

**WHERE ARE THEY NOW?**

# Carolyn Bushong

*The self-reliant woman has done it again*

By Linda Castrone

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Carolyn Bushong pays the mortgage by counseling people with relationship problems, but her sideline is counseling Oprah. And Sally, Leeza, Bertice Berry and Maury Povich.

The talk show hosts need guests and experts for their shows, and when they call for referrals, they're usually desperate. Bushong does her best to oblige.

The 46-year-old Denver psychotherapist is a TV producer's dream. Her special talent is taking ordinary sounding ideas and molding them into sexy topics.

Her first venture after moving from Aspen to Denver in 1984 was a Denver Free University class called The New Macho Woman. It attracted the attention of the *Rocky Mountain News*, and she was recruited to write a singles column for the newspaper.

By 1986, she also had taken on a syndicated column for News America Syndicate and was finishing a book she called *The Self-Reliant Woman*.

One year later, "everything started to go wrong," Bushong said. Her column in the *News* was canceled, DFW went bankrupt, News America was sold to another syndicate, her tax returns were audited ("I'm still paying the IRS back," she says) and "every publishing houses rejected the book 10 times."

Not until 1989 did things start to look up again. Frustrated by lack of interest in her

book, Bushong sold it piecemeal to *New Woman* and *Cosmopolitan* magazines. In 1991, a new editor at Crossroads/Continuum bought the book and renamed it *Loving Him Without Losing You*.

It was released in 1991 and bombed. When bookstores began to return unsold copies, Bushong took the matter into her own hands.

"I spent eight years on that book," she said. "I wasn't going to just move on to the next one, so I tried to do it myself."

Months later, the producer of the Oprah Winfrey show called. She had seen the book's title and thought it fit with a show on "Wives Held Captive in their Own Homes."

Bushong agreed to appear as an expert guest, sold 2,000 copies of the book the next week, then leveraged that appearance into several more. Before she knew it, her book was back in the publisher's current catalog and has been there ever since.

Bushong also found herself on the source list for dozens of producers.

"In the last year I've been getting one or two calls a week, and it's become a burden," she admits. "One Monday I got calls from Leeza (Gibbons), Bertice and Sally (Jesse



Carolyn Bushong: advisor to the talk-show stars.

Raphael). All of them wanted people to be on their shows, and all of them were in a bind.

"I spent three hours finding people, and it dawned on me. I should be getting paid for this."

Now Bushong gets paid to help professionals get on the air to promote their books or their businesses.

She also handles private clients with quirky stories they want to share. She represents them for free, just to keep her credibility with the producers.