Hello.
My name is Karen Stobbe
My Dad, Manfred died from Alzheimer’s disease
My Mom, Virginia, is living with Alzheimer’s disease.

I feel I have a unique perspective. And if I can help your audience perhaps see things in a different way, have an Aha Moment or perhaps remember why they got into this business in the first place - then I am happy.

My background as an actor, and especially as an improvisational performer added to my experience as a family caregiver for my Dad, Manfred and now for my Mom, Virginia enables me to facilitate learning in a different way to diverse audiences.

I am very comfortable in front of any type of audience. I have presented as a Keynote, Concurrent Session, ½ day, Full-day or Special Events. All presentations are adapted to fit each audience. My husband co-presents and we perform our show together. Presentations can also be tailored to combine elements from several different topics.

I am very passionate about Alzheimer’s disease, creativity, facilitating so people ‘get it’, person-centered care and basically, being a good person.
1. Sometimes Ya Gotta Laugh (the keynote/workshop)
Karen will present her list of practical ideas of how to bring more laughter and less stress into your caregiving and life. Karen's suggestions are brought to life by stories and examples from her life with two parents with dementia.

2. Being Present or Being in the Moment
We look at these three words in correlation to the title: perspective, presence and purpose. How do we slow down and appreciate the moments that are slipping by us? What is the importance of “being in the moment” in the world of dementia? How do we be mindful in what we do everyday? We will look at the meaning of stepping in to their reality and being present.

3. Positive Approaches to Communication
This workshop is for those wanting to understand how dementia affects communication and how to carefully observe, listen and interact effectively with persons with dementia.
* Variation: This can be broken into 3 different workshops. Non-verbal, verbal and listening skills.

4. Changing Our Behavior or Seeing Behavior as Communication
This workshop is designed to educate and empower care partners and caregivers to see behaviors as a form of communication and to change our negative mindset about them. Most of the time a person with dementia is reacting to our actions. And maybe more importantly, how we need to look at our own behaviors because we are the ones who need to make a change.
5. Importance of Creativity in Healthcare
We know that the Arts and Creative Expression are useful tools to improve health and well-being. But what about the creativity it takes to work in an environment that is ever changing and has so many different personalities? We need to give ourselves, and the rest of our team the permission to be creative in our work everyday. These are some of the qualities that it takes to make culture change (and actually life) successful. We will use creative and improvisational exercises that showcase these qualities to help you and your team to make your journey interactive, supportive and maybe even fun.
NOTE: Presented by Mondy Carter and Karen Stobbe

6. Person/Relationship/Resident Centered or Directed Care
No matter what you call it, what is person centered care? We are all throwing around the current buzzword of the day, but what is it really? Join us for an overview as discuss what it is, why you need a team approach and why a personal transformation is essential.

7. From One Family Member to Another
When you have a loved one that you suspect or they have a diagnosis of Alzheimer’s disease it can be difficult to understand and decipher what it all means. Join a family member as she tells you her family’s story and gives you answers to questions that we all have about dementia.

8. Having a Good Day
Patience. Empathy. Creativity. A Sense of Humor. Spontaneity. Presence. Preparedness. Motto for a new Scout Troop? No, just a few personality traits that we all need to help ourselves and those with dementia to “have a good day”. Join us for an interactive workshop that will focus on 7 steps to having a Good Day.

9. Having a To Do List or A Day Filled with Meaning
We will look at how to bring more meaning and engagement to each resident’s day. How do we think creatively about what fills our residents or participant’s days? We will brainstorm new ideas and think about how to create a better day for everyone.

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A test of a people is how it behaves towards the old. It is easy to love children. Even tyrants and dictators make a point of being fond of children. But the affection and care for the old, the incurable, the helpless are true gold mines of a culture.

- Abraham J. Heschel

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Me & my Dad - 1984
10. Building Teams: breaking down barriers
Does your staff (and you) need to learn how to better work together? How do you get everyone to be on your team? Who is your team? Do you have all the positions on your team covered? We will talk about the true meaning of a team in a person centered healthcare environment and learn exercises to make and break teams.

11. The Balanced Empathetic Soul
How do you teach empathy? Empathy is the ability to identify and understand another’s situation, feelings and motives. Empathy means: “putting yourself in the other person’s shoes” or “seeing things through someone else’s eyes”. If we can teach this, if we can understand this, then we can better understand one another. We will discuss what is needed and how to have a balanced empathetic soul.

