

Good Morning Ladies and Gentlemen!

My name is Steve Bauer and I am a sexaholic. That is what I would say in one of my 12 step recovery meetings. I will not say which group or groups but I will say that I have attended faith based and secular 12 step groups and I have been porn free for 12 years.

I started using porn and alcohol to medicate in my teens and really began strongly at 18. I found some magazines in my uncle's garage. I medicated my teen pain or perceived pain. Even after I married porn was something I still used. I was very satisfied in my marriage physically and every other way. Yet I continued to use. I guess I thought I couldn't live without porn. Porn also helped me to withdraw from the reality of daily life and pressures. At home conflict never had a good ending with my parents. They were good people but by using porn I could avoid conflict and relationships while still enjoying myself physically. Porn stunts relational growth.

Porn ruins relationships, marriages, families and has a similar affect on the brain as a chemical drug. Porn is very progressive. The picture I saw last week doesn't turn me on as much as day one so I went to another picture of a woman. When that became too familiar I went to pictures of couples having sex together and then group sex and on and on, always looking for the next high that really is never achievable. It became my drug. I couldn't live without it or thought I couldn't live without it. Much more dangerous today is internet porn where EVERYTHING is available in the privacy of a home. If I wanted to seek out a particular kind of porn I would have to buy it. Now it is a click away and I don't have to be seen walking into an adult bookstore. Bondage and Discipline (BD) and Sadomasochism (SM) and sex and violence together using guns, knives, rape all are available.

I am a family man, a person of faith, husband, father, grand father, great grand father. I didn't want to do this. I hated it. The pleasure is outweighed by the guilt and shame. Do I want my wife looking at nude men while self pleasuring? Would I want my family to know what I do in my private time? What should be a healthy part of my marriage had turned me into some one I never intended to be. For sure the best sex I have experienced by far is when my mate and I are connecting spiritually, mentally, emotionally. Then the physical is a thing of beauty. Yet not so much if those other elements are not there. In fact the spiritual, mental, emotional is what carries a relationship long term not the physical. Porn also made me a liar. I had to cover up things so my family would not find out. I started going in late to work and telling the boss my mother was having problems at the nursing home. I was actually porn free for about 20 years and went back thinking I could handle it. My 12 years freedom is my current sobriety. I hope to have it for life.

Kids as young as 8-11 are seeing their first porn. How do they even process this? We all become voyeurs when we watch porn. Not only do we see sex but sex and violence together. In an age of # Me Too we are more sex obsessed and women are treated more like sex objects than at any time in our history. Women are called bitches and whores by men and even by other women. Many think this is okay. With an emphasis on sexual abuse against women these days the porn industry depicts violence as part of sex--like women really want to be beaten and raped and this is part of the deal.

I have heard the stories of hundreds of men and women in the last 12 years in our groups. ALL started with porn. The porn's progressive nature took them to places and people they never dreamed; to places so low they never thought they would go. Porn leads to phone sex, cyber sex, chat rooms, strip bars, affairs, and at the worst child sex. Under age girls are being sold at The Super Bowl every year for sex.

I can't imagine what anyone would find sexual about a young boy or girl. Yet some in our groups were in recovery by court order and some molested children or raped. If you talked to some you would never think they were capable but many did. I am convinced that some of these people were not true pedophiles but went to that extreme through the progressive nature of porn viewing. People who have died through asphyxiation during sexual activity were trying for the ultimate high.

Parents have to learn how computers and smart phones allow porn into the home. Start by using a filter, putting the computer in the family room not allowing these in the bedrooms of kids. At some point we

have to have the conversation with our kids and grand kids that they WILL see porn and that it is naked people and yes some of this will be attractive to them but explain in age appropriate ways.

Porn does not show the consequences of sex like AIDS, pregnancy, STD's . It sends a message to kids that porn is normal. Yet we have to do a better job with "acceptable" sexism and acceptable objectifying of women and girls. Pro sports "cheer" leaders, movies, television all do what #MeToo is against. Yet who is speaking up? Sports Illustrated "swim suit" issue is sexism and objectification of women. No always meant no even when I was high on alcohol. No matter how high, I got that. Adults can change a channel on TV or stop watching a show and explain to a son or daughter that we are not watching because it depicts sex or women in a bad way. I don't want to leave out the women--women who have a porn addiction. While less common then men, women are still affected by it and there are women's groups as well for this.

Viagra and other products are being marketed for men in their 30's and 40's. The reason? Men are using porn alone to pleasure themselves and have nothing left for their mate.

Boys and men think they have a right to sex today even beat their girl friend or wife. They are getting much of this from porn and other media. At some point we have to stop talking about it and do something. I am trying to do my part by talking to young men about my journey. Help is available. Part of my effort is why I am here today to let you know that I am not just a face less person who sent you a letter but I am an average American. Porn is white collar, blue collar, young, old, men women, black, white.

Porn companies are buying child networks and getting access to children. Porn appears suddenly on a "safe" child screen and it is even hard to leave the sight. The internet giants must be challenged and we need to write to the FCC and our elected officials. Persistence is key. Respectful letters can be sent snail mail. My friends tell me that snail mail is even more effective today because e mails are sent by the thousands. Snail mail has a better chance of actually being read.

Mature manhood is about respect and character and responsibility. Each man has to be an example for the younger men. Any education expansion about porn is very helpful. I urge you to consider calling porn use an epidemic in the State of Ohio. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Steve Bauer 330-697-6507 phone 515 Crossings Circle Tallmadge, Ohio

I will be testifying and reading this letter with your permission tomorrow September 17 at The State House Room 116