

# Marriage and Porn: What Everyone Needs to Know

Parents need to be the experts when it comes to empowering kids to reject porn. And research shows that kids who keep porn at bay are better prepared to enjoy a happy, healthy marriage. So today, let's do a mini *Marriage and Porn 101* and review a few of the most pertinent facts about how porn hurts relationships. (Then you'll have the information to share with your child when you find the right time.)

## Over Half of Divorces Involve Pornography Obsession

A 2011 [Psychology Today](#) article describes some of the research.

"In a 2004 testimony before the United States Senate, Dr. Jill Manning shared some interesting data regarding [pornography](#) and relationships. In her research she found that **56 percent** of [divorce](#) cases involved one party having an obsessive interest in pornographic websites.

Another source, the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers, polled 350 divorce attorneys in 2003 where **two thirds** of them reported that the Internet played a significant role in the divorces, with excessive interest in online porn contributing to more than half such cases."

## 10 ways porn harms marriages

Dr. Jill Manning [lists 21 negative effects](#) of porn in her book *What's the Big Deal About Pornography? A Guide for the Internet Generation*. Here are ten that can negatively affect marriage:

- Increased risk of developing **unhealthy views about sexuality**
- Increased risk of getting involved in sexual behavior that is **risky, unhealthy or illegal** (hiring prostitutes, for example)
- Increased risk of experiencing **difficulties in intimate relationships**
- Increased risk of becoming **violent or aggressive**
- Increased risk of becoming **sexually abusive toward others**
- **Decreased trust** in your boyfriend, girlfriend, or spouse
- Increased risk of **believing long-term relationships are not even realistic**
- Increased risk of believing there is nothing wrong with being sexually active with someone you have **no emotional involvement with or commitment to**
- Increased risk of becoming **sexually dissatisfied with your future spouse**
- Increased risk of **cheating on your spouse** once you're married  
But it gets worse.

## New research shows increased divorce rate among porn viewers

People who begin using porn after their marriage increase their risk of divorce. [As reported in Science](#), a working paper presented at the 2016 American Sociological Association's annual meeting suggests that "men and women who begin to consume pornography partway through their marriages are more likely to get a divorce than their non-porn consuming peers."

This study is different from others because it looks at how pornography impacts marriages over several years. The researchers took their data from the 2006-2014 General Social Survey, a yearly poll that asks thousands of Americans for their opinions on a variety of topics. The same people are polled every year,

so researchers can track changes in attitudes and behaviors over time. To measure pornography use, the survey asked respondents (who also reported their relationship status) whether they had watched an X-rated movie in the past year.

*“Analyzing the data [researchers] found that people who started watching porn were more likely to split with their partners during the course of the study.” For men, the chance of divorce doubled, for women it tripled.*

This study tells me that pornography is not helpful to a marriage, nor is it neutral.

OK, some of us didn't need a study to figure that one out!

### **Pornography objectifies people**

Here's how we address this in *Good Pictures Bad Pictures: Porn-Proofing Today's Young Kids*:  
*“Watching pornography can lead you to believe that people are objects to use instead of real human beings with feelings. We know that everyone has feelings and wants to be treated with kindness, so that's one more way pornography lies to people who look at it.”* (*Good Pictures Bad Pictures: Porn-Proofing Today's Young Kids*, p. 24-25)

### **Pornography may lead to increased infidelity**

A recent article posted on Family Studies entitled *Millennials, Infidelity, and Porn* reports on research that shows that Millennials, the first generation who have grown up with internet porn, are more lax in their attitudes towards infidelity with **only 75% responding that adultery is always wrong** among married couples (down from an average of 84% for the entire study group). Research also shows that using porn destabilizes families and destroys intimacy within marriages.

### **Fight back with the truth!**

Kids get so many “pro-porn” messages from popular culture—it's crucial to push back with the truth!

I fervently believe that porn-proof kids have a much better chance at succeeding in their future marriages than those who bring a third partner—their pornography addiction—into their relationship.

You *can* empower your children with the facts about what porn does to relationships. Kids *can* learn to defend themselves against porn if they are educated early and mentored often.

By Kristen Jenson