

PORNFREE RADIO

001 Coming Clean

Welcome to Pornfree Radio, I'm Matt Dobschuetz. This is the podcast about getting porn free and staying there. Today we're talking about coming clean about porn addiction. I'll share a story from my life and some practical actions you can take this week. Since this is the first episode, I want to tell you a little bit about my story.

The first time I saw porn when I was 7 years old at a gas station. I was there with my grandmother. I walked into the store, opened the door, went to the magazines, and just saw a magazine that I didn't recognize. It was a little higher up, I grabbed it, I opened it, and the first page I opened to I saw an adult woman, completely naked, on a bed. And it was like completely shocking. I'd never seen anything like it. And even though I had never seen anything like it, it immediately hooked me. There was just something about it; it just kind of sucked me in. Now I immediately closed the magazine for fear that someone would see me or that my grandmother would come in. I guess I had some shame. I didn't tell anybody. I just kind of put it in my head that there's magazines like this. And I wanted to see more.

I did tell one friend about a year later. He had had a similar experience. He was 7 or 8. We both kind of shared that we had seen this stuff and we didn't really talk about it. That was kind of it. I know other boys experienced and saw pornography at a young age and I'm sure as they grew up they definitely looked for it. But for me it was deeper. As soon as I saw it, I just wanted to see more. It didn't really go away. Even into my 30's I felt like it was the same draw, the same pull as back in that gas station.

Now when I got a little older, about 12 or so, I started stealing pornography. I had tried to find it at different places. I found it in neighbors' garbages and things like that. Once I started... once I got to about 12 or 13 I just started stealing it. By then I had figured out about masturbation. Putting porn and masturbation together really cements the habit. It just... the stimulus of the masturbation with the porn and the orgasm, it just creates this habit loop. It just clicked. From then on, as I grew older, it didn't go away.

Now I tried to help myself. I remember buying a book once at a Christian bookstore with my mom, called *Eros Defiled*. Now, if I was with my 15 year old son and he bought a book called *Eros Defiled*, I might have a conversation. But for whatever reason, my mom and my dad never talked to me about it. I just had this book.

I tried to read in the book and get some guidance, but it didn't really help. I still was looking at porn. I moved out of the house when I was 19, or actually I had just turned 18 and I moved into my first apartment. By then I had a VCR. As soon as I had an apartment, I could rent videos and I didn't have any sort of authority or accountability. I had a roommate, but it was pretty easy to do whatever I wanted. So the habit of pornography really flourished in this kind of environment. I wasn't really accountable, no one knew what was going on with me, and I could just sort of look at it whenever I wanted. What made matters worse is I had a second shift job and I was home at weird hours. I was getting home at 2 am in the morning, kind of jacked up from work, I couldn't go to sleep 'til 4, so I just had really weird time where it was unaccountable and just sort of no one knew what was going on with me. So I'd rent videos or I'd buy magazines and that's kind of how things were for me.

About this time, I had gone to a college fellowship on campus, of this commuter school I was going to and you know I went to the meetings. It was pretty good. I didn't know a lot of people. One of the first meetings went to, a woman came in and she was from a ministry in town that worked in the sexuality area. I don't know if it was a support group. I don't quite remember all the details. But she started talking really frankly and honestly about pornography in particular and masturbation. She said both of them out loud. She talked about how they could trap you and you could get kind of stuck and she knew that there were guys here who probably were trapped by this. And when she said it, it was like a light shined on me. It cut right to my core. All the hiddenness, all the places where I'd sort of tried to be quiet and tried not to tell anybody. It just felt like she was reading my mail. She was just right in my business. It was illuminating. I mean the fact that she just even said it in a talk just made me feel somewhat validated like wow I'm not the only one. But of course, I was too ashamed to talk to her. I wasn't going to go up to her and say, wow, I really related to your teaching, like I really related. I just couldn't do it.

So a couple days went by and she was still in my mind... that speaker. I found myself after work one night with \$10 in my pocket. It was 2 in the morning and I have this 10 dollar bill. Now at the time I was working a job where I got paid in cash, you kind of had to go check to check. So this is \$10 that I didn't need for rent or groceries. It just was an extra 10 dollars. I found myself in this dilemma. I was standing outside my apartment at 2 in the morning with a 10 dollar bill. I remember this night 'cause it was kind of misty raining a little bit. So I'm standing in the rain and I'm thinking, I'm going to go buy some porn. And I started thinking about that speaker. And I was like, oh, I can't believe I'm back here again. Just a

couple days ago, I felt alive as she was talking, as she sort of explained the predicament I was in. But here I am, right back in the same old spot I've been in for years. And I had this \$10. And I just stood there.

