

Congratulations to Rush for 30 Remarkable Years

This week marks the 30th anniversary of my brother's national syndication in radio, and it has been a phenomenal success. Congratulations and kudos, Rush.
By David Limbaugh

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Rush was born for broadcasting, especially radio broadcasting. While he has enormous talent and makes broadcasting look easy, he cultivated his skills into a finely developed art through years of dogged determination and dedication.

He sensed he had this gift, because he began broadcasting when we were very young, without any prompting. He sat in front of the TV with the volume down and announced St. Louis Cardinals baseball games. When listening to sports broadcasts and AM radio, he did more than follow the play-by-play or the songs; he studied the great broadcasters and DJs with rapt fascination. Like any beginner, he started out emulating the pros, but over time, he crafted his own style. He worked on his elocution and meticulously trained himself to ditch our Midwestern accent.

He was so enthused that my parents bought him a Remco Caravelle -- an electronic device that allowed him to broadcast over the AM airwaves inside our home. He began using that with delight, and we were his audience.

Unlike some people who passionately pursue career or recreational paths for which they have no particular gifts, Rush was richly blessed with natural abilities tailor-made for broadcasting.

His voice is a malleable instrument under his complete dominion. He could do lights-out impressions of people, from colorful local characters to national celebrities. Impressionists don't just have pliable voices; they hear details others miss. They notice the subtle nuances of voice patterns -- the pitch, the enunciation, the unique vocal tics.

I remember one time when Rush and I discussed an eccentric family friend. Rush spontaneously launched into a monologue in this man's voice. The guy had a penchant for name-dropping, and he always bragged about one prominent person's being his personal friend. When Rush pronounced this hotshot's name in our friend's voice, I almost drove off the road from laughing so hard. I had never picked up on the subtly goofy way he proudly pronounced this name until Rush said it -- in his voice. Amusingly, Rush had no idea why I was tickled, because imitating the guy precisely in the man's voice came so naturally to him. But he hears things other people don't; he observes things other people miss. He has always used those faculties in broadcasting.

Rush has a steel-trap mind and is one of the quickest studies I know, a gift he acquired from our brilliant father. He instantly absorbs anything he reads -- assuming he has the slightest interest in the material -- and has a wide-ranging aptitude for most subjects.

He was uncannily precocious in certain areas, which dazzled my parents and frankly left them speechless -- a near impossibility for both of them. He could identify any car we passed on the road, starting not too long after he began talking. I don't know whether he even remembers this, but my parents swore there was no way he could have acquired the information as to cars' identities --

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rethink news as if he were a reimagined automaker. They never did figure out how he did it, and I doubt he did, either. He also had an intimate knowledge of aviation -- identifying planes and understanding the science of flight -- an interest he acquired from our World War II fighter pilot father, but here again, I swear my dad didn't just spoon-feed it to him. It's as if he absorbed it out of thin air.

His humor he got mostly from our mother -- a beloved character of characters. He also has a natural fluency whereby his thought process kicks into high gear at the sound of his own voice. People have consistently marveled at Rush's ability to string together complex sentences, paragraphs and entire monologues on the fly without a hitch. He forms his thoughts as he goes, sometimes not knowing in advance what he's going to say. The creative process proceeds at the exact same speed at which the audience hears his ruminations. That has always fascinated me.

With Rush's full array of talents -- intelligence, wit, fluency, voice mechanics, passion and natural entertainment genius -- he was bound to be a radio superstar. Or was he?

In fact, it wasn't that simple. He worked against all odds -- against family career tradition, against recalcitrant bosses and against relative poverty in the beginning -- and persevered to achieve his greatness, in a sense, all on his own. Deep down, he knew he wanted to do more than spin records and offer clever comments between songs, and he sometimes irritated station managers by editorializing and doing gags that weren't part of the job description.

It was anything but easy, and at times, he thought he'd finally failed, but in the end, all of his hard work and persistence paid off. He carved out his own genre -- conservative talk radio -- where he marshaled his skills to produce the finest political talk radio show in broadcast history.

With so many conservative radio and TV talkers in the industry today, some may forget the media terrain when Rush was operating solo. He blazed the trail and shocked the liberal media world. Liberals had always exclusively owned the major media airwaves -- and they didn't take kindly to Rush's trespass on their monopoly. He validated millions of conservative Americans starved for a media voice, and he mainstreamed conservative thought.

He proceeded fearlessly, skewering sacred liberal shibboleths and daring to use his biting humor to expose liberal hypocrisy and ludicrousness. Immediately, he became their target, and they have been trying to destroy him ever since. He was, quite actually, the tip of the spear, and he has suffered their arrows with little complaint and little assistance -- except from his fabulously loving and supportive audience. All other conservative hosts, without exception, are direct beneficiaries of his experiences on the front lines.

That brings me to the final point I want to make here. I think it is delightfully fitting that Rush saw something early on in presidential candidate Donald Trump with which he could identify, an observation that enabled him to understand Trump's appeal and electability like few others. He watched Trump's rallies and noticed the same kind of excitement he had experienced when

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traveling the country, to develop his national radio audience in the early years. Rush saw a connection between Trump and his audience that mirrored his bond with his radio audience. It is a relationship built and sustained by mutual trust. I believe he also identified with Trump's becoming a target of hateful liberals and others who simply could not or would not understand his unorthodox approach to politics -- just as the experts could not initially accept Rush's unorthodox approach to radio.

Though some people think Rush is all bombast and fire and brimstone, that is all a media caricature. Rush is one of the politest hosts in the business. When people listen without preconceived notions instead of accepting the haters' descriptions, they're often pleasantly surprised. Rush is the only person I've ever known who could gently persuade someone to come into the fold.

Finally, though it is difficult to single out Rush's greatest talent, if I were forced to name one, I would not say it's his broadcasting or entertainment prowess or any of the other attributes I've mentioned but instead say it's his gift for incisive political commentary -- something based on his deep insight into human nature, his lifelong study of politics and political science, and his exceptional ability to analyze the current political climate, with all its players and all its moving parts. Just as with voices, he often notices things that others miss.

I am extremely proud of what Rush has accomplished for himself and, more importantly, what he has meant and continues to mean for the country. I am proud to be his brother and wish him another 30 years of success, prosperity, profundity and indispensability to America. Congratulations.