

PORNFREE RADIO

028 3-Day Ditch and Porn Fantasies in the Bedroom

Welcome to Pornfree Radio, I'm Matt Dobschuetz. This is the podcast for people who want to live 100% porn free. In this episode, I'm hitting the Pornfree Radio mailbag and answering questions about getting past the 3-day hump and porn fantasies in the bedroom. Let's get started.

Well, welcome back from a holiday week. It's been a little challenging in my household getting everyone settled back in school but things are going well here. I had a good Thanksgiving and I just wanted to just say that if you kind of had a tough weekend, I mean it was a long time, 5 days off for a lot of people, 4 days off, possibly some unstructured time out of your rhythm if you acted out this week, I want you to have grace for yourself. It's a tough challenge to go porn free if you don't have a plan in place for a holiday like this. A holiday break. If you did and you're kind of picking yourself up from this weekend, welcome back. Let's get you back on track. Let's get some days under you. Let's get some confidence built back. Let's do it.

I remember when I was first in a group, probably in 2001, or maybe it was 2002, the leader... after an Easter break we had a week off and we kind of had an Easter holiday and he basically extended a lot of grace and a lot of compassion and empathy when we came back after that long week. I don't think I acted out that week, but I remember him being so warm and kind of encouraging that I think if you did act out that week you just felt seen and understood and heard and kind of it was a pick me up. Again, if that happened, I'm with you, I empathize, but let's get back on track. That's kind of what this show is about.

I wanted to point one thing out before I get started. My buddy Craig Perra's doing another webinar and if you're listening on Wednesday, December 3rd, it is actually tonight so stop what you're doing, pause the podcast, you can go to pornfreeradio.com/craig C-R-A-I-G and you can register for the webinar right there and I believe it's 6:30 PDT, 8:30 CDT, 9:30 EDT so you've got all day on December 3rd to register to get in on that.

I did it last time and there were about 250 guys in the chat room all excited about going porn free and listening to Craig. It was kind of fun just being in the chat room. This month Craig's talking about 5 things you must do to create a great life

and beat compulsive sexual behavior. He calls them the [Fundamental Five](#). [Catch the replay on YouTube!]

Now last time he did a ton of teaching, took a lot of questions, had about 30 seconds of a sales pitch so don't get worried that this is some big drawn out sales pitch or something. He's going to teach, he's going to educate, and you're really going to get a lot out of it. So you know if you need a jump start after this weekend, get on that call Wednesday, December 3rd.

If this is in the future, that web link pornfreeradio.com/craig will go to Craig's website the Mindful Habit and there's plenty of free stuff you can get there anytime, evergreen content, couple videos to watch, maybe a free download or two. So definitely check that out. Also if you haven't heard of Craig, go back and listen to [Episode 16](#) and [Episode 17](#) at pornfreeradio.com. You can check those out. You can listen to Craig's story and he actually gives away some content in episode 17. So check that out.

So let's get to these emails, got a couple of emails in the mailbag. They actually came in this week. I was excited to answer them. I had some stuff planned for this week but I like the emails and I really wanted to dig into the content so let's do it.

OK, email #1. The subject was the 3-day ditch that totally caught my attention. So let's get into it. Hey Matt, my name is Ben and I'm trying to beat this thing with people but I'm having a hard time getting past three days. At three days recently I had a huge physical drive and I resist several times a day and then give up. How do I get out of this 3-day ditch? I have a support group, I just need small techniques. Thanks and God bless, Ben.

Well, Ben, here's the thing. We need to disrupt this habit. I know you mentioned a physical drive and you know obviously physical stuff is tied into this addiction and into this stuff. We get kind of connected to the dopamine, we get connected to just the good feelings of orgasm just the stimulation of the images and things like that. We definitely get kind of wired towards porn addiction and masturbation. But underneath it is a habit. And a habit simply is a trigger that's followed by routine. So we get triggered. We get the impulse to act out and then we have a routine. We kind of have a way to act out.

Triggers can be all sorts of things. It could be the time of day, it can be a mood, it can be seeing a woman walk past you or jog past you in a certain outfit, it can be a feeling that you have, it can be something that someone's said to you in a harsh way. There's all sorts of things that trigger us. It can be something you saw on TV. But the routine is kind of this ritual that gets acted out over and over until it becomes sort of second nature. So a lot of times when we think about our physical drive or when we think about a physical type of thing, we don't even see

the habit anymore because we're so used to responding a certain way to stimulus.

So what we need to do is disrupt this habit that's going on the third day. So a couple good things that you're doing. You have some other people in this with you. So that's good. I'm imagining that maybe you meet with your support group once a week.

