

WILLPOWER IS NOT ENOUGH

BY THE RECLAIM TEAM - #R011

Common advice to those struggling with pornography use, masturbation, or other unhealthy sexual behaviors is, "You just need to try harder!" Those who struggle with pornography use and other unwanted sexual behaviors, have often tried hard to overcome their addiction countless times, only to fall right back into it each time.

Why does this happen over and over again? It's not because those with these struggles are weak, evil, or a lost cause. It's because these specific ways of thinking and behaving that have developed over time through repetition and have become habit.



An Addiction is a Habit on Steroids

Pornography use and masturbation often begin as a simple experience of stimulation and reward. But through repetition and the rewiring of the brain that happens, the reward circuits of the brain can become habitual to this behavior. Once it has become a habit, it can escalate into problematic behavior quite quickly and it can end up with what our culture calls an "addiction."

Habit formation is the brain's number one priority. Why? Because the brain's watchword is efficiency, and the most effective way to be efficient is through the formation of habits. This is what the brain seeks—to focus its energy and attention on mastering a skill and, as quickly as possible, make it automatic—a habit. The brain can then move on to direct its efforts at learning and mastering the next skill.

While the brain's habit-formation power is a remarkable gift, it can also make it incredibly difficult to break out of old habits—especially highly advanced habits like "addictions." Once a person's brain expends the time and energy to develop a habit, whether it's good or bad, it doesn't want to give it up!

If, hundreds or thousands of times, an individual has "practiced" turning to pornography and other sexual behaviors as the most convenient, powerful, and efficient way of instantly escaping boredom, stress, loneliness, and the pressures of life, these outlets become the person's automatic, dominant "drug of choice." Consistently practicing turning to a particular drug of choice makes that choice automatic—an addiction.

Over time, pornography viewing rewires the brain circuitry and shackles a person in addiction. However, there is great hope! The brain is "neuroplastic" which means it can be shaped, molded, and changed. You do not have to be stuck with your old addiction circuitry! A deliberate action will be needed to break the habit, as well as ongoing practice to retrain the brain will be needed if you are to change. Eventually the brain can rewire itself and create a new, healthier automatic response. It isn't easy, but it can be done. Have hope in the fact that the brain is highly adaptable. To change your behavior, you need to change your brain. If you work with it rather than against it you will have a better chance of breaking the habitual behaviors. The brain is very adaptable, so the phrase "once an addict, always an addict" simply is NOT TRUE!

Stop Fighting What Your Brain Does Naturally!



If you've tried:

- sheer willpower,
- hyper-avoidance
- complete abstinence,
- running away in fear,
- giving in or
- a host of other techniques

and none of them have worked, you've likely been fighting against the natural current of your brain. Instead, why not "go with the flow" and harness the power of your brain's marvelous habit-formation abilities? Everything you need to break free is already built into the very structure of your brain. Harnessing and redirecting the brain's natural habit-creating tendencies using RECLAIM's specific tools and exercises can help you break free.

Remember, porn addiction is a specific way of thinking and behaving that has developed over time through repetition. Fighting your addiction only makes it worse because your brain is designed to hold on to what it has already learned. Instead of going to war with your thoughts and urges, you can learn to work with your brain's natural built-in mechanisms for positive change. The RECLAIM resources and the RECLAIM Online Recovery Program can show you how!

TESTIMONIES — Participants wrote these messages to their program's personal coach:

"Your program really works and it's been a life-saver!"

Coach-

I have wanted to change for many years. In the past I have gone over the plan in my head to get this accomplished. I slipped up over and over again because I used denial and forced restraint. FRC has been the missing tool I needed. So far, all has gone extremely well. I have not been porn and masturbation free for this long ever (at least 45 years). I am so happy I found this online program before things got totally out of hand and before those close to me were hurt more. I feel I am back on the road to a "normal" life. I understand that I need to talk to someone about my dark side if for no other reason than to get it into the light and expose the ugliness and thus diminish the allure. I have confessed to priests in the past and will continue to do so. Also, I have a very close friend who knows but not to the extent it was controlling my life. However, this forum and the lessons has been the real answer to my prayers.

"Your program really works and it's been a life-saver!"

Coach

Just wanted to let you know that the long slow development of brain-circuitry necessary to help me change habits which have been with me for almost 40 years (in regards to masturbation) and over 13 years (in regards to viewing pornography with some regularity) has been slowly happening. I've been practicing the program principles diligently for almost two years. Even though for a long time my calendar did not appear to show a dramatic reduction in patterns of unhealthy behavior, I still remained very hopeful that the building-blocks necessary for that change were actually going into place. Now, I'm finally experiencing the longer and longer periods of maintaining healthy habits. My relationships with everyone, including myself and my wife have noticeably improved. I'm getting stronger and have more and more 'real-life' successes – both in avoiding unhealthy behavior, as well as in engaging in lots of healthy and life-giving relationship and activities. I'm very hopeful and wanted to thank you for being there to help guide me through this process. Your program really works and it's been a life-saver! I'm going to keep on practicing and advocating for myself. God bless your day.

SIGN UP FOR THE RECLAIM SEXUAL HEALTH ONLINE RECOVERY PROGRAM! www.ReclaimSexualHealth.com