

# PORNFREE RADIO

## 021 Feedback: Forgiveness, Nostalgia, and Voyeurism

Hey this is Matt Dobschuetz. Welcome to Pornfree Radio, the podcast for people who want to live 100% porn free. I'm really excited to talk to you today. This show is kind of off schedule of our normal Monday release schedule. I'm traveling this week and so it was kind of hard to fit it in. I'm actually recording this on an iPhone, I have a little microphone hooked up to it and we'll see how this goes.

I wanted to do a show this week to just respond to some of the great feedback that I've gotten over the last couple of weeks from the different shows that we've done. Specifically in Episode 19, we talked about our wives and the topic was called My Wife Caught Me Looking at Pornography, Now What? and it was kind of a guide and sort of some tips for talking to your wife after a relapse or after coming clean with her. Got a number of emails about that.

Then also, last week's show we talked about celebrity nudes and the hacking scandal so I got some more comments about that. So I kind of wanted to dig in to a couple of these comments and bring some clarification on some of the things I said and if you haven't heard those episodes, definitely go back and listen to [pornfreeradio.com/19](http://pornfreeradio.com/19) is the My Wife Caught Me Looking at Porn show and Episode 20 is at [pornfreeradio.com/20](http://pornfreeradio.com/20).

OK, well the first question that came up really was tied around a concept that I shared about seeking a full pardon with your wife in the sense that as you come clean to her, the best recommendation I have is to be as thorough and as accurate as possible about sharing the level of your addiction, what your behaviors look like, and kind of giving her an accurate view of what's been going on with you. And I brought up this idea of a full pardon and I said you know if you went to a judge who offered you a pardon the only way you would get a full pardon is if you confessed to all of the crimes. If you hid any crimes or withheld anything then the judge couldn't give you a full pardon. So I used that phrase full pardon and in the metaphor, it puts the wife in the place of the judge and we're asking for the full pardon.

You know the metaphor breaks down a little bit there 'cause it's not totally the type of environment that we're in. We're not asking for our wife to absolve what we've done or minimize it. We're not asking... that's not the goal. The goal for us

is to get everything out in the open. So when I talk about the full pardon, that's the idea is to get everything out in the open so that your wife can really make an accurate and sort of have an accurate picture of your behaviors and what you've been doing and then choose to forgive.

Now, the question came in from Rob, who's one of our listeners and he writes really thorough feedback and it's really awesome. He kind of came at this and he said why is the full pardon so important? Do we need this to feel better about ourselves and our own past behavior? Do we deserve a full pardon? Can we not recover from this behavior without receiving a full pardon? Can a marriage survive without a full pardon? So those are all really big questions.

And what I'd say is, we can't make our wives forgive us, that's not really something that we can control. But if there is any hope of getting past this, if there's any hope of getting more freedom and more intimacy in your marriage, what has to be restored is an open line of honest communication. The only way that happens is through disclosure and through being thorough and accurate about what's been going on. Now where your wife goes with that or how you walk out your relationship, that's really up to her and that's really up to you and how hard you work.

You might still work really hard and still not be able to save the marriage. You've broken trust, there may be other factors in mind and so it's the reason that I recommend full disclosure and being honest is because that's I feel like the only real hope of getting past it. Now whether your wife chooses to partner with you and kind of dig in, that's really up to her.

Rob goes on to say in his email, I wonder if this notion of a full pardon is really something with roots in modern Christianity.

Of course that's what I'm drawing on. There's a verse about... in Colossians about forgiving each other as the Lord has forgiven you so you also must forgive. As a Christian, I believe that we're called to forgive one another. Now does that make it easy for your spouse? Does it make it easy for you if your spouse is the one who's been dishonest and has been acting out with pornography? No, it doesn't. But, that is what we're called to do and it may take time and it may be something that has to take years to restore.

But the good news is I feel like God is faithful and I've seen this in relationships. As you take steps towards building honesty and building trust, your spouse will begin to see it, will recognize the change, will recognize the shift, and there will be restoration. It's totally possible.

Now in some cases it might not be. Some cases it might be too far gone. But that's what I believe as a Christian so that's what that's kind of based on. Actually the whole idea of the metaphor of the judge came from a writer named Edward

Hanna, a Catholic theologian. And he talked about Jesus as the judge who gives the full pardon.

So, back to Rob's point, he actually goes on to bring this up, he goes our wives aren't Jesus. You know? We can't expect them to forgive like Jesus.