Well, obviously if you're having a 3-day ditch, a 3-day hump, that weekly support group, or that support group that meets once a week or maybe infrequently maybe is not helping you disrupt the habit. So we'll get into some ways of disrupting the habit in a second, but I just wanted to point that out is that even though you have a support group in place, there's some things that you could probably do to up your game a little bit in terms of being accountable and letting them in on what's going on.

I wanted to talk one more thing about this disrupting the habit. I had a story recently related to this. I want to say a few months ago I was driving to work in a way that I don't normally drive to work and I had some coffee. I think I had dropped my kids off at their grandparents' and so I'm coming to work a totally different way.

I pass a McDonald's. Now I never go past a McDonald's on my normal route to work. That particular day I had some hot coffee, and I thought, man you know what would go great with this coffee is a hash brown. Now I don't eat fried food as a habit. I don't go to McDonald's. I actually don't eat meat. So there's not much at McDonald's I can eat anyway. So I... but that particular day I went, you know what would be good is a hash brown. So I went and had a hash brown.

A couple days later I think I was down a little bit and I thought you know what? That hash brown was really great the other day. I'm going to go by that McDonald's again and get a hash brown. So I actually drove out of my way. At some point again, I did it again, and then maybe a fourth a fifth time and by the fifth time I just drove to the McDonald's. I literally didn't even pay attention that I wasn't going my normal route and I went right to the McDonald's and I had a hash brown.

I had to talk to someone about this. I mentioned this to a friend and said you know what? I don't want to eat hash browns mindlessly. It's not good for me. It's not part of my food plan. But you know, it seems like I created a little bit of a habit. It was just enough repetitive times of doing that and going out of my way that all of a sudden it was really natural for my car to go that way. Now, I'm proud to say today I did go past that McDonald's and did not go in and that was good. I think it's because I started talking with my friend about it and know that my friend is going to ask me when they see me. How am I doing with the food and how am I doing eating in the morning?

A real simple thing that disrupts that habit is to just go a different route, to just totally avoid the McDonald's. To get back on track of going the way I used to go. That's something that you can kind of do with your 3-day ditch. You can start to plan ahead and go... what can I do to kind of not put myself in a position to end up back in the ditch? What can I do to disrupt this? If you think about the routine, how does the routine typically act out with you? Do you use your phone? Are you going on your computer? Is there a time of day that you're more vulnerable? What are things that you can do to disrupt that routine?

Good example is if you have... if it's a computer phone thing if it's tied to the computer or phone, one thing that can disrupt this is putting a time limit on how much you spend on the phone or on the computer. Setting a timer, a physical timer that tells you, OK, get off the computer. Don't be on the computer for more than say 30 minutes at a time.

Another thing might be setting a curfew, like I'm not going to use my computer after 11. I'm not going to use my phone after 11. You could also say something along the lines of, you could set another boundary. I'm not going to use my computer in a room after 6pm where I'm alone. You could just plan to only go to a library or be with friends and use your computer with them. So you could set a boundary also tied to time.

Other things you can do to disrupt kind of access is do something like I mention in Episode 4 while traveling. [[Episode 5](#) is on traveling.] A lot of times I lock my computer at night in my rental car so it's not in the hotel room 5 ft from my bed hooked up to high speed Internet. So that's something you can do.

When I was a younger guy, and this is going to date me, I used to have a VCR and I acted out with that all the time. So at some point I gave it to some neighbors who lived downstairs. A couple of women lived downstairs who were good friends and they didn't ask. They were women I knew from church and they didn't actually ask why I let them use my VCR kind of indefinitely. Maybe they kind of knew, but they didn't ask any questions, so they just kept the VCR. Every once in a while I would borrow it back, watch a movie, and then promptly return it.

So cutting off access is a way. You could give your computer to a friend if it's really causing you every 3 days to really fall back into the ditch. You might want to consider even for a week going without your computer or without your smartphone.

Abstinence really is the biggest thing that you can do to start to break the physical connection with pornography. It's the hardest thing to do and it takes a lot of planning. It takes some discipline. It also takes some humility asking for help. But abstinence really is a powerful thing. Because every time you fall in the

ditch every three days, you're kind of resetting that physical connection to the porn to the masturbation to the orgasm. So what you want to do is get past that 3 day ditch and then not fall into it again for a while. So that your body can reset and that the new habits can kind of kick in.