And I go, am I going to do this again? Am I going to go get porn again? And then I had this thought. What if I went into my apartment and wrote the woman a letter, telling her about this. And telling her about when she spoke, what I encountered. Now writing a letter... this was the 90's. So it was pre-Internet, pre-email. So, that's all I could think to do. Then I had this even better idea. I'd write her a letter and then I'd put the \$10 in the letter, seal it, and immediately mail it. As soon as I had this idea, I ran back inside and I wrote this letter. I have no idea what's in the letter. I'd love to see it now, I'm sure it would embarrass me but I wrote this letter to her and I put the \$10 in, and I said I was going to use this \$10 to buy porn tonight. But I'm putting it in this envelope to keep myself safe. And I'm mailing it to you.

So I went right to the mailbox, and mailed that letter... and the \$10. It was kind of a victory. I went to bed and didn't look at porn. A couple days later, I still hadn't looked at porn and it was kind of a little victory, a little weekend of a victory. I came back from the grocery store with my roommate and he pressed the answering machine button. Now, again, it was the 90's, so there was no voicemail. So he presses the button and in the middle of the house, the speaker, the woman had got my letter and she called me. I don't think I included my phone number so she must have looked me up in the phone book or something. She called and she started just saying these nice things.

She didn't say anything about the pornography or the masturbation, but she just said that she got my letter, and she really thanked me for writing her and that I was worthy of love and she said some other things that were kind of embarrassing and my roommate's like who's calling you? Who's leaving this message? And even though it was embarrassing, I felt seen by her, like I had finally come clean about this pornography problem in my life. And even though I didn't really know her and she was leaving this kind of gushy message, I just felt seen. I felt like she gets it. She gets it and she's not judging me, she's not condemning me but she's encouraging me. So that's coming clean. That's when I first came clean.

And I'd love to say that was the last time that I had to really come clean. But it took many more years to really get to the bottom of the addiction. And a lot more heartache and a lot more dark places that I ended up going. But I remember that because that was the first time I really brought anyone else in to what I was struggling with. And her reaction was so loving and caring.

So as I'm thinking about you right now and this podcast: the goal of this podcast is to create community. You know I really want you to feel like you're seen by me. I understand where you're coming from if you're struggling with porn, if you're

struggling with masturbation, if you're just kind of in this endless habit loop and you can't get free from it. I understand and I want you to know that I'm here for you and I want to connect with you. You don't have to send me \$10 either. But I wanted to put that out there that I really know what you're going through. And I know the shame that goes along with it. And I also know just the hiddenness and all that goes into it, the feelings of sort of being slimy and just kind of dirty, I totally get it.

So I want to encourage you to think about some things this week that you can do to take a risk and tell someone what's going on with you. Now if you haven't told anybody before, this might be a very scary thing. But I'm going to encourage you. There's someone in your life right now who you can probably reach out to. It might be a friend, it might be a roommate, it might be your wife. I want to encourage you to just take a risk. Now, they might not respond great, but what it will do for you is it will just start to bring someone else in to what's going on in your inside. Bring someone else into the addiction. And I use addiction in the sense that it's a habit that's out of control.

And just telling someone begins the path of freedom. It does. There's something about it, there's a bit of a humiliation that comes out when you expose yourself and expose the dark thoughts, expose what you're doing that just is freeing. You might not have a perfect person to tell. I remember I was in a group a few years later where I had to give up drinking for a couple about 9 months. I remember when I would go with my friends after work for a drink and order like a Sprite or something, it was the most conspicuous thing. People know me for liking beers and now I love craft beer.

But back then even I remember, people would be like Dobber why aren't you having a beer? And you know I had a choice. Do I tell them that I'm in a group, a recovery group related to pornography and masturbation addiction or do I make up some other story about just not wanting to drink? So every time I got asked I answered why I was doing it. You know I told some coworkers and friends and just people who you wouldn't normally tell. People's responses really surprised me. Some people were just really caring. And they really encouraged me. You might be surprised. There might be some people in your life right now that if you were just honest with they would really respond well.

Now if you've been at this a while, what I want to encourage you to do this week is to get current. That means where you get together with someone who maybe you've talked with them before about this, or talk to your wife, or someone that you trust and just get current. Just give them what's going on right now this week. Now you might not have acted out, you might not have looked at porn, but maybe there's some other things going on in your life. You're feeling a pull to fantasy or you're sexualizing people as they come down the street past you or at work you're just daydreaming a lot and having sexual fantasy. It could be something small too. You might be doing little Google searches or just looking at the

channel guide of your TV for some illicit programming. There's all sorts of things we can do that are kind of slippery behaviors.