And I don't think that that's totally true. I think that we forgive because we're forgiven so we forgive out of our capacity to forgive comes from being forgiven. So that's kind of where I draw that from. Now if you're not a Christian or if your wife is not a believer in the Christian faith, then I do think there's possibly some places where that might be a harder concept to embrace.

But I do really believe that going forward in your relationship, open, honest communication, clear and accurate disclosure of what happened and your behaviors is crucial for the success of the relationship. And if you end up in a future relationship, say after a divorce, or if, after a breakup, as you enter that new relationship, you need to adopt a new posture of being open and being really clear about your history with pornography and really work hard to establish that connection early.

Now why is the full pardon type thing important? What am I trying to get at?

What I really believe is the benefit from feeling forgiven from feeling love in the place of sin or the place of this addiction is this is the piece of shame that we have. This is the thing that we carry, that we hide. This is the place where we feel unlovable, this is place where we feel deep down that if someone really knew us, if they really knew everything, they wouldn't love us. So when we disclose that, when we open up the door to that, when we shine light into the dark room, and our partner or our friend or even our relationship with God, if we start to feel the forgiveness and the fact that they see what's there and they still choose to maintain relationship and still choose to love us, that's a powerful, a very powerful experience that really propels you into further growth and sobriety and walking this out.

When you feel love in a place where you feel unlovable or dirty or not clean, it's very powerful. So, yes, can we expect our wives to walk in and forgive and love us at that place just because we were honest after years of lying or hiding? No, we can't. But ultimately, we need to feel love in those places that have been hidden and not disclosed and we also need to feel the acceptance of someone even in light of our weakness and in light of things we've done wrong. So that's really what I was talking about with the full pardon. It's about us being honest and giving others the chance to come in to our hiddenness. It's us getting the practice of disclosing what we're doing. So that's the best outcome. That's the best outcome if your wife decides to stay in the marriage and help you be part of the plan of overcoming your addiction that's definitely the best.

Now, in the case where your wife chooses to not stay I mean that's definitely much harder and but you know and sometimes we have to deal with the consequences. We have to take a hard look at our behavior and where we got to where we got and there can be consequences. I would say that even though my wife chose to stay with me and work through stuff, some of those early days after a relapse or at the very beginning, there were hard days where I saw the pain on her face. Where I saw her struggling to support me where I didn't do that great in terms of my response to her. There were times where I probably blamed her or was passive aggressive or responded to her not in a very loving repentant way but in a kind of resentful way like she was somehow my parole officer. It's difficult and I don't mean to minimize it.

In a 30 minute podcast it's easy to say something that sounds real definitive or real black and white and you know not be able to really dig in to the deeper issues. So I really want to choose to dig in deeper and so I love your feedback. I love getting called on this and really kind of digging in. So I welcome just more emails and stuff and you can reach me at [matt@pornfreeradio.com](mailto:matt@pornfreeradio.com) if you have comments or thoughts because I do want to go deeper. I don't just want to have a surface response to this.

It's so often that you see online advice related to addiction or diet advice and things like that and it's so surface-y. It doesn't get to the heart of the matter. So yeah, dealing with your wife is something that will probably be an ongoing topic here. Talking to your spouse about your addiction will be an ongoing topic and we'll probably dig in to all those sorts of things.

I was just thinking about something that I learned when I first got into this. That you could be in a real situation where your wife was a bit of a caretaker or she was a fixer or she, some of her brokenness or weakness kind of fit with your weakness and as you walk this out, as you start to become more upright and honest, and communicate and go to her with your needs and open your heart to her, the response that she might first have is wow, this system, this dance that we've been doing together is now changing and I'm not comfortable with this.

I know it sounds counterintuitive, you'd think why would a wife want a husband engaged in this sort of kind of secret lying and this pornography but there's many wives out there and spouses who unknowingly are complicit with this behavior. It meets a need for them either it meets a need where they don't want to engage sexually, it meets a need where they're always in the codependent role, and so when you start of sort of becoming upright and communicating your needs and engaging on a heart level that can be scary sometimes. And I don't blame the spouse at all. I mean this is a real shock to any family system.

So you'd be surprised at sometimes the responses that people have. I've seen people in my groups where the wife isn't happy that they're coming to a recovery group. The wife is more embarrassed that the husband is talking about their

problem. She'd rather just him sort of deal with it on his own even if he's not very successful at it than go through what she feels like is embarrassment.

Again, I'm not blaming wives; I'm not calling out spouses. It's just a really challenging area of dealing with a partner in this very personal yet relationally threatening behavior of pornography addiction. So, anyway I just love these comments.

