

THE PORN ANTIDOTE:

ATTACHMENT: GOD'S SECRET WEAPON FOR CRUSHING
PORN'S GRIP, AND CREATING THE LIFE AND MARRIAGE
YOU DREAM OF.

CARL STEWART, MA

www.theporntantidote.com

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I am so thankful to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for the opportunity to serve Him as I get to see men be set free from pornography and marriages restored. Thank you to my amazing wife Julie- your support and encouragement as I chase my dreams is incredible...you are a blessing. Thanks to all of my friends and colleagues for supporting and encouraging me as well- I am blessed to have all of you in my life. Finally, thank you to all of the men, marriages, and families that I have been privileged to work with. What I have learned from you I am passing on to others.

INTRODUCTION

Pornography is shredding men, marriages, and families. This virus is spreading faster than you can imagine and it is affecting you whether you realize it or not.

Please hear me out - this not an overstatement or embellishment.

The facts speak for themselves:

According to the Barna Group (Survey, 2014):

- *79% of 18-30 yr old men.
- *67% of 31-49 yr old men.
- *49% of 50-68 yr old men.
- *55% of all married men

LOOK AT PORN ONCE A MONTH!

63% of adult men viewed pornography in the past three months at least once **while at work**.

“Sex” is the #1 searched topic on the internet.

Playboy stopped publishing pictures of naked women.

Think about that!!!

The CEO of Playboy told the New York Times:

“You’re now one click away from every sex act imaginable for free. And so it’s just passé at this juncture.”

If someone in your home isn't struggling with porn, then someone involved with your family certainly is. Your kids' friends (who all have iPhones with no internet filters), a neighbor, coach, or pastor - you are already rubbing elbows with guys who are knee-deep in porn.

This is the culture we live in, and we need a plan of attack. The virus is spreading.

This book dissects pornography and shows you how to truly defeat it. After reading it, you will have a clear understanding of:

- How porn really works;
- How it hijacks your brain;
- The real reason you keep going back after you have sworn on your mother's grave to never look again (Hint: It's not just lust).

I emailed a draft of THE P*RN ANTIDOTE to a pastor who came to see me.

He replied:

"Thank you for sharing this with me. Part of me said you wrote this after I left your office because it describes me so well, but I know that it was written long before we met. I must admit, yesterday I told myself I wasn't coming back because I felt better and finally telling someone my secret and I felt I could 'take it from here' and get better. But after reading those 10 pages those thoughts vanished."

Like a grenade going off in the home, pornography affects those around you. The information you are about to read will finally make sense of why your wife is so wounded, and it will show you how to repair your marriage.

If you don't know how this stuff really works, you may as well be walking through a minefield while blindfolded.

A wife whose husband had been deeply involved in sexual addiction read the first few chapters of THE P*RN ANTIDOTE and said,

"...I can see that glimmer of hope you are offering that so many need in a time of desperation and hopelessness....thank you for sharing your giftedness in saving our marriage..."

Another wife wrote:

"For many women who are newer in this mess (or men who have never understood why they turn there!) this will be EYE OPENING....there are root issues and that is what you do here - you explain the path to the behavior!"

THE P*RN ANTIDOTE deals with the root issues in a way that draws you more deeply into a relationship with Christ and others. The guys I work with in my private practice keep coming back to tell me that “LOOKING AT PORN DOESN'T MAKE SENSE ANYMORE!!!”

That is freedom. That is victory.

90% of my private practice as a counselor involves working with guys who are dealing with pornography/sexual addiction, and their marriages. I get the privilege of watching these men being set free, and seeing their marriages restored.

In fact, they are more than merely restored - the marriages end up better than both spouses could have imagined. That is a far cry from just “limping along” forever. It is amazing to watch the Lord exchange beauty for ashes and joy for mourning.

THE P*RN ANTIDOTE allows me to share all of the principles and truths that have been transforming people's lives in front of me for years now. I want you to be able to say what I hear guys tell me every week: “Porn doesn't make sense anymore,” “It isn't a battle like it used to be,” “I feel like a huge weight has been lifted - I don't have to hide anymore!”

Your wife will be relieved to finally understand why porn is so powerful for you when it doesn't make sense to her at all.

You will find hope for your marriage where you have previously felt terror and despair. You will see that your marriage can not only survive, but thrive! Repeatedly couples tell me that they are incredibly thankful for the marriage they have now - how it is better than anything they would have dreamed of before. They tell me it was a rough road to walk, but that it was worth it!

