

How Kids Are Traumatized by Porn

Though you might think pornography is viewed in secret, it has the potential to negatively impact not only a marriage, but undoubtedly the innocent children as well.

It is commonly understood that the average age that a child is exposed to pornography is 11. However, we frequently hear from people who first viewed pornography as young as age 7.

In my family, our daughter was 10 when she first admitted to seeing her daddy looking at inappropriate things. She decided to tell. But I wonder how many kids keep the secret. Struggling with confusion about what they saw. Or being afraid that it will cause a big fight between their parents. Or worse yet, how many of those kids keep the secret hidden, knowing that it isn't right but fearing their parents will end up divorcing.

Divorce

Every 13 seconds, one divorce is finalized in the United States.

There are 86,400 seconds in a day. This means that on average, more than 6,600 divorces take place daily here in America. That means that 2.4 million couples per year are trading their "I do" for "I don't anymore."

Pornography use was cited as a factor in 56 percent of divorce cases in 2002, according to the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers. In more than 3,600 marriages that dissolve daily, pornography plays a role in the decision to call it quits.

While the adults point fingers and fight out the divorce, there is another group of people who didn't ask to find

themselves caught in the crossfire.

The kids.

Sadly, it is estimated that half of all kids in the US will witness the ending of a parent's marriage. In approximately 90 percent of those divorces, moms end up having custody of their kids. Only 35 percent of those mothers will receive child support.

I talked to one woman who shared that when her marriage dissolved as a result of her husband's unfaithfulness, she found herself needing to maintain two to three jobs just to keep the bills paid and the kids fed.

In an article published by The Heritage Foundation in 2000, nearly 50 percent of parents who are getting divorced move below the poverty line. But financial constraints are not the only concern.

Emotionally Broken

Kids who experience family separation can also have higher levels of health, emotional and behavioral problems. Studies have found that these kids can also have an increased risk of suicide and drug abuse.

Sandra Blakeslee, a writer for *The New York Times*, stated, "[Children of divorced parents] are really, really frightened. They're afraid of betrayal, of loss and of abandonment because that has been their experience at least one time."

My daughter has always had self-esteem issues, but they have become increasingly worse over the past several months. I noticed that she started to view herself as worthless, and she believed there was something wrong with her. To make matters worse, she was becoming outright defiant towards me. As a mom, I knew that I couldn't allow this to continue. I had several conversations with her, and she would always just shrug her

shoulders when asked why she feels that way. One night, out of desperation, I decided to use an activity I learned through the Conquer Series.

The Most Painful Event

I gave my daughter a piece of paper and told her I wanted her to go to someplace quiet to think. I wanted her to make a list of the 10 most painful moments of her life. When she was finished, I wanted her to bring them back to me so her and I could talk about them. At first, she was skeptical. I explained to her that it would help her. It would also help me understand so I could help her.

If we don't understand how we have been wounded, we will never be able to recover.

About 30 minutes later, she emerged with her paper in her hand and tears running down her face. As I took the paper, I expected to see some of the responses—such as her grandma dying, which definitely took its toll on her. What I wasn't prepared for was the one thing that she wrote on her paper.

“When I was 4, you and daddy got into a big fight and you made daddy leave.”

Without asking her, I knew exactly what she was referring to. My husband battled a pornography addiction for many years of our marriage. Eventually, this gave way to him communicating with a woman who had plans to meet him so they could have an affair. When I found out, I was crushed—as any woman would be. A huge fight ensued—so big that my husband punched the wall with our daughter standing right in front of him. I screamed at him to get out. He left, reluctantly, and stayed gone for several days.

The Ripple Effect

I asked my sweet daughter what she remembered about that day

or if she understood the thoughts that she had. She admitted that she didn't know what was going on, but she knew I had just taken the one person who was always there for her and kicked him out. She knew in that moment that she hated me.

I have to be honest and say that she was right, because at that time I was chasing huge career dreams and was neglecting my family, leaving her and her brother under the care of their dad all of the time. He was there to feed them, take care of them when they were sick and put them to bed at night.

She continued to tell me that she knew that her daddy moved back home, but admitted that even to this day, any time my husband and I as much as argue, she is terrified I'll make him leave again. This is nearly 10 years later, with both of us more in love than we have ever been! For a decade, the enemy has been telling my daughter that when she least expects it, her dad and I will divorce. Because of this, she admitted to carrying around anger and resentment toward me for all this time, which is now manifesting in defiance.

The Healing Process

Together, my husband and I assured her that we are not going anywhere. We made sure she knows that the things that were going on back then are no longer happening now. Since that night, we have been talking about how important it is going to be for us to sit down with her and let her know the truth of what was happening all those years ago.

This was her first experience with someone leaving her. Sadly, six of the 10 things on her list all involved people moving away or passing away. She admitted to being terrified to become friends with people because she is scared that they too will leave.

Beyond Divorce—How Porn Affects Young Minds

While it's important to evaluate the impact divorce has on

kids, it is equally important to draw attention to the toll that pornography takes on a young mind.

According to the American College of Pediatrics,

Consumption of pornography is associated with many negative emotional, psychological, and physical health outcomes. These include increased rates of depression, anxiety, acting out and violent behavior, younger age of sexual debut, sexual promiscuity, increased risk of teen pregnancy, and a distorted view of relationships between men and women. For adults, pornography results in an increased likelihood of divorce which is also harmful to children.

We can see that viewing pornography causes a lot of feelings within a person that cannot easily be controlled. We also know from experts such as Dr. Doug Weiss and Dr. Ted Roberts that pornography use becomes a way to medicate the pain that one is feeling in life at any given moment.

“Sexual bondage is not about sex, it’s about how you’ve learned to medicate the pain in your life.” –Dr. Ted Roberts

When you become a parent, life is no longer about you. If you are the parent who is struggling with a porn problem, now is the time to quit! Thankfully, there is a resource that is available to help.

There Is Help

The Conquer Series is a 12-disc DVD set geared at getting to the root of sexual bondage—which in many cases is the wound of the past that started it all. Through this process, individuals will learn that they are not alone, that there is hope, and they will be provided with proven principles that they can apply daily as they work through the journey to sobriety and lifelong freedom. Will it be easy? No. Will it be worth it? Yes!

“The battle of life is, in most cases, fought uphill; and to win it without a struggle were perhaps to win it without honor. If there were no difficulties there would be no success; if there were nothing to struggle for, there would be nothing to be achieved.” –Samuel Smiles, Scottish author

Our kids see the battles we face. They learn from what they see us do, and they transform into adults whose values are based on their childhood experiences. I have done many things wrong in life, but I hope my kids will one day look back on their lives and remember the courageous steps I took to become a better version of myself—not for me, but for them.

Maybe that’s where you find yourself today. Maybe you realize your son or daughter is also now in desperate need of freedom.

Determine that today will be the day you close the chapter on your old self and begin writing a new version that is full of humility, grace and courage. Find a local Conquer Series group to join, or purchase the Conquer Series for yourself and your teen. The results of your leap of faith will be priceless.