12. Improve with Improv
Learn what improv is and experience a little improvisation
101 Warning: Improv increases your group’s interaction, builds self-confidence and may induce laughter!! Lets have some fun!!

13. OR...Create Your Own Workshop/Show/Training Program
Tell me what your subject matter is and if it is in my circle of teaching, I will create a personalized workshop for your event. Ex: Laughter workshop for a Mother/Daughter Church Banquet or a Celebration of the opening of an Alzheimer Unit.

Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all.
- Aristotle

Specifically for Trainers & Educators

14. In the Moment
An overview of a program that uses theatre, improvisation and creative techniques to train those who work in the healthcare field. You will have a working knowledge of how to use the web site and we will play a few exercises to give you examples of how the program works. This is not selling

15. Condensed Training
Got 15 minutes? How about 5? How do we fit ongoing trainings, re-trainings and reminders into our everyday work life?
We will run through practical and real ideas for making trainings more effective in your workplace.
sometimes ya gotta laugh

the show

This is not your ordinary performance.

Sometimes Ya Gotta Laugh is about finding your laughter, accepting your tears and being human. It is a roller coaster ride that is caregiving. Performed by the husband and wife team of Karen Stobbe and Mondy Carter, they will educate and entertain in the same breath.

Sometime Ya Gotta Laugh has been performed in all time slots at conferences, trainings and events. It has been performed for 40 people and 1300 people and for the general public, medical students, family caregivers, nurses and direct care workers and well...you name it.

All have received the show with open hearts, tears and laughter.

We can adapt the show to fit any length of time.

What have people said?

Heartfelt presentation, entertaining and valuable lessons and dynamic presenters!
Incredible, it brought everything to light. It’s what we are all here for.
Attendee at Virginia Assisted Living Association, April 2011

This show is poignant, relevant, uplifting, and eye opening.
The actors are deft at their craft but more importantly have a deep understanding of the roles they are portraying. Sometimes Ya Gotta Laugh is a powerful tool to help anyone celebrate the joys and parodies of life while gaining clarity about the need to delve into their own biases and approaches to serving elders.
Megan Hannan, Action Pact, Inc.

The closing event...Sometime You Gotta Laugh as an educational entertainment session delivered a poignant message in an forum that excels in imagination and relevance.
I was deeply moved and impressed.
Attendee at Ontario Long Term Care Association, April 2013
Karen Stobbe & Mondy Carter

Karen and her husband Mondy were both working as actors, directors, writers and instructors of theatre when Karen's Dad, Manfred was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. Karen's life has taken on a new focus and new meaning in combining the knowledge of her two worlds into one life work.

Karen and her husband Mondy Carter wrote and now perform in a two-person performance entitled Sometimes Ya Gotta Laugh. Karen has also written a book by the same name, which is in its third printing. Karen has developed a 6-week training program called In the Moment, which uses creativity, improvisation and theatre as training tools. She has a web site for the entire program: www.in-themoment.com She has developed a Train the Facilitator DVD that focuses on how to train effectively and creatively. Karen has facilitated over 600 trainings in storytelling, improvisation, person-centered dementia care and caregiving. Her trainings have included; The Pioneer Network, University of California-San Diego, RUSH Hospital, Alzheimer's Association chapters across the nation and many in-services for organizations across the country.

Karen recently worked as Subject Matter Expert and co-wrote the curriculum and video scripts for the Hand in Hand Training program for CMS and it was distributed to every nursing home in the United States.

Mondy is an accomplished actor starring in over 100 stage productions, many commercials, voice-overs, 4 films, industrial videos and improvisational shows. He is also an accomplished writer including 4 comic books.

Karen's Mom, Virginia was diagnosed with Alzheimer's/Vascular dementia a year after Karen's Dad passed away in 2000. Karen, Mondy, their daughter Grace and Karen's Mom all live interdependently in North Carolina with their 2 dogs, Gus and Ginger and one very interesting cat named Magic.

Thoughts

We all need to slow down and take a breath. I didn't get the 'Life is Short' statement til after 40. Cherish the moments. Cherish one another. “I Need You” are 3 very powerful words. Once you do not feel needed why come out of your room or out of bed? We all need purpose. See all action as communication. There is meaning; in those gestures, sounds and in their eyes.

Life is hard. Let’s give each other and ourselves a break.
what others say

**April 2013 - Ontario Long Term Care Association**

Unleashing Your Creativity - Workshop
Sometimes Ya Gotta Laugh - Keynote

Creativity session was sensational - full of great ideas and entertaining at the same time. Presenters had a wealth of knowledge and their experience with improv gave an interesting slant to creativity with people with dementia.