That is what I want for you. This is what the Lord has in store. What the enemy intends for destruction, the Lord intends for good. And the Lord likes to show off.

If you apply only 10% of what you read in THE P*RN ANTIDOTE you will see significant changes in your struggle with lust and porn, in your marriage, and in your relationship with the Lord. You will make the transition from resisting porn, to protecting a life that you love.

Don't put this off. Don't wait until you have “more time” to read this material and put it into action.

There is probably a voice in the back of your head screaming at you to run away from this book right now. The longer you run the harder it becomes to start. It is time to at least take a peek at something that will help you find freedom and peace.

If you have repeatedly fallen in the face of temptation and are telling yourself (again), "This time I mean it!! I can do this on my own!" please, save yourself the guilt and shame of falling again and wishing you had already done something.

Heed the words of these guys who did just that after years of trying and failing to quit on their own:

"Carl and Christ helped save our marriage. Working with Carl gave my wife and I the tools to better love each other. When we first met Carl my wife was drowning in pain. We are now closer than we've ever been and this closeness is running over to improve our whole family. Carl has been a great guide to reveal what Christ wants for us. Thanks Carl."

"(Carl) taught me that Satan uses my guilt to show me my past sins and tries to convince me that is who I am; Christ however sees a blank slate. Carl taught me that Christ actually wants to hang out with me; He is not just part of a Grumpy God that sits high in heaven and is too busy to deal with my small stuff. Christ wants to not only be my savior and king, but he also wants to walk through life with me."

"There is no magic cure, only God can completely heal you; however, this book has given a new hope. This book really helped me understand the addiction like I have never understood before."

Please turn the page now. Don't spend another day spinning your wheels and doing the same old dance that leaves you stuck in shame and despair.

Read the first two chapters- if what they say isn't transforming then put it down. Take this opportunity to change your trajectory.

See you in the next chapter.

Chapter 1: Porn Is An Epidemic

Pornography is an epidemic. You heard that right - it's not just a 'growing problem.' Not a 'passing phase.' We live in a sexually saturated culture that is the perfect incubator for this virus. If you don't think it is a problem or affecting your life right now, then your head is in the sand and you need to wake up.

Unfortunately, porn is an epidemic in the church as well. How many Christian leaders have you seen go down in the media? How many pastors do you know of that lost their jobs, or at least their influence, due to "sexual indiscretions"? How many marriages and families do you know of that have been rocked by porn? Lost jobs, lost marriages, kids that insist on finding porn. This is the stuff I work with in private practice as a counselor in "THE MOST PORN LOVING RELIGIOUS CITY IN THE COUNTRY" (as per a porn distributor that compared visits to their website per capita from cities that rate themselves as religious or highly religious in the U.S. census data, on BuzzFeed.com). Yep, Huntsville, AL is #1.

I see the carnage - and the healing - every day. That is why I am writing this book - to give you what I share with guys and couples that leads to freedom. The strategies and principles I am about to share with you are what I use with folks that pay me a lot of their own money. My clients pay the full cost of counseling out of their own pockets, so if what I teach didn't work, they wouldn't keep coming back.

First, you have to look at the carnage. You have to see how big and bad the problem really is before you can understand why it's so important to tackle the issue.

Consider these statistics:

- 43% of internet users view pornography
- 25% of all searches are for pornography
- Sex is the #1 searched topic on the internet
- 35% of all downloads are pornographic
- 53% of Promise Keepers viewed porn in the past week
- 37% of pastors admit that they struggle with pornography
- Porn revenue is greater than all professional football, baseball, and basketball franchises combined. (There is a ton of free porn available- so it is huge that people are willing to spend that much money on it!)
- 56% of all divorce cases involve one person with an obsessive interest in pornographic websites
- 69% of the pay-per-view market is pornographic
- 90% of 8-16 year olds have viewed pornography - most while doing homework
- 8 is the average age of first exposure to pornography. (The brain isn't ready to process sexual experiences until puberty.)

Think about those stats for a minute. This is happening in your neighborhood, your office, and your church. According to the statistics, it has been in your house.

The porn industry has changed since I was kid. It used to be that somebody had to steal a magazine from their dad. You had to actively look for porn.

Today, the porn industry seeks you out. It is aggressive and effective. Unsolicited email and pop-ups were just the start. This industry now targets website names that sound like the names of popular children's characters in order to lure kids in as young as possible. Consider 'www.barny.com' vs 'www.barney.com.' One is an annoying purple dinosaur that is crack cocaine for kids. The other is crack cocaine for adults. The former wears off a lot quicker.