I said that new habits, I was going to get to that. Craig Perra, who I mentioned earlier, one phrase he says a lot, is to break a habit you need to make a habit. If I'm thinking about your 3-day ditch problem, probably day 1, you just acted out the night before. You're trying to scramble to get things back in place kind of in your plan back in place. You might feel some shame. Day 2 you're still a little gun shy, you're a little rough around the edges because you acted out a day before and by Day 3 though would kind of float back into status quo land or as Craig Perra calls Habitland and the old habits just kind of kick back in.

What are you doing, what habits are you making? What new habits are you making? A good example could be a good type of thing would be to do running or do some exercise, some planned exercise. Especially do it on Day 3. It's great to start on Day 1 or 2 but make sure that you have some stuff planned on Day 3 that's going to take your energy that's going to take that physical drive and channel it. Plan your time. Is there a way I can exercise? Is there a way I can meet with friends on Day 3. Can I get together with some of those guys in my support group on Day 3? Can I... What are some new habits that you can make? Is there a hobby you could take up? Preferably something that's not dealing with media.

You know another good one is reading. That's kind of a lost art. Just sitting down with a book and reading. Give yourself something to read that will build you up that's maybe it can be something actually fun, too. It doesn't have to be, you don't have to just read a bunch of self help books about addiction. I mean you could read the *Chronicles of Narnia* or *Harry Potter* or whatever kind of thing would just be fun to just give yourself a break but also to start to take some of your time and your energy. Do something that recharges you. So think about that. To break a habit you need to make a habit. Start to look for ways to disrupt the routine and then look for ways to make new habits.

I mentioned talking to your guys in your support group. Now, you meet with them every week, but if this is a 3 day thing, it might be time to amp up your support. You might want to make a commitment to check-in every day, maybe a couple a times a day. Maybe a time in the morning, time at night. Check-in one or two times a day. Put it on a couple of guys. You don't have to just do one guy. Take a couple of guys and make it your mission to connect with each of those guys meaningfully each day.

I find that when I don't connect with people over a week or two, even I'm prone to kind of isolation. Now, I'm not acting out anymore in the way I used to with porn.

But I can still get isolated, down, lonely, and I need to be reaching out, amp up that support.

Get current with your guys, too. If you're having a fall every three days, kind of bring them into that and say, listen guys, I know I messed up this week, but let me tell you how quickly it's happening. Basically every 72 hours I'm hitting the computer, I'm hitting the phone, whatever it is. It's like a 72 hour thing. It's not a once every couple months.

You talk to some guys and they go you know I'm really am struggling with porn. And you're like well how many times did you act out this month? And they'll be like once. And then you'll talk to another guy and you'll be like... and he'll say I'm really struggling with porn. You'll say how many times did you act out? And he'll be like I acted out 3 times a day. The thing is frequency does talk about the level of addiction but to be honest, I don't know how someone's struggling unless they tell me, unless they bring me into it. Get current with your guys. Tell them that you're really having trouble getting past this 3 days and what can they do to help get past the 3 days? Bring them into this.

Look for ways to disrupt the habit. Look for ways to make new habits, amp up your daily check-ins. Early on in the podcast [\[Episode 4\]](#) I talked about a consequence; plan out a consequence. If you're really working on a week goal, like getting to 7 days, come up with a consequence that you can enact immediately if you act out. So an example might be hey if I act out this week, I'm going to give my computer away for 3 days to my friend. Or I'm going to go without my smartphone. I'm going to stop getting coffee at Starbucks or I'm going to do something else to create a consequence.

I talked about the check-in, the daily check-in, you know I had a friend who set a consequence that if I act out I'm going to check-in 30 days in a row. I'm going to follow through and do that. I know other guys who do you know when they're first getting into SA, Sexaholics Anonymous, they'll go to 90 meetings in 90 days. Now that seems crazy to a lot of us. But I guarantee if you go to 90 meetings in 90 days you are going to have some runs of sobriety that go longer than 3 days. It's just really hard to go to a meeting where you're kind of humbled and inspired and with other people struggling with the same things. It's hard to go to that and then act out, it just kind of goes against it.

Think about a consequence. Think about something you can write down right now that says if I act out, if I break my bottom line, and I suggest your bottom line should be no porn, no masturbation, orgasm, any of that sort of ritual. If I cross the PMO [Porn Masturbation Orgasm] bottom line I'm going to do this.

If you bring one of your friends into it and say, hey, I need some help. If I call and check-in and say I've done this, I want you to ask me if I've done my consequence. So you can bring them in on that and just say... I've heard guys

write a check and say if... to like a political candidate or to a charity or something and they say if I call you and tell you that I acted out, just put that check in the mail and send it, those types of things. Think about what you can do as a consequence.

