



Broadcast Transcript

3Broadcast: The Flipside of Feminism – Part 2

Guest(s): Phyllis Schlafly and Suzanne Venker

Air Date: September 2, 2026

Dr. James Dobson: You're listening to Family Talk, the radio broadcasting division of the James Dobson Family Institute. I am that James Dobson, and I'm so pleased that you've joined us today.

Roger Marsh: Well, welcome to Family Talk, the broadcast division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Roger Marsh. Few cultural shifts over the past several decades have stirred up as much debate as the feminist movement. It raised big questions about the roles of men and women in society, about marriage and motherhood, and about what women were told they should want out of life. And those questions are still very much with us even today. On this edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, we're concluding revisiting a conversation Dr. Dobson had with two remarkable, well-spoken women. The first is Suzanne Venker, celebrated columnist, commentator, speaker, and certified relationship coach who has joined us on the program before. Our other guest for this broadcast is Suzanne's aunt, Phyllis Schlafly. Phyllis was a prominent conservative voice for the family right up until her passing in 2016. A respected lawyer and a best-selling author, she famously helped stop the Equal Rights Amendment almost single-handedly. Together, these two women will be drawing from their book called *The Flipside of Feminism* as they take a hard look at the feminist movement and offer a different perspective for women. So here now to introduce our guests and today's program is our own Dr. James Dobson here on Family Talk.

Dr. James Dobson: Just from an historical point of view, Phyllis, take us back to the days of the ERA and how you managed to stop that almost single-handedly. It was incredible to watch, because both houses of Congress had already passed it. By the way, ERA stands for Equal Rights Amendment and you took it on when nobody was on your side.

Phyllis Schlafly: That's right. We had three presidents against us, Nixon and Ford and Carter, nearly all of Congress, 99% of the media, all the money that they could want and Hollywood, and we beat them all. It really is an inspiring example of how the grassroots can rise up and take on the whole establishment and win. What we did was to show the handicaps, how ERA would hurt women.

I testified in 41 state legislative hearings and there never was any benefit. There was no benefit to women. I had sons and daughters about 18 or 20 then. One of

the first effects of ERA would've been to draft women, because we had a draft in 1972 when we were in a war. The draft act is the classic sex discriminatory law. It says male citizens of age 18 must register. My daughters thought, "You're going to give us a constitutional amendment and the first thing is we have to sign up for the draft like our brothers? You got to be kidding." So anyway, the fight went on and we did beat.

Dr. James Dobson: Separate restrooms too. Didn't you make a case about that?

Phyllis Schlafly: All kinds of bad effects. Getting rid of the laws that say the husband should support his wife, and there were so many bad effects.

Dr. James Dobson: Now, that would've been a constitutional amendment, which required the state houses of government, what is it, three quarters?

Phyllis Schlafly: If three-fourths of the states ratified it, it would be part of the U.S. Constitution.

Dr. James Dobson: You were down to three.

Phyllis Schlafly: Yes.

Dr. James Dobson: I mean they only needed three more states and you took it on.

Suzanne Venker: It's an incredible story, and we do have it in chapter two, by the way.

Dr. James Dobson: The feminists are really not for equality. They are for affirmative action for women, preferential treatment. Fundamentally, they are for interchangeability of the sexes.

They want you to be interchangeable in everything and that's ridiculous. They're at war with human nature.

Well, that's very well said, Phyllis. It's why you're a hero of mine for the way you stood up for what you just said, for those traditional values. When there was no pro-family movement, you were truly a lone voice. When you brought millions of women and men to an understanding of moral and conservative values, and I applaud you for that. Now, let's turn a corner and get back to the topic of your book, *The Flipside of Feminism*.

Suzanne Venker: There is no question that the average young college woman today enters school, and goes through those four years without giving any thought whatsoever to marriage and babies. They are there solely to get a degree, and then plan a life that is going to revolve around this phenomenal life/career outside the home. That is going to bring them the utmost of fulfillment and just feel so great about themselves. Oh, by the way, if I get married and have children, that's great, but that's sort of on the periphery. My advice to those women is the complete opposite of the advice that they get. Because even

though they're not going to think of it this way now, give them 10 years and they will.

That is that you should flip that plan entirely, and assume that getting married and having children is going to be the most important thing in your life. The most satisfying thing in your life. Nothing will ever compare to it. One of the, I think, more provocative points that I did make in there, that there is a biological clock. That biological clock does tick, and it has a beginning and it has an end. It may not be politically correct or it may not even be pleasant, but it's a fact. It is a terrible disservice to encourage women to ignore that clock, and to suggest that you don't have to worry about that till you get to it later.