Today's porn is powered by the 3 A's:

Affordable: Most porn is available for free. YouTube can't monitor the thousands of uploads per day. Revenues for the porn industry are declining due to so much free pornography offered on the internet.

Accessible: Every 5th grader has an iPhone. Few have a filter or are checked by their parents. Fifty percent of the time porn is viewed on a mobile device. Our school system issues computers to each student. Bless their hearts - they try to put filters on the computers, but any kid that wants to can beat the system. The kids I work with tell me

all the time how they use school computers to access pornography. Then there is the computer at your desk...work cubicles still offer just enough privacy.

Anonymous: You don't have to go to the "bad part of town" to get this stuff. No more going to the room at the back of the video rental store. You don't even have to go to the corner gas station. Anyone, anywhere, anytime has a voluminous library of erotica readily available without the fear of being seen or recognized. What's to stop you?

This is typically what I hear when I challenge the widespread use of porn: "It isn't harming anyone," "All guys do it, so what's the big deal?" and "I look every now and then, who doesn't? That doesn't mean I have a problem." "It's natural, we are made to be sexual, so it can't be a problem." My first job out of graduate school was working in a residential drug rehab for teens. The minimizing, deflecting, and flat out denial sound all too familiar.

If you have looked at porn (or been to a massage parlor for a happy ending, gone to a strip club, been with a prostitute or girl from a "dating service", etc.), and felt regret, shame, or the need to hide the behavior, then you have a problem. If you go back to these behaviors, and these behaviors escalate over time, then you have a problem.

See if these types of guys sound familiar.

The Binger: You may have days, weeks, or months (sometimes a year or two) without looking or acting out. But then the urge hits you and you dive in head first, spending hours and days consuming as much porn as you can. Late at night after your wife goes to bed, or when she is out of town are prime times for you. Just knowing that you will have access and no accountability gets the juices flowing. Resistance seems futile. The fact that there are times when you don't look or act out provides a sense of control. "See, I can stop whenever I want," you might think. If you keep having to 'stop,' that means you haven't stopped...you've just paused.

The Compulsive: This person knows they cannot stop and they have no desire to try. If they attempt to stop, they know they won't in the end, so why bother? He is constantly thinking about sex and where to get his next fix. Thoughts of sex and erotica dominate his thinking throughout the day and this interferes with every aspect of his life. His reasoning goes something like this: "Why stop if it feels good and you know you will come back anyway?"

The Persistent Drip: This guy may binge occasionally, but his defining characteristic is that he looks on some sort of regular basis. Every few days, a few times a month, even a few times a year. It is not planned that way. For example, he looks a bit a work, maybe at night after his wife has gone to bed or when she leaves town. It isn't all the time. There is an ebb and flow to it. He will realize that he is spending too much time looking at pornography and abstain for a while. He is not surprised when he looks again. He may feel a sense of pride or control since it doesn't "seem" to control him. Again, he keeps stopping and convincing himself he has everything under control.

A lot of these guys feel guilty and mad at themselves after giving in. They swear they will never do it again. They put the filter back on, start exercising or embarking on some other self-improvement campaign, and for heaven's sake- don't tell anyone. "This time will be different," they tell themselves. Somewhere inside they know it will not work, and the pattern repeats itself.

Sporadic: This guy seems a bit more random. He has some traits seen in the other types. He will binge at times, be persistent at times, compulsive at others. Since there is no pattern, he wrongly believes that he doesn't really have a problem.

If you are reading this and wondering if you or someone you know has a problem, use the checklist below created by Robert Weiss M.S.W., C.A.S.

CYBERSEX ADDICTION CHECKLIST

If you answer yes to 3 or more questions, this may be an area of concern and should be openly discussed with a friend or family member.

If you answer yes to more than 6 questions, consider

(a) Counseling with a professional trained in addictive disorders

(b) Checking out a 12-Step support group for sexual addicts.

