• What Children Really Need, p. 2
• The Problem of Pornography, pp. 10 & 18
• Toward Family-Friendly Careers, p. 28
Forever Families Website Now On-line

Brigham Young University’s School of Family Life has recently launched the Forever Families website (www.foreverfamilies.net), which provides practical, scholarly, and sacred educational information to individuals, married couples, and families of all faiths within the framework of The Family: A Proclamation to the World, published by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This framework emphasizes the divine nature and importance of families, marriage, and parenthood, coinciding with the faith traditions of many world religions. The site’s anticipated audiences are parents, couples, and individuals who are interested in promoting marriage and family-strengthening principles in their homes and in their communities.

Forever Families contains numerous brief articles on various marriage and family life topics, written in a lively, engaging style. The articles integrate the latest scientific thinking with practical help, all in the context of the belief that marriage and family are divine institutions.

The articles are grouped by the following 10 categories:

- Preparing for the Covenant of Marriage
- Principles of Successful Marriage
- Sacred Responsibilities of Parenting
- Supportive Extended Families
- Physical and Spiritual Needs of Children
- Principles of Successful Families
- Sanctity of Life
- Divine Nature and Destiny
- Communities Strengthening Families
- Challenges, Marriage and Family Life

The site is updated regularly, with the newest articles listed at the “Recent Additions” link. Here are some examples of the current titles you’ll find at the site:

- “Important Factors to Consider Before Taking the Marriage Plunge”
- “Benefits of Couple Prayer”
- “Handing Conflict in Marriage”
- “Guiding Our Children”
- “Forgiveness in Families”
- “Identifying Your Family Strengths”
- “Being a Successful Single Parent”
- “Combining Two Families and Meeting Everyone’s Needs”

For those who want to learn more about the research on a topic, many of the articles on Forever Families provide a link to an expanded article complete with a list of references, helpful readings, and links to other websites.

Marriage & Families is a journal for young couples, husbands & wives, parents, and professionals—including educators, counselors, therapists, psychologists, physicians, social workers, nurses, public health people, teachers, clergy, experts in family law, and everyone interested in marriage and families. Our editorial board members belong to many faiths—with a common belief in the importance of traditional families. Marriage & Families is dedicated to strengthening families. Without apology, our name begins with the word marriage—a concept that many dismiss or completely ignore these days. However, since marriage and fidelity are essentials, not options, in a healthy society, we are pleased to bring you a publication containing credible data supporting this and other time-tested principles and values related to the family.
WHAT CHILDREN REALLY NEED: ANOTHER WAY TO LOOK AT CHILDREN’S RIGHTS
Allan Carlson

THE PORNOGRAPHY TRAP
Victor B. Cline and Brad Wilcox

PORNOGRAPHY USE: CONSEQUENCES AND CURES
Paul James Birch

A SENATOR SPEAKS ON SOCIETY, LAW, AND THE FAMILY
Senator Gordon Smith

NEWS:
- CONSTRUCTING FAMILY-FRIENDLY CAREERS
- BYU’S SCHOOL OF FAMILY LIFE TO RECEIVE A NEW HOME

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The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted as an international treaty in 1989, enjoys ratification by most nations on earth; the United States is the one notable exception. As the UNICEF website explains, this Convention “spells out the basic human rights that children everywhere...have: the right to survival; to develop to the fullest; to protection from harmful influences, abuse and exploitation; and to participate fully in family, cultural and social life....The Convention protects children’s rights by setting standards in health care, education and legal, civil and social services.”

The architects of this Convention hoped to protect children from exploitation in armed conflicts, from the abuses of child labor, and from sexual exploitation. These are worthy goals. They also wanted to reduce disparities within societies, such as the gap often seen between urban and rural health systems. Again, this is a worthy goal.

All the same, prominent legal scholars have raised strong criticisms of the Convention. Some point to passages, such as Article 13, which appear to undermine the ability of parents to protect their children from harmful outside influences. Others see language that threatens cultural diversity and religious liberty. Still others worry about the very nature of “rights” when applied to children, seeing this as implicitly granting excessive power over the young to governments relative to parents and other kin.

It is not my purpose in this article to weigh and evaluate these arguments. Instead, I want to take a few minutes and—as an American management consultant might say—to “think outside the box” about what children really need.

Twenty-six years ago, I began work on my doctoral dissertation, which examined the origins of family and population policies in Sweden during the 1920s and 1930s. In the years since, I have given almost exclusive attention to two questions: What modern movements, forces, and developments threaten families and children? And how can we strengthen families and protect children in our time?

My pursuit of answers has led me into research and writing that cuts across the academic disciplines: sociology, psychology, and the biological...
sciences; medicine, child development, and history. One project that I initiated 14 years ago was collecting and abstracting for average readers scholarly journal articles on child and family questions. These abstracts now number nearly 2,000 entries in a fully searchable database, and they tell us a great deal about the real needs of children.

