

Why Porn Wreaks Horrific Havoc on Your Brain

Looking at brain scans, it's easy to see.

The brain of a porn addict looks similar to—and perhaps even worse than—a drug addict's.

A normal brain has the topography of a beach ball ... nice and smooth. In stark contrast is the Swiss-cheese-like surface of a porn addict's brain.

It's shocking and scary, but the good news is that the damage can be reversed.

To understand why this happens—and how to fix it—we need to understand just a little bit about the brain.

Who's in Charge?

The CEO of your brain is the prefrontal cortex. It is the top front portion of your brain and, though it may be smaller in size, it really runs the show.

It is responsible for good decision-making, impulse control, planning and other complex functions befitting its executive position—and it's not fully formed until the age of 25.

On the brain scans of porn addicts, the prefrontal cortex looks diminished—much like a deflated tire.

By watching porn, this person has bypassed their CEO many times to go straight to “I want to feel good.”

That “feel good” portion of your brain would be your limbic system.

This is why an addict will do things they never thought they would, because their higher reasoning takes a back seat and

the limbic system takes over.

Operating on Automatic: Our Limbic System

Our limbic system is housed in a lower section of the brain.

It's our survival system, where we act on impulse to jump out of the way of an oncoming train, for instance. Dodging certain death is an automatic reaction that we don't have to think about.

Because one of its purposes is to keep us alive, the limbic system can overpower the prefrontal cortex.

This is great when facing a dangerous situation.

It's not so great when it's been bypassed on a daily basis to do something our CEO would put a stop to. And watching porn fits that bill.

The Delicate Balance

Your limbic system acts as the gas pedal, while your prefrontal cortex is the brakes. Even in a normal situation, the limbic system can override the prefrontal cortex.

Dr. Ted Roberts, former Marine Fighter Pilot, pastor, and host of the Conquer Series, a cinematic DVD series that helps men break free from porn explains it this way:

"Your brain is like a Ferrari with bicycle brakes."

Watching porn repeatedly is strengthening the limbic system pathways to unhealthy behavior, ignoring your CEO in process. And like a muscle that hasn't been used, the prefrontal cortex will atrophy. This makes us even more impulsive and less "in control" of our behavior.

With a regular porn user, their ability to control their behavior has lessened considerably, and they are much more driven to act out again and again on impulse.

In a perfect storm situation for those who use porn: The limbic system is also where memories are formed and pleasure registers. So even seeing the computer or the phone used to view porn in the past can be a trigger to watch porn again.

All told, you end up with a brain that is highly overactive in some places and woefully underactive in others. Your brain isn't functioning normally.

Thankfully, there is a way to get back to normal.

This is not an excuse for those in the midst of addiction, but understanding the battle they are up against is a critical step in recovery.

Restrain or Retrain Your Brain?

Many people treat porn addiction like a willpower issue.

"Just stop watching," they'll say. Or, "All you need to do is put a porn blocker on your phone."

Unfortunately, it's not that easy.

Dr. Roberts admonishes, "Trying to defeat your addiction on your own is like trying to do brain surgery on yourself!" Don't try that at home—or anywhere else, for that matter.

You really need to understand how you got here in order to get to where you want to be.

You can retrain your brain to healthy, God-intended sexuality. Freedom from porn can be found with a reprogramming of the limbic system.

It's a process, but it works.

"Prior to 1990, we were under the assumption that the brain never changed," Dr. Roberts reveals in the Conquer Series.

“You were born with a certain number of neurons, you died with those neurons. Then we discovered neurogenesis.”

Neurogenesis tells us that the brain is constantly changing. It's continually making new connections, giving birth to new neurons on a moment-by-moment basis.

What this mean is, just as your brain “molded” in response to pornography, it can “re-mold” in response to healthy sexuality.

The Conquer Series can walk you through that process.

This powerful DVD series offers proven strategies and daily practical tools to conquer pornography and find freedom. You can join the 450,000 men in 65 countries who have learned to move beyond “not watching porn” to start living a transformed life. Order the Conquer Series today!

The Conquer Series is a cinematic DVD series for men on sexual integrity. Over 450,000 men in over 65 countries have started their journey to freedom from pornography through the Conquer Series. KingdomWorks Studios, the producer of the Conquer Series, aims to help further God's kingdom here on earth through the medium of film. Their mission is to bring God's kingdom to the lost and seeing God's kingdom reign in the lives of His children.