Very well presented! Great energy and very interactive!

Excellent does not begin to describe the talent and ability to teach Mondy and Karen have. Absolutely LOVED their Session and Closing keynote!

**April 2013 - The Dementia Concerns Coalition**

2-hour presentation for family members

Karen was wonderful. She's very personable. The humor – Laughter is awesome. Having the speaker have experience with Alzheimer's, learned a lot from her presentation. She really draws you in and you really wanna listen. Laughing at Karen's presentation – I needed that! The energy of Karen made it so easy and interesting. Love how self-experience helps me as a worker (caregiver) feels refreshed that I am not alone. Bring Karen Stobbe back!!

Bonnie Beam-Stratz  bbeam@alz.org

**June 2012 - Maine Health Care Association**

All-day Event: Being in the Moment: Presence, Perspective, Purpose and ended with performance of Sometimes Ya Gotta Laugh

I had high expectations for the impact this program could have and I'm very pleased to report that the evaluations did not disappoint us. We had a 98% response rate on written evaluations and, based on scores and comments from attendees, the entire group felt the program met their expectations and the content and instruction as high quality. Even more exciting is that 98% said they gained new information that would be useful to them in their work.

In addition, there were a number of comments recommending that we bring you back to Maine. That is a true testament to your ability to engage the audience and get your message across with great skill and finesse. Thanks again for partnering with us this year. Clearly, you're program was a great success and it has been a pleasure working with you.

Karen Michaud  kmichaud@mehca.org
May 2012 - Best Practices of Northern Michigan
2 Breakouts & Closing Keynote: A Lesson in Empathy

We have had great responses to our conference and you were the shining star of the show. Raving reviews. If you need a quote, here is one, “I laughed. I cried. Karen is awesome!” Oh, and another, “Please bring her back!” Our message was consistent all day, Person-Centered Care! And you brought it all home. Thank you for joining us and making the 14th Annual Best Practices Conference the best ever.

Sharon Greenhoe   GreenhoeS@nemcsa.org

March 2012 - Montana Health Care Association
Day-long Seminar
Comments from Attendees:

“I enjoyed this very much. She is very motivating.”
“There was no part that was boring!” “Fabulous!”
“Truly enjoyed every moment. Looking forward to teaching these techniques to my staff!”
“I appreciated your whole program and will use so many of your ideas with our residents and my wonderful grandmother.”
“Excellent session = lots of eye opening conversation”
“Very good one of the best (and funniest) classes I have ever attended!”
“Excellent teacher, her life experiences are real and contribute to her ability. “

Suzi Kopec   skopec@rmsmanagement.com

March 2012 - Alzheimer’s & Dementia Alliance of Wisconsin
Day-long Workshop
Thank you so much! I thought Thursday’s conference was wonderful!
You did a terrific job of organizing the day and connecting with the audience.
I hope you felt good about about the day and the evaluations reflected positively all the hard work that you put it into it. So many positive comments!

Becky DeBuhr   becky.debuhr@alzwisc.org

May 2012 - Alzheimer’s Association of South Carolina
Keynote & 2 Breakouts

When asked what topics they’d like to see at future conferences, an overwhelming majority stated: "Being in the Moment." "Bring Karen back!!" "I love to laugh and cry at a conference!" "Learning how to re-word things was very helpful."
You were clearly the favorite speaker at our conference! Thanks, again!

Joyce Finkle   joyce.finkle@alz.org
We are the primary caregivers for my Mom who has Alzheimer’s disease and I discontinued my travel at times. Now I have 2 older sisters who have moved into the area and my daughter is now older so now and I am ready for the road.

2012 South Carolina Chapter - Spartanburg, SC
2012 South Carolina Chapter - Greenville, SC
2012 Northern California Chapter and Northern Nevada Chapter - Monterey, CA
2011 Northern California Chapter and Northern Nevada Chapter - Sacramento, CA
2011 West Virginia Chapter - Sutton WV
2008 Oregon Chapter - Portland, OR
2008 & 2007 Western Washington Chapter - Seattle, WA
2007 Minnesota & North Dakota Chapter - St. Paul, MN
2007 Northern California Chapter - Santa Cruz, CA
2007 North Central Texas Chapter, Wichita Falls, TX
2007 North Central Texas Chapter, Abilene, TX
2007 Western North Carolina Chapter, Charlotte, NC
2007 Georgia Chapter, Savannah, GA
2006 North Central Texas Chapter, Fort Worth, TX
2006 North Central Texas Chapter, Waco, TX
2006 & 2005 Greater Indiana Chapter, Indianapolis, IN
2006 Greater Tennessee Chapter, Johnson City, TN
2006 & 2005 Greater Idaho Chapter - Boise, ID
2006 Greater Pennsylvania Chapter, Harrisburg, PA
2006 & 2005 Desert Southwest Chapter Arizona - Phoenix, AZ
2006 Miami Valley Chapter - Dayton, OH
2005 Greater Ohio Chapter - Toledo, OH
2005 Greater Illinois Chapter - Rockford, IL
2004 Northern California Chapter - San Francisco, CA