I can't think of anything more horrific to say because you are messing with someone's life. These women are getting to be 35, 36, 37 and realizing time is running out. My body's not cooperating. It takes me a million shots just to get pregnant because I'm doing it so late. Some of them end up with only one child and they want more than one and they can't. That is a travesty and it's a lie. Why would we do that to them?

Dr. James Dobson: Why, indeed, Suzanne? As you're talking, I'm thinking with empathy about the single women who's out there, who hears what you're saying, and there's nothing she wants more. She wants a child to hold. She wants to be a mother. I'm one of those that believes there is a maternal instinct.

Suzanne Venker: That's right.

Dr. James Dobson: There is a great desire to be loved, embraced by a husband. I don't want to make things worse for those single women out there who have done things right, but the Lord has not brought a man, a suitable man into their lives. As a result, they hear Big Ben, they hear the gonging, the passage of time and they know menopause is coming.

They know all about it and they know when it typically occurs. They realize they're not going to have that blessing of holding a child, or at least it hasn't materialized yet. So I want to make sure that we are compassionate with those single women, and that we are not unmindful of the pressures and the pain that she is experiencing. I have met hundreds of them, and you have too. Suzanne, continue with your thought. What else do women need to know as they make decisions about their lives?

Suzanne Venker: The other very taboo thing to say to young women is, "You need to look for a man who can support you." 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's ambitious and capable of holding down a job, and finding a path that is consistent where he does not flounder.

Another point is when I say that the reality is there are going to be some careers that are probably not going to be good options for you as a woman. Let me give you an example. I was speaking with a woman from the *Boston Globe* recently. She wanted to get my opinion for a piece she was writing. She ended up cutting it out and not including it at all. But I said, "I have an 11-year-old daughter, and if we got into the conversation of what am I going to do in X number of years? She comes to me and she says, 'Mom, I want to be a brain surgeon.'" She said to me, the *Boston Globe* reporter, "Well, what would you say to her?" I thought for a moment and then I said, "I would ask her, 'Okay, is there anything else that you want in your life?'"

If she presumably then says, "Well, I'd like to get married and have children too." I'd say, "Then you probably better pick something else and here's why. These two things are going to conflict majorly. You are going to spend 10 years preparing for this major life as a brain surgeon, which is one kind of life, all-consuming. Then right when your body is winding down biologically, you want to get married and have children. That ain't going to work. That is a harsh reality. You've got to accept it." If you don't want to get married and have children, that's one thing. But if you do, this is a conflict and it's just the way it is, so how do you make this work for you? Find something else that you want to do. The crux of the whole thing is about devaluing the role of what we then call the full-time homemaker.

Phyllis Schlafly: Well, most of the feminist leaders are bitter women. Many of them came out of dysfunctional homes. What they tried to do was to make their own personal problems' society's problems, and pretend they were everybody's problems. That's the way they built their movement. They built it by a technique called consciousness-raising session where they would get a lot of women together, and then they would exchange their horror stories about how badly some man had treated them. Grievances are like flowers, if you water them, they will grow. Little grievances grew into big grievances, and that's the way they built their movement.

Dr. James Dobson: To be honest here, let's admit that there are a lot of women out there who have been abused by men. There've been a lot of girls that have been sexually abused when they were in the preschool years, and certainly through adolescence, and they've got a right to be angry. They have been badly mistreated. There are also girls, who during adolescence, were made fun of and dropped by the guys that they wanted to be friends with and so on. So there is a reason for some of that anger that's out there. Would you agree with that? Phyllis, would you agree with that? I mean, that won't explain all of it, but it does happen.

Phyllis Schlafly: I think everybody has problems. If there's somebody who doesn't have any problem, I would like to meet them. When I was growing up, we only had one problem, it was money. I grew up during the depression, but now people have a lot of other problems. But that doesn't mean necessarily that it's a societal problem that needs a big grant from the federal government of taxpayers' money.

Dr. James Dobson: Or that it's characteristic of the entire masculine gender.

Phyllis Schlafly: Or that you're better off to have your babies before you get married. When they started out, they called it the Women's Liberation Movement. You have to ask yourself, "What did they want to be liberated from?" It was home, husband, family and children.

Suzanne Venker: That has been the number one biggest travesty of feminism is the terrible divide between men and women that exist today. The fallout of obviously marriage and divorce and all of that.

Dr. James Dobson: It's not rocket science that society works better when men and women cooperate with each other, especially with regard to the raising of children. How silly to think that makes sense that you create World War III in the home while children are there. I mean, that can't work.

