

## Catching a Loved One with Porn: Now What?

Imagine this scenario: you walk into a room when your spouse (son, daughter, sibling, friend, colleague) is on the computer. You gasp. They quickly darken the screen. You guessed it—they were viewing porn! Now what do you do?

The following insights come from a new 18 page booklet called *“Eyes Wide Open”* by Joseph Corbo and Susanna Ryan.

The authors first caution us to step back and take some time to calm down and to pray, so when we do talk it is well-thought out and helpful to the other person. Yes, that is hard to do. So we take several deep breaths and do whatever else we need to do to come to a calm place within ourselves. We pray.

We know that viewing porn is wrong. It wounds the user’s relationship with himself or herself, with God, with others. It damages the marriage relationship. It is a selfish pursuit leading to one’s own gratification by using another, thus warping one’s view of the wondrous gift of sexual passion reserved for marriage.

But before we talk to the porn user, we need to wait until our motives are clearly to assist that person to become whole again, instead of simply letting out our anger and shock. Yes, we can carefully let them know “in a controlled manner” of our disappointment and deep concern.

Shaming the person never helps, but only pushes someone using pornography into greater isolation. And of course sexual stimulation can then seem even more attractive as a diversion and comfort. Let’s remember that God never shames us, but forgives and guides us with loving compassion into greater freedom and health.

So what do we do? If we are dealing with children or teens we must safeguard them, as far as possible, from opportunities to see porn. The *“Eyes Wide Open”* booklet gives numerous tips on how to do this, but points out the impossibility of being able to totally protect our young people from this menace.

Part of helping is understanding how a good person (child, teen, or adult) can slip into sexual addiction. Most often addiction happens accidentally, with one event leading to another and then another. Once seen, a pornographic image cannot be “unseen.” It can involuntarily repeat itself countless times in a person’s imagination with incredible persistence. Secrecy and shame add to the trauma and put a person further away from help.

Learning about addictions gives us a realistic view. It is humbling to realize that our pleading is not enough to make someone quit. Support groups, such as Sex Addicts Anonymous ([www.saa-recovery.org](http://www.saa-recovery.org)), which are based on the AA 12-step model, are invaluable.

Above all, remember that the last word for Christians is always hope! As the authors of *“Eyes Wide Open”* write, “Loved ones afflicted ... can be helped back onto the correct path with patience and compassion, firm resoluteness, a structured recovery program, and a renewed sacramental and prayer life.”

## **Pornography: Can A Relationship Survive It?**

*By Dorn Checkley, Director, WholeHearted.org and the Pittsburgh Coalition Against Pornography*

Pornography is an omnipresent temptation in our culture with over 280 million pages of porn on the Internet and an abundance of cable porn, indecent television, hotel pay per view porn, strip bars and adult bookstores.

With all this pornography available, you may wonder what is wrong with porn and does it actually hurt anyone?

First let's compare it with God's purposes. Sex is a private act of love between a married man and woman. It was created for procreation, intimate bonding and pleasure. We were not created to be voyeurs of other people's intimacy. We were created to be participants in the reality of love and sex.

God's goal for you is intimate oneness and procreation with your spouse. Interacting with porn is having fantasy sex with no one. Pornography encourages lust, adultery, dissatisfaction with your spouse and ultimately, aloneness. Therefore, pornography sabotages intimacy, marriage and procreation.

The known consequences of pornography abuse bear this out. Research indicates that 40% of sex addicts will lose their spouse, 58% will suffer severe financial losses, and 27-40% will lose their job or profession, according to 2004 Senate testimony given by Dr. Mary Ann Layden.

In short, pornography destroys marriages.

If you have, or have had, a problem with porn, now is the time to put in place the boundaries that will prevent pornography from poisoning your marriage.

Commit to being honest. If you have struggled with porn, confess it to your priest, your spouse or to an accountability / prayer partner. Secrecy kills. Healing starts with confession. Sobriety is maintained through confession.

Embrace God's purposes. Choose to see porn for what it really is -- a cheap, one-dimensional counterfeit of sex that isn't good enough for you.

Do not allow yourself to be alone with porn. Keep the computer and the cable TV in the family room. Install blocking software on your computer at home and work.

Agree on rules with your spouse to avoid being alone with someone of the opposite sex.

Keep romance alive in your marriage. Date, celebrate, plan time to be alone.

## **7 Steps to Protect your Family from Pornography**

**The following resources can be helpful, but they are not specifically endorsed by the My House Office:**

**1. Secure all internet devices with filtering and accountability software**, keep them in a high-traffic area of the house, and limit the time children can use them.

**Computers**—Use accountability and filtering software such as [www.CovenantEyes.com](http://www.CovenantEyes.com), [www.SafeEyes.com](http://www.SafeEyes.com) and [www.SeeNoEvilOnline.com](http://www.SeeNoEvilOnline.com).

**Cell phones**—Monitor your children’s text, picture, and/or video messages on cell phones. [www.CovenantEyes.com](http://www.CovenantEyes.com) has software for iPhone and iPod Touch and Windows Mobile 6 cell phones and PDAs, and [www.SafeEyes.com](http://www.SafeEyes.com) has software for iPhone and iPod Touch. *Sex & Cell Phones* has information on parental controls at [www.NationalCoalition.org](http://www.NationalCoalition.org).

**Video Games**—[www.iphantom.com](http://www.iphantom.com) and [www.opendns.com](http://www.opendns.com) help to filter a home’s wireless signal, which can help protect children on X-Box, Playstation, Wii, and other game systems.

**2. Monitor all social networking sites** for children (Facebook, My Space, xanga.com, etc.)

**3. Know all user names and passwords** to email, social networking sites, and EVERY site that requires a user name and password for your children.

Frequently monitor your children’s email and social networking sites.

**4. Secure television and satellite radio, and screen all movies** before watching them.

**Block all “adult/mature” content on TV**, as well as other channels that may have inappropriate or morally offensive content. ([www.SkyAngel.com](http://www.SkyAngel.com) provides family friendly cable packages)

**Christian movie review** sites such as [www.usccb.org/movies](http://www.usccb.org/movies) and [www.PluggedInOnline.com](http://www.PluggedInOnline.com) provide a detailed review of movies, including a written description of any sexual content, violent content, or other morally offensive content.

**Use teachable moments** with your children when there are situations that go against your family Values. *Theology of the Body* resources are very helpful with discussing these topics.

**Satellite radio**—“Family friendly” packages are available without “mature content.”

**5. Spend quality time** with your children.

Affirm your children daily.

Pray with your children daily.

Eat family dinners together.

Turn off the TV, computer, and cell phone, and talk to your children.

Have vacations and family gatherings together, and build positive memories.

**6. Have open, honest, and regular conversations about God’s glorious plan for creating us male and female, and the beauty of our human dignity and sexuality!**

Read, listen to, and become familiar with resources on *Theology of the Body*.

[www.LoveIsFaithful.com](http://www.LoveIsFaithful.com) has lists of resources on *Theology of the Body*.

[www.PureLoveClub.com](http://www.PureLoveClub.com) has helpful resources for parents and teens.

[www.ChristopherWest.com](http://www.ChristopherWest.com) has helpful resources for adults.

**7. Sacraments:** Encourage all family members to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation monthly, and go to mass as a family each Sunday. Eucharistic Adoration and Mass during the week are tremendous blessings!

**These are some initial ideas, and for more information and practical ways to protect your family, please visit:**

**[www.LoveIsFaithful.com](http://www.LoveIsFaithful.com)**

## **Pornography addiction**

Elizabeth Ministry has partnered with Candeo, to create **RECLAIM Sexual Health**, a professional, science-based online Catholic program to overcome pornography and other unhealthy sexual behaviors. Over 5,000 struggling individuals in more than 75 countries have been helped with the secular version of this behavioral change technology. Now it is available with a Catholic format!

Leading researchers, scientists and psychologists have partnered with Catholic scholars combining *The Brain Science of Change* with *Theology of the Body* to create a different and breakthrough approach to addiction recovery. We have developed peer-ministry aspects called **St. Michael's Men, St. Monica's Missionaries** and parish programs.

For more information, visit [www.reclaimsexualhealth.com](http://www.reclaimsexualhealth.com) or contact Elizabeth Ministry International at 920-766-9380 or [www.elizabethministry.com](http://www.elizabethministry.com)