

The Keynote Chronicle



Humor News from Jan McInnis

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Mom's Genius Idea

If you peeked into our house on any given weekday morning when I was growing up, you'd see a LOT of activity: four kids racing around like maniacs getting ready for school, Dad scrambling to pull himself together for work, Mom whipping up a well-balanced breakfast for six, and at least a couple of times you'd hear someone screaming, "Check the bed!!!"

"The Bed" we referred to was Mom's genius idea. In the days of "keeping up with the Joneses" Mom did a great job of keeping a neat house and supporting Dad in his career, but there was one thing she refused to do: fold and put away the clothes of us four kids. Not only would we not appreciate it, but she didn't have that kind of time. So, a twin bed in the basement ("The Bed") is where Mom dumped all of the kids' clothes from the dryer. If you needed socks, shirts, dresses, pants, underwear or pretty much any clothing item, then you had to go to "The Bed" to find it. I remember countless mornings when at least one sibling and I were frantically plowing through the MOUND of clothing to find something that was wearable, matching, and "ours." (God forbid you grab someone else's favorite jeans!)

Mom created what we call a "hack" today: a shortcut, or a way of doing something differently, usually faster, that achieves the same result. "The Bed" was a unique hack; none of my friends had it, it was faster for Mom, and with a Mt. Everest pile of clothing on it, it wasn't pretty, but it was very functional..

I'm sure most of the commercials back in Mom's day showed mothers pressing and folding kids' clothing. But I'm guessing that once the first week of September rolled around with four school-aged kids, Mom realized folding and ironing was not an option! Sometimes we don't think differently until we *have* to.



The Bed

Spotlight

Make sure You're Using Jan For:

- ✓ Her "Finding the Funny in Change" Keynote
- ✓ Her "Bouncing Back" Keynote
- ✓ Master of Ceremonies for your Banquet
- ✓ Her Clean Comedy Show

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



I learned about finding a different way to do something when I moved to LA. EVERYONE gave me the same career advice for working in corporate gigs: you need to get a Hollywood agent. “Well, how do I do that?” I’d ask. They’d respond with: buy this list of 300 mailing labels of agents from this company that has the “list.” You book a place to do a comedy show. You design and print a postcard inviting agents to that show, and you mail it to the agents. They then show up in droves! They love your act (because it WILL go perfectly), and then fight over who gets to be your agent. Cool.

So I followed this (not so) simple formula. And poof! No agent. Out of over 300 mailed postcards, I got one response, from one agent because I knew his girlfriend and he knew that I knew his girlfriend, so I’m sure he felt obligated to answer. And his response? He couldn’t attend.

Luckily there were many non-agent attendees, so I didn’t do my act to the chairs, but that was a complete waste of time and money. The stamps cost money, the list cost money, and the postcards cost time and money. And back then it was HARD and expensive to get a postcard designed and printed.

After all that work, I thought, “I’m NEVER doing that again.” I looked around for an alternative way to book myself into corporate gigs and figured out two other avenues. First, I could contact speakers bureaus that work with meeting planners. And second, I could do it myself by contacting meeting planners directly. Back in that day, most comedians weren’t doing either of those things, so I forged ahead with these options, and it worked out beautifully. I’ve been booked pretty solid ever since. Skipping over a Hollywood agent and going through other avenues for bookings was my hack. It didn’t take any more time to market to people who actually plan the meetings or work with meeting planners, and it also gave me better odds for keeping my calendar full.

As we move through these next few months and years, be proactive and find your own hacks *before* you need to. Look around, pay attention to other people, listen to new ideas, and replace at least one “standard-we-always-do-it-this-way” task with a different approach. It might be easier than finding a needle in a haystack. . . or a matching sock in a mound of clothes.

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 events:

*“Jan’s presentation was a great conclusion to our conference. She meshed her life experiences and hilarious humor to entertain our attendees. **She was great to work with and did a wonderful job of making her content relevant to our meeting guests.** There is no doubt that we will be working with Jan in the future.”*

*“Jan’s ability to perform to the audience and engage them in relevant change was beyond compare. **The keynote was delivered with humor, fun, and meaning. Her keynote was the delight of the event.**”*

*“We thoroughly enjoyed having you join us, and **your presentations were FANTASTIC!** We have already received some positive feedback, and I’m sure there is much more to come in the days ahead. I appreciate all that you do to bring humor and happiness to others, thank you for sharing that with us in Oklahoma.”*

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 20+ 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, Jan@TheWorkLady.com or contact her assistant Brenda@TheWorkLady.com 703-581-7604