1. Are you spending increasing amounts of online time on sexual or romantic intrigue or involvement?
2. Have you been involved in romantic or sexual affairs?
3. Do you prefer online sex to having "real" sex with your spouse or primary partner?
4. Have you tried unsuccessfully to cut back on the time you spend online in sexual and romantic activities?
5. Has the time you spend on online sex or romance interfered with your job or other important commitments?
6. Have you collected a large quantity of Internet pornography?
7. Have you engaged in fantasy online acts or experiences which would be illegal if carried out (e.g. rape or sex with children or adolescents)?
8. Has your online sexual or romantic involvement resulted in spending significantly less time with your spouse/partner, dating life, or friends?
9. Have you lied about how much time you spent online or the type of sexual romantic activities you experience online?
10. Have you had sexual experiences online that you wish to keep secret from a partner or spouse?
11. Have your family or friends increasingly complained or been concerned about the amount of time you have spent online?
12. Do you frequently become angry or irritable when asked to get off the internet or computer?
13. Has the computer become the primary focus of your sexual or romantic life?

Source: *Robert Weiss, M.S.W., C.A.S.*

Truthfully, if you answered yes to any of these statements you have an issue with porn. The question is how big will the problem get, and how bad will the consequences will be. Ignoring an infection is not a good plan. Do something before it grows.

In the next chapter I will clearly describe the mechanics of porn: How and why it is so effective. Later I will discuss the impact on wives and marriages. This is messy, but there is hope. Conventional wisdom says that the man with a problem should work on his recovery (for 6 months or a year), and then address the marriage. In my experience, this approach is marital suicide. I will tell you why, and what you need to do instead.

I will address the need for filters and accountability. These are necessary, but not sufficient. Like using a garden hose on a house fire, you will need to take a more aggressive approach to end the problem once and for all. I'll tell you what really works to put out the fire and heal the damage. It is amazingly effective. This is why I have guys in my office repeatedly telling me, "Porn just doesn't make sense to me anymore...it isn't a fight." That is victory.

What I am sharing with you is based on years of research and training. Research has clearly revealed that not all approaches are created equal. Neuroscience has taught us how porn affects the brain, why his brain is affected more than hers, and how to most effectively attack the house fire in a way that really works.

I began college as an engineering student. I could have been an engineer like my dad and everyone else in this city, but that was not my calling. However, this training taught me to analyze how things work, and not simply to accept someone's personal theory or flighty ideas. A client once called me a "social engineer." The fact that engineers keep coming to me to address emotions, relationships, and behavior says a lot.

Get ready - next I'll break down the mechanics of porn. Knowing how it works changes everything.

Chapter 2: The Three Brains

Porn seduces with a promise: "This is what you want," "This will make you feel good," "This will make you feel like a man." It promises everything you think you want in that moment without showing what it will cost you later. By the end of this chapter you will understand why we fall for the trap so easily.

The same scenario played out in the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve didn't want for anything and sin had not yet corrupted the world. There was no sadness, fear, or heartache. So what happened?

They were seduced by the offer of "More." The offer of being like God seemed too good to pass up. 'What could go wrong?' they thought. After one bite the cost of "More" hit them like a ton of bricks. We have been experiencing the consequences and trying to hide our nakedness ever since then.

Porn is the apple offered to every guy. One bite...it won't hurt anybody, right?

Pornography hijacks the male brain. (More on why it doesn't do this to the female brain in a bit.) The male brain literally lights up when it sees something sexual. The MRI readout of a guy's brain when he is looking at pornography looks like a volcano exploding. The female brain, meanwhile...nothing. You can hear crickets.

The "3 Brains" theory explains why pornography acts like a drug. No, you do not have three different brains. These three parts of your brain interact with each other in a powerful way. Clients frequently tell me that understanding this dynamic has been pivotal in their recovery.

THINKING BRAIN:

The thinking brain is the prefrontal cortex. It is located at the front and top of your brain. If you have ever felt stupid and slammed the palm of your hand on your forehead, you hit the prefrontal cortex.

The thinking brain processes cause and effect, goals, morals, and values. It helps us apply what we have learned from our past experiences. When you are calm, this part of the brain works pretty well. When you feel a sense of connection with someone you love and care about, it is supercharged (you will hear a lot about this later).

When you we feel upset, afraid, or overwhelmed the thinking brain checks out. In that moment, you are not considering goals, morals, values, cause and effect, or your past experience – in other words, all of the checks and balances that God put in place. When the thinking brain checks out we are capable of doing just about anything.

The thinking brain isn't fully developed until age 25, and it is the last part of the brain to fully develop. This explains why car insurance is so expensive before the age of 25.

FEELING BRAIN:

The feeling brain involves several parts of the brain (known as the “limbic system”) including the amygdala, and is located in the middle of the brain. The feeling brain is always evaluating whether you are safe and working to detect threats. It processes physical threats and emotional or relational threats in the same way.