So that's about it, Ben. I feel for you. I totally remember when I could barely go 2 or 3 days without acting out. I remember those days very vividly. What I want to tell you is that it's totally worth doing this and I totally empathize with you. Here's the thing, I totally know it's possible for you to go for more than 3 days. I think it's possible for you to go more than 300 days because I was just like you. I totally could not get a week of sobriety for much of my life. Now I'm coming up on 5 years.

It would be longer if I.... I got isolated and I made a mistake, I've talked about it traveling 5 years ago. But it doesn't matter. The thing is if I acted out tonight or tomorrow, I know how to get back to where I am. I know what I need to do. I know who I need to reach out to, I know I need to plan, I know what needs to happen, and you can get to that place too.

All right, well let's get to the second email. This is the... I'm going to do 2 today. This one was a really good one. It's from Robert S. Do you still have fantasies of porn when being intimate? How have you dealt with those?

OK, do I still have fantasies of porn when I'm being intimate? No. I don't. However, I wouldn't be totally honest to say that in the sense that every once in while there are images or there are things that I've seen recently that flash in my mind during intimacy with my wife. It's not that... What I'm definitely not doing is playing a fantasy in my head where I'm sort of pretending that my wife is another woman or where I'm thinking in my head of sort of pornographic things while I'm in the midst of being intimate with my wife. So what I'm not doing is I'm not actively fantasizing or actively reminiscing of porn I've watched.

But I do remember when I was a little earlier that I had to work harder at this, of really keeping intimacy with my partner really clean and really not bringing in any of the residue of the addiction into that intimacy. So let me just tell you a couple of things, Robert, that have helped me, and that I still do on occasion when something pops into my mind.

Well the first thing is really outside of the bedroom. It's don't nurse the addiction. Don't be feeding your porn addiction. The example would be, a lot of times on reddit on the NoFap groups they call it edging or they call it kind of the behavior that's sort of getting up to the edge of acting out.

So this might be, let's say you're not looking at porn actively on the computer, but you're sort of watching things that are sort of inappropriate on TV or you're... Or maybe you're sort of edging a little bit you're kind of doing some image searches.

You're not masturbating, but you're sort of still looking at people online naked or you're kind of skirting the edge.

It's really important, especially when you're first getting into recovery that you really starve yourself of these things because as you get farther away from the porn, some of these things will be powerful. One thing I've struggled with recently is I've watched some shows that have some sexual content or have some implied sexual content and if I'm not careful, that sort of memory of that show will sort of stick with me as I head into the bedroom, so to speak. So you need to be really careful about what you watch, what you take in, what you consume because that can affect you.

Really don't nurse the addiction outside and don't do any types of edging. Really work at getting those habits out of your life 'cause that will help you. Because the longer you go without looking at porn actively the less temptation, and actually the less frequency, that you will experience fantasies. It just doesn't happen. I just haven't looked at porn actively the way I used to so I'm not sort of overwhelmed by porn fantasies when I start being intimate with my wife.

You know I talked about triggers earlier. We think of triggers a lot of times as negative, but obviously if you're sexually aroused and doing sexual things with your partner, that can be a trigger because when we start thinking about erections and when we start thinking about arousal it can easily make us think of porn or it can make us think of the ritual of porn. So, and that's a challenge.

It's the same challenge food addicts have when they're trying to get their eating under control. They still have to eat. So they have to figure out how to eat in a safe way, how to eat in a clean way. That's what you're doing, too. You're in the bedroom, you're figuring out what you need to do to have intimacy in a clean way.

I talked about, I was talking to Ben, I was talking about this idea of disrupting the habit. In this same way, even though it's a natural response to a trigger to kind of think of something pornographic. There are things you can do to disrupt the habit even in the intimate space of the bedroom. Here's a couple things that have worked for me.

Making more eye contact with my wife. So just making eye contact, really looking into her eyes, seeing her look back at me, really trying to establish that connection that is intimate but is just person to person that this is a real person that I really see her, she really sees me. That's one thing that's kind of helped get me out of that sort of porn think.

Another thing and this might not totally make sense but having the lights dimmed or on. Now, I think the reason why this helps is because I think when we're in darkness just having intimacy it's a lot easier to sort of maybe just queue up

images in our head. But when we have the lights dimmed, when we're in a little more of openness eye contact is more possible. The actual visual of just being with your partner is much more evident.

That's one thing that's helped me a lot is just that kind of having that available. It's not every time. It's not a big thing for me now to be in the darkness. But it is helpful. It might not be something that your partner is comfortable with. They might sort of feel shy or it doesn't feel right and so that's just something you have to communicate and talk about.

