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## Quack

Dr. Laura Schlessinger's pearls of wisdom  
are another man's pure poison

**W**hat is it with straight people thinking they have it so good? In a recent broadcast of her popular radio show, Dr. Laura Schlessinger—known to her legions of fans as simply Dr. Laura—uttered the now-infamous line: "Hear it one more time, perfectly clear: If you're gay or lesbian, it's a biological error that inhibits you from relating normally to the opposite sex."

If Dr. Laura is to be taken seriously, one has to accept her unspoken belief that heterosexuality is the pinnacle of human existence. This is intriguing, because if you look at heterosexuality it's not particularly enticing as a way of life. Granted, it is the most popular form of behavior on the planet, but that's not saying much. I don't know about you, but as far as I'm concerned wood-paneled station wagons, an all-you-can-eat fish fry and family vacations to the Grand Canyon do not a paradise make. I much prefer a Volvo with a sunroof, sushi dinners and summers in Provincetown.

Besides, I don't have any problem relating to the opposite sex. I think women are great, and some of my closest relationships are with women. Sure, I know a lot of gay men who don't have many women in their lives apart from Streisand and Midler. And I know a lot of lesbians who won't give anything with a penis the time of day. But I know just as many straight women who wouldn't talk to straight men if it weren't for the fact that they sometimes want help carrying in the groceries, and I honestly can't think of any straight men I know who would happily go shoe shopping with their gal pals unless they had a foot fetish.

So if Dr. Laura's idea of "normal" relations between men and women comes down to being sexually aroused by the opposite sex, then no, I don't meet her criteria. But if that's the case, then why not say that heterosexuality is a biological error that inhibits people from relating normally to the same sex?

I suppose Dr. Laura would argue that this is all our fault. After all, if straight guys weren't so afraid of being mistaken for queers, maybe they would go to the opera together more often and help each other find pants that make their asses look better. But I doubt it. For one thing, I've met more than the occasional "straight" man, complete with wife and kids, who goes in search of man-on-man action when he wants to really get it on. And I have many straight women friends who would take a banana split with chocolate fudge sauce over a penis any day.

If we remove attraction from the equation, maybe we should revise our definition even more and say that heterosexuality is simply a biological formula for the continuation of the species. This works for me, but in this age of donors and turkey-baster babies, it's a definition that's teetering on the brink of obsolescence.

No wonder Dr. Laura is so afraid of us and thinks we're the aberrations. Imagine how her theory would hold up if we were able to eradicate ignorance and prejudice? If society were somehow freed of these restrictions, and we were all free to pair up with whomever we really wanted to, would people indeed conform to the "norm" of heterosexuality? Sure, some would. Maybe even a lot would. But I suspect the majority would fall along a spectrum, neither completely one thing nor another.

Dr. Laura frequently says that what we really need is a return to morals, values and religion. I agree with her on the morals and values. I even agree with her on the need for religion—sort of. What Dr. Laura doesn't understand is that religion is only the outward expression of innate spirituality, and that any religion based on fear and easy answers is a weak one. True spirituality teaches acceptance of the divine in all its forms, which is something Dr. Laura knows nothing about. Nor



ILLUSTRATION BY JAN FAUST

*I've met more than the occasional "straight" man, complete with wife and kids, who goes in search of man-on-man action when he wants to really get it on.*

does she understand that the morals and values we need are, quite simply, love and kindness, not holding to an outdated ideal that never really offered anything useful to begin with.

Or maybe she does understand this but, because she is conveniently included within the majority that dictates how things should be, she prefers to keep everything just the way it is. It's not at all surprising that Dr. Laura's audience adores her. Because they are the ignorant and the confused, the ones with lives so wildly dysfunctional, just hearing Dr. Laura berate them for their stupidity gives them a giant jolt of self-esteem.

Is it just possible that, unhappy with her own existence, Dr. Laura has to take it out on those of us who are truly content? I hate to break it to the good doctor, but if what she is passes for normal, I'll happily stay in my sick bed.

■ MICHAEL THOMAS FORD's new book, *That's Mr. Faggot to You*, is in stores this month. Visit his Internet site at [members.aol.com/shopiltee](http://members.aol.com/shopiltee) or e-mail him at [shopiltee@aol.com](mailto:shopiltee@aol.com).