

Unhealthy Diet & Appetite for Obstruction

By Reg P. Wydeven
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Sometimes life can drive you crazy. I can get swamped at work. My kids might decide to decorate our kitchen table with permanent markers. The loud clicking noise that reminds me to turn off the blinker in my car may suddenly decide to never turn off. No matter how frustrating my life can be, I always feel better about myself after watching Dr. Phil.

Dr. Phil McGraw has some of the saddest, scariest, most messed-up guests on his talk show. Parents who take drugs with their kids. Kids who beat up their parents. Spouses who cheat on one another with each other's best friends. And morbidly obese people who can't ever seem to lose weight. The best thing about Dr. Phil is that he can help them all...well, except for maybe the overweight folks.

Dr. Phil attempted to help his beloved fans shed the pounds with his "Shape Up!" diet plan. Three still-pudgy followers of the plan filed a lawsuit against Dr. Phil after they didn't lose any weight. In their suit they allege that the plan, which was promoted through a book and television special, is completely useless. Before Dr. Phil discontinued it, the plan called for its followers to take 22 herbal supplements and vitamin pills a day, adopt a low calorie diet and to exercise. There were even Shape Up! shakes, bars, and multivitamins. Adding insult to injury, the herbal supplements and vitamins cost about \$120 a month.

The former dieters also requested that a Los Angeles County Superior Court judge expand their fraud claim into a national class-action lawsuit. If granted, this request would open the suit to potentially thousands of followers of the Shape Up! plan, all seeking refunds and additional damages. A final ruling on the request isn't expected until next year.

And speaking of TV show personalities, dieters, lawsuits and people who make me feel good about my life. Anna Nicole Smith is headed to the U.S. Supreme Court. The star of her own reality TV show and a successful dieter who lost a ton of weight using the TrimSpa system, Anna Nicole is seeking to appeal a prior decision that cut her out of her late husband's estate.

In 1994, at the age of 26, the former stripper-turned-Playboy-Playmate-of-the-Year-turned-B-Movie-star-turned-reality-TV-joke married J. Howard Marshall II, a Texas oil tycoon, at the ripe age of 89. Marshall died in 1995 and the widow Smith was awarded \$474 million of his estate.

Marshall's son, E. Pierce Marshall, successfully appealed the decision and got her inheritance knocked down to a mere \$89 million, which was later eliminated entirely by the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco.

Smith, whose real name is Vickie Lynn Marshall, is now asking the highest court in the land to ultimately decide her share. She alleges that Marshall promised to leave her millions and he intended to provide for her throughout her life. Although she received more than \$6 million in gifts from her late husband, Anna Nicole was not included in his will. Smith further claims, however, that Marshall's son destroyed a trust instrument that provided for her and stripped his father of all of his assets prior to his death.

Hopefully this case, which will also take place next year, will be the subject of a new reality show. Otherwise, if she loses and is depressed, she could always go on Dr. Phil's show.

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