Now, you need to be careful with the lights on. You don't want to be recreating porn scenes in your head or doing something that would be dishonoring to your partner. But I definitely think there is a value in being able to see and being connected and being able to be seen.

So don't nurse the addiction outside of the bedroom. Work on ways of disrupting through the habit to fantasize by making eye contact, having the lights on. Another thing is talking. I'm not talking about necessarily dirty talking, which you know you can do that too if you want, the idea of talking. Just breaking the silence so you're not going into a fantasy world, you're not detaching, you're staying connected.

So you can do, if you're not comfortable having long conversations, ask things like how are you feeling? Focus on their needs. How are you feeling? How are you connecting? Is this good? Is this good? You know that kind of thing. Checking in, getting feedback because I think when we're quiet or silent it can be easy to isolate and disconnect even in an intimate situation.

All right, so the final thing that I would recommend is if fantasy starts to overwhelm yourself at any moment, like you're closing your eyes and you're just seeing something that's just pornographic. You're almost being harassed by it, what I recommend is pausing all activity just for a few moments. Your partner really might not even be aware of this.

Now you can bring them into this, you can bring her into this and say this is kind of what I want to do if something comes up this is something I need help with. You can do that. But you could also just it's not out of the realm of normal possibility that you could be over stimulated or you could just need to pause for some reason. Feel free to communicate to your partner I need to take a break just for a second. Give me a moment.

I've even got up and said hey, I need to run to the bathroom for a second. I just go on to the bathroom and I've literally just washed my face. It doesn't make any sense, it's not about... I've just done it to just take a moment to assert some control so I don't get carried away with a fantasy or I don't get carried away to a place that I don't want to be.

So stop any action if fantasy becomes present. Pause and then start again. And start again by doing the things that I'm talking about: making eye contact, talking, focusing on their needs, kind of engaging work on engaging your partner in a new way. What's great about this and I'll say this is completely true, I'm not blowing smoke here, I now prefer engaging with my wife and having mutual pleasure and mutual connection in intimate times, I prefer that over pornography and masturbation.

I have to say that probably for about 6 or 7 years of recovery, that would not have been a true statement. I would've said deep down I still if all things were equal porn would still be a stronger pull. But those things flipped. They flipped at some point, I don't know exactly when it was and that's really helped. It's really helped me make better choices.

That also, for single guys too, I know that that's tough to hear, but you can do things right now to disrupt your habit and start your habit that if you do get married, it will really benefit you. You won't be bringing in this residue into the bedroom. You won't be bringing in these memories; you won't be bringing in these fantasies and having to work to shut them off. You'll just come in kind of clean. So that's totally possible.

So look at ways to disrupt the habit. It is a habit to fantasize. It is a habit to go into that. So what are ways even on the bedroom that you can disrupt the habit? What are ways that you can take back control? So that's kind of what we're talking about today. I mean, it's really about taking back control of the habits and saying no, no I'm not going to fantasize right now in bed. I'm not even going to allow myself to continue this sexual activity, as good as it feels, until the fantasy curtails itself, until I can get control. I'm going to do what it takes to do that.

Now I know some people early in recovery will have abstinence from their partner for 30 days just to kind of reset. I think on reddit they call it hard mode or something. I don't necessarily recommend that but I do understand why some guys would do that. But eventually you need to get to a point where you can take control over your thought life in situations like this. Otherwise you're going to be like the food addict who can only keep to their diet when they're fasting. That doesn't work. You can fast for a short time, but you can't fast forever.

So that's about all the time we have today. Hey, if you have an email, if you have a question for me, my wife called me Dear Abby and then I was joking that I'm more like Dear No Fappy that's a horrible joke but I thought I would say that. So I'm like the Dear Abby of porn. If you want to reach me you can reach me at matt@pornfreeradio.com. For show notes and transcripts for this show, go to pornfreeradio.com/28. That's pornfreeradio.com/28.

As always, and I've said this boy I've said this for the last 6 or 7 shows, if you have not gone to [iTunes](#) and left a rating and review, please do it. We did a survey a couple weeks ago. 80% of you found out about this through iTunes and that's a lot of people. That is a lot of people. I think we're getting close to 17,000 downloads. So think about 80% of that traffic came from people who found us on iTunes. And how do you find us on iTunes? iTunes weights people by their ratings and reviews. So Pornfree Radio pops up when people search for us and the better reviewed we are the better rated we are, the closer we are to the top that we show up. So please do that if you haven't, I would really appreciate it.

All right, have a great week and once again, Ben, Robert S., thanks for the emails. Feel free to reach out if I didn't answer your question sufficiently or if you have any follow ups, all right? All right guys, have a great week.