

Tweens & Teens • Tweens & Teens

How Pornography Hurts You:

Teenagers face many challenges in the world today, especially in the media. There is a limitless availability of video games, MTV, and Internet. As a teenager, it is hard to avoid the many negative influences that come via all the new technology, prime time TV, commercials, cell phones and even the local mall. Pornography is one such negative influence. It has become such a part of society that it is accepted as the norm. So much so, many teenagers would say because it so much a part of the culture they are no longer affected by it.

The reality is that pornography does have a tremendous negative impact on a person. The use of pornography can become as addictive as any other drug. Pornography has contributed to divorce, premarital sex (hooking up), abortion, sexual addiction, abuse -- these are sad realities of today, the result of misdirected desire for love.

Pornography negatively shapes how we interact with others. It uses sex to turn people into objects for someone's personal pleasure. Pornography warps a person's view of sex and is extremely detrimental to a healthy, happy relationship now and in the future. Viewing sexually explicit materials and images can adversely affect loving relationships. There is no mutual sharing or intimacy, and those are two of the values that make a sexual activity so holy and meaningful.

True love is a gift. God created our sexuality and gave us that gift to do two important things: show love to another person in a committed chaste relationship and to cooperate with God to conceive human life. Watching pornography does neither of these two things and is actually almost the exact opposite of what real sexuality is all about. Paul gives us the most beautiful description of love:

“Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, it is not pompous, it is not inflated, it is not rude, it does not seek its own interest, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury, it does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things. Love never fails.”

1 Corinthians 13: 4-8

Consider this...

- **1 in 7** children who use the Internet have been sexually solicited.
(Internet Filter Review)
- **1 in 5** children (10 to 17 years old) receives unwanted sexual solicitations online.
(Youth Internet Safety Survey, U.S. Department of Justice)
- **2 in 5** abductions of children ages 15-17 are due to Internet contact.
(San Diego Police Dept.)
- **76%** of victims in internet- initiated sexual exploitation cases were 13-15 years old. **75%** were girls.

What can I do?

Know the difference between infatuation and love. The mainstream media and the Internet bombard teens with distorted views of intimate relationships. Infatuation is highly emotional, self-centered and largely focused on outward or physical characteristics. Infatuation changes quickly and is not usually rooted in reality. Love is based on the whole person, other – centered and develops over time. Love is rooted in self giving, trust, faith and lasting commitment to another.

Archdiocese of Omaha
Anti-Pornography Task Force

Tweens & Teens • Tweens & Teens

Be up front: Tell your close friends and those you may be dating your expectations about “going with someone” and your desire to abstain from sexual activity before marriage. Express your views that pornography steals one’s ability to achieve profound intimacy in marriage. A true friend will respect your views and support you by warning you of potential risky situations, i.e. parties with alcohol.

Make a plan: Make a plan of what to do if you get into a risky situation, (i.e. pornographic material being viewed in your presence, pressure to engage in sexual behaviors, pressure to drink or smoke). The plan might include a “code” word you share with a loved one or friend. This word or phrase can alert them you need help getting out of an uncomfortable situation.

Participate in the Sacraments: Our culture many times invades us with temptations that are hard to resist alone. Participating in the sacraments of the Eucharist and Reconciliation can fortify us to resist these temptations and say “yes” to follow our Catholic teachings.

Break the Silence: Tell a friend or loved one when pornography is a problem. Secrecy is not helpful to making any positive changes. Honesty is a powerful tool that can lead you to freedom from this addiction.

Seek Professional Help: It is vital to seek professional help when pornography is a problem. This will help you with the tools you need to change the addictive behavior and provide support to make the changes long lasting.

Even clothes send a message...

The mainstream media and the Internet bombard teens with distorted images of what they need to look like in order to achieve acceptance and happiness. Remember, these images promote a certain product or cause.

Clothes give other people clues about our values and how we want to be treated. Our clothes also give clues about how we will treat other people. The way you dress sends messages about yourself to others and often influences the way you and others act. You should dress in such a way to bring out the best of yourself and those around you. Your individuality can be expressed by the style and color of your clothes and accessories. Avoid exposing or accentuating areas of your body in a way that engages others to focus more on those than you as a person. This can be a distraction from you, the beautiful person God created.



Photos by Corbis©