One of the groups I read online on reddit talks about edging. That's where you just kind of get to the edge of acting out, but you don't really act out. So you don't really lose your sobriety but you're not really clean. So I just recommend, if you're someone who's been working a program for a while, get current. Just take the opportunity to get current with someone and really let them in to what's going on with you this week. How you're doing now. You don't have to be perfect but you want to put yourself in a position where you're being humble, where you're constantly looking at your behaviors and making sure that you're not going back.

And there might not be someone directly that is easy for you to tell in your life. You might be at a place where you're sort of trying to build community or where you're kind of between people that would really be able to help. So, I want to recommend that you look online for some help. Here's a couple of ideas. I mentioned reddit. There's a couple of groups on reddit that are really good for just a place to check in. One of them is called [pornfree](#), just like the podcast. The other one is called [NoFap](#). Fap is a euphemism for masturbation. So it's a group dedicated to not masturbating. So there's pornfree and there's NoFap. If you're a Christian, there's also a group called [NoFapChristians](#). Now any one of these three groups is a place where you could just log in and just tell about what's going on in your life. You can tell a little bit about your story and you can just start to ask for support.

I'll say that some of these groups are a little rough around the edges. There's lots of different people and there's lots of different reasons that they want to give up porn or give up masturbation or give up both. And so they might not be exactly like you, but they're very supportive. That might be a good first step for you.

I'll also warn you, too, if you're not familiar with reddit, it has lots of great groups, but it also has some groups that could be unsafe. So if you're not real familiar, I only recommend that you log in to one of these three groups. And you can configure your id so you just look at these groups when you log in. I wouldn't spend a lot of time poking around.

The NoFap group also has a website that's separate from reddit and I think it's called [NoFap.org](#). I'll put it in the show notes at [pornfreeradio.com](#) when I'm done and I'll double-check the link. But that's another source where you can log in, introduce yourself, and get support.

I just wanted to give a postscript to that story. What happened with me after years of working the program and starting to get help and after I got married and was able to develop some accountability. I'll tell more about my story of how my wife caught me looking at pornography in the weeks to come. And how that really was the final thing that helped me start to really get freedom.

But I was able to start a group to help others. So after years of leading that group, I would tell different stories. I happened to tell that story about the \$10 in group one night. At the end of group, one of the men in the group came up to me and he said I really appreciated that story. And then, out of his wallet, he pulled a single \$10 bill. Now, he said in the back of his mind when he came to group that night he knew he had \$10. And this was a guy who had a lot of accountability, even with his money and how he spent it. Just so that he wouldn't act out with the addiction he was struggling with. But this particular night for some reason he had this \$10. He was hanging on to it, thinking that after the meeting, he could maybe go to where he liked to act out and use the \$10 to kind of, I don't remember how he was going to use it, but the \$10 was going to help get him where he needed to go. And he took the \$10 out and he gave it to me. And he said, can you put this in the offering bucket at your church? I was going to act out tonight with this \$10, but I need to stay safe, and I need to give it to you.

And it was just like that night, probably 10-15 years before when I was standing on the sidewalk in the rain with the \$10 and decided to put it in that envelope and mail it to that speaker. And that happens a lot in life. As you start to get freedom, as you start to be vulnerable with others, tell people about your story, you get an opportunity to help others. You get an opportunity to be there for others. And that's what I want to do here. I want to create that kind of community where we can be here for one another.

I want to leave you with a quote. This was really helpful when I first got into recovery and really started the path to freedom. It's a quote that kind of cuts against perfectionism. It's funny, some of us who struggle with porn or masturbation, we like to think that we're kind of messy and we're kind of rough around the edges, but there's a part of us that has a lot of pride and a lot of perfectionism. A lot of times the way it works is when we mess up we just feel real bad about ourselves and we beat ourselves up and we kind of get into this all or nothing thinking. We think, man I just messed up so why bother? But the quote that I first heard in 2001 was "Anything worth doing is worth doing badly." For some reason that was just freeing to me. To go, this is worth doing. Struggling and going on this journey is worth doing. It's worth looking bad, it's worth telling others about stuff and making yourself look bad. It's worth it, 'cause I want to get free of this. The quote is by GK Chesterton. It's a little misquote, but it's pretty much what he said. "Anything worth doing is worth doing badly." So take a risk this week. Don't be afraid to look bad. Don't be afraid to look messy. And ask for help.

Well, that brings us to the end of Episode 1. This is PornFree Radio with Matt Dobschuetz. For more information, you can go to pornfreeradio.com. You can leave a voicemail question there if you have a question for me or you can send an [email](#) or get my [Twitter](#) to send a tweet. I hope you have a good week. Just remember, change is possible. It totally is. Thanks.