



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: The Flipside of Feminism – Part 1

Guest(s): Phyllis Schlafly and Suzanne Venker

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Dr. James Dobson: Welcome, everyone, to Family Talk. It's a ministry of the James Dobson Family Institute, supported by listeners just like you. I'm Dr. James Dobson, and I'm thrilled that you've joined us.

Roger Marsh: Well, welcome to Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh. You know, more than half a century ago, the feminist movement set out to reshape how women thought about work, marriage, and family. It made big promises about freedom and fulfillment. But did it deliver? Well, that's the question we're going to be wrestling with today in a timeless conversation featuring Dr. James Dobson and two women who spent their lives thinking hard about what feminism has meant to our country. Suzanne Venker is a syndicated columnist, an author, a speaker, and a relationship coach, with articles featured in publications like *The Washington Examiner*, *The Federalist*, and *The Wall Street Journal*. Suzanne is the co-author of the book that we'll be discussing today, alongside her aunt, the late Phyllis Schlafly. Now, Phyllis Schlafly was a best-selling author, an attorney, and one of the most influential pro-life voices of her generation, whose conservative leadership helped defeat the original Equal Rights Amendment. She testified before Congress and state legislatures many times over the years. Mrs. Schlafly passed away 10 years ago in 2016, but her legacy lives on today. In their book, these two women take an honest look at the promises the feminist movement made, what it actually delivered, and what it means for women and families raising the next generation. So whether you cheered the movement on or questioned it from the start, this is going to be a conversation worth hearing all the way through. So let's join in now as we hear Dr. James Dobson introduce our guests on today's edition of Family Talk.

Dr. James Dobson: Phyllis, I want to start with you. It's been 40 years now since the feminist movement claimed to bring freedom to women who were supposedly being oppressed by a patriarchal culture. And you and I have been here this whole time, observing this so called liberation. So tell us, what is the state of women today as a result of that movement?

Phyllis Schlafly: Well, in the first place, they teach young women to believe they are victims of the patriarchy, that they are oppressed by the man. And our position is that American women are the most fortunate class of people who ever lived on the face of the Earth. We have every opportunity and it was not created by the feminists. But recent polls show that American women are not as happy today as they were in the 1950s when Betty Friedan was telling women they lived in a

comfortable concentration camp from which they should be liberated. And so now that they've been liberated, they've got jobs in the workforce, more of them are going to college, they're not as happy as they were before.

Dr. James Dobson: That idea, which really came to the fore in the sixties, was radical, and yet it seemed that the whole country bought it and believed it.

Phyllis Schlafly: It wasn't the whole country, Dr. Dobson. It was the media that bought it. They gave it to us every day.

Dr. James Dobson: It sounded that way I said, because that's all you heard. You said Suzanne, in this book, that Americans have been completely hoodwinked by the feminist movement. Explain that.

Suzanne Venker: We did say that. And one of the reasons that it was so important, that I felt it was so important to sort of set the stage with Phyllis's story and what she fought when feminism was in its heyday, was to lead up to where we are now, to explain exactly how the message became so insidious to the point where people felt as though it was the only thing to think and thus do not ever speak out the truth. And then when they ...

Dr. James Dobson: [crosstalk 00:04:18] there're just more women who are willing to disagree.

Suzanne Venker: Yes.

Dr. Dobson: And you're one of them because you came out of a very liberal university and you had been fed a lot of that stuff yourself. And yet you've had the courage to put your name on a book.

Suzanne Venker: Yes, that's true. And I explain at the beginning of the book that I don't know that I would have felt the way that I did at the time, if my background, weren't what it is in terms of having had a completely different message from the women in my family, which is that you can have it all. But you have to have it in stages and you have to be responsible and you have to still honor the responsibilities that you have to both your family and yourself.

Dr. James Dobson: You are obviously an author and you speak and do other things, but you consider yourself a full-time mom, don't you?

