

PORN FREE

BECOMING THE TYPE OF MAN
WHO DOES NOT LOOK AT PORN



SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

1. The opening story is about a “wake-up call” that David experienced around his porn usage (and the consequences he saw for others). Have you experienced a wake-up call around your porn usage? If so, in what way?
2. The author says his podcast (and this book) is for “motivated guys who want to quit looking at porn.” Where would you place your level of motivation on the scale below and why?

1

Wondering if this is a problem

5

Growing realization that things need to change

9

Fully aware and motivated

3. The introduction describes how David had a number of unsuccessful attempts to walk away from porn that undermined his confidence. What efforts have you made to walk away from porn in your life? How successful have these efforts been, and how does this affect your confidence regarding your ability to change?

CHAPTER 1: BEING ALONE

1. When was the first time you remember seeing porn? What were the feelings associated with that experience?
2. If you received a message about porn or masturbation from your parents, what was that message?
3. The author speaks about a “disconnect” between his faith/values and his growing porn behaviors. Did this disconnect happen for you, and if so, how would you describe it?
4. The author speaks about the feeling of isolation and shame that surrounded his porn struggle and then the experience of being “seen” by someone. How “seen” have you felt in your struggle? What steps have you taken to become “known”? Where would you place yourself on this continuum and why?

1

Still mostly locked away

5

Taking some early steps

9

Been “seen” for a while

5. The author describes the experience of being “alone” as a major trigger in his early childhood. Can you think of a feeling that leaves you vulnerable to wanting to run to porn?

CHAPTER 2: THE PORN SOLUTION

1. Which of the following “problem” messages have you heard about porn?

- It is a sin against God.
- It is something we should hate.
- It is bad for your brain.
- It is a sign of poor self-discipline or self-control.
- It is a drug that turns us into addicts.
- It is a spiritual battle for purity we must win.
- It is a weakness of our flesh that must be overcome.

2. The above statements may contain elements of truth but also can lead us to a brutal hangover every time we act out. If any of the following words resonate with you, add some short statements underneath with things you have felt or told yourself around your struggle with porn.

Shame:

Helplessness:

Hopelessness:

3. The author makes a provocative statement: “Porn is not the problem for us; it is the solution.” What is your first reaction when you hear that statement?
4. What are some problems you try to solve with porn?
5. If recovery is the process of getting healthy (and not just avoiding at porn), what are some of the areas in your life that you need to address?

CHAPTER 3: BUT WAIT, ISN'T PORN AN ADDICTION?

1. What feelings do you associate with the idea of porn being an addiction and you being an addict? (There may be a variety of opinions here!)
2. Does your perspective on addiction change if you see it as an “extreme version of a habit”? If so, how?
3. What are some of the costs that you associate with your porn habit?
4. The author outlines four ways that porn robs us of time. For each of the four, describe how this has felt to you.

Porn's Effects	My Experience
It dishonors my value	
It spontaneously overrides my life	
It ruins my next day	
It robs me of my presence	

Now describe what your life would look and feel like without the effects above.

5. The author ends the chapter using the story of the *Cloven Viscount* to illustrate that wholeness is the goal of your recovery. What does integrity and wholeness mean to you? What do you make of the author's suggestion that we need to move beyond simply seeing ourself as having a "good side" and a "bad side" and move toward a more "integrated approach"?

CHAPTER 4: EITHER WE GET CAUGHT OR WE GET COURAGE

1. Was your desire to get porn out of your life prompted by getting caught or did it come from a desire to change on your own? Do you think it makes a difference? If so, why?
2. Early in our recovery, we break through shame and isolation by stepping into honesty and exposure. Describe how this has felt to you.
3. The author describes three reasons why we avoid taking the steps above: looking bad, aversion of loss, and fear of pain. What are the reasons that have kept you in isolation and hiddenness?
4. The author describes three gifts of being known: no more hiding, the ability to focus on the real problem, and the opportunity to experience love and acceptance. In what ways have you experienced these gifts?
5. "Every man needs help and every man has some help to give" (Nate Larkin). What are the benefits of being in a group of like-minded men—who share your struggles but are also motivated to lead more integrated and healthy lives?