I wanted to talk a little bit about Episode 20. Rob actually had some more thoughts about episode 20 and I thought I would just share a couple more thoughts about that. Now, Episode 20 was about the celebrity nude hacking scandal. I brought it up carefully and I tried to navigate it without triggering.

And Rob asked the question, he said, you know, I get the what... I get kind of the illicitness of this and I get kind of your response but I think he was really pressing for the why. What is it about this sort of celebrity kind of thing? What's this thing that really triggers us in this?

And I was thinking about it and I think there's a couple of things that really trigger us. One, I think there is a nostalgic element to this celebrity thing. If you think about some of your first exposure to porn or nudity it most likely came in media in movies. Unless you're a younger person who just started looking at hard core pornography on the Internet when you were 12 or 10, for a lot of us, the way we first discovered sort of this sexuality at puberty was through actresses in movies. So even though we're older now, like I'm in my 40's, there's still a little bit of a lure to a famous woman being naked. And it taps into a kind of a nostalgic, childlike part of me.

While it's not hard core pornography and for some of you, even if you sought out some of this recent material, you may have not even been aroused or had a sexual response to it. You've cued your body to look at hard core pornography and so just seeing a woman, even a famous woman in some undress it's not that triggering. You're not immediately masturbating or acting out. It's pretty tame when you compare it to online porn.

But, the truth is it takes us back to this nostalgic time so seeking it out and especially once you're in recovery, going back to it, there's a little bit of nostalgia. You're feeding the roots of your addiction, the kind of early roots and it's easy to start looking at something that seems sort of innocent and harmless and end up back down the rabbit hole.

Once you get in recovery it's easy to sometimes do a little Google search or to do something on Twitter, look something up, or to be triggered by a BuzzFeed article on the bottom. I think I was on BuzzFeed a couple days ago and I saw at the bottom of an article, just a random article, you know it's like 10 celebrities who've had like boob jobs or something like that. Now, is that pornography? Is

that even at the level of stuff that most of us have struggled with? No, it's not. But does the curiosity get triggered? Does that childlike sort of curiosity get stimulated? I think it does.

I think that many of the things that draw our attention at the supermarket line or at the BuzzFeed or in a scandal like this, it's a childlike response to sexuality. And we're called to be adults. We need to live in our adult. I've been influenced a lot by a local counselor named John Baldwin and he talks a lot about this idea of determining when you make a decision are you making a decision in a childlike place or your adult like place? When you are sort of giving in to these impulses, these little temptations to do Google searches or follow a BuzzFeed thing, is that coming out of a real adult place where you're going is this a good choice for me? Does this match up with my goals? Does this match up with my goal to be porn free? Chances are it probably doesn't. So it's probably coming from more of that childlike impulse.

Now he mentions actually a third part of ourselves which he calls the Shadow and the Shadow is a real slippery guy and it's the part of us that feels entitled, or the part of us that feels a little slippery that feels we deserve some of these things. I talk about those kind of behaviors a lot and attitudes on this show. So that's another potential type of thing. Where are you at when you make a decision to look at porn? Where are you at when you make a decision to click on these things? So yeah, I think that's one thing is this nostalgic thing.

I think there's one other thing that I haven't talked a lot about on here and it's voyeurism. I think a lot of us are hooked by voyeurism, this idea of hidden cameras, this idea of upskirts or other types of illicit captured sexuality is a big trigger for us and again I think that goes right back to childhood. I think that as a child when we encounter sexuality early on it's usually through a glimpse of someone's bra or a glimpse of someone's underwear or some small thing where we sort of accidentally saw someone naked or sought it out.

I thought of something really powerful that happened to me when I was in first grade. I was at an overnight party, a slumber party, with a friend of mine. And we, his room had one of those bathrooms that connected to his sister's room and his sister probably was 12 or 13. We just being little 7 year old boys or 8 year old boys went into this bathroom and we just kind of peeked into the sister's room. And the sister and her friend were having a slumber party and they changed in front of us. At 8 years old I saw these two naked girls, kind of a prepubescent girl and a girl who was going through puberty and it was shocking.

Now was it pornography? Did it come out of a real lurid sinful temptation place? You know maybe a little bit, but I was 7 or 8 years old. It pretty much came out of an immature child place. But when you think about some of these celebrity pictures or just even that voyeurism instinct it does come out of a very childlike immature place. It's not coming out of an adult place.

So I think that those are two things that really drive us in those things. Is that nostalgic kind of going back to maybe an earlier time when this material was kind of our first entryway into sexual content and the other thing is a voyeurism, a childlike voyeurism, a peeping tom type thing?

