



# The Keynote Chronicle

**Humor News from Jan McInnis**

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## “Doing Nothing to Win”

It was being hailed as the “fight of the decade,” and seeing as I was in my second decade (I was 12), I didn’t want to miss it! Greg, the school bully, was short, stocky, and angry. To me, it seemed like he had huge muscles for a kid. Stephan was as opposite as you could get: nerdy, three times taller than Greg, thinner than a sheet of paper, and incredibly uncoordinated. You could usually see Stephan tripping down the crowded hallways wearing brown corduroy pants with the belt looped a couple times around his waist.

Stephan had made Greg mad, probably just for breathing, so Greg sent word around our elementary school that he was going to kick Stephan’s butt (tough words those days) on the playground after school. I was on Stephan’s side for sure, but being taller, thinner, and even more uncoordinated than Stephan (I was wearing size 10 shoes that would soon be a size 12), I couldn’t possibly help him fight. But I figured I could help peel him off the ground after he was mashed into it.

The scene was just like you see in movies: 30 or so kids in a circle, Greg in the middle, tensions high. Once Stephan showed up, Greg put up his fists and started circling Stephan for a few tense seconds . . . and then he pounced! Stephan hit the ground hard, but instead of being knocked out, he made one quick move and somehow was on top of Greg. That was amazing, but what was even more amazing was that once Stephan got on top of Greg, he did. . . **nothing!**

## Spotlight

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Scan this code to see a clip of my popular keynote “*Finding the Funny in Change*”.



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Stephan kept his arms straight down at his sides and laid on top of Greg like a dead weight. Greg flailed all over trying to get a good angle to punch him, but try as he might, Greg could not get Stephan off of him or get any momentum behind the few punches he did land. In fact, Greg looked ridiculous, like he was wrestling a mannequin or a sack of potatoes. It's extremely awkward and it's also no fun if the potatoes won't fight back

After a couple minutes of this bizarre "dirt dance," Greg got up and stormed off. We all looked around in silence. We couldn't believe it—Stephan had won! Sure, he had a bloody nose and torn corduroys, but he was walking away from the fight under his own power.

Stephan used his head to figure out a unique solution that never even occurred to us, and he probably did it by asking a few questions, like "What am I good at in a fight?" Apparently, laying on top of someone!

In the many years since that day, I've honed my question-asking skills a lot. Partly because I'm naturally curious about things, but also, as a comedian, because we find humor by asking many questions and coming up with different, never-thought-about, answers that become punchlines.

In my keynote "Finding the Funny in Change," I have a segment where I talk about the questions you can ask to see a different angle on a challenge or situation. Asking unique questions helps you come up with unique solutions that you may not have thought of before. That perspective gives you an "aha" moment because so many of us tend to approach challenges with the same standard solutions that everyone else is using.

Throughout your journey on this planet, you're going to be faced with all sorts of challenges—the "Gregs" of the world (people or situations)—that you think may not end well if you go the traditional route. Instead of tackling the challenge in the same old way, take a pause, put on your "Stephan" hat (or maybe corduroys?), and ask a few different questions. Who knows? You may surprise everyone by conquering the challenge and walking away from it with only a few bruises.

*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.*

**Feedback from recent event:**

***"You were absolutely amazing. I lost a lot of pounds without sweating!"***

***"Thank you so much for a wonderful session last evening. I thoroughly enjoyed your utilization of humor and education."***

***"You have great ideas for introducing humor. Thanks!"***

***"Loved your opening session at the conference - GREAT use of humor to make your point!"***

**Connect with Jan on Social Media:  
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## About Jan . . .

Jan McInnis has written for Jay Leno's Tonight Show monologue as well as many other people, places, and groups radio, TV, syndicated cartoon strips, and even guests on the Jerry Springer show (her parents are proud). For over 26+ years she's traveled country as a keynote speaker and comedian sharing her unique and practical tips on what business leaders can learn from comedians (no, it's not all about telling jokes). She can be reached at [www.TheWorkLady.com](http://www.TheWorkLady.com), [Jan@TheWorkLady.com](mailto:Jan@TheWorkLady.com) or contact her assistant [Brenda@TheWorkLady.com](mailto:Brenda@TheWorkLady.com) 703-581-7604