

Heather: Welcome to Practice Outside the Lines Podcast. I'm your host Heather McPherson, multi-passionate sexuality entrepreneur. Join me as we learn from the people who are working at the leading edge of sexuality. We will listen in to how it all happens, as they share the secrets to mind-blowing success! All things media! I can't think of a better person than Dr. David Ley to consult with us about this topic. David welcome to the show.

David: Hey! Thanks for having me.

Heather: So David has been on almost every media outlet you can think of- Anderson Cooper's, the infamous Katie Couric, pretty much every TV show, daytime show you can think of. As well as all of the online print and online media and current media. So, you know obviously, sexuality, in general, is really present in the media, and media sources are really hungry for content, and it's really important for us to get really good and accurate content. And that's up to us as sexual health professionals to provide that. So

David, you know I'm wondering how did you become such a media sexpert?

David: Haha. Um well, you know it was my lifelong dream, right. In fact, it was really accidental. I had always wanted to write a book, and uh I wrote my first book called *Insatiable Wives* about hot-wife-ing and cuckolding and female sexuality and infidelity. And Marty Klien, who I've known for a long time, a lot of folks know him, and Marty reviewed the book and endorsed it. And then it was funny because, in the book, I had mentioned this one guy, who I said sort of in passing, that I would be able to diagnose the guy as a sex addict but that I don't believe in sex addiction. Well, Marty really liked that part because, um at that time he was one of the very few people out there challenging the validity of the sex addiction concept. Marty had been on dr. Phil a bunch and did not like dr Phil. And they called Marty up and asked him to come on the show to talk about sex addiction, and Marty said I'm not going to do it I don't want to, I don't want to be on the show anymore. But here talk to David Ley because he doesn't believe in it either. And so, um, Dr. Phil show called me and I was like well yeah okay! Ya know, I'm trying to promote my book, and Dr. Phil and I kind of hit it off. I ended up doing a whole show, about five times, and not all about sex addiction but about other issues. And it really just kicked it off where it was, I found out it was kinda fun talking to the media. And there's some ego in it too, and I think that when we get into

this we have to own it and it kind of gives you an intellectual boner to see your name on the TV or to read your name in the NY Times and stuff like that. It's pretty exciting. And so it kinda kicked in were people starting knowing my name, seeing my face, and hearing my voice and I learned how to have a talk with them about stuff, I learned how to share information about sexuality. The thing that kept it going for me like I said it kinda starts at that ego, but then it starts feeling really valuable to share accurate and important info, to see things start to kind of shift in the way media talks about these issues. And again when I wrote that first book and I started to talk about sex addiction on Dr.Phil, and that became one of the things that everybody wanted to talk about. And so, I ended up writing a second book you know about the myth of sex addiction. And that really really kicked me into the media because at the time everybody under the sun was a sex addict. Tiger Woods was a sex addict, David Duchovny was a sex addict and the media was really interested in finding somebody that had an opposing voice. And so you know that is one thing that I would put out there as sort of a tip. You know there are lots and lots of sexperts out there that go on the media and talk about polyamory or non-monogamous relationships but you know how many people are there that the media can call on to talk about expertise in say necrophilia? And If you can identify an area where there isn't a whole lot of confident expert voices in this area of sexuality, it kinda carves out this unique sort of niche where you can become very valuable. And one of my favorite examples doing media stuff, you know you talk about these examples where what's in it for you. And well I got a free damn trip to Australia.

Heather: Oh, wow.

David: What are they called? I think SPFS, it's like public television down in Australia, and they called me up and they said "Hey can you help us find somebody who can say the same stuff that you say and that thinks the same way that you do um down in Australia or down in the Southern Hemisphere?" And I said, nope sorry it's just me. Haha. No, there's nobody like me.

Heather: Haha, fly me out!

David: And so sure enough they flew me out and I got a week in Australia on their dime.

Heather: Nice!

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David: You know for doing the show, right? And you know it's a good example where, yeah I got something out of it and I still have really strong contacts now in Australia from that.

Heather: That's amazing! That sounds like so much fun. And yeah I couldn't agree more you know that once you become a so-called expert in a subject if you're talking about one topic then people start reaching out to you about that particular topic. You know, I was in *Playboy* Magazine, the print edition, part of it I think well there's an online edition and a print edition.

David: Now there's not a print edition anymore, they stopped printing them.

Heather: Right, not anymore. But there was an online edition and they printed it and it was quoted something about so you think you're into choking or something about choking. And so I imagine they needed some certified sex therapist talking about that subject and you know if you are putting yourself out there as an expert in kink or BDSM then they are more likely to reach out to you. I think the print edition was actually with you David!