I think I'd like to dig into some more fetish type things as we sort of dig into topics but that will be for future episodes. 'Cause I'd like to kind of talk about what are we going for when we're attaching to a fetish or attaching to a certain type of porn? What is being triggered in us? And I bet you at the bottom of a lot of these triggers are childlike behaviors or childlike impulses. So wow, this is a long episode for a quick response to some feedback.

I'd like to share a success that I got this week. This actually came in from Facebook from a guy and I'd just like to read it. I didn't write his name down and so that's just as good because I don't want to out him. But I'll just read what he wrote. This is a guy listener and he wrote this on Facebook: I found all of your topics helpful. I wasn't aware how much smutty TV, news, social media I had let into my life. I have cut everything out but Facebook and I cut down my Facebook friends who are not close to me and I always find myself looking at their Spring Break pictures. I'm in a 12 step group now and I no longer go to work hating myself for what I did the night before.

Just a great couple of things there. He cut down some of his activities. He kind of curated his Facebook and went to a 12 step group. I asked him what was the most important thing in sort of his movement in the last couple of weeks. And he said joining the 12 step group. Scariest but rewarding thing I did. I was too scared of telling anyone, even other addicts about my problem. I acted out the night before going to the meeting. My addiction was worse right after college and he kind of talks a little bit about this. He finally said that going was this big change for him. I decided to find external help. It wasn't until I called my problem and addiction that I was able to get sustainable sobriety.

We get hung up sometimes on the word addiction or problem or whatever. But what we have to do and I think anyone who's listening to this podcast has to take a hard look at themselves and say this is a problem. This isn't just a little naughty behavior that I've kind of indulged myself with. This is something that's life threatening. It affects my relationships, it affects how I feel about myself, it's harmful, it just engages with a dark side of myself. So admitting that there's a problem, admitting there's an addiction is really key.

And I love this guy going to... he went to SA, which is like a Sexaholics Anonymous. That's a tough place to go. A lot of people who go to those groups have a much deeper addiction in terms of a physical addiction going out with prostitutes or having anonymous encounters and stuff so it's hard as just a porn addict to go, but it can still be very powerful and you can meet people who really

get it. So, that's great. To my Facebook friend there thanks for the comment and I love hearing that success that you had.

So yeah, in the next couple of weeks I want to talk about some more things. A couple questions came in, one question came in, what do we do for pleasure once we cut the porn out? What are ways that we can develop good self care things in our lives? We're probably going to cover that.

Another possible topic: online dating and the porn addict. How do you approach online dating if you've come out of this? One of the guys who wrote in, I believe it was Rob, the guy who I talked about earlier he talked about being on an online dating site has a quality that feels a little bit like the old addictive YouPorn or other types of sites where you're reviewing and analyzing profiles and looking at people. So how do you do that in a non objectifying way? How do you engage with women in a dating environment and not fall back into the old pattern of sexualizing and eroticizing them and getting sort of needs met by that objectification. That's definitely something we want to dig into.

Another question that came in was I mentioned in a couple of episodes how I'm becoming more sensitive. The more recovery I get the more sensitive I am to just mild forms of sexuality. The more sensitive I can be to Dancing with the Stars or the checkout line or just a woman that I encounter. What does that look like? Why do you get more sensitive and how do you manage it? So we'll dig into that.

That sensitivity question I'm really excited to talk about because I know that I've been giving advice at the end of these shows and it might seem for some of you, very quaint. I'm saying stay away from TMZ and stay away from Twitter and you're like man, Matt, I am like going to hard core porn sites. I have gigs of bittorrent films on my hard drive and you're talking about staying away from a gossip chat show?

And I totally get that. I get that some of the things I'm kind of focused on may be might be a little farther down the road for you. It might seem really quaint right now. But you'll get there one day. If you keep focused on this and you start cutting these hard core places out and start weaning yourself of this sexual pornography and this sort of pull towards pornography you will get more sensitive.

And at the same time, the other benefit is you will get more sexual satisfaction in your primary relationship with your spouse. If you're in a relationship with your spouse you will have deeper connection. You will have longer arousal times. You will have... it will have other benefits that you wouldn't even expect. So as you wean the unhealthy behavior and push in to the good behaviors, you actually get benefits. So we'll dig into some of that. What it means to become more sensitive.



So, guys, thanks again for all your comments, all your emails, I love hearing them. Hope the audio on this show is pretty good. I'll be putting this up probably on Thursday, let's see... what's the date today, hopefully tonight, Thursday the 25th. We'll get back on schedule next week and yeah, looking forward to it. Got some new things in the works. Can't wait to share them with you. Thanks again everyone and have a great porn free week.