Suzanne Venker: Oh, I do. Absolutely. I'm very honest and I do in my work talk about the very taxing experience of raising small children and say that ultimately, I believe that people have been given an out to skip that step and pay other people to do it because it is too hard. And that is not something that is ever said. It's always said within the context of having to work. It's always about economics when you hear it in the media, but that isn't true. That isn't true for a great majority. It has much more to do with the constant brow beating of the role of the full-time homemaker that started back in the day when Phyllis was fighting this.

Phyllis Schlafly: That's right. If you read what the feminists wrote, they were not trying to get the woman out of the home in order to increase their economic benefits or have a higher standard of living. They were trying to get them out because they really disdained the role of full time homemaker. They thought women could only achieve something by having a career. And I thought it was very important to co-author a book with Suzanne so that you get the viewpoint of another generation. So people don't say, "Oh, well, Phyllis, you come from another age and now we can get the viewpoint of the younger woman who has realized we were pretty right all along."

Dr. James Dobson: You know, you're the perfect example here because you're an attorney and a very successful one, and you worked your way through college.

Phyllis Schlafly: Yes. That's the thing that really, really blows them away because I worked my way through Washington University on the night shift, firing guns and machine guns to test 30 and 50 caliber ammunition, four to midnight and half the time, midnight to eight in the morning. And I got my degree in 1944. And the feminists tried to make you believe that women didn't go to college before the present time, before they invented it and that's not true.

Dr. James Dobson: So you are a shrinking violet, right, Phyllis? You're tough as nails, but you've also lived out the value system that you write about.

Phyllis Schlafly: Absolutely.

Dr. James Dobson: We put it in the context so far of being employed outside the home or being a full time mom, but it's much, much bigger than that.

Suzanne Venker: If I could interject, that is why we tried to frame *The Flipside of Feminism* within the context of understanding what's really going on today is the same thing that went on for, or has been going on for the last 40 years, is that leftwing women rule the media. And that means that all of the information that young people get is filtered through a leftwing-lens only. And if they don't have another voice out there, like they will find in *The Flipside of Feminism*, where are they going to go? And I've heard from people all over the country. And I hear from them every day, just thanking us just profusely. Where have you been?

Phyllis Schlafly: People need to understand how really anti-male the feminist movement is. In fact, the one conservative Harvard professor, Harvey Mansfield, wrote in his book called *Manliness* that the feminist movement is anti-male, anti-masculine, anti-marriage, anti-motherhood and anti-morality. Now think about that. Their anti-masculine attitude has gotten them to eliminate so many of the men's sports in colleges. And anti-marriage, they're telling women "you're oppressed by marriage. Get out into the workforce. That's a more fulfilling life." And anti-morality, they're teaching young women in college, "join the hookup generation. It's more fun. It's liberating."

- Suzanne Venker: If they were to hear her say this, obviously they would deny it and say, what do you mean? We're not anti-male and so on and so forth. So it's important to understand that they never come out and say it that way of course, that's what makes it so insidious. They choose instead to use these benign phrases and terminology to appeal to people's emotions and they sound very harmless.
- Dr. James Dobson: Suzanne, you said a minute ago that this feminist perspective still owns the media, and it's true. And I don't know whether this is going to make you uncomfortable or not, but *Fox News* has rejected your book. They will not do a program on it because there are feminist producers there, male and female, who don't like this message.
- Suzanne Venker: Doesn't make me uncomfortable at all. It makes me very happy to talk about, and I don't want to speak for other people, I believe because since my first book, I have had an enormous education about what it's like to deal with women in the media. And they absolutely do not want my message out there. There's no question in my mind. And a lot of people have a perception that with the liberal media versus the alternative sources of media, yes, that's true, you'll get conservative voices in the alternative media sources, that's true, but that's different from feminism because feminism has infiltrated the conservative movement just as much as it has the liberal movement.
- Phyllis Schlafly: Well, take as one example of that, Bernard Goldberg said in his book, *Bias*, about *CBS*, that the biggest story you'll never see on *CBS* is what's wrong with daycare. Because the feminists who work for *CBS*, if they have children, are dropping their kids off at daycare at eight o'clock in the morning and picking them up at six o'clock at night, and they're not going to hear anything about what's wrong with that. So they won't let the truth about daycare come out. The feminist movement is really anti-motherhood. They think it's oppression of women that women have babies and men don't have babies. So that's why they're in favor of abortion and in favor of daycare.
- Suzanne Venker: There's no question, if there is nobody else in the house providing an income, that you have no choice but to provide that income. That's really a whole separate conversation talking about single mothers. This is about addressing women who have been taught to and gladly have absorbed, or maybe even absorbed unbeknownst to them, the idea that to be empowered, you must be in the workforce full time on a consistent basis and put your children in full time substitute care. There are plenty of women who are able to mix work and family on a part time basis or sequence their lives, as we've talked about, you're out for five and then you're back in. Maybe you tag team with your husband, you work weekends and night. There's all kinds of scenarios there. But the working mother phrase that I go by is what I said before is putting your children in full time substitute care from the time they're born, by choice.
- Phyllis Schlafly: Well, our book, *The Flipside of Feminism*, is so important because with Suzanne's input, she's really given a roadmap for the young woman so that she