From this work comes my special problem. For when I read the Convention on the Rights of the Child, I find it inadequate: not so much wrong, as poorly focused. It contains many fine sentiments and worthy ideas, but it misses larger truths about children and their needs. Too often, I think, the convention inappropriately presses adult issues and adult language onto children’s unique circumstances.

And so, I want to engage in this article in a small fantasy. With all due humility, I will assume that I have been asked by the nations of the world to draft a new and more appropriate Charter of Rights for children. It is to be called What Children Really Need, and it is to reflect the freshest and most compelling new research on this question. After much consideration, I have settled on Ten Articles, and I will now set them forth. They are:

**Article I**

Each Child Has the Right to a Mother

Despite the best arguments for the view that differences between the genders are insignificant, the modern sciences continue to reinforce what custom and common sense also teach: on issues of human reproduction, men and women are very different. Only women have the gift to carry the *conceptus* to birth. Only women can develop the unique hormonal bonds between mother and child mediated by that amazing organ, the placenta. And only women can provide that fountain of nurture, giving human babies exactly the nutrition they need when they need it: namely, breast milk. As the children grow, mothers play unique roles in guiding girls and boys into psychologically healthy development. As research reported in *The Journal of Genetic Psychology* explains, having “a recollection of the mother as available and devoted predicted less loneliness, less depression, less anxiety, higher self esteem, and more resiliency in dealing with life’s events.” In these ways, mothers are vital to what economists call long-term human capital formation.

Yet at times, modern society seems to conspire against motherhood. During the last 100 years, mothers’ tasks have been devalued in the West, from the Highest of Vocations to a distraction or a kind of hobby. Some of the pressures come from the short-sighted views of modern business. Commenting on the recent flow of married women into the labor market, *The Economist*—a business-friendly magazine also known for its frankness—wrote: “Women are proving a godsend to many employers. They usually cost less to employ than men, are more prepared to be flexible and less inclined to pick up a fuss if working conditions are poor...Employers like them because they...command lower pay, and because part-timers can be pushed harder while they are at work.” This form of exploitation may or may not be good for women; it certainly is not good for their children, born, unborn, or potential.

To fulfill the Child’s Right to a Mother, governments should take all reasonable steps to treat motherhood as the most important of vocations and to ensure that the mother-child bond is given priority over short-term economic needs.

**Article II**

Each Child Has the Right to a Father

The evidence has now accumulated here as well: fathers are not optional adornments in the household; they are necessary to the healthy growth of
children. Relatively new books by David Blankenhorn, David Popenoe, and Barbara Dafoe Whitehead summarize the vast body of research on this point. So does a recent article in Demography by scholars at the Universities of North Carolina and Pennsylvania. “Fathers matter,” they write. A father’s involvement in a child’s life “significantly influences [three] outcomes: economic and educational attainment and [avoidance of] delinquency.” Fathers who are “both emotionally close and highly involved in joint activities” play a major role in a child’s maturation. Adolescents who experience “increasing closeness” with their fathers are protected from “delinquency and psychological distress.”

Here again, though, the biases of modern life discourage fatherhood. Many governmental welfare programs encourage fatherless households with children, by creating financial incentives for out-of-wedlock births. Even for married fathers, work expectations and routines undermine their physical and psychological availability to their children. The popular Western media commonly portray fathers as fools.

To fulfill the Child’s Right to a Father, governments should take all reasonable steps to protect and celebrate the father-guided Family.

**Article III**

**Each Child Has the Right to a Home Built on Marriage**

The research evidence on family and children, accumulating for two decades, points to one overwhelming conclusion: children are most likely to be healthy, happy, well-behaved, and responsible; most likely to succeed in school and in life; and least likely to be promiscuous, delinquent, or users of alcohol and illegal drugs if they live with...
their two natural parents who, in turn, are lawfully married. Any willed variation from this model—due to cohabitation, legal separation, divorce, sole-parenting, or even remarriage—will predictably lead to more negative results for the children. Even first marriages that are troubled are predictably better for children than the alternatives (except in cases involving physical violence between husband and wife or parent and child, or the sexual abuse of a child by a parent).

The good home for children is also a place rich in functions, where the young become both the center of daily life and participants in meaningful household work. The good home takes seriously the task of education, and parents become the prime educators of their children, starting with moral training. The good home defends its autonomy and authority, for this again has positive effects on children.