David: Yeah, that's right!

Heather: I was really lucky enough to be able to be interviewed alongside you about hotwife-ing and cuckolding, which is about your first book, *Insatiable Wives*, which is a fantastic book if you haven't read it definitely go pick up a copy if you're listening to this cause it's a really wonderful book full of case studies and I really enjoyed it. So, yeah I think that that's some really good advice. I'm curious, how do you not get boxed into one particular topic or subject? I feel like I've been lucky enough to you know be asked about all kinds of topics from kink to masturbation to um you know hotwife-ing and cuckolding, but I'm curious do you feel like some people get boxed in to only talking about one topic, like sex addiction for instance?

David: Yes, I think you kind of start identifying and sort of establishing yourself in um a certain area. But it also, that expands with media sources and you start talking to them. Because the thing is that journalists are kind of like attorneys too- they call you with a question and they have the tip of the iceberg oftentimes. You know, they have a question about consensual non-monogamy for instance and then as you talk to them it's your opportunity to expand their mind a little bit about for instance understanding the

difference between consensual non-monogamy and infidelity. Or for instance, talking about how some of the same dynamics might drive infidelity and non-monogamy. Or you get to talk about, for instance, you know kind of moral or religious kind of issues that come up. And so, as you talk to journalists it is your opportunity to start expanding your bandwidth there. Because the way it works is the journalist contacts you now for this issue but as you talk to them you demonstrate some expertise and confidence in talking about, for instance, mental health issues and they're like oh, hey that person was really good talking to me about this issue- I am going to contact them and just see if this is in their sort of alleyway right?

Heather: Yeah I couldn't agree more. Once they like you, they keep referring to you, that's what I've experienced as well.

David: Yeah I mean not a week goes by where I don't get about half a dozen emails from various journalists and stuff and they're asking me you know can I comment on this issue or can they interview me about X, Y, Z, whatever it is. And you know, some of it is the kind of casting a wide net. And you know my ego is intact, I know it's not about me- they're sending out probably 10-15 of those emails and seeing who they hear back from. But you're on their list as a trusted source.

Heather: Right, and you know that brings up the other topic of sort of staying in your lane. Cause it's really tempting I think for someone to you know to respond to something that maybe they don't have the expertise on or maybe they don't really know that much about.

David: Yeah.

Heather: And so, that's a really important topic to bring up as well.

David: Yeah, you know I couldn't emphasize that enough. I mean I think that honestly the journalists, the good ones, they respect you more for saying, Uh you know this isn't my area, Um, but I know this other lady, Heather McPherson, over at Sexual Health Alliance who can really talk to you well about this. Because again the reporters have learned that they have to be careful as well. And you know, one of the most fascinating reads that I've really ever had was I think last year or the year before. This reporter contacted me and he said you know I need help. I've got this very interesting kind of issue and I need a

trusted sexual health clinician and expert who can help me figure out what's going on here. And I said, to be honest, I was a little bored right then, and I said yeah sure whatever, what you got?

Heather: Hahaha.

David: What he had was this guy named Damien Sendler, who a couple years ago he started promoting himself as an MDPHD sexologist, Harvard trained, and this guy was all over the place.

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Heather: Oh that's right, I remember that.

David: Yeah he was in *Forbes* magazine, he had all these publications, um he was showing up on TV, he was even on the Dan Savage show!

Heather: Wow.

David: And Savage loved him, and he presented himself as an expert on necrophelia. And so this guy, he had taken my lesson, exactly what I was talking about you know identify that kind of unique, niche area. Well, this guy got it. This reporter contacted me and he said you know I think this guy is fake. You know, I contacted Harvard and he doesn't have a degree there. And so I spent two weeks working with this reporter named Jennings and he would send me links to this guy's stuff, he would send me his articles. We started rilling down, it was like investigative journaling it was so exciting.

Heather: Hahaha, that's so exciting! And, that's enough to get that media boner going, huh?

David: Yeah! And, well we found out, yeah this guy is a complete and total fraud! I mean he had a bachelor's degree and he was allegedly in medical school in Poland but this was all just made up. And he loved the attention. And Jennings finally interviewed him and said well you know Harvard doesn't know who you are! And the guy said well, I was gonna go to school and get the degree but it ended up being a lot of work. So I just started saying I had the degree, and everybody believed me! And, um Dan Savage who has gotten to be a friend of mine is sort of engaged in the process of the media and everything else. Dan actually did a Podcast where he said you know we go Punk'd. And then the message became how do journalists vet their sources and you know how do they snake sure that on these sensational kinds of salacious topics they're getting the real deal and real expertise.

