



## Chapter Eleven

# Benefits of Pornography

Part Two

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Part One gave you the “benefits” of pornography (to which there are none), now let’s consider real the consequences of watching pornography.

### **Pornography isolates you**

The more pornography a person consumes, the more their brain connects being aroused with porn’s fictional fantasy.<sup>3</sup> The harder it becomes for them to be aroused by a real person or a real relationship.<sup>4</sup> As a result, many consumers start feeling like something’s wrong with them; they don’t know how to be turned on by a real person, much less form a deep personal connection with one.<sup>5</sup>

Pornography viewers can experience withdrawal, becoming restless, irritable, and discontent when pornographic material is not available. Dishonesty and/or lying and keeping secrets about pornography use (amount of time, content they view, etc.). Becoming disconnected is a result, demonstrated by a loss of interest in family, friends, work, and previously enjoyable activities.

### **Pornography ruins your relationships**

Naomi Wolf, author and political activist, has traveled all over the country to talk with college students about relationships. “When I ask about loneliness, a deep, sad silence descends on audiences of young men and young women alike,” she

says. “They know they are lonely together ... and that [porn] is a big part of that loneliness. What they don’t know is how to get out.”<sup>6</sup>

Studies have found that when people engage in an ongoing pattern of “self-concealment” — doing things they’re not proud of and keep them a secret from their friends and family members—it not only hurts their relationships and leaves them feeling lonely, but also makes them more vulnerable to severe psychological problems.<sup>7</sup>

For both male and female pornography consumers, their habit is often accompanied by problems with anxiety, body-image issues, poor self-image, relationship problems, insecurity, and depression.<sup>8</sup>

Pornography and other addictions or compulsions are used as self-medicating tools, which can lead to depression. More research is being conducted and more evidence is arising to show the damaging effects pornography and other sexual addictions have on our brains, body, relationships, and life.

However, pornography and other addictions are used to make the consumer (temporarily) forget about feelings of sadness, fear, anger, or boredom. This habit can quickly lead to depression and is also something depression can lead to. One negative aspect of what pornography teaches consumers is that both men and women aren’t worth anything more than the sum of their body parts and how much sexual pleasure they can offer. Whether pornography consumers like it or not, those perceptions often start creeping into how they see themselves and other people in real life.<sup>9</sup>

The more difficult it becomes for the consumer to see themselves and others as anything more than sexual objects, the harder it is to develop real relationships.<sup>10</sup>

### **Pornography fuels shame and hopelessness**

Pornography users experience shame and guilt due to viewing and masturbating. Pornography viewers experience shame, diminished self-confidence, and sexual uncertainty.

### **Pornography kills your confidence**

In one study done on both straight and gay men, viewing pornography was correlated with higher levels of body dissatisfaction. Pornography exposure was correlated with social physique anxiety for gay men and a higher tendency of developing an eating disorder.

In a similar more recent study, a group of college men who viewed pornography rated how they viewed themselves in terms of body satisfaction, relationship satisfaction, and overall emotional well-being. After analyzing the data, it turns out that guys who view pornography are much more likely to have anxiety in relationships and withdraw from them more than guys who aren't viewing pornography. Their sense of emotional security was lower overall than guys who do not view pornography.<sup>11</sup>

### **Pornography supports human trafficking**

“It is estimated that 2 million children worldwide have been offered on the web or depicted in sexualized violence. According to the annual report of ECPAT (End Child Prostitution, Pornography and Trafficking of children for Sexual Purposes), in the European Union alone, several hundred thousand children are trafficked every year. Many thousands of children are abducted and never seen again. This traffic in children serves the Internet supply and demand.”<sup>12</sup>

They are adult rape, sexual harassment, adult and child prostitution, adult and child sex trafficking and domestic violence combined with sexual assault. All of these connections with pornography have been found in both clinical experience and in research.”<sup>13</sup>

One article, “The Connections between Pornography and Sex Trafficking,” refers to a report that states, ‘Pornography is the primary gateway to the purchase of humans for commercial sex.’ In a compelling *Newsweek* article that describes how pornography usage increases men’s aggression and fuels the demand for commercial sex enterprises.”<sup>14</sup>

### **Pornography is addiction forming**

#### **“Two Fallacies”**

“What does this have to do with pornography? Pornography is a visual pheromone, a powerful, \$100 billion per year brain drug that is changing human sexuality by ‘inhibiting orientation’ and ‘disrupting pre-mating communication

between the sexes by permeating the atmosphere,' especially through the internet. I believe we are currently struggling in the war against pornography because many continue to believe two key fallacies:"<sup>15</sup>

**"Fallacy No. 1: Pornography is not a drug."**

**"Fallacy No. 2: Pornography is therefore not a real addiction."**

"In men, there are five primary chemicals involved in sexual arousal and response. The one that likely plays the most significant role in pornography addiction is dopamine. Dopamine plays a major role in the brain system that is responsible for reward-driven learning. Every type of reward that has been studied increases the level of dopamine transmission in the brain, and a variety of addictive drugs, including stimulants such as cocaine, amphetamine, and methamphetamine, act directly on the dopamine system. Dopamine surges when a person is exposed to novel stimuli, particularly if it is sexual, or when a stimuli is more arousing than familiar partner, exposure to pornography leads to 'arousal addiction' and teaches the brain to prefer the image and become less satisfied with real-life sexual partners."<sup>16</sup>

"It's the overuse of the dopamine reward system that causes addiction. When the pathways are used compulsively, a downgrading occurs that actually decreases the amount of dopamine in the pleasure areas available for use, and the dopamine cells themselves start to atrophy, or shrink. The reward cells in the nucleus accumbens are now starved for dopamine and exist in a state of dopamine craving, as a downgrading of dopamine receptors on the pleasure cells occurs as well. This resetting of the 'pleasure thermostat' produces a 'new normal.' In this addictive state, the person must act out in addiction to boost the dopamine to levels sufficient just to feel normal."<sup>16</sup>

### **Pornography causes ED! (erectile dysfunction)**

There are new statistics that teenage boys are being diagnosed with erectile dysfunction due to advanced pornography abuse."<sup>18</sup>

Just as in any chemical dependency, the amount of pornography the addict previously used is not enough to stimulate these brain chemicals. Dopamine loves novelty. When the reward wears off, the dopamine release declines, therefore pleasure declines, the libido declines, and may cause erectile dysfunction in males. Less gratification leads to the desire for greater amounts of "hardcore

porn.” A vicious cycle reigns. Addicts need to intensify reaching the pleasure points in their brains again, only on a more advanced level.”<sup>17</sup>

**“Exposure to sexually pornographic material is correlated with:”** Concentration problems, Low motivation, Depression, Social Anxiety, Negative self-perceptions in terms of physical appearance and sexual functioning, Erectile dysfunction.<sup>18</sup>

**“Any of the following may precede or accompany delayed ejaculation and erectile dysfunction:”** Earlier genres of pornography are no longer exciting. Uncharacteristic fetishes develop. Pornography use is more sexually exciting than a partner. Sensitivity of penis decreases. Sexual arousal with sexual partners declines. Erections fade when attempting penetration or shortly thereafter. Penetrative sex is not stimulating. Pornographic fantasy is necessary to maintain erection or interest with partner.<sup>19</sup>

**Sexual Dysfunction**—loss of interest in real-world partner sex and/or problems with delayed ejaculation (DE), erectile dysfunction (ED), and/or anorgasmia (inability to reach orgasm).

One relatively large-scale survey of sex addicts found that more than a quarter (26.7%) experienced ED, DE, or anorgasmia . Smaller studies suggest that sexual dysfunction is a common sex addiction side effect—17% of sex addicts reported problems in one study, 58% in another.

Unsurprisingly, the primary sexual dysfunction issue is ED—even among younger pornography addicts in their teens and twenties. Much of the time these men report that they have no trouble achieving and maintaining an erection when looking at pornography, but they struggle with real-world partners. Compulsive pornography use seems to create a psychological disconnection that manifests physically in some men as ED. After all, when a guy spends the vast majority of his sexual life engaging with endless amounts of constantly changing, hyper-stimulating online imagery, a single in-the-flesh partner can’t exactly compete—even if the pornography addict truly loves that partner.

This, of course, is one of the true paradoxes of sexual addiction: Sex addicts, especially pornography addicts, often struggle to perform sexually with their real-life partners. And this is not because they’re not interested in great sex, or they

don't want to be with their partner. It seems that their sexual response has become conditioned to function only in the context of stereotypical pornographic images. So, they struggle to get hard, stay hard, and reach orgasm with actual people.

When a man turns to pornography and then cannot perform sexually with his partner, this undermines not just his own sexual pleasure but also his partner's. More important, it undermines the very security of the bond between partners. After all, sex is also a bonding behavior.<sup>20</sup>

### **The benefits of setting personal boundaries –**

Solomon warns us to guard or protect our hearts (Proverbs 4:23, 25). Our lives flow out of the heart. He further stated to not be distracted by side shows. You are the one responsible by what you see and expose your heart to.

It is God's Righteousness and peace that protects your heart and mind. He justifies us so that when Satan accuses you about the past (Romans 8:33). To be justified means one is shown or regarded as innocent. Jesus Christ justifies us and that means we are righteous. This happens when we live a lifestyle of repentance and in obedience to the Word of God.

When we live in righteousness, peace and joy is the result (Romans 14:17). This resulting peace is what protects and guards our hearts and minds (Philippians 4:17 KJV, AMP).

An integral part of protecting our hearts and minds is setting personal boundaries. Planning and establishing your personal sexual boundary plan would include inner boundaries and outer boundaries.

### **The Sexual Boundary Plan**

Sexual boundary plans are created for several reasons—helping addicts to understand the nature of their addiction and to define their personal version of sexual sobriety, identifying “slippery” areas to watch out for, and providing addicts with guidance when they are triggered and unsure of what to do next.

Many sex addicts carry printed or digitized versions of their boundary plan with them at all times. That way, if/when addicts feel triggered, they can look at their inner boundary and see that a particular behavior is prohibited. More important,

they can look at the outer boundary and find a handy list of alternative activities. For most sex addicts, even a quick glance at certain outer boundary items—“re-earn the respect and trust of my wife and kids,” for instance—is enough to halt the addictive cycle.<sup>21</sup>

### **“Bookending” Difficult Events**

Sometimes sex addicts are triggered unexpectedly. Other times, triggers can be anticipated long in advance. For instance, attending a social engagement where people will be looking their best and drinking alcohol is an obvious potential trigger for most sex addicts. Knowing this, addicts can arrange to “bookend” such an event with phone calls to their therapist, twelve step sponsor, accountability partner, and/or another supportive person in recovery.

During the “before” call, an addict commits to sobriety, and he or she may even discuss plans to avoid relapse in this particular situation. The “after” call provides an opportunity to discuss what happened, what feelings came up, and what the addict might need to do differently next time.<sup>21</sup>

### **The 3-Second Rule**

Sex addicts (just like the rest of us) are not in control of the thoughts and ideas that pop into their minds at any given moment. What they can control, however, is how they act when they unexpectedly encounter problematic thoughts, triggers, or ideas.

For instance, after recognizing that there is an unexpectedly attractive or seductively dressed person on the street, for example, they can train themselves to do the following, rather than allowing themselves to “get into” addiction thinking (try it, it works well).

**1st Second**—Take one second to acknowledge that this is an attractive person or situation that you find arousing and a turn on (sexual attraction is a natural part of being human that must be acknowledged, not shamed or avoided).

**2nd Second**—Look away. Look down or away, take this second to appreciate the sky, your surroundings, anything other than the object of your desire. Let yourself be aware that you are struggling; that you would rather keep staring at that person or get something (sexual) going with them or someone else. Allow the

feeling, but instead of acting on it, take an opposite action by choosing to look away.

**3rd Second**—While still looking away, imagine in your mind that person as someone’s daughter, granddaughter, nephew, son, etc. See them (in your mind, not by looking at them a second time) as a genuine, spiritual, real person, worthy of love, who doesn’t deserve to be used sexually or romantically and then thrown away. Then keep moving on.

By allowing the feeling, choosing to turn away and then de-objectifying the person, you get to stay in the world and feel okay about yourself, as a healthy person with healthy sexual desires, who does not act on them every time you feel them, and as someone who appreciates that people are people, not objects. The more addicts practice this simple exercise the easier it becomes to “be” in the world with less temptation and more hope.<sup>21</sup>

### **My 3 takeaways from my session...**

1. 3 (or more) consequences of my watching pornography - \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What guards or protects my heart and mind? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What I learned in session that I did not previously know - \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### **Homework -**

Write your personal boundary plan in detail - \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Practice book-ending events (if applicable) and the three-second rule.

**Be ready to share with group participants.** (You will inspire others and this will lend to your own sense of accountability)

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### Scriptures

#### **2 Samuel 13:2, 15**

2 Amnon was so distressed over his sister Tamar that he became sick; for she was a virgin. And it was improper for Amnon to do anything to her.

15 Then Amnon hated her exceedingly, so that the hatred with which he hated her was greater than the love with which he had loved her. And Amnon said to her, "Arise, be gone!"

NKJV

**Song of Solomon 1:4** Draw me away! We will run after you. The king has brought me into his chambers. We will be glad and rejoice in you. We will remember your love more than wine. Rightly do they love you.

NKJV

#### **Proverb 5:18-20**

18 Let your fountain be blessed, And rejoice with the wife of your youth.

19 As a loving deer and a graceful doe, Let her breasts satisfy you at all times; And always be enraptured with her love.

20 For why should you, my son, be enraptured by an immoral woman, And be embraced in the arms of a seductress?

NKJV

**Proverbs 4:23** Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life.

NKJV

**Proverbs 4:23-25**

23 Keep vigilant watch over your heart; that's where life starts.

25 Keep your eyes straight ahead; ignore all sideshow distractions. THE MESSAGE

**Romans 8:33** Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.

KJV

**Romans 14:17** for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

NKJV

**Philippians 4:7** And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

KJV

**Philippians 4:7** And God's peace [shall be yours, that tranquil state of a soul assured of its salvation through Christ, and so fearing nothing from God and being content with its earthly lot of whatever sort that is, that peace which transcends all understanding shall garrison and mount guard over your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

AMP