# Changing our Minds about Porn

By [**James M. Rochford**](https://www.evidenceunseen.com/aboutjamesrochford/)

# Table of Contents

**[Hold down CONTROL and click the link to jump to that page.]**

[**Pre-Homework:** The Benefits of Porn and Difficulties of Quitting 1](#_Toc90046865)

[**Session #1.** Is Porn Harmless? 3](#_Toc90046866)

[**Session #2.** Changing our Minds about Porn 5](#_Toc90046867)

[**Homework:** Building a Happy Life 7](#_Toc90046868)

[**Session #3.** The Externalization of Voices 10](#_Toc90046869)

[**Session #4.** Creating a Plan for Victory 14](#_Toc90046870)

# Pre-Homework: The Benefits of Porn and Difficulties of Quitting

**(1) Write down everything that porn positively gives you. (Yes, you read that right.) Be as specific as possible with these thoughts:** How does porn make your quality of life better? What does it give to you that you enjoy? What does it help alleviate in your life?

**(2) Write down everything that would be difficult about quitting porn. (Again, you read that right.) Be as specific as possible with these thoughts:** What would make it difficult to quit porn? What steps would you need to take that would be hard?

**(3) Moving forward, do you want to give up porn? If so, why on Earth would you want to do so? Everything you wrote above sounds so great that you’d have to be insane to quit, right? After all, porn gives you a lot of benefits, and quitting will cost you a lot of difficulty. So, why do you want to quit? This is honestly not “reverse psychology,” or whatever you want to call it. If you can’t answer this question with strong answers, what hope will you have in getting free from porn?**

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

# Session #1. Is Porn Harmless?

#### Iceberg illustration

1. Wrong actions

2.

3.

4. Right actions

#### #1. Porn is incredibly addictive

Kuhn and Gallinat Study (2014)

#### PORN: A DOPAMINE DRUG

(1) Stimulant

(2) Hallucinogen

(3) Barbiturate

Valerie Voon

#### #2. Porn impedes our ability to enjoy sex

What percentage of men aged 16-24 experienced erectile dysfunction?

History of ED

Erectile dysfunction between older and younger men

(2001-2002)

(2011)

#### #3. Porn dehumanizes women

What percentage of porn depicts violent or aggressive sex?

#### #4. Porn raises our tolerance of aberrant sex

What percentage of people watch porn they previously found disturbing?

Regular porn users were more likely to…

(1)

(2)

(3)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Bryant-Zillman Study** | | |
| **No exposure** | **Questions** | **Massive exposure** |
|  | **“What percentage of Americans engage in group sex?”** |  |
|  | **“Is marriage an important institution?”** |  |
|  | **“How long should a rapist be incarcerated?”** |  |

#### Discussion Question

What is your reaction to the material presented in the first video? What information did you find to be personally persuasive regarding the harm of porn use?

# Session #2. Changing our Minds about Porn

**Iceberg Illustration**

~~1. Wrong Actions~~

**2. False Beliefs**

3. True Beliefs

4. Right Actions

**Noetic Effects of Sin**

**Main Thesis?**

When you give up porn…

**[Take notes on how to respond to these false beliefs below.]**

**“Porn helps me feel happy.”**

**“Porn helps me have a sexual release.”**

**“Porn helps me when I’m stressed out.”**

**“Porn helps me when I’m bored.”**

**“I just want to look at porn once in a while.”**

**“I’ll quit eventually.”**

**“I’ll quit when I get married.”**

#### Discussion Question

Look through your notes on the false beliefs listed above: What other points could you make to help crush that particular belief that weren’t mentioned?

Were there any other false beliefs that were missed above?

# Homework: Building a Happy Life

Imagine a little kid whose mother keeps telling him, “STOP hitting your brother… STOP jumping on the couch… STOP raising your voice… STOP chewing with your mouth open…” Good parents know that they need to encourage good behavior—not just criticize bad behavior. The same is true for us as adults—only now we’re the adult in charge of our lives.

You simply can’t live your life based around what you shouldn’t do. This would get you out of damaging behavior, but it wouldn’t help you build a healthy and happy life. Therefore, you not only need to make a break from porn, but you also need to fill your life with healthy goals and interests, replacing porn with love relationships, gratitude, hobbies, exercise, etc.