2005 National Alzheimer’s Association - Chicago, IL Presented on the Campaign for Quality Care
2004 National Alzheimer’s Conf. - Philadelphia, PA 4-hour post conf. intensive - In the Moment
2003 National Alzheimer’s Conference - Chicago, IL - Breakout session & Poster session

2005-2006 National Alzheimer’s Association Office
Consulted on Campaign for Quality Care; curriculum and scripts for clips.
Worked with Jeanne Heid-Grubman (see my references page)

1999-2005 Alzheimer’s Association of SE & Central Wisconsin
Sat on 2 different Conference Committees and presented many sessions over the years at local and 4 times at the State Conference, working my way up to the Keynote over the years.

This is not a complete list.
These are from those who I have worked beside, presented for, facilitated with, and of course have learned a great deal from. All of whom I greatly admire for the work they have done and continue to do.

Rose Marie Fagan, Pioneer Network Founder, Advocate  RMFagan@rochester.rr.com
First Executive Director of Pioneer Network. My mentor in all things from the heart.

Jeanne Heid-Grubman, Admiral on the Lake  JHGrubman@admiral.kendal.org
Worked with Jeanne on the Alzheimer’s Association’s Campaign for Quality Care, among other things. Wonderful passionate person.

Karen Schoeneman, Consultant (Formerly with CMS)  karenschoeneman@aol.com
Sonya Barsness and I were curriculum developers, subject matter experts and scriptwriters for the CMS Hand in Hand Training Series, which is free to every nursing home in the US. Ms. Schoeneman was the CMS lead.

Alicia Lepke, Alabama LTC Ombudsman  alicia.lepke@adss.alabama.gov
Alicia has had me (& Mondy) back to Alabama several times and I feel like an honorary Alabamian or Alabamite? or Alabamalama?

Bill Keane, Consultant  liam45@comcast.net
I have had the pleasure of working beside Mr. Keane and more importantly he has seen me work and I have learned from him.

Anne Basting, University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee  basting@uwm.edu
I worked with Anne on her TimeSlips Program and was the National Trainer for many years. Anne’s joy in being with persons with Alzheimer’s disease is true and pure. She, I think is the most creative person I have met, other than my husband.

And a few more who know my work.

Megan Hannan, Action Pact - megan@actionpact.com
Anna Ortigara, The Green House Project - AOrtigara@ncb.coop
Susan Misiorski, PHI, SMisiorski@PHInational.org
Sonya Barsness, Sonya Barsness Consulting - sonya@sbcgerontology.com
Barbara Leigh, Milwaukee Public Theatre - barbara@milwaukeepublictheatre.org
answers to frequent questions

**Question:** What are your fees?
**Answer:** It varies. I try to work with you to be fair to both of us. And I admit, I am not the best at talking money. So if you have a budget, please speak up and save us both from that awkward silence when you ask about my fee. And I do ask for all my travel to be paid; transportation, hotel and meals.

**Question:** What AV do you need?
**Answer:** Powerpoint set up with a laptop. My powerpoint is for the visuals so I will send other handouts. A flip chart. Maybe more...but depends upon the presentation. The show set up is a little more - but not much.

**Question:** What type of audience is best for your presentation?
**Answer:** I am not sure. I think I can adapt to any audience. I do enjoy speaking to other family members and to direct care workers. Both do not get as much training as they need.

**Question:** Where are you located?
**Answer:** We live in the very western part of North Carolina, near Asheville. So I fly out of AVL airport. I highly recommend everyone should visit. Most people try to figure out how to move here once they visit. But don't worry it wears off a few weeks after you get back home.

**Question:** What was your biggest audience?
**Answer:** Keynote Presentation at the Pioneer Network National Conference - 1300 people

**Question:** Is your husband funny at home?
**Answer:** yes. yes he is.

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let's talk.

This is where we live - Black Mountain, North Carolina