can plan a life, in case she does have children and will probably want children, that she can follow. And it's very important for the young women to have that.

Suzanne Venker: We basically go farther than that in saying, just assume that you're going to want them because most people do. Most men and women want children. It's fine if you don't, but most do. And so therefore let's assume that, instead of assuming the opposite life where marriage and motherhood is questionable or changing so much that you don't know if it's going to work for you or something you can do later. And so I'm going to focus on this career and maybe I'll get to that other thing, flip that entirely on its head. Marriage and motherhood is the center. Everything else works around that. Trust me, 10 years down the road, you'll be thrilled you did that.

Dr. James Dobson: Suzanne, if I had to guess, I would presume that you have been asked this question before: Suzanne, why do you dislike women so? I mean, this movement has opened doors to every opportunity that could possibly be out there and it's made such a great contribution and you resent it for some reason. How come? Have you been asked that?

Suzanne Venker: I'll go a step further there again, I've been called a misogynist. So not just disliking, but outright hate. I'm very involved with the social media end with respect to *Flipside*, all the comments online and the various websites and the radio pieces, all that stuff that you can get online and all of those comments that come in, invariably say to me exactly what you just said, "How dare you? How can you possibly chastise the movement that gave you the life you had?" So this went on and on, but that has been the number one comment. And my response is always the same: feminism didn't give me the life that I have.

Phyllis Schlafly: No, and certainly feminism did not give me the life I had, or open any doors for me. You'll remember, Dr. Dobson, as an unknown housewife with small children. In 1964, I published my first book, *A Choice, Not an Echo* and I sold three million copies out of my garage.

Dr. James Dobson: It was a phenomenon. And the two of you have written this book together, it's called *The Flipside of Feminism*. And I love the subtitle. *What Conservative Women Know and Men Can't Say*. Why are men intimidated? I mean, a man is a man. Why can't he say what he believes? But apparently he can't.

Phyllis Schlafly: Oh, why is it that men can't stand up for what they believe in, in regard to relationships with women? And I think it's just not natural for men to fight women. I watched a program on television about bears in Alaska, and these were real bears. They weren't actors. And they showed the mama bear and how she paced off her fishing area to take care of her two cubs. And then the male bear tried to encroach on her area and he's about 30% bigger. He's a big, gargantuan, tough monster. And they squared off like boxers in a ring. You know how boxers will look at each other and dance a little bit as they glare at each other. And then this big monster bear just hung his head and walked away. I think isn't natural for men to fight women. And a lot of these issues of feminism

really have to be fought by women and explain how hurtful it is, both to women and to men and to babies.

Dr. James Dobson: And that's why many men have no idea what it means to be a man. I mean little boys, for example, if they turn on the television set and they see sitcoms, the men are all fools and the women have it together and they're beautiful and they say smart things and men act like adolescent crazies.