#### Values and Goals

Researchers have found that writing about our values is one of the most powerful psychological interventions ever studied.[[1]](#footnote-1) Simply writing out our values has been shown to “boost GPAs, reduce doctor visits, improve mental health,” and it helps us “persevere in the face of discrimination and reduces self-handicapping.” People who “write about their values once, for ten minutes, show benefits months or even years later.”[[2]](#footnote-2) Dr. Dominque Morisano (of McGill University) found that setting intensive goals for college students over a four-month period increased their academic performance by **30%** on average.[[3]](#footnote-3)

**What are the highest values that you have in your life?** For instance, if all else failed, what do you value and desire the most? Explain why these are such high values. For example, one value in my life is studying the Bible. This is important to me because I want to know God more than anything, and I really enjoy learning about him and how to help others. Studying the Bible continues to change my life, and it plays an impact on the lives of people around me. So, studying my Bible is a very high value to me (Ps. 119:72, 127). What are your highest values? Be specific!

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

**Based on your values, create a list of what you’d like your life to look like five weeks from now. What would your life look like if you knew for a fact that you couldn’t fail?** (Think BIG!) For example, if my value was studying the Bible (see above), I would love it if I could know the main point of each chapter in the book of Acts in the next five weeks. That would give me a good command of that book. Also, I would like to see how my homechurch compares to what I read about in the book of Acts, and come up with a plan to help meet needs and lead change in my church to make that vision a reality.

(1)

(2)

(3)

**What are FIVE GOALS can you set for the next FIVE WEEKS to move toward your overall goal in the area of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_? (December 3rd to January 7th)**

**PRO TIP:** Create **numerical goals** (e.g. “I want to take notes on the book of Acts, and summarize each chapter in the next five weeks.”), rather than **“every day” goals** (e.g. “I want to read three chapters of the book of Acts *every day* for the next five weeks.”). The problem with “every day” goals is that if you miss even *once*, you automatically fail and you’ll give up. By contrast, numerical goals can be reached even at the “eleventh hour,” or right before the end of the five weeks.

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

(5)

#### Checklist

Are your goals specific enough that you’ll know if you met them or not?

Are you stretching yourself and aiming high?

Are you aiming so high that you are setting yourself up for failure?

Are any of these goals out of your control? (Revise your goals to make them in your control)

Do you need to invest in any resources to achieve your goals?

When would be some good benchmarks to measure progress?

How are you going to celebrate success once you’re done? Moreover, how will you react if you fail in ANY or ALL of these goals?

# Session #3. The Externalization of Voices

**Iceberg Illustration**

~~1. Wrong Actions~~

~~2. False Beliefs~~

**3. True Beliefs**

4. Right Actions

#### Origin of the Exercise

Dr. David Burns of Stanford University created this exercise. He uses 50+ tools for counseling, but uses this more than any other.[[4]](#footnote-4)

#### Explanation

Write down specific thoughts that lead to porn use.

Rate your thoughts (0-100).

Have a friend play “the friend from hell.” (i.e. devil’s advocate)

Use acceptance or aggression.

Assess who won the exchange.

Switch roles if you’re struggling.

Rerate your thoughts (0-100).

#### Discussion #1. Video

As you watch an actual example, answer these questions:

(1) Who won the argument?

(2) What tactics did the “friend from hell” use? Did these work? How?

(3) What tactics did the person use to refute these thoughts?

What feedback would you have for him to help him improve?

#### Script

FRIEND FROM HELL: Hey man, how you doing?

ME: I’m doing good.

FRIEND FROM HELL: Excuse me?

ME: I said that I’m doing good.

FRIEND FROM HELL: Superman does good. YOU are doing well.

ME: OK, I’m doing well.

FRIEND FROM HELL: Not off to a good start are you?

ME: Not really…

FRIEND FROM HELL: Hey, do you have a minute?

ME: Sure.

FRIEND FROM HELL: It’s clear that you’re looking out of it. I’d like you to feel better. You know, spending some time looking at porn would feel SO GOOD right about now!”

ME: The Bible says to “flee from porn.” Not to engage with it.

FRIEND FROM HELL: “Really, where does it say that?”

ME: I can’t remember. Romans, I think.

FRIEND FROM HELL: It doesn’t matter. That’s what the Bible says, but I’m not talking about the Bible. I’m talking about you. I want you to feel better because you’re in bad shape right now. Looking at a little porn would make you feel SO GOOD.

ME: It wouldn’t make me feel good.