Phyllis Schlafly: *Ms. Magazine* in its beginning, promoted marriage contracts in which they would agree that a husband did the dishes and the diapers three days a week. The wife did it three days and then they would fight over who did it on the seventh day, and that's ridiculous. My husband never changed a diaper. I didn't want him to.

Suzanne Venker: Well, that's a little extreme.

Dr. James Dobson: My field is child development. So where I had my most serious problem with the feminists, because I was in graduate school in the '60s and I witnessed all this. It had to do with the feminists, Gloria Steinem and Germaine Greer, and so many others.

Phyllis Schlafly: Who know nothing about children.

Dr. James Dobson: Yes, that's the point.

Suzanne Venker: That's the ticket. Yeah, right.

Dr. James Dobson: 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. That's usually where I try to get them, is when we're talking about children's needs because they have nothing. There's no rhetoric on that.

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: Yeah. Blaming the differences between them on a patriarchal society. It made no sense whatsoever. Again, Phil Donahue and the rest of the media bought into that and validated it for 30 years.

Suzanne Venker: Yep, that's right.

Dr. James Dobson: Before medical science proved that the brains are different.

Phyllis Schlafly: The feminists are anti-marriage. They think that you don't need men. You can have babies without men. You can have your affirmative action job, and it's very unfortunate. Many of us grew up in a society where we had traditional families. The father was the provider and protector of the family, and that way of life seems to be going away. Now, the big attack on marriage is coming from the feminists. They were the ones who put through the unilateral divorce in the late '60s. The feminists are the major enemy, and we have got to restore marriage of the mother and father as the basic, stable fundamental of our society.

Suzanne Venker: My advice to those women is the complete opposite of the advice that they get. There are several things that they can do to help themselves in rejecting the feminist culture. The first thing is to reject the idea that sex is something that should be casual and makes you freer and more in touch with yourself as a woman or more enlightened or whatever word you want to give it, because all the facts show that that is not the case. Not to mention the obvious results that come from that, negative results that can come from that.

There's also a big emotional piece there that is rarely discussed, in which we talk about in *Flipside*, and how that lifestyle affects women differently than men. Then the second thing is to assume, as we've talked about before, that marriage and motherhood will really become the central aspect of your life. It's not going to be when you're 22, so you have to have a little faith there and know that once you become a mother, everything changes.

Every plan you ever had goes out the window, and just know that going into it and assume that your life really begins when you have a family. It doesn't end. That is a huge paradigm switch from what young people are taught today, which is that you want to postpone marriage and motherhood because that's the end of your life, and your freedom and your independence. Then you succumb to

this life. Flip that entirely, it is the beginning of life. There's no question that what we're asking of people is a tall order, because you're talking about a complete shift in the way you view the choices you've made. The way you view the male-female relationship, the way you view marriage, the way you view mother. I mean, it's huge. There is no question about it. This is a tall order, but I'm an optimist. I do believe that anything is possible at any time in your life, and you can always flip the switch and make a change, but you have to be open and willing to hear the message first.

Dr. James Dobson: Now, we really do need to issue a disclaimer, because there are women listening to us who feel called to work outside the home, and their backs will be up if they think they can't do that. You're really talking giving them a choice. As of this time, according to your book, Suzanne and Phyllis, that they don't have a choice because they are denigrated for being a full-time mom.

Phyllis Schlafly: Well, let me answer that, Dr. Dobson. I grew up during the Great Depression and my father lost his job, and he really never did have a full-time job after that. Little jobs here and there, and my mother became the principal support of our family. She was 25 years the librarian of the St. Louis Art Museum, but she had prepared herself with her college degree before she got married.

Then when the depression hit, she was ready to fill into that role. Now you have to deal with the problems that life thrusts upon you, so there are conditions that you just simply have to deal with. No problem about that, but obviously the family was first. We had a very close-knit family. But you have to do some of the things you have to do.

Dr. James Dobson: Of course.

Suzanne Venker: But the key is to obviously have that backing and education that you need, should those situations arise. Then there's understanding that generally speaking, the trajectory that you want to plan for is one that allows you to step out. So when you said that some women feel called to be in the workforce, we're absolutely not saying then you shouldn't do it. We're saying there's a time and a place you can have that in your life. We're only talking about a few years really when you think about it. Once children are in school, you have the whole middle of the day where you can find time for yourself.

Dr. James Dobson: I can tell you they go by very fast.

Suzanne Venker: They go by very fast.

Phyllis Schlafly: In the modern parlance, we are sequential women.

Dr. James Dobson: I like that. That means do this first, and then the whole world's open to you.

Phyllis Schlafly: But we're not interchangeable with men.