In other words, if you hold a gun to my head or if my wife says she is leaving me I will feel the same way. Both possibilities are terrifying.

The feeling brain processes emotions, relationships, and, you guessed it, sex. In fact, the part of the feeling brain responsible for processing sex is two times larger in men than in women. This isn't an excuse for looking or lusting, but it gives some needed context.

In women, the part of the brain responsible for processing relationships is twice as large as the male counterpart. Guess what women spend more time thinking about?

We pride ourselves on our logical and rational culture. We are proud of our thinking brains. The problem is that our brain processes information through the feeling brain before the thinking brain gets to weigh in. Why? The feeling brain is here to make sure we are safe before we engage in analysis and reflection.

If the feeling brain determines there is a significant physical/emotional/relational threat, it takes the thinking brain out of the equation.

If a screaming man is charging towards me while slashing the air with large knives, I don't need to spend time reflecting and considering all of the possibilities. I don't need to think deeply about what is happening: “Is he a Japanese steakhouse chef?” “Is he being attacked by bees?” The reflective functions of the thinking brain are not what I need to be using in that moment.

There are a lot of connectors going from the feeling brain to the thinking brain. However, there are not many connectors going from the thinking brain back to the feeling brain. This is why it is hard to think your way out of being upset or overwhelmed. How many times have you said or done something when you were upset and regretted it later? Usually we say, “What was I thinking!?!“ Truthfully? You weren't thinking at all.

Consider the experience of going to a haunted house. You know that people are going to try to scare you. You know that you will be just fine at the end. You can see people leaving who are laughing and have not been hurt at all.

You hear people screaming inside the haunted house even though they know they will not be harmed. The time lapse between the feeling brain and thinking brain allows you to experience the rush of fear before the thinking brain kicks in to remind you that it is all make-believe.

When the feeling brain perceives there to be a threat it automatically goes into some version of fight, flight, or freeze. If someone yells "GUN!" in a theater, you will be moving before you have time to think about it, or you will freeze to avoid drawing attention.

BODY BRAIN:

This is the brain stem, located on your neck at the base of your skull. This part of the brain is responsible for all of your bodily functions: Heart rate, breathing, blood pressure, etc. It is fully functioning at birth which allows us to live without having to think about blinking or breathing, which would be exhausting.

The brain stem mobilizes the body based on the perceived needs at the time. When everything is calm, it takes its orders from the thinking brain. When a threat is perceived, the feeling brain moves into the driver's seat. In that case the body brain gears up the system for fight, flight, or freeze.

There are a lot of connectors going from the feeling brain to the body brain. Similarly, there are lot of connectors going from the body brain to the feeling brain. This is where your "gut feeling" comes from.

When the feeling brain is processing something that has not been reflected on or analyzed by the thinking brain, yet the intensity of the feeling brain is transmitted through the electrical circuitry of the body brain, you experience a sensation known as a "gut feeling," because we typically feel this in our gut.

The two large vagal nerves descending from the body brain into your torso connect to all of your vital organs. These are the culprits for "getting butterflies" before a game or feeling nauseous when your team loses the big game.

Just because you have a gut feeling does not mean it is correct. It does mean the feeling or perception is worth investigating by using your thinking brain. Malcolm Gladwell describes this well in his book *Blink*. Gavin De Becker does an amazing job of fleshing this point out in his book *Protecting the Gift* (every parent should read it).

So what does all of this have to do with pornography? Everything! Let's look at how pornography hijacks a guy's 3 Brains.

When guy looks at pornography, the feeling brain (where we process sexual stimuli) lights up. Dopamine (the "gotta have it" drug produced by the brain) and testosterone levels surge when guys see something sexually stimulating. Dopamine encourages us to stay focused on sex, which causes the brain to release more testosterone, which in

turn cues the brain to look for more sexual stimuli and the release of more dopamine. This is a powerful feedback loop - a snowball rolling downhill that gets out of control fast.

Just to make it even more fun, this feedback loop causes serotonin levels to drop. In guys this is experienced as tension or anxiety while simultaneously making you obsess on what is sexually stimulating you. This sexualized tension is screaming for a release.

Remember, when the feeling brain lights up, the thinking brain checks out. The part of the brain focused on goals, morals, values, processing cause and effect, and learning from past experience (i.e. when looking at porn has caused problems in the past), is not readily accessible. The part of the brain that would say "STOP! DON'T DO IT! THINK ABOUT YOUR WIFE AND YOUR JOB!" is being sidelined.

