

Dr. Laura's *nasty "house call"*

By Ross Shafer

Dr. Laura Schlessinger called my house last Friday; angry as hell.

When the phone rang, I was already bloody and frustrated; trying to find the energy to fix the kitchen drain pipe. I thought about letting the call go to voicemail. But my fingers were close enough to wiggle the receiver loose and I caught it on third and a half ring. The voice on the other end said, "Ross, this is Dr. Laura Schlessinger."

The news didn't register immediately. I would sooner get a call from Dr. Dre. Two seconds later, I idiotically said, "Yes, I recognize the voice." If I'd had my wits about me I would have asked her how she got past my "screener." A fierce tone came through, "How could you say those things about me?" Laura was referring to a blurb about my new book, *Nobody Moved Your Cheese*, in which I wrote, "Dr. Laura can do more harm than good." I asked her if she had read my book. She said, "No, my producer made me aware of this and I'm very disturbed by it. You're trying to get famous on the backs of people like me and Dr. Phil." I tried to explain the context of the book (*which is to stop trusting "experts" and start trusting yourself*)...but she interrupted to scold me. "Have you ever listened to my show?" she barked. I told her I had not only listened to her show but reminded her that I had been "in session" with her for marriage counseling 13 years ago. I swear she paused to recollect. "I didn't want to bring that up" she said, "but I helped you." I was astounded by her eroded memory. "We got divorced,

Laura.” I said. “Well, I help a lot of people with what I do. I am credentialed and have millions of letters and testimonials from people to prove it.”

At this rate, I knew I wasn’t going to get the sink fixed, so I put the greasy wrench on the kitchen table and settled in for battle. “Laura, to be honest, I think it can be dangerous of you...or any radio psychologist, for that matter, to take a desperate caller’s problem, without hearing the other half of the story, chastise them, and then cavalierly dispense life changing advice within 30 radio seconds.”

This was all it took for her skin get unnaturally thin; especially for a woman who confidently dominates her time slot on over 500 radio stations and has an army of loyal (albeit insecure) worshippers. “You should be ashamed...and you should rethink what you are doing.” Hmm, the tone crackled vaguely like a movie thug; just before he breaks your thumbs. I said, “I can’t rethink it because the book is already published.” She was so livid I couldn’t even interject the charming things I said about her in my book. I wrote, “My experience with Dr. Laura is different than what you’ve heard on the radio. I liked her. She was smart and insightful. And, in my case she never berated me. I was paying and she was listening. Because whether you like her or not, she is bold enough to stand for something. She has an uncompromising view of morality; mixed with an annoying smugness.”

Ok, I ended that passage with a dig. But if you’ve listened to her radio show you know that she acts holier than...well, everybody. Comedian, Kelly

Monteith, says that when she dies she'll probably go to heaven and find out that God has a Dr. Laura complex.

Tune her in and you'll hear that she quickly locks horns (with her callers), chastises them, and dismisses her minions within seconds; often pausing afterward to reflect on their abject stupidity. What I find amazing is that after dispensing such radio wrath, she can turn on a dime and sweetly hawk her books, T-Shirts, coffee mugs, monthly newsletter, and even better rates on life insurance.

So, how does one lone comic, like me, unnerve such a dynamic, powerful woman; to the point that she stops autographing *I Am My Kid's Mom*® totebags to call your house? It's easier than I thought. Just disagree with her. Offer another point of view. Point out that maybe this Empress has no clothes.

What's peculiar is that, in the same book, I challenged Anthony Robbins, Jack Welch, Jack Canfield (*Chicken Soup for the Soul* empire), Dr. Richard Carlson (*Don't Sweat the Small Stuff*) and a dozen others who try to lay their template for success and happiness over your life. None of those targets have picked up the phone to marshal an opinion for their defense. They probably have better, less petty things to do.

So, how did our conversation end? Her last words were, "I have to go on the air in a few minutes and I'm upset. But this is on *your* conscience. You have a nice day." I was left with the distinct notion that she was trying to intimidate me into shutting up. Well, her tirade of insecurity only doused fuel

on my fire and left me convinced that when Shakespeare penned, “Thou doth protest too much,” he must have been referring to the Dr. Laura of his generation.

Incidentally, this energized me enough to successfully fix the pipe.

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