FRIEND FROM HELL: Why have you been looking at it every day this week? Clearly, you enjoy it.

FRIEND FROM HELL: “Besides, you really deserve some time to enjoy a little bit of porn later after the week you’ve had. Come on! You got fired, your girlfriend dumped you, and you overdrafted on your bank account. Don’t you think that you deserve a little happiness in your life for once?”

ME: I deserved to get fired because—

FRIEND FROM HELL: Exactly! You can’t even hold down a simple job—or a girlfriend. Just take some time to unwind and feel better for a change.

ME: Porn won’t make me feel better.

FRIEND FROM HELL: Seriously? You can already feel the excitement of what it would feel like!

ME: But it won’t make me feel better for long.

FRIEND FROM HELL: True, but why not just take what you can get right now to take the edge off. Are you honestly saying that you’re never going to look at porn again? You’re never going to get a girlfriend—let alone get married. You’re not like other guys, and you don’t stand a chance. You might as well take care of yourself. After all, are you seriously going to go for the rest of your life without having a sexual release? How long do you think that’s seriously going to last?

ME: Maybe I’ll get a girlfriend if I get back out there someday.

FRIEND FROM HELL: “Okay, maybe you will… Someday. But I’m talking about right now. Look, you’re a good guy. You don’t even need to watch a whole video. Just take a peek. Then, you’ll turn it off. Besides, you’ve already been deliberating about this for too long. It’s just a matter of time before you take a look. You can’t resist it.”

#### As you watch an actual example, answer these questions:

(1) Who won the argument?

(2) What tactics did the “friend from hell” use? Did this work? How?

(3) What tactics did the person use to refute these thoughts?

What feedback would you have for him to help him improve?

#### Discussion: YOUR TURN

Break up into groups of 3-4.

Write out your thoughts, rate them, and have one person volunteer to share these.

Have another person play the “friend from hell” and argue.

After an exchange, review what you saw and ask for ways you could improve and grow.

# Session #4. Creating a Plan for Victory

**Iceberg Illustration**

~~1. Wrong Actions~~

~~2. False Beliefs~~

~~3. True Beliefs~~

**4. Right Actions**

#### Set yourself up for success

#### Focus on the positives

#### New open doors?

(2 Tim. 2:20-21) In a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some to honor and some to dishonor. 21 Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work.

#### Greater freedom?

(Heb. 12:1) Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

(1 Cor. 6:12) All things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be mastered by anything.

#### God growing you?

(1 Thess. 4:3) It is God’s will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality.

(1 Thess. 5:23-25) May God himself sanctify you through and through… 24 The One who calls you is faithful, and He will do it.

#### Don’t focus on the difficulty

#### Set a Quit Date

A “quit date” is not “vow.”

#### Preparing for your Quit Date

(1)

(2)

(3)

[**https://accountable2you.com/**](https://accountable2you.com/)

Accountable2U has a “blocker” option and accountability software.

[**https://www.covenanteyes.com/**](https://www.covenanteyes.com/)

Covenant Eyes has a “blocker” option and accountability software.

[**https://www.opendns.com/**](https://www.opendns.com/)

(4)

(5)

#### What’s your plan for times of temptation?

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

#### What if you have a fall?

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

(5)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Growth Journal** | | | | | | |
| **Monday** | **Tuesday** | **Wednesday** | **Thursday** | **Friday** | **Saturday** | **Sunday** |
| “0” | “1”  Had a fall after failing a big exam at school |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Externalization of Voices Journal** | | | |
| **Thought that Leads to Porn Use** | **% Now** | **What is your Response to this Thought?** | **% After** |
| **“I’ll Quit Eventually.”** | 90% | If it’s so great for you, why quit at all?  Do you think you’ll wake up one day and spontaneously want to quit?  Do you want to do this for the rest of your life? When do you think you’ll stop? |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

1. Geoffrey L. Cohen and David K. Sherman, “The Psychology of Change: Self-Affirmation and Social Psychological Intervention.” *Annual Review of Psychology* 65 (2014): 333-71. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Kelly McGonigal, *The Upside of Stress* (New York, NY: Avery Publishers, 2015), p.71. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Dominque Morisano (et al.) “Setting, Elaborating, and Reflecting on Personal Goals Improves Academic Performance” *Journal of Applied Psychology* 2010 March, 95(2):255-64. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. David D. Burns, Feeling Good (New York: HarperCollins, 2000), p.469. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)