Dr. James Dobson: Really? So it is important for us to say that for these past days, we've been focusing on general principles that the Lord has laid out for us in Scripture, that help us navigate family life and gender roles, and our place in society and the home. But it's important not to forget the sovereignty of God, because He does have a plan for our lives, and it is different for each one of us.

These commands and these guidelines that we've been talking about, will help us bring order and joy to our lives and to our homes. Once again, the title of the book that we've been talking about is *The Flipside of Feminism: What Conservative Women Know and What Men Can't Say*. Last question, Suzanne, what is the flipside? Give us in the shortest possible answer because we're out of time, what is that flipside?

Suzanne Venker: *The Flipside of Feminism* is that there really is a completely different way that you, as a woman, can view the relationship between the sexes, your own life, having it all, motherhood, work, all of that stuff. There's a completely different lens from which to view those things, and we provide it for you in *The Flipside of Feminism*.

Dr. James Dobson: Phyllis, any last comment?

Phyllis Schlafly: Well, feminists teach women that they are victims of the patriarchy and our view is that American women are the most fortunate people who ever lived. You can have a wonderful life if you plan it right.

Dr. James Dobson: The book is co-authored by Suzanne Venker and Phyllis Schlafly, and I strongly recommend it to our listeners out there. Thank you all for being our guests and for flying here from St. Louis. Phyllis, for being my friend for 40 years. You are a good lady, and you're still out there defending the things that I believe with all my heart.

Phyllis Schlafly: Well, Dr. Dobson, you're one of the great leaders of the pro-family movement. I'm proud to be your friend. Thank you for inviting me.

Suzanne Venker: Thank you so much for having me.

Dr. James Dobson: Blessings to you, ladies.

Suzanne Venker: Thank you so much.

Phyllis Schlafly: Thank you, Dr. Dobson.

Roger Marsh: Suzanne Venker and Phyllis Schlafly didn't just critique a movement. They handed women a different lens for looking at marriage, motherhood, and the choices that shape a life. You've been listening to Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk as we feature the conclusion of a two-part conversation featuring Dr. Dobson and his guests, Suzanne Venker and Phyllis Schlafly. Now, Phyllis Schlafly

went home to be with the Lord in 2016, but her words of wisdom still ring true even today. And if you'd like to hear this program again or to pass it along with a friend, you'll find both parts one and two on our website at drjamesdobson.org. And while you're there, you can also learn more about the book that Suzanne and Phyllis wrote together. It's called *The Flipside of Feminism*. Again, information about the book and the audio series are at jdfi.org.

Well, without a doubt, moms carry a heavier load than just about anyone, and they deserve real encouragement for doing so. That's why I want to point you toward our free Empowering Moms email series because it's packed with practical parenting advice and time-tested biblical wisdom for moms delivered in short daily readings designed to renew and inspire your faith. To sign up, simply search for that title, "Empowering Moms," when you visit our website at drjamesdobson.org. That's jdfi.org for short if you're looking for an easier way to get there.

You know, conversations like the one you heard today are at the center of why this ministry exists. For years, the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute has worked to strengthen marriages, defend the family, and point people toward the gospel of Jesus Christ. And that mission continues because of listeners like you who believe in it and choose to stand behind it. When you donate to the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, you help keep this program on the air. Your gift of any amount makes a real difference. And if you'd like to send your gift through the U.S. Postal Service, our ministry mailing address is Dr. James Dobson Family Institute P.O. Box 39000 Colorado Springs, Colorado 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. If you prefer, you can give securely online at jdfi.org or call a member of our constituent care team. That number is 877-732-6825.

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. And I'd also like to take a moment here at the close of our program to wish my big sister, Linda, a happy birthday. Hitting full retirement age today, the day after her younger brother celebrated his 65th birthday. Linda, I love you so much. You are the definition of what a godly woman should be, and your nieces and nephews and great nieces and great nephews love you so much, but so does your younger big brother. Happy birthday to my sister, Linda. And by the way, be sure to join us again next time right here for a special edition of Family Talk featuring Rabbi Jonathan Cahn talking about his brand new book called *The Altar of Pergamon*. That's coming up 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.

Hello, friends. Roger Marsh here. In today's rapidly changing world, the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute remains committed to our founding mission to preserve and promote the institution of family and the biblical principles on

which it is based. Thanks to your prayers and faithful support, we're reaching millions through our daily family talk broadcasts, online resources, and policy initiatives. As President Reagan wisely said, freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction, and that's why we are working tirelessly to uphold faith, strengthen families, and protect our God-given freedoms. Thank you for standing with us in this mission. Together, we're making a difference for generations to come.