CHAPTER 5: THE DARK NIGHT

1. In reading the author's description of his dark night, can you relate to any aspects of this story? If you have experienced this "darkness," how would you describe it?
2. What or who have you blamed for your difficulties in putting porn aside in your life?
3. The author describes the "pushback" or "power-shift" he experienced when he started out on his desired journey to live a new way. How does this "resistance" show up in your recovery journey?

CHAPTER 6: THE PORN FREE PLAN THAT NEVER FAILS

1. What is your first thought when you see the title of this chapter: hope, skepticism, or something else?
2. Ask yourself this question: *On a scale of one to nine, where would I place myself on the awareness that porn is no longer working for me?*

1

It's not that big of a deal

9

It's killing me!

3. If denial is a mechanism we use to avoid the uncomfortable truth of our situation, what are some of the excuses you have made for keeping porn in your life?
4. The author says there is a big difference between awareness and deciding to change. What keeps you from being ready to take the actual steps to become porn free? (For example, you could be one that confuses “research” with taking action.)
5. What makes it hard for you to connect with others about your porn habits? (You can check more than one.)
 - The belief that “I take care of me”
 - I don't want to look bad
 - Shame/embarrassment
 - My situation is unique (so others wouldn't understand)
 - Vulnerability is hard for me
 - Previously bad experiences in something like this
 - I want God to take care of it (because He should know me)
 - Create your own: _____
6. What is “Your Why” for wanting to quit porn? (For help with this question, complete the exercise in the book's appendix located immediately after chapter 9.)
7. What are the emotional triggers and mistaken beliefs that come before you wanting to look at porn?
8. What are some simple, practical ways that you could remove weak links in your technology that leave you vulnerable to craving?

9. What do you think of the idea of porn as an extreme habit rather than an “addiction”? Do you think the idea of creating a different “system” of habits is one that could work in your favor? Explain.

10. What are three new active commitments you could use to begin unleashing the power of positive habits?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

11. What is one way that you could celebrate steady movement toward your goal? (Set a goal of 1-week or 1-month porn free to start.)

(reward) _____

12. What is one way that you could remind yourself (not punish yourself) with a consequence if you choose porn over completing your goal?

(consequence) _____

13. Who could you share your plan with as a way of activating it in your life?

14. Why is reviewing and improving our recovery plan necessary? How does the F.A.S.T. check-in listed in the chapter remind us of this basic truth?

CHAPTER 7: THE ENEMY OF RECOVERY IS SELF-REJECTION

1. From the author’s story, we see that children are great recorders but lousy interpreters. Can you think of an early event in your life where your interpretation has left you with ongoing false beliefs about yourself or others?

2. Based on the previous question, what set of unmet needs could still be in play in your life?

3. What coping mechanisms and strategies have you used to to meet your unmet needs?

4. Can you think of any ways that you practice “self-rejection”?
5. What difference would it make for you if, at the core of your being, you believed that you are “beloved”?

CHAPTER 8: SELF-CARE

1. When you think of self-care, what comes to mind?
2. How do you beat yourself up after a relapse?
3. In what way has porn been “unhealthy self-care” for you? (Think about the needs it promises to meet.)
4. The author talks about his favorite chair. Do you have a location that you identify with as your place of self-care?
5. Where in your life do you feel “out of control” or unsafe?
6. Do you identify with the author when he says that there is a part of us that longs for “escape, excitement, or adventure”? What are the things in life that activate this desire for you?
7. Take some time and work through the questions that the author includes for each of the below areas. Jot down any key insights that could help you create both equilibrium and health in your life.
 - Physiological
 - Safety
 - Variety/Uncertainty
 - Love and Belonging
 - Esteem
 - Self-Actualization

CHAPTER 9: BECOMING THE TYPE OF MAN WHO DOES NOT LOOK AT PORN

1. What do you see as the difference between “practicing behaviors that keep me from looking at porn” and “becoming the type of man who does not look at porn”?
2. How would you answer the question, “What are you moving toward?”
3. In regard to your response for the previous question, do you feel that your daily activities support the ongoing movement in this direction?
4. Do you think that your reasons for wanting to be free from porn have evolved over time? If so, in what way? From this chapter, what would you say you would like your long-term motivation to be based on?
5. What are some new (or old) passions that you would like to cultivate to replace the role porn used to occupy in your life?
6. Describe the hope you have taken from reading this book.
7. What is an action you will take as a result?
8. Finally, who could help you take this action?