It is the union of male and female through marriage that produces these results. Each partner brings gifts to the marital bond that are complementary. New research shows how this works. For example, one unusual study reported in the journal *Criminology* found that the active bonds between wives in a neighborhood—such as borrowing food or tools or having lunch at a neighbor’s home—had a strong effect in reducing neighborhood rates of violent crime. Interestingly, this result was not produced through the bonds of husbands in a neighborhood. And yet, the presence of “family rooted men” in the same neighborhoods did reduce rates of out-of-wedlock births among neighborhood teenagers. According to the researchers, a single-mother home with teenage daughters present was viewed by young neighborhood males as “an unprotected nest,” because it lacks “a man, the figure the boys are prepared to respect, ... to keep them in line.” The lesson here is that a husband and a wife complement each other; each marital partner brings unique talents to the building of a home, so that it becomes greater than the sum of its parts.

To fulfill the Child’s Right to a Home, responsible governments will use all prudent means to encourage lawful marriage, discourage divorce, and recognize the prior existence and autonomy of families.

**Article IV**

**Each Child Has the Right to Siblings**

The current trend, particularly strong in developed lands, is toward a one-child family system. For example, if current trends in Europe continue for another 50 years, by the year 2050 a majority of the European people will have no brothers or sisters, no aunts or uncles, no cousins. A range of anti-natalist impulses help explain this, including economic pressures to put work before family and children and the heavy burden of taxation on household budgets.
This trend toward a one-child family system portends great trouble and great loneliness. The relationships between brothers and sisters have long been understood to be critically important in shaping for the good the moral and psychological character of children. In contrast, children without siblings disproportionately develop hostile, anti-social personalities. In China, for example, where the government has aggressively pursued a one-child-per-couple policy for years, researchers report in the journal School Psychology International that a child without siblings is more likely to disrupt the school classroom than a child reared with brothers and sisters. When compared to the latter, “only children display considerably more behavior problems, particularly in terms of learning, impulsivity, hyperactivity and anxiety.”4

Later in life, sibling bonds also remain strong. Indeed, this is the longest blood relationship that people normally have in their lives, longer than relationships with parents, children, or spouse. Recent research shows that older adults commonly feel closer to their siblings than to anyone except their own children, attachments that grow with the passing of years.

Sometimes, of course, it is not possible for parents to have more than one child. But the main cause at this time is extreme voluntary child limitation. Such actions deliberately diminish the psychological prospects of sole children.

To secure for Children the Right to Siblings, governments should welcome the birth of multiple children in a family through all prudent and proper means.

Article V
Each Child Has the Right to Ancestors
Children know emotional wholeness and personal security if they see themselves as part of a great chain of family being, binding together ancestors, their living family, and their descendants. It is this that makes sense out of death, suffering, and sacrifice, which, in turn, supplies purpose and meaning to life. Indeed, children show a great hunger for stories about their families. Reporting in The Journal of Marriage and Family on a study of the telling of family stories, the researchers found it “a particular surprise” that “the younger generation told just as many, if not more family stories than the older generation.”

And yet, too often today, the young learn in schools or from the drumbeat of modernist propaganda in the media that their ancestors were ignorant, bigoted, and mean-spirited. But as the great rhetorician Richard Weaver once remarked, “those who have no concern for their ancestors will, by simple application of the same rule, have none for their descendents.” And this diminishes not only the lives of children, but the global community as a whole.

To secure a Child’s Right to Ancestors, governments should ensure that its schools and institutions appropriately honor the struggles and positive gifts of those generations which came before.

Article VI
Each Child Has the Right to a Posterity
Current myths hold that the population control movement represents a rational adaptation of
family size to modern conditions. While this change began in the West, it gains strength in the Developing Nations because of its popularity.

New research shows these myths to be false. A careful history of fertility decline (by a leading advocate for population control), appearing in *Population and Development Review*, shows that neo-Malthusian “ideas, ideologies, and organized assistance”—or *propaganda* instead of steady conversion—was key. The task for these propagandists was to attack the status of large families. Their key triumph, according to the author, was the “rolling back of religion’s grip on...sexuality,” urging persons to “ignor[e] the religious view.” These ideologies then spread to the Third World through *colonial administrators* using “eugenic” arguments to control native populations and—later—through private organizations such as The Population Council and The Ford Foundation.6

It is time to end this war on human fertility, for the sake of children. At the dawn of the twenty-first century, it is objectively clear that depopulation rather than overpopulation is the problem that looms before the world. The best evidence also shows that population growth actually stimulates economic growth, both absolutely and on a per-capita basis.

It is natural for each person to want to create progeny and to live into the future through them. This is each child’s destiny. Propaganda against the building of families is a direct assault on this destiny.

To secure a Child’s Right to a Posterity, governments should take all appropriate actions to affirm the value of fertility within marriage and to support and protect larger families.

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**Article VII**

*Each Child Has the Right to Religious Faith*

Religious families better protect their children physically and psychologically when compared to families which reject religious faith. This finding flies of the face of the modernist bias that sees religion as resting on ignorance and repression. For example, a study on parenting styles reported in *American Sociological Review* found that “while it is true conservative Protestant parents are more likely to rely on [spanking than non-religious parents], it is also true that they are more