Heather: It's so interesting, you know I was just doing some research earlier this week that turned up 20-25% of Ph.D.'s are actually fake.

David: Oh my God!

Heather: They're called diploma mills and you just pay for it and you got one.

David: Yeah.

Heather: So this guy didn't even pay for it and get a fake one he just flat out lied! And said he had one which is just not...

BREAK

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END OF BREAK

David: But the media I think, the good ones at least, I think they are getting more savvy in terms of sort of verifying their experts credibility. And when you do kind of some higher end media for instance, you know I mean it's weird to say this but so I did the daily show last year.

Heather: That was a very fantastic show by the way, that was so funny.

David: Yeah you know that was fun, and you know honestly one of the things that I would say that I've matured with in terms of this messaging is being able to make it funny and engaging. So doing the daily show was hysterical cause we got to kind of talk about these serious topics in this really fun, humorous way. But, you know the daily show is a big deal, a lot of people get their news from the daily show.

Heather: Mhm, yeah.

David: And the daily show reached out to me after we recorded the episode to verify some of the claims that I had made. And they asked me to give them citations for some of the things I said. Like, for instance, that masturbation appears to actually increase testosterone and that abstinence from masturbation appears

to decrease testosterone at least in males. And that was one of the things that I said on the show and they reached out to me afterwards and they said well can you sort of prove that uop for us? Because they know that they were going to be attacked.

Heather: Mhm.

David: And so that is sort of the thing that the media is realizing that if they don't want to get called fake news they need to be able to back up their information and verify their sources. And so, that's something you need to be really thoughtful about and thats also why it is so important to stay in your lane as you're talking about this stuff, because when you step outside of your lane, when you let the grandiosity or the ego sort of get to you, it can end up biting you in the back-end.

Heather: And eventually it always does and it's not in the good way.

David: That's right, like this guy Damien Sendler.

Heather: Mhm.

David: Most of his articles got taken down, you know he was exposed. Now media sources wont use him right?

Heather: Right.

David: Because he was just making this stuff up.

Heather: Well I'm really glad that media in general and journalists are getting more savvy in terms of who they are reaching out to and verifying their credibility and their sources, I think that's even more important that you know as therapists, as couches, as sexual health professionals, that you make sure that you have the you know accurate, reliable, credible training behind you to be able to have that important piece to giving those interviews. You know I think that there's a lot of people in the sexual health field that don't have any training, that might be giving quotes and information. And that's why we have so much crap out there!

David: Yeah and-

Heather: - so it's great to hear that theyre getting more savvy about it. And I think- go ahead what were you going to say?

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David: Well I was just going to say that I think when we know being that sexpert, when we are offering this information, we have to remember that we are educating, that we are educators. And that it's important to give that information accurately and effectively. To give it in a way that the audience can receive it and you know the, uh... I do a lot of forensic work now as well and I'm effective there as well because it's the same thing. You're in the role of educating the jury and educating the attorney about these complicated things and you have to walk this complicated tightrope of not simplifying something too much but not making it too complex. You have to hit the target in a place where we acknowledge the complexity but we package it in a way that people can understand it and now do something with it. And that requires you to understand the complexity of these things and then be able to communicate it in an effective way. And one of the things that has really helped me in all of this, is you know there are a lot of different sources in media- we can talk about radio, we can talk about magazines and podcasts and television and documentaries and everything else. But the thing that really helped me the most was you know about ten years ago I started writing a blog for *Psychology Today* and as I wrote that and I started with these long kind of complicated pieces, but I learned through what words I was using that people responded to. And I started being able to actually see sentences that I wrote, people picking them up and tweeting them out or copying them into facebook posts and that helped me to really distill down what the important parts of the message were and how to say them in a way that it stuck. So you know for people that are listening that kind of want to get into the media in this kind of dialogue and you know kind of process, that's the thing is you gottas put in the work. You can't walk into this thinking you know that, Hey I'm a cowboy and that I can walk in and do this. You gotta practice and you gotta learn how to communicate this complicated stuff in an accessible, effective and accurate way. Writing about it is one of the really really important strategies.

Heather: That's really good advice. I mean I think any of us who have worked with media outlets understand that you write you know 4 or 5 paragraphs, sometimes even more, and one sentence gets taken from it and that's it. And so I think it's really good advice to be careful about how you answer the questions

and understanding that you know it might just get one sentence and that's okay and you know you might need to of or have wanted to said a lot more to get your point across-

David: Right.

