



The Keynote Chronicle

*Humor News from Kent Rader,
co-star of the Baby Boomer Comedy Show.*

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The Importance of Being Professional

I just celebrated my fourteenth anniversary of quitting my last job to become a professional speaker and comedian. Soon afterwards I vowed I would never wear a suit again.

I hate dressing up because, as a child, my parents and grandfather were in business in the small town of Richmond, Missouri and, though you wouldn't know it by the way I dress, they owned a men's and boy's clothing store.

When you're in business in a small town, you have to set a good example. Not only did Mom make sure my brother, Mike, and I dressed well, she got the idea to put on a fashion show for the Richmond Women's Club. Take a guess who her models were...

That's right, Mike and me. It was awful. We had to bathe, do our hair, throw up after every meal with Mom yelling, "You gotta fit in a 4T."

And if sashaying down a runway in front of your friend's mothers wasn't bad enough. Mom put pictures in *The Richmond News* for everyone to see.

So you can imagine my fear when Mom announces she's opening a lady's dress shop because I just know a skirt and blouse are in my future and not in the way a 12 year old boy imagines.

Consequently I hate dressing up, but when I first started speaking I wore a suit and tie like everyone else.

Fortunately early in my career I met a friend and mentor, Michael Johnson.

Michael always stressed being unique and authentic and was the first to encourage me to not dress or sound like every other speaker.

Michael is a writer and performer who, like me, has a passion for helping other human beings. Early in his career, he wore a suit and tie like everyone else because he said, "I was told you had to dress a certain way." Problem is Michael's a cowboy who talks about his western way of life, stories about his horse, Shine, interspersed with displays of his skill with his lariat. "I realized I looked like an idiot doing rope tricks in a suit," he said.

Michael decided to wear his cowboy clothes when he speaks, even against the advice of a fellow speaker who told him, "Michael, five states in the country will think it's cute and 45 will think you're a hick."

"Though she didn't tell me which states those were, I've worked all over America and Canada and found that simply wasn't true," Michael said. Once his dress began to coincide with who he really was, Michael enjoyed a level of success he hadn't experienced before.

I was struggling with similar issues when Michael suggested, "Why don't you wear your running cloths?" I responded by asking, "Won't there be people who don't hire me because of the way I dress?" He says "Yes, but I doubt people who are that superficial will appreciate your message anyway. We can't get away from who we are." I took his advice to heart.

There are times when I show up for my keynote program that the meeting planner seems startled by my dress. Sometimes they ask if I need a place to change or "Did the airline lose your luggage?"

But that tension dissipates the minute I tell the audience I follow the fashion advice of Gilda Radner who said her fashion sense was based on what didn't itch. This joke and my passion for helping people learn and experience how laughter matters in reducing stress immediately gets everyone past my clothing.

Though it hasn't happened in years, it doesn't mean I haven't gotten negative evaluation comments over the years, like the person in Alabama who wrote, "He needs to wear a shirt".

This comment conjured up a vision of me on stage dressed like a Chippendale Dancer. Not a pretty picture.

Webster's says a shirt is a garment covering the upper body. In fact, the running shirts I wear cost more than a dress shirt and tie and are less dangerous.

Research shows ties are havens for bacteria and pathogens causing pneumonia and staph infections.

A guy in Kansas stood in line, not to buy my book, but to tell me I ought to read *Dress For Success*. I said, "Thank you" but I remember thinking, "I dress daily in clothing I find comfortable to go to a job I absolutely love. It seems to me that ought to be the definition of dress for success."

A few years ago someone in Colorado wrote, "He should wear a suit so at least he looks professional."

Look professional? Look professional? Bernard Madoff looked professional. Those crooks from Enron looked professional. Every member of Congress look professional. I believe it is more important to BE professional.

Michael Johnson recently wrote an article *How To Be Professional*, imploring us to "do what you say you are going to do, when you say you are going to do it."

What a beautiful sentiment.

While some may not think I look professional, I go to great lengths to show my professionalism. I show up on time prepared to perform. I am not demanding (because meeting planners have more important problems than a speaker being a prima donna) and I treat audiences with respect.

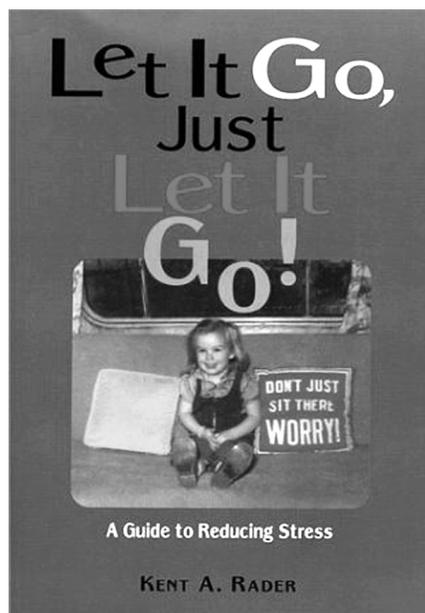
I can think of no better example of a professional than Jon Bon Jovi. A few years ago I saw him being interviewed on Donny Deutsch's show. At the end of the hour interview Mr. Deutsch thanked Bon Jovi and relayed to the audience that Bon Jovi had done the entire interview even though he was so sick with the flu he had been in bed all day.

Contrast that with a Big 12 football coach who canceled an advertised autograph session last summer at the last minute, not because he was sick or because he had a family emergency, but because he "didn't feel like it." I somehow believe this lack of professionalism has much to do with his team's record of one win and eleven losses?

Wouldn't it be great if everyone at work "did what they say they are going to do, when they say they are going to do it"? So while you're making your New Year's resolutions, I think we all could strive to be more professional in 2013. It will make you stand out in your profession more than a keynote speaker showing up at a conference dressed in running pants and running shoes.

There are many people who express envy at my work cloths. They love the idea of being able to dress for their job in clothing they find comfortable, but I must warn everyone, you have no idea what it's like living daily in fear that the next knock at the door could be those folks from the television show *What Not To Wear*.

I wish you continued success in 2013 and always remember Gilda Radner's other immortal words "laughter matters".



Known as the world's cleanest comedian and speaker, Kent Rader helps people learn and experience how laughter matters in reducing stress. A reformed accountant, Kent has written the stress reduction book titled Let It Go, Just Let It Go available at Amazon.com. Kent has been seen on Comcast's Who's Laughing Now and is the winner of the Branson Comedy Festival. Kent co-stars with Jan McInnis in The Baby Boomer Comedy Show, Clean Comedy For People Born Before Seat Belts (www.babyboomercomedyshow.com).

Vinnie Martiniano of the New York HIMA had the following to say after Kent performed his new keynote, From Money to Funny, Business Lessons Learned On My Journey from Accounting to Comedy:

"Kent, your closing Keynote Address was the perfect ending to our 4-day annual conference! You remind us all that we had learned could most effectively be applied in a work environment less stressed with generous doses of humor. The stories of your work experiences in health facilities connected with the audience and gave us a chance to reflect on how similar situations we've faced might have turned out better if we hadn't taken them so seriously. There were so many laugh-out-loud punchlines, that my face started hurting about half-way through your presentation. Your career change was a good decision since you are truly a funny comedian and commentator on today's health care landscape. Please do not hesitate to use me for a reference in your future marketing efforts."

For more information or a free DVD, please contact Kent at 405-209-3273 or email kent@kentraderspeaks.com.



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Humor News from Jan McInnis
Co-Star of the Baby Boomer Comedy Show

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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.

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!

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 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