

## Reality show junkie needs help

About 10 years ago, while trying to peddle a manuscript to a bunch of disinterested publishers, one finally took pity on me and revealed one of many reasons why doors kept slamming in my face.

Basically, he said, "Now, I don't have a crystal ball or anything like that, but this thing called reality television is going to hit it big and there won't be much else people will



**Generations**

Peg DeMarco

watch on television but this junk. And no one is going to read books or go out to the movies anymore."

I couldn't imagine what he was talking about, but his prediction came true during the past couple of years.

In one of her recent columns, Kaye Fish touched on how a show like "Bret Michaels' Rock of Love" can pull you in and make you keep hanging on for that grand finale that always seems to promise much, but deliver little. And I, sad to say, am one of the ones completely hooked.

How can a 60-year-old woman with grown children, one who owns a business and manages a busy household, get hooked on watching the most ridiculous shows imaginable? And, even more important, what can she do to break this deplorable habit?

For me, it probably started with *Survivor*, a show where I could somehow pretend that I was right there with them on that deserted island, struggling with personalities as well as hardships.

I probably then graduated to *The Amazing Race*, a show I could put the blame on using the excuse "learning geography."

When did the tide turn and this obsession take over? When did an occasional reality show turn into a quagmire of mindless rhetoric that I can't seem to switch off with my handy remote?

I missed the Kelly Clarkson win on *American Idol* and only picked the show up in the second season.

An avid enthusiast rooting for the underdogs for the next few seasons, somehow today the show has lost its luster for me.

Here's a preview of just how far I've sunk with the hope that maybe one of you reading this column can either top my list or show me the road to salvation.

Since one of my loves is food, *Hell's Kitchen* and *Kitchen Nightmares*, both with Gordon Ramsey, and *Top Chef* need to be pretty high on my viewing list. Not only do I not understand a word the chefs are talking about when they describe their entrees in what I like to call "chef talk," but I can't seem to figure out what they should have done to have improved their dishes to

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**gab**

remain in the competition.

The only way I can tell if it is a hit or miss is by how much bleeping is done when Gordon goes on a rampage.

America's Top Model is next in line. Tyra is gorgeous. I don't care how much weight they insist she's gained, no one can touch her.

However, even one of the judges, Twiggy, looks obese compared to the models shimmying on the runway or facing the dais of judges. Yes, thin may be in — but bones have got to be out.

Millionaire Matchmaker is a hoot. Can anyone honestly believe that a Los Angeles millionaire has a hard time finding love and would need to hire a nice Jewish girl from New York to pick out the love of his life?

Speaking of Los Angeles, I must admit that the Housewives of Orange County drew me in slowly, but in a sneaky kind of way.

I found myself rooting for the brunette in every episode, no matter what her story line was.

Early on, I had decided that the look-alike, buxom, spoiled blondes that always seemed to be shopping deserved no sympathy from this viewer and that the poor brunette could do no wrong.

Orange County is now on hiatus, but the Housewives of New York City were quick to fill their stiletto heels.

This group of high society ladies, living in closets that they pay an arm and a leg for, seem to always have a martini glass in reach.

Another favorite of mine has become Flavor of Love with Flavor Flav.

If I lost you, it's a reality show where William Jonathan Drayton Jr., better known as Flavor Flav, starts with a stable of about 20 finalists and selects the woman of his dreams by elimination.

Flav (see, I'm with it, hip to the bone) wears the most distinctive coiffeurs, gigantic horns on top of his head, a big clock necklace and hot pink Zoot suits that the front man for Kid Creole and the Coconuts would die for.

As you see, I have no shame when it comes to confessing that I'm a reality show junkie and, in fact, freely admit it.

I was one of those viewers elated when Bret picked "the old lady" at 37 instead of the Double D stripper on his finale show.

However, I'm not so sure the moguls of his network share the same opinion that he has found true love at last, so I remain poised and ready to view his third season with anticipation.

I do remain hopeful, however, that something or someone will save me, and that I can overcome this reality show addiction in time. It's iffy — as Flav would say, "The clock is ticking."

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