Suzanne Venker: "Father Knows Best" has been replaced with "Father's an Idiot." And in fairness to them, there are now fewer men who are taking that path. And I can't tell you how many men that I know of both personally and professionally who have no career path. They keep going from this degree to this degree, or they don't know what they're ... They just keep prolonging that adolescence because they don't have anybody encouraging them to hone in on something so that they can take care of a family.

Phyllis Schlafly: And they're not looking to get married.

Suzanne Venker: You think they're going to say to the woman that they're dating what their true feelings are about wanting a traditional family? They can't even get it out because if they ask or even allude to the idea that she take time out of her career to stay home when the kids are young, just that, how about that? Not even the whole time.

Phyllis Schlafly: Well, they better talk about it before they get married.

Suzanne Venker: That's right. But they're not. And they're afraid to say that because of course they will be deemed a chauvinist. Forget the fact that they might come from a divorced family themselves and they're just concerned about the effects of daycare on kids, and they want a voice in how their kids are raised. They don't have a voice. They can't do that because the immediate assumption is that you're a chauvinist, which is absolute bunk.

Phyllis Schlafly: Well, I'd tell a young man in college, find out if your girlfriend's a feminist, because you don't want her if she's a feminist.

Suzanne Venker: But it's hard to do that because they don't use the term anymore.

Dr. James Dobson: That'll bring some mail.

Suzanne Venker: That's the problem.

Dr. James Dobson: Suzanne, I may be telling something out of school, but my daughter, Danae had a blind date with a guy and he took her out for coffee and expected her to pay for her own cup of coffee. I mean, if that doesn't say it all.

Suzanne Venker: Say it all. Yes, says it all.

Dr. James Dobson: The guys have not been taught.

Suzanne Venker: That's right.

Dr. James Dobson: Suzanne, what do women need to know as they make decisions about their lives?

Suzanne Venker: You need to look for a man who can support you. And the reason why you want to do that is not because you're never going to make your own money and go out into the world. It's because you're going to hit a point, particularly in those years when the children are not in school, the first five years, when you are not going to want to be bothered with making an income, because you're going to want to be with those babies. That doesn't mean you have to find a rich man. It just means you have to find somebody who is ambitious and capable of holding down a job and finding a path that is consistent, where he does not flounder.

Dr. James Dobson: My field is child development. And so where I had my most serious problem with the feminists because I was in graduate school in the sixties and I witnessed all this. It had to do with the feminists, Gloria Steinem and Jermaine Greer and so many others.

Phyllis Schlafly: Who knew nothing about children.

Suzanne Venker: Yes, that's the ticket.

Dr. James Dobson: That's the point. There's no evidence that they had ever had a class on child development and they certainly didn't have children or had spent any time with children. They began telling the rest of the world how to raise their kids.

Suzanne Venker: That is such a critical point because I truly believe that most people don't realize that this major movement that has affected their very own lives and paths and choices was fraudulent in that if you read and learn and know how it started with those folks you mentioned. Not only did they have horrible upbringings and very troubled marriages and just angry, but they also had no experience with children and children never come up, I might add, in a conversation on this debate, whether it's about work and family balance or feminism or whatever. We never talk about the children. And yet they're everything. Feminist will never talk about the needs of children because they don't get it. They don't have that, not only as a priority, but don't even have the information about what kids need. So they don't even touch that subject. That's usually where I try to get them as we're talking about children needs because they have nothing...

Dr. James Dobson: So, you have Marlo Thomas writing a book, *Free To Be You And Me*, telling mothers especially to raise their little girls like little boys and raise their little boys like little girls.

Suzanne Venker: She never had children.

Dr. James Dobson: And blaming the differences between them on a patriarchal society. It made no sense whatsoever. And again, Phil Donahue and the rest of the media bought into that and validated it for 30 years before medical science proved that the brains are different. I'm enjoying myself and I don't want to stop. I think that there is another day here. We really ought to talk about some other issues that are in the book, *The Flipside of Feminism: What Conservative Women Know and Men Can't Say*, that we just can't afford not to address. And so let's just do one more program right here and then we will air that tomorrow.

Phyllis Schlafly: Thank you Dr. Dobson, it's an honor to be with you.

