

'Home Improvement' Star Still Thanks Tim Allen for Saving Her From Playboy 30 Years Later

The Christian virtue of modesty, so elusive in the modern world, often depends on both honesty and charity.

In other words, those who find themselves under strong temptation to indecency might require little more than truth and kindness.

In an exclusive interview with the New York Post, 59-year-old actress Debbie Dunning, who played "Tool Time girl" Heidi Keppert on the 1990s hit sitcom "Home Improvement," starring Tim Allen, recalled that advice and encouragement she received from Allen that helped her turn down an offer of a photo shoot in Playboy magazine, long famous for its photos of nude and semi-nude women.

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"Probably [to] just stay as natural, as you are," Dunning said of Allen's advice. "There were times where I wanted possibly to be a little more glamorous. And he's like, 'No, the way you look and the way you are, you will go so much further.'"

That, of course, sounds more like career advice than moral admonishment from Allen, now a prominent conservative.

Indeed it should, for honesty and charity often yield greater fruits than does scolding.

Meanwhile, Dunning also remember a time when Allen and a director told her what she needed to hear.

“‘You’ve got that natural girl next door beauty,’” they told her. “‘Don’t ever lose that. Don’t ever get sidetracked.’ And so when Playboy came to ask me if I wanted to do that ... I was like, ‘I’m going to have kids someday. I don’t know.’”

That advice “helped me make a really good decision,” she said.

Dunning will appear in Season 2 of Allen’s latest sitcom, “Switching Gears.” Episode 1 premieres Wednesday at 8:00 ET on ABC.

Last week on the social media platform X, Allen earned praise – not to mention more than 12 million views and counting – for his reaction to the grace demonstrated by Erika Kirk during the memorial for her slain husband, conservative Christian icon Charlie Kirk.

“When Erika Kirk spoke the words on the man who killed her husband: ‘That man... that young man... I forgive him.’ That moment deeply affected me,” Allen wrote. “I have struggled for over 60 years to forgive the man who killed my Dad. I will say those words now as I type: ‘I forgive the man who killed my father.’ Peace be with you all.”

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– Tim Allen (@ofctimallen) September 25, 2025



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Allen, of course, spoke for many of us who watched in awe as Erika Kirk modeled Christian forgiveness.

Moreover, in light of Dunning's recollections, Allen has another powerful connection to the Kirks.

In a clip that went viral on X last month, Charlie Kirk showed extraordinary grace toward porn actress Molly Little when she tried to embarrass him during a joint appearance on the Whatever Podcast.

At the beginning of the clip, Kirk admitted to having struggled with porn. Little then interrupted to ask if he had thought about her during those struggles.

The pained look on Kirk's face said it all. He showed no embarrassment. Nor did he chastise her. Instead, he reacted with honesty and charity.

"I've never heard of you before," he calmly replied.

A mix of laughter and confusion prevailed among the host and other guests. For her part, Little came across less as vicious than as addicted to the shocking and scandalous in life.

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"Molly, I have sympathy for you. I do," Kirk added moments later. "You're trying to cope with the suppression of your soul. And filming yourself having sex with other men is not the highest and best use of the talents that God gave you."

Little, of course, wasn't about to concede anything on the spot, so she joked to conceal her discomfort.

"I think that is a talent God gave me," she replied.

"Well it's not the highest and best use," Kirk said, again calmly. "And it's not a talent, cause, as I said, in my belief that should be saved in a sacred domain. We're not gonna agree on that."

Having shared truth, Kirk concluded on a charitable note.

“But I hope you change course,” he said. “I think you’ll be happier and more joyful. And I pray you don’t have to suffer too much to realize that.”

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The post featuring the video of Kirk and Little had more than 12.2 million views as of Wednesday morning.

In short, whatever Little decides to do with the rest of her life, she has heard the truth from Kirk. And she heard it delivered in a manner most likely to reach her – just as Dunning did, thanks to Allen.

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