The dopamine release ensures that the tension feels really good and makes you crave more. Remember, the feeling brain and body brain are well connected. Since the sexualized feeling brain is giving the orders, the body is preparing for sex. Pulse and heart rate increase, hormone levels surge, you have an erection and are aware of the nerve endings in the penis that are screaming for stimulation.

This feedback loop rapidly escalates and consumes your whole mental and physical experience. In this moment, all of the rest of life fades away. You are not aware of the bills, your boss, your marriage, or your insecurities. All of life shrinks down to a very pleasurable and intensely sexualized experience that you are in "complete control" of.

This is an amazingly powerful and effective escape from reality. This is what makes sex and lust addictive. You become addicted to the dopamine and the emotional escape. With these images seared into long term memory for ready access, you can get a hit simply by recalling them any time.

The grand finale is when you act out on what your body has been ramping up for. This is sex with yourself (masturbation) or someone else. When you ejaculate your brain releases natural opiates like oxytocin that calm everything down. After super stimulating the feeling brain, oxytocin shuts down all feelings of tension for a while. Peace and calming...until the guilt and shame kick in. In that moment, all of life's problems go away. You are mentally and physically tension free. Again, until reality kicks back in.

Oxytocin is called the "cuddle hormone." It is responsible for causing us to feel attached to other people. At birth, the mother's body pours oxytocin into her system, creating a powerful bond between mother and child. Moms also get a good dose of oxytocin while breastfeeding.

Guys experience the greatest release of oxytocin after sex. We receive a lot more oxytocin than women after sex so it is understandably a lot higher on our agenda than it is on theirs. This means that whatever you "have sex with" you are bonded to. You

can literally create an attachment to pornography. Be careful who or what you share oxytocin with.

As you can see, porn and lust are mood altering experiences. The fact that you can look at sexy pictures and make all of your problems go away for awhile is what makes porn addicting. The escape from reality by chemically overriding the brain is inherently addictive when left unchecked.

The more you engage in this mood altering cycle, the less effective it is. Less dopamine is released, so you have to find something more stimulating to get the same effect. Just like drinking alcohol consistently helps you develop a tolerance, requiring you to drink more to get the same effect, looking at pornography consistently means you have to find something more extreme to feel aroused. With drugs and alcohol, you have to put something in your body. With porn it is always one click away, or readily recalled in vivid detail from your memory bank.

Given that exposure to illicit images and videos is overwhelming for adult brains, imagine what it does to the adolescent brain. During adolescence the brain is two to four times more sensitive to the effects of dopamine. Everything is so extreme for kids during this period, and dopamine sensitivity is the culprit. What we think is kind of cool or interesting, they experience as totally amazingly over-the-top awesome. Therefore, they crave more of whatever made them feel that way. Dopamine junkies, the lot of them.

Remember, their thinking brains are still cooking until age 25. So adolescents are even more compromised when porn hits them. It's like they are shooting up with crack cocaine. Hearing the thinking brain in the midst of such overwhelming stimulation is like standing behind a 747 and trying to hear someone whisper. Good luck with that one.

Adolescents also don't feel the effects of excess as much as adults. They can keep bingeing and not experience the same "hangover" feelings experienced by adults. When it comes to their ability to handle pornography, the deck is stacked against them.

Kids that are exposed to pornography before adolescence are hit hard in a different way. (Remember, the average age of first exposure is eight years old). Developmentally speaking, this is a latent period (ages 8-11) where they aren't really interested in dating and their focus is primarily on playing and just being kids. Their brains are not ready to deal with sex yet. When kids encounter porn they are overwhelmed by the experience, their hormones spike and they feel sexually stimulated in a way they have not experienced before. Inherently they know this is something they are not supposed to be seeing so they hide, just like the child who hides in his room with the cookie he stole from the kitchen.

This hiding behavior means the child must deal with the confusion and stimulation alone. This dynamic makes the whole experience more stimulating, confusing, and

shameful. The groundwork has been laid for a lifetime of hiding when things get overwhelming, confusing, painful. This is the story the men share in my office every day. This is the seedbed of sexual addiction.

I will talk more about the emotional triggers leading guys to escape into porn in the following chapters. Now that you have a framework for how the brain functions and how porn hijacks the brain, it is time to dive into the what drives guys to go down the porn spiral.

