman run around the house screaming, “I can’t possibly write this letter, I can’t find my lady pen!”
- Nike invented magnetic sunglasses that attached to your head AFTER you glued magnets TO your head. Seriously?

Of course with these mistakes, all that was lost was a little marketing money. Over thirty years ago I heard a speaker say that if something can be fixed with money, then it’s not a problem: it’s an expense. I wish I could remember who said it because I’ve tried to heed that advice my whole life.

In the sitcom writing world, one type of mistake is called “jumping the shark” and it’s huge. This is when the writers introduce something so out of character that it turns the audience off and eventually leads to the end of the sitcom. It started with the show *Happy Days*. Henry Winkler, “The Fonz,” was a great water skier, and so the writers had The Fonz water ski and jump a shark. Loyal fans got mad, said it was unrealistic (like The Fonz was?), and lost interest. Sad days for *Happy Days*.

Of course sometimes we make mistakes and don’t realize it. At my first big marketing job I was sitting at my desk, contemplating various ideas for promoting our products. And apparently I contemplate by looking around the room, because my boss popped by and asked, “What are you doing?” I said, “I’m thinking.” He snapped, “I don’t want to see you thinking. You’re a marketing person. I want to see you either on the phone or writing!” My mistake was using my brain!

And sometimes, despite our huge efforts, we still end up on the other side of success. I started out doing open mics in comedy clubs

Spotlight

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for others to enjoy!!! 📌

Make Sure You’re Using Jan For:

- ✓ NEW! Flourishing From Failure Keynote
- ✓ Her Finding the Funny in Change Keynote
- ✓ To Emcee for your Awards Banquet
- ✓ Her Clean Comedy Show

Download the free QR code app and scan this code to see a clip of my new keynote Flourishing From Failure: Handling Mistakes Like a Comedian.




*When they’re stressed,
hedgehogs curl into a ball.
Don’t be a hedgehog!*

and was hired almost immediately for paid gigs. I jumped into professional comedy feet first and made a lot of mistakes. I had some tough shows, worked with some less-than-honest bookers, and stayed in some scary hotels. It was a rough start. I was friends with a woman who started comedy at the same time as me. We talked a lot about quitting our day jobs and being full-time comedians. She wasn't working as much as me, but she was still getting stage time around town at open mics, along with a few paid gigs. After a couple of years though, she started to fade out of the comedy scene and eventually moved out of state. Years later I ran into her and we went out for a drink. After a couple drinks, I said "Why did you quit? You had the same start as I did. You were starting to get work. What happened?" Without missing a beat she said, "Because I saw what happened to you." We both focused on different things about my comedy career; she got out of the business and I made a great career out of it.

Whether we've made a bad choice (Colgate lasagna?), jumped the shark, or inadvertently used our brain to think, things are going to happen that we didn't intend to happen. Hey, that's life! Handle the problems quickly, learn from the mistakes, and don't give too much energy to the failures. Then go celebrate with a gin and tonic.

"Every employee at my grocery store asks me if they can help me. . . and if I need to know where something is, they don't point, they take me there!"



I'm in my 50's and never been married. I'm worried the only person who is ever gonna offer to walk me down the aisle . . .

IS THE PRODUCE MANAGER AT KROGER!"

Jan McInnis, Keynote Speaker & Comedian
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Jan has shared her customized humor keynotes with thousands of associations and corporations, and she is the author of 2 books: **"Finding the Funny Fast"** and **"Convention Comedian."** She was also featured in the Wall Street Journal, the Washington Post, and the Huffington Post.

From a recent healthcare client: *"Thank you for presenting at the 2019 ASPAN National Conference in Nashville. Your presentation was a wonderful way for us to end our conference. Everyone truly loved having you speak! It was a pleasure to meet you and I look forward to seeing you again."* —C.B., ASPAN National Conference Coordinator

BABY BOOMER COMEDY SHOW: Jan co-stars with Kent Rader in this hilarious clean comedy show. Check out their schedule and book them for your event at BabyBoomerComedyShow.com

This newsletter comes out 3 times a year...not as bad as spam in your inbox, but not as consistent as Reader's Digest. A nice mix! If you know of someone who would like a copy, send 'em to my website www.TheWorkLady.com to sign up.

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