Heather:- or to provide that education but it's not always possible.

David: Yeah, you know I was actually pissed off about it for a while. And I went to my accountant and my tax prep guy and I said look you know I'm spending an hour on the phone with this damn journalist can I write off that hour?

Heather: Haha, well thats a really good question!

David: Right, like can I write that off you know my hourly rate. Cause you know, this is an investment right?

Heather: Mhm.

David: And so he came back and he said no you cant.

Heather: Oh, man!

David: But, you know it brings me back to the early kind of question- is, you know, you need to think about what youre doing media for and you know whats the goal of engaging with media for you? Is it getting referrals to your practice, is it you know trying to drive links to your website? Is it the ego? Is it exciting to see your name in print or yourself on TV so that you can do what I did which is you know send all these magazines to my mom-

Heather: Aww, thats adorable!

David: Yeah I mean talk about- its funny until I tell you yeah I was in *Time Magazine* and *Hustler*. And when Im sending those to Mom, you know she only read the articles. Um, but you need to think about what youre doing it for.

Heather: Mhm.

David: And you need to be clear about what you're getting out of it. Because that's where this investment can be worth it. Cause you know when you're spending all this, when you get tired of talking to these journalists and saying the same damn thing over and over and over, um thats what makes it worth it.

Heather: Yeah so really understanding your intention going into this part of the work, um and being clear about it thats some really good advice.

David: Yeah.

Heather: What mistakes have you made in working with media?

David: Well, um let me see. There was one where I almost made a mistake and I caught it and um I had published a research article that I was apart of about how to educate the queer community about access to affirmative pay for health services. And I got this contact from an attorney, a journalist I'm sorry, about wanting to interview me about that research and it was back when I was googling and researching the journalist before they contacted me. And I was really really glad I did because it turned out that the journalist wrote for this extreme, right-wing, highly conservative rag that had extremely homophobic perspectives.

Heather: Hm.

David: And so I didnt respond to them and they were stuck just then, they did write a piece about it, but they were stuck just referring to the published article. Whereas if I had talked to them, boy they couldve invited me to say some outlandish stuff tha they could use against me.

Heather: Yeah, so researching the you know journalists and media that is reaching out to you-

David: Yeah

Heather: Really kind of doing your work-

David: That's right

Heather: - and kind of making sure that they have the legitimacy to do it as well.

David: Yeah and to make sure that there's somebody writing for a venue that you wanna talk to. And then you know, the other one it was a painful lesson, I wouldn't say that it was a mistake but you know it was a challenging experience. I did an episode with Katie Couric back when she had a daytime talk show, and she-

Heather: Oh yes, we all remember this one. This was so painful.

David: Oh god, this was- And they brought me on to you know talk about pornography and I had actually set limits early on, you know, I just want to make sure we aren't talking about child pornography.

Heather: Mhm.

David: And, um you know cause that turns into-

Heather: So you even did your due diligence, you even-

David: I did

Heather: - tried to make sure to protect yourself

David: I did and then on the show she just sand bagged me. And she um, a lot of her negative attitudes values toward pornography and toward sex came out and she even said during the interview, well I guess I'm just a prude, about herself, and I think she's right. But it was painful, I mean it was you know and a lot of people look at the video- I mean your listeners can watch it it's on YouTube. And they say, you know you did okay. You weren't... but I learned a lesson, you know I learned a couple lessons. And one of the lessons I learned was that when I go on there and I'm talking about research, and research, and research that that feels kind of distant, especially when someone is reacting from an irrational, emotional kind of place.

Heather: Mhm, which often times it is when we're talking about sex and porn.

David: Exactly, and so I realized after that experience that I had to learn how to talk about these issues, both at the research level and at the emotional level. And, um after that experience I published my third book, which is about pornography and it's written for guys. And I wrote it specifically in this very accessible, non-research driven kind of manner. Because I realized from that experience that we had to start putting this in an accessible kind of language. And- because I'm a smart ass I dedicated the book to Katie Couric, and I offered to send her a copy and she never wrote me back.

Heather: I think that you did great on that show I mean I think that we were all um watching in agony, but you know you actually did learn about the research, so hey!

David: I mean yeah you know I walked up... well that's funny cause that was the last episode of her show.

Heather: You ended her, haha.

David: I did, well I also ended Anderson Cooper- Anderson Cooper had a day time show-

Heather: Oh man, hopefully this wont be the last episode of this podcast!

David: Laughter

Heather: Laughter

David: I should've told you I am the curse of death apparently-

Heather: Oh, man.

David: - for daytime talk shows listed. Although, I've down Dr. Oz and Dr. Phil and they didnt go off the air-

Heather: Okay, alright, alright.

David: It's funny cause as i was walking off the set from Katie Couric, and you know they always have like a handler that kind of escorts you around and stuff like that. And so, this guy is kind of walking me around and off the show, and he says oh well that was good! And I looked at him and I said what the fuck are you talking about, did you watch the show I was on?

Heather: Laughter

David: And I said that that was awful. And he said yeah, he said she shut ya up. And he said-

Heather: Oooo.

David: And he said yeah thats why I'm leaving and this show is ending-

Heather: Oh no. oh. Man so there was just it wasnt really handled well.

David: So you know, thats the lesson that I learned that I hope other people can learn from my pain is that you know because sex is so sensational and because triggering fear and anxiety and you know using that emotional conflicit that is alla bout sex is such a great way to get cliks and eyeballs. That unfortunately there is a lot of media folks out there that you know exploit that and you gotta be careful that you dont play into that because that can wind up hurting you.

Heather: Mhm. Yeah that's some really good advice just to kind of take in and understand that you know not everyone is out for your best interests, you really have to be careful. And I think its really you knwo it's good advice to have someone that you can talk to about this stuff.

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David: Yeah.

Heather: And to have a media person like yourself that has had all of this experience-

David: Yeah.

Heather: - that we can learn from.

David: So, you know the last tip I'll give here is, and then we'll talk about where we can explain this in more detail, and it goes along with that kind of vetting your sources, is that when a journalist contacts you about one of these sensational kind of topics, that you know could go south, I think it's always important to ask the journalist, you know, hey, what's your approach here and ask them to tell you how they're kind of going out this so you can get an idea, and it's not for sure, but so you can get an idea about what they're thinking about this and if that's something that you want to be associated with or not.

Heather: Yeah especially whenever you're going to go on a live TV show and you don't really have control over the narrative or where it's going. That's really important advice to take. So you know, you kind of mentioned a little teaser-

David: Mhm.

Heather: - of where can we get more information about this. So we are really excited at Practice Outside the Lines podcast to partner with Sexual Health Alliance and provide a more in depth training of how to engage with the media and Dr. David Ley is going to be teaching a lot of that because as you can tell he has a wealth of knowledge, so much to learn, of all of his years of experience- the good the bad and the ugly.

David: laughter

Heather: So you wanna talk about that a little bit?

David: I bring the ugly let me tell you! So yeah, we're gonna do a workshop about this, about how to engage with the media as a sexpert because they're a lot of sex therapists and sex educators and sex researchers out there that uh they want to talk to the media about it or they have talked to the media about it and they felt that it didn't go very well. So the idea is to share some of these lessons with those folks and I think it serves all of us- it serves us as a community to have more accurate information out there from

reliable sources and uh hopefully it helps us all team up and partner together to get that information out there.

Heather: Absolutely.

David: So we are going to do that on a Friday in September, it will be online and you can sign up and participate and you can learn all of this stuff and a whole lot more. You know, we'll talk about you know how to identify the media to engage with, how to reach out to them, how to pitch them. We'll talk about you know ways to get your message better. We'll talk about um, you know, the different kinds of media. And we'll talk about you know what you can expect um from you know this media versus that. We will talk about the ever present question of can you ever get paid for doing this stuff, can you every charge anything for going on one of these shows or you know give these kind of interviews- and if you do well then how do you do that? And then we will also talk about where the next steps are. Not only, you know, viewing engagement with the media, not as an end result but as a means to an end and then what's next. What do you turn that into um and how do you maybe even monetize that and I've got some ideas and experience there.

Heather: Some really good idea, I can not wait to hear and learn about all hings media from someone who has been on so many different media outlets and has had so many different experiences its just a wealth of knowlkgе that we are going to get to be training with and so I am really excited for that.

David: I am too.

Heather: And so, thanks so much Dr. David Ley for talking with us about all things media. There was a wealth of information as I said, theres so many things that we delve into- I'm sure we could talk for hours about this. But that will be for the training, so thankyou so much for coming on and sharing with us.

David: Thankyou, good stuff! Can't wait to hear where you go next.

Heather- Thankyou for listening to Practice Outside the Lines podcast, my name is Heather McPherson, certified sex therapist, consultant, and sex entrepeuer. Did you know that we have a certified course on starting or growing your sexual health focused business? Go to practiceoutsidethelines.com to get started.

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