

Sometimes Ya Gotta Laugh

Karen Stobbe & Mondy Carter
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www.in-themoment.com

While watching the show

We hope you enjoy the performance.
More importantly, we believe in the power of theatre as a tool for educating.
Feel free to laugh and clap, but please no throwing food ...
unless it's chocolate.

After the show

We will have time after the show for comments and questions.
We welcome and encourage you to share any thoughts
that you have with each other and with us.

Sometimes Ya Gotta Laugh

Written & Performed by

Karen Stobbe and Mondy Carter
Wilford Gordon McDonald Partridge is a book by Mem Fox with some
Interpretation from Mondy Carter
"I Am" adapted with permission from a poem by Janie Jasin

The History

In 1996, Manfred Stobbe was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. As his youngest daughter struggled to understand the disease, she engulfed herself with email groups, conferences and books about Alzheimer's. Karen and Barbara Leigh, the cofounder of Milwaukee Public Theatre decided to write a grant to pursue merging their world of theater and the world of Alzheimer's disease. They received a three-year grant to research, develop and tour a show about Alzheimer's disease, laughter and stress. Karen and Barbara performed the show for several years together until Barbara's schedule as director of the theatre company began to be too full for touring the show. So the show went through some rewrites and a casting change with the addition of Karen's husband and fellow actor, Mondy Carter. The show continues to adjust with the evolving changes that are occurring in healthcare and the field of aging.

The Performers

Mondy Carter and Karen Stobbe met while acting in a show. They are married and have 1 daughter, Grace who is amazing. The three of them live in Black Mountain, NC with Karen's Mom Virginia, 2 cats; Beans and Cookie and their dog Ginger. The other half of their life is making beeswax candles. Really. Check out www.esoulshine.com

The Book

At the end of the three-year grant, Karen looked back at that first grant to make sure she did everything she said she would do. She realized that she needed to write a 10-15 page resource booklet about the content of the show. Well, it ended up being a 150-page spiral bound book entitled *Sometimes Ya Gotta Laugh* and is into its 4th printing. Karen only sells it at speaking events or through her website.

With Thanks to

Milwaukee Public Theatre, Barbara Leigh PhD & the Helen Bader Foundation
And of course to the place where they are performing the show right now.

The Alzheimer's Disease Bill of Rights

Every person diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease or a related disorder deserves the following rights:

- To be informed of one's diagnosis.
- To have appropriate, ongoing medical care.
- To be productive in work and play for as long as possible.
- To be treated like an adult, not like a child.
- To have expressed feelings taken seriously.
- To be free from psychotropic medications, if possible.
- To live in a safe, structured, and predictable environment.
- To enjoy meaningful activities that fill each day.
- To be outdoors on a regular basis.
- To have physical contact, including hugging, caressing, and hand-holding.
- To be with individuals who know one's life story, including cultural and religious traditions.
- To be cared for by individuals who are well trained in dementia care.

Virginia Bell and David Troxel – *Best Friends Approach to Alzheimer's Care*.
www.thebestfriendsapproach.com

Points to Ponder

After watching the show here are a few questions, ideas for you to think about or discuss together

1. How do you view others who work where you do? Do you think if you had the time to talk and listen with them that you would see that you have some of the some things in common?
2. Have you ever tried to put yourself in someone else's shoes? If you are an aide, how do you think a family member feels? If you are an administrator how do you think the aide feels?
3. What is YOUR humorprint? Most likely what you laugh about is very different depending on whom you are with. Make sure you understand that everyone come to their sense of humor from different perspectives and what may seem funny to you may not be to someone else.
4. Was there a time when you did not feel any joy? Any laughter? When did you find it again?
5. How would you explain Alzheimer's disease to a child? What words would you use to help them understand and yet not be afraid.
6. What are some labels you have been called? Short? The baby of the family? The pretty one? The APP in 301 (that was me, when I had my appendix out and I was in room 301). How did/does it make you feel? What are some labels you may use now that could be changed into a more realistic and positive one?
7. Can you find ways to better listen to persons who have Dementia? What are some ideas?
8. Think about when you are 84...Where will you be living? Who will you live with? What will be your hobbies? What will be your hope for the day?

I Like Quotes. Here are some for You.

