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Crawford: Slowly, you'll succumb to the seductive Radio Tesh

Tesh is going to be there for you.

By ERIN CRAWFORD REGISTER COLUMNIST

January 6, 2006

Something embarrassing happened a few weeks ago.

I started listening to the John Tesh radio show. And what I found on Mix 100.3 any weekday or Sunday between 7 p.m. and midnight was Mr. Rogers for grown-ups. All the components are there. The calm voice. The soft songs. The single-minded goal to make your attitude toward life and yourself healthier.

Mr. Rogers had the sort of show you outgrew, when all of the affirmation and cardigans started to seem uncool.

Well, I've grown back into them. There is no shame in needing Tesh.

"The more you listen, the more you know," the show advertises.

Scoff now. But you, too, will be seduced by the show's "intelligence for life" and you won't be the first. Judging by the letters he reads on the show, most of his listeners have big oozy grown-woman crushes on Tesh.

"Your show is the most enjoyable thing I've heard in 25 years," sighs one caller on a recent night.

This is the same John Tesh who left "Entertainment Tonight" when he had the whole world of celebrity news in his tanned palm, who had all this and threw it away for a career in New Agey piano played in outdoor amphitheaters.

Now, he has this nightly soft rock radio show peppered with helpful relationship and health tips.

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PAYING TOO MUCH FOR AUTO INSURANCE?

ZIP code where you park at night:

Do you currently have auto insurance? Yes No

Have you had a U.S. driver's license for more than 3 years? Yes No

Has any driver in your household had 2 or more accidents or moving violations in the last 3 years? Yes No

INSWEB

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GENE BLEVINS/GETTY IMAGES John Tesh

convert, it looks like an unlikely career path. Radio is the medium where you find bitter men raging about politics.

On the show's Web site, Tesh's floppy blond hair looks like it should be attached to an 8-year-old kid with glasses and a black eye.

But that doesn't detract from my feeling that the John Tesh radio show is the closest you can get to showering in vanilla pudding. It seems like it would be a really good thing.

Since they have yet to add an audio feature to this column, I took notes during a recent Tesh broadcast so you could share the Tesh sensation with me.

The show starts, as always, with Michael McDonald's "Ain't No Mountain High Enough."

"I'm going to share three hidden heart attack risks. . . . If you fall into the baby-boomer category, I have the dos and don'ts for you in online dating," Tesh nearly croons in his calm bass.

You see, Tesh has money and music and a wife and children, and yet every night he gets on the radio so that we can live longer, feel less stress and hear songs that haven't been in the Top 40 for years, plus some Goo Goo Dolls.

"If you think eating right and exercise will keep you free of heart disease, you could be wrong. . . . I found these risks in Fitness magazine. . . . 1. Migraines with an aura. The next, phobias. Women with anxiety caused by phobias were 30 percent more likely to get fatal heart disease. . . . And the final condition, a small social circle. . . . Just like having a phobia, being lonely can cause stress because you don't have anyone to unload on. . . . So get help. . . . it could save your life."

And from there, he goes on to talk about what celebrity names have caught on with parents, how baby boomers should approach online dating and a new research study suggesting a shot of digestive hormone can aid weight loss.

"As we've said before on this program, excessive weight is a risk factor for a host of diseases. . . . When we know more, so will you."

Yup, Tesh isn't just playing music, he's monitoring scientific journals

to improve the health of
thousands of listeners.

"Your man could be lying to you,
but I'm going to tell how to tell
how he really feels by decoding
his body language," Tesh intones
in his soothing bass. Just like that.
Another problem solved.

Even if your two-timing dirtbag
boyfriend is boinking his girl-on-
the-side in the car you just leased
for him as a birthday gift, Tesh is
going to be there for you. And
he's got advice on why next time
you should date a momma's boy.

And, then, of course, there's the
music. Imagine the sort of mixed
tape your first boyfriend might
have made for you in the time
period after he got to second base
but before he's said he loves you.

Every single song has been
screened for a message of
inspiration and a soothing sound.

"I Can Dream About You" by Dan
Hartman.

"Drops of Jupiter" by Train.

Christina Aguilera singing
"Beautiful."

Mariah Carey belting "We Belong
Together."

It's like turning on your radio and
having potpourri and fuzzy kitties
and a soft warm breeze pour out.

Civil letter to a media outlet?
Helpful advice outside of a print
source? Relaxation? Soft music?

What is this strange new world of
civility and compassion you've
discovered, Captain John Tesh?

Maybe the Oprah effect is finally
spreading its self-improvement.
Maybe society's finally in the
mood for a bit of niceness again.

I doubt it. His show feels way too
much like a guilty pleasure to be
an actual sea change.

Tesh is an oasis, and when he
leaves the air, we all just have to
wait the 19 or so hours until he
makes sweet stress-reduction to
us again.