

## TV Review: Lisa Kudrow Stars in Disappointing ‘Web Therapy’

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on July 19, 2011 - 11:35am

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CHICAGO – Showtime’s new comedy series “Web Therapy” with Lisa Kudrow suffers from two notable problems. One, what works in brief installments online rarely translates to longer ones on the small screen. Two, sticking with an extremely unlikable character who talks directly to the camera for the majority of a half-hour can be difficult to maintain. Kudrow is a multi-talented comedian but this is another misstep.



Television Rating: **2.0/5.0**

“Web Therapy” began as a series of improvised online shorts in which the “Friends” star played Dr. Fiona Wallice, a remarkably needy therapist who figured out a way to reduce overhead in her profession by eliminating the need for an office, couch, etc. Why not just provide therapy through iChat? The problems inherent in dispensing therapy via the internet are amplified by the fact that Fiona is a bit of an egotistical jerk. She focuses on how she looks more than the problems of her patients and gets excited at the potential incest of one of them because of what it could do for her reputation. She’s a pretty horrible human being.



Web Therapy

Photo credit: Showtime

That kind of character works very well in short bursts and the online version of “Web Therapy” was a pretty big viral hit, running for the last three years and attracting a number of high profile guest stars, including Victor Garber, Bob Balaban, Rashida Jones, Jane Lynch, Alan Cumming, Julia Louis-Dreyfus, Selma Blair, Molly Shannon, Courteney Cox, and even Meryl Streep. Showtime decided to take the online segments and expand upon them, attracting some of the same guest stars while also including Lily Tomlin in a few episodes.

Just as Fiona is silly to think that in-person therapy won’t lose anything by being conducted online, Showtime and the creators of “Web Therapy” are misguided in thinking that exactly what works online will work on TV. First off, it’s easy to tell that the concept has been stretched to its breaking point just to fill a standard running time. Imagine an “SNL” sketch pulled long enough to get to the length of a sitcom. The program may be divided into “segments/sketches” but even the individual parts of the show feel poorly-paced. It’s a long half-hour.

One of the reasons is that Fiona Wallice is loathsome. I love Lisa Kudrow. I think she’s immensely talented. But all the talent in the world can’t make someone reprehensible interesting in a half-hour comedy format. Fiona is SO annoying that I actually stopped watching halfway through the second episode mostly because I just didn’t want to spend any more time with her. Characters this self-centered, in-your-face, and generally vile are a tough sell to a TV audience and it’s no slight on Kudrow’s talent that she can’t pull it off. Just as therapy shouldn’t be conducted online, “Web Therapy” probably never should have been turned into a TV series.

*“Web Therapy” stars Lisa Kudrow, Victor Garber, Tim Bagley, Dan Bucatinsky, and Rashida Jones. The pilot was directed by Don Roos. It premieres on Showtime on Tuesday, July 19th, 2011 at 10pm CST.*



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