Laughter is the shortest distance between two people. ~ Anon

The last of the human freedoms - to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way. ~ Viktor Frankl

If you treat a person as he is, he will become what he is,
if you treat a person as he could be, he will become what he can be. ~ Anon.

I have always set personal boundaries of what is funny and what is not.
I have been quoted as saying, " There are just some things you don't poke fun at. "
I was wrong. Laughter rises out of tragedy when you need it the most and
Rewards you for your courage. ~ Erma Bombeck

Everything that irritates us about others can lead us to an understanding of ourselves.
~ Carl Jung

Laughter is a way of killing fear. It's fine to make awful jokes about your illness if it helps you.
It's important to laugh about it. ~ Betty Rollin, breast cancer survivor

After 2 days in the hospital. I took a turn for the nurse. ~ Rodney Dangerfield

I love to laugh, long and loud and clear. I love to laugh, it's getting worse every year.
The more I laugh, the more I'm filled with glee and the more the glee the more
I'm a merrier me. ~ Ed Wynn, in Mary Poppins

You have to be careful. The biggest thing I have learned through the years
is that not everybody has a sense of humor. ~ Jonathan Winters

When I could recognize something funny in what a moment before had seemed like a
hopelessly grim situation, a wonderful transformation occurred. It was as though I had been
suddenly healed and restored to health, even if for only a moment, even if only in my mind.
~ Arnold Beisser MD, *Flying Without Wings*

We are all here for a spell; get all the good laughs you can. ~ Will Rogers

Live a balanced life--learn some and think some and draw and paint and sing
and dance and play and work every day some. ~ Robert Fulghum

Sometimes your joy is the source of your smile,
but sometimes your smile can be the source of your joy. ~ Thich Nhat Hanh

Some days you're the bug. Some days you're the windshield. ~ Mark Knopfler

Well at least I know I'm not going crazy.
Virginia – after hearing her diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease

Resources

A few resources on Alzheimer's disease and Humor.

Websites

Here a few great sites out there. A lot of these have links to other sites.

- National Alzheimer's Association www.alz.org
Updated with great info. The interactive Brain Tour is worth checking out.
- Alzheimer's Foundation of America www.afa.org
Free monthly magazine and also has a branch for Teens
- Washington University- St. Louis www.alzheimer.wustl.edu/adrc2/alzheimerlist
The Alzheimer's Page is the gateway to an excellent e-mail support group.
- A Year To Remember www.zarcrom.com/users/yeartorem/index.html
By family caregiver Brenda Parris Sibley dedicated to her mother. Beautiful site!
- The Pioneer Network www.pioneernetwork.net
Changing the Culture of our Society for a better life for our elders and those who work where they live.
- TimeSlips www.timeslips.org
Storytelling with persons with dementia. I am a national trainer for TimeSlips.
- Laughter Works www.laughways.com
Kay and Laurie work with people who want to decrease stress, increase joy and create a working environment that is downright positive.

A Few Good Books

- Sometimes Ya Gotta Laugh* by Karen Stobbe
- Rethinking Alzheimer's Care* by Sam Fazio, Dorothy Semen, Jane Stansell
- The Healing Power of Humor & The Courage to Laugh* by Allen Klein
- Anatomy of an Illness as Perceived by the Patient* by Norman Cousins (actually anything by Norman Cousins)
- The Best Friend's Approach & A Dignified Life: The Best Friends Approach to Alzheimer's Care, A Guide for Family Caregivers* by Virginia Bell, David Troxel
- Speaking Our Minds: Personal Reflections from Individuals With Alzheimer* by Lisa Snyder
- Don't Worry, He Won't Get Far on Foot* by John Callahan (& his other books)
- Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience* by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi

Funny Stuff (remember this is my humorprint – don't hold it against me)

David Sedaris; I have listened to his books on tape over and over, Mandy Patinkin; he is hysterical & silly & intelligent, my pets; Beans, Cookie and Ginger, Dave Barry; I still like his old books, Gilda Radner; on SNL & her book, Will Ferrell, Monty Python, Far Side and Close to Home cartoons, Jon Stewart & Stephen Colbert, Paula Poundstone; her old standup was genius, Nancy Mueller, Mel Brooks movies, Ellen Degeneres; always funny, other people laughing, Seinfeld; the show & comedian, Virginia Stobbe & Grace Carter; individually my Mom and my daughter are funny, together they are dangerously funny.