Suzanne Venker: Thank you so much. It was so great meeting you, really.

Dr. James Dobson: And Suzanne, thank you for this book and for having the courage to do it. I don't think it takes any courage for Phyllis to do it because she's been at it for a long time. But for you as a young mother to do it, I think it does take a lot of courage and you put it on the line. They're going to be a lot of people that will hate you for it.

Suzanne Venker: Oh they already do.

Dr. James Dobson: And so what?

Roger Marsh: Decades of promises and the women who lived through it all are still asking whether any of them really came true. You're listening to Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, and today we heard Dr. Dobson's conversation with Suzanne Venker and Phyllis Schlafly, drawn from their book, *The Flipside of Feminism*. If you missed any part of today's program, or if you'd like to pass it along to a friend who is wrestling with these same questions, you can find the whole interview online at jdfi.org. Well, so much of what our guests talked about today comes back to one thing, the everyday work of raising kids and building a home. If that's your season of life right now, we would love to walk alongside you and we've put together a series to help you do so. It's called "Empowering Moms," a collection of short practical readings created just from others. Each one is packed with parenting wisdom and grounded in Scripture with an encouraging prayer to help you renew and inspire your faith. Whether you've got three minutes a day or 30, each of these readings is designed to meet you right in the middle of a busy schedule. It's completely free, and you can sign up today when you visit drjamesdobson.org and search for that title, "Empowering Moms." That's drjamesdobson.org, or if it's easier, just type in jdfi.org.

Every single episode of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk is put together by a small and dedicated team, and we are able to do this work because of an equally dedicated group of friends who believe in this work. These are people who value having a trusted voice speaking up for the family, for the gospel of Jesus Christ, and for life, religious freedom, and righteousness in our culture. Their generosity is what keeps this program on the air for listeners all across the country, and if that's a mission you would like to stand behind, we invite you to

partner with us today. You can make a secure donation at jdfi.org. You can speak with a member of our constituent care team at 877-732-6825. That's 877-732-6825. Or to reach us by mail, you can write to the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, P.O. Box 39000, Colorado Springs, Colorado, the zip code, 80949. Once again, our ministry mailing address is the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, or just use those initials JDFI for short. P.O. Box 39000, Colorado Springs, Colorado, the zip code, 80949. And if today's conversation got you thinking about where faith meets the culture around us, there's another resource I'd like to point you to. Our own Gary Bauer, senior vice president of public policy and culture here at the Dobson Policy and Culture Center, hosts the Defending Faith, Family, and Freedom podcast. New episodes drop every other week. Gary brings decades of experience in public policy to the issues shaping our country, always from a biblical perspective and always with the family in mind. You can listen wherever you get your podcasts, One Place, Apple, Spotify, TuneIn, and more. Or you can find it online here on our homepage, drjamesdobson.org.

Well, I'm Roger Marsh, and on behalf of all of us here at Family Talk and the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, thanks so much for joining us today. Be sure to tune in again next time right here as we'll hear the conclusion of Dr. James Dobson's conversation with Suzanne Venker and Phyllis Schlafly as they discuss the flipside of feminism. That's coming up right here on the next edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, the voice you trust for the family you love.

This has been a presentation of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute.

Dr. James Dobson: It's not the quantity of time that you spend with your children. It's the quality that counts. Or is it?

Roger Marsh: With today's Dr. Dobson Minute, here's Dr. James Dobson.

Dr. James Dobson: Maybe you've heard that argument that it doesn't matter how much time you spend with your children as long as your few moments together are of high quality, whatever that means. But the logic of that concept seems rather suspect to me. Let's suppose you've looked forward all day to going to one of the finest restaurants in town and you order the most expensive steak dinner in the house. But when the meal arrives, you see this tiny little piece of meat about one inch square. When you complain about the size of the steak, the waiter says, "Sir, I recognize that the portion is small, but that's the finest corn-fed beef money can buy." Well, you would certainly object, and for good reason. Both quantity and quality are important in many areas of our lives, including how we relate to children.

Roger Marsh: For more information, visit drdobsonminute.org.