

“How Much Will You Let Pornography Rob From You?”

If you are the wife of a (hopefully recovering) pornography addict, I have a heart-felt message I want to share with you. But first, I want you to pray that God would open your heart and mind in such a way that you'd be able to fully receive it with the spirit in which it is intended – to be a blessing, not a burden... to encourage you and inspire you rather than require things from you that you're simply not ready to give. My goal is to help you become a sexually confident wife again, in spite of the past poor choices your husband has made.

Before I just throw these principles at you, I want to tell you about a few conversations I've had recently with women who are still sorting through the multiple layers of immense pain that their husbands' addictions have caused them. Cathy explained, "I refuse to buy or wear any sort of sexy lingerie." Very attractive with a petite, proportionate, curvaceous frame, I couldn't image that body image was the reason for Cathy's aversion. As I inquired further why she felt this way, she responded, "That's the kind of stuff they wear in pornographic films! I don't want to awaken the urge in my husband to look at that stuff again!"

Okay, let's pause here for a bit of girl-talk amongst ourselves. So... I'm guessing Cathy wears cotton nightgowns, fuzzy robes, or frumpy pajamas instead of sexy lingerie? And this is supposed to keep her husband's sexual appetites from being "awakened?" Sorry, but I can't agree, nor can I imagine her husband agreeing with this philosophy. A well-fed man doesn't feel the need to steal a steak dinner from his neighbor. Only the starving man is tempted to reach out for something that doesn't belong to him to satisfy his hunger. I think the same principle applies here. If a husband can't drink his wife's beautiful body in through his eyes and enjoy the sexual freedoms that the marriage bed is meant to offer, how can he *not* be tempted to look elsewhere for that visual gratification? I'm certainly not trying to justify a man's use of pornography, but simply trying to help wives understand the natural cause-and-effect. And granted, many wives do all they can to dress sexy for their husbands in the bedroom and they *still* surf for porn. In response, I say that I'm so sorry that your husband doesn't recognize the value of honoring you by looking to you exclusively as the sole source of his sexual and visual gratification. He's got some growing up to do before becoming the sensitive lover that you deserve. But back to the woman who refuses to dress sexy for fear of awaking his desires for pornography... I'm just not sure that equation adds up. How sad that she's let pornography rob her of any sort of sexy lingerie wardrobe.

Another example is Rhonda, who lambasted me for even suggesting that wives gratify their husbands by doing an occasional striptease for him in the privacy of their own bedroom. "That's pornographic!" she exclaimed. Hello!!! Really??? Further conversation revealed that Rhonda thought it best to leave the lights off to make love because she doesn't want to be "compared" to pornographic models. I guess she thinks that if he can't see her, he can't compare her and

think of all the ways she doesn't measure up to those airbrushed beauties. How sad that she's let pornography rob her of her own healthy body image.

Yet another example is Tonya, who refuses to consider any other position than the missionary position because "all those other wild-n-crazy positions are what pornographic actors do, and I don't want to emulate them!" How sad that she's let pornography rob her of the carefree, adventurous side of her sexuality (not to mention her husband's adventurous side as well).

I can understand that a woman's knee-jerk reaction to her husband's pornography issue is to try and starve his desires until they match her own more-inhibited, less-frequent desires, but does that strategy have any hope of real success given how men are such sexually-oriented, visually stimulated creatures? And remember, this is their divine design by God, not a result of some sickness or brokenness or pornography addiction. Sexuality was God's gift to man and woman *before* the fall of man, so there's nothing inherently sinful about his natural, healthy sexual desires.

I also understand that a woman might, as a result of her own brokenness and insecurities, be tempted to withdraw completely from anything that even remotely resembles pornography, but consider these things...

- Pornography wasn't invented until the early 1950s. I can't imagine that women weren't dressing sexy, stripping, or enjoying various sexual positions with their husbands prior to that time period. So why would we not feel the freedom to do these things now?
- There are also very natural things portrayed in pornography such as kissing... body massage... and intercourse. Does that mean married couples should abandon those activities all together too? Sorry, but I refuse to let pornography rob me of *that* much of my sexuality! Just because something has been featured in some pornographic film doesn't automatically make that thing "dirty" or "bad."
- I'm not convinced that it's all bare skin and hot sex men are after when they gaze upon pornography. I believe the "You're absolutely irresistible... I want you badly... Come and get me" looks on their faces are really what these men are craving. They want (and need) to feel sexually desirable in a woman's eyes in order to feel like a real man. What power we hold as wives to provide that which their mind, body, heart, and soul longs for most!

All this to say, Ladies, *please don't hold out sexually on your husband as some sort of "punishment" for his bad behavior, because you're ultimately robbing yourself.* As just one example of how this is so, sexual intimacy causes a wonderful hormone to be released in the human body called oxytocin (what I call the "Big O" hormone!). Oxytocin causes a woman especially to experience peaceful, calm, and even euphoric feelings when she is tenderly touched, and

this feeling bonds her like glue to the person who touches her and creates these hormonal surges. Therefore, the more sex she has, the more she'll want to have with her lover.

However, oxytocin can also work against you if it's not produced regularly in your system. The less you're touched, the less you'll want to be touched. The less sex you have, the less you'll want to have, all the while growing more and more "frigid" as the years go by. No woman aspires to be a frigid wife, and no husband desires to have one, so while I'd never be so cold as to say to a woman, "Get over it and get naked!" I'll let you do the math. One naked, oxytocin-producing man plus one naked, oxytocin producing woman equals one intimately connected couple!

There are too many emotional, physical, and spiritual health benefits to sexual intimacy for you to allow anyone or anything to rob you of it. If you give in and let pornography rob you of your sexual confidence, or your healthy body image, or your playful adventurous side, then pornography wins (again!). But if you can draw the line in the sand and refuse to let pornography rob you of anything more than it already has, then you win... your husband wins... your marriage wins... your family wins. In light of all that's at stake, isn't your sexual confidence worth fighting for?

If you answered yes to that question, you can learn more strategies for victory in my newest book, *The Sexually Confident Wife* (available at www.amazon.com). You're also welcome to join us at www.sexuallyconfidentwife.com for other blogs to inspire your sexual confidence!

Wishing you the BEST sex life possible,
Shannon Ethridge

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