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10 QUESTIONS FOR JANE PAULEY

AFTER GETTING UP EARLY (FOR THE TODAY SHOW) AND STARRING IN PRIME TIME (on *Dateline* NBC), Jane Pauley, 53, will venture next week into a new time period, as host of a daytime syndicated talk show. The mother of three (and wife of *Doonesbury* creator Garry Trudeau) has also written a book, *Skywriting*, in which she reveals her bipolar disorder. She talked with TIME's Michele Orecklin.

DOESN'T IT SEEM LATELY THAT TALK-SHOW HOST HAS PASSED DIRECTOR AS EVERYONE'S FANTASY JOB? I, for one, never aspired to be a talk-show host. When the idea of the show came up, I was making other plans, which didn't involve television, but it didn't take more than a minute to see that all the things I was interested in, like women, education and learning, health and children, naturally fit under the umbrella of a talk show.

HOW WILL YOU DISTINGUISH YOUR SHOW FROM THOSE LIKE OPRAH THAT ARE ALREADY ON THE AIR? I think the success of a talk show depends on how true it is to the personality of the person hosting it. The shows I really admire, like *Oprah* and *Ellen*, are distinctively like their hosts, so I think my show will be successful only if we try to stay consistent to my own sense of myself.

AND HOW DO YOU SEE YOURSELF? I see myself as life-sized, certainly not a supersized personality, and apparently after 30 years of television, that's what the audience thinks of me as



well. I know this because for the first time in my career, I've just seen market research, and the thing I am known for is being authentic. So if I'm being asked on the show to be authentic, to be myself, this I can do.

BUT TO DO THAT YOU HAVE TO BE REVEALING ABOUT YOUR LIFE, AND HAVEN'T YOU ALWAYS BEEN INTENSELY PRIVATE? I have been fiercely private, in part because I could never understand how a journalist could be otherwise. I was

also the mother of small children, and security concerns were paramount.

SO WHAT CHANGED? For one thing, I'm not doing journalism anymore. I'm doing a show where I have conversations with women like myself. But also I've changed. About the time I turned 50, I experienced the profound biological change that often accompanies women at that age. Also, I put two kids in college and lost both of my parents, so I'm no longer somebody's daughter.

YOU HAVE SAID THAT YOU ARE MORE SUITED TO THIS THAN ANY JOB YOU'VE EVER HAD. WHY IS THAT? In the beginning when I sat next to Tom Brokaw on the *Today* show, the stories I was interested in were those having to do with women and children and learning and health. In those days, 25 to 30 years ago, that was called soft news, and not in a nice way. I'm not known for confrontations. I was not a great reporter. I was a good interviewer. Now I get to pick the stories; the news picks itself.

YOU HAVE DECLARED YOUR SHOW A "NO-POLITICS ZONE." WHY IS THAT? Because I want to talk about issues that are important to women, the things that we all share. Politics just tends to drive people apart.

YOU WRITE IN YOUR BOOK ABOUT DISCOVERING IN 2001 THAT YOU HAD BIPOLAR DISORDER. DID YOU HAVE ANY INKLING BEFORE THAT? None that I knew of. A former head of NBC News once said I had the best mental health in journalism.

HOW DID YOU DISCOVER IT? I was being treated for hives with steroids, which when you start to take them really rev you up and when you go off them make you slow down ... At some point I was depressed. It wasn't debilitating; I was still working at *Dateline*. But I was taking an antidepressant, and apparently it was a kind that shouldn't be prescribed for someone with a predisposition for bipolar disorder, which I had never known I had.

YOUR REPUTATION IS FOR BEING LEVEL-HEADED AND EVEN-KEELED. DID YOU EVER THINK, THEY SHOULD SEE ME CUT LOOSE ON A SATURDAY NIGHT? No, that's really the way I was and how I was brought up in Indiana. When profiles were done of me when I was younger, they always mentioned my normal upbringing, like there was something wrong with that. ■