

Pornography-An Addiction?

What do pictures have to do with addiction? I just admire this art form...why should I worry about becoming addicted? How do I know if I'm becoming addicted? These are a few of the questions we answer in the second of our three articles on pornography addiction. For more information and detail, see these recent top-selling books about pornography and sexual addiction.

What Is Addiction?

To understand porn addiction, we need to understand addiction in general. Addiction can be defined as an ever-increasing dependence on a substance. To illustrate addiction, draw a large triangle on a piece of paper. Label the top point "Belief (self-Image)", the bottom Right point "Action" and the bottom Left, "Results (emotions)" Now, add arrowheads on the triangle lines pointing from Belief to Action, Action to Results, and Results to Belief. We'll call this the BAR Cycle. Addiction starts with a Belief, that we're somehow missing out on something and that some substance (let's say... a drug) might fill that void. This belief triggers the Action of experimenting with the drug, which leads to positive and negative results. Positive-the void was temporarily relieved. Negative-withdrawal, hangover, guilt and fear. Both the positive and negative Results work to strengthen your Belief that you have a void and the Action of taking the drug can fill it, but this time it takes more of the drug to do so.

This BAR Cycle is a simple way to understand how addiction works. Every time we go through the cycle, our self-image is lowered, requiring more of the drug to temporarily relieve the void we feel. Imagine that every time you go through this cycle, you're adding a BAR to your addiction prison, making escape more difficult. This is how addiction works, and why it's so difficult to get to recovery.

What Does Addiction Have To Do With Porn?

So, what does addiction have to do with pornography...after all, pictures aren't drugs. Actually, pornography produces more powerful drugs than anything you can get from the doctor or the street vendor. When we become sexually aroused, our bodies begin producing the most powerful drugs ever known. Endorphins work like heroine, soothing and relaxing us. Adrenalin works like crack, preparing us to fend off competition for the attentions of our mate. As these drugs build in your system Phenylethylalanine (PEA) is added to produce the rewarding feelings you get at and after climax.

Looking at sexually explicit pictures triggers this normal sex-drive and redirects away from normal sexual relations. This actually increases the guilt in the BAR Cycle and adds another Resulting emotion...shame, due to the social stigma surrounding unusual sexual behavior. So, you can see, viewing sexually explicit pictures has everything to do with drugs and is at least as addictive as a needle full of heroine. If you read our previous article, Pornography Addiction-Who Is Hurt? you know the harm of porn addiction can be just as severe.

How Do I know If I'm Addicted?

Where do we draw the line between viewing pictures and addiction? Many people say an action isn't addiction unless it interferes with your life. Though this is technically correct, it leaves too much room for interpretation...or denial. Answer the following questions honestly to yourself:

Am I doing more of this than I was a year ago?

Is more than 50% of my computer Spam about pornography?

Do I use pornography to enhance or spark sexual interest in my partner?

Do I prefer Pornography to normal sexual relations?

Have I tried to quit and failed?

If your answer to any one of the above questions was "yes" you're probably addicted to pornography. You can get more conclusive results by taking a Signs Of Sexual Addiction Test.

What Do I do To Recover? With drug addiction, you can check into a detox facility, stay away from the drugs and drug people, join a 12-step group and have a good chance to stay clean. With sexual addictions, the drug supply is manufactured by your body, you can't get away from it. This requires far more time, mental discipline and determination to recover. Every sexual thought must be opposed and replaced by an uplifting one. Sometimes, complete sexual abstinence is required for as long as it takes to restore a normal sex drive. It's essential to have someone to be completely accountable to and honest with, so you can discuss your temptations and get advice. We cover all of this in more detail with our next article, Pornography Addiction Recovery. Once you're serious about recovering, there are many places to get help. The most important step is to admit the problem and decide to get help.

I want you to know there is someone who can help, who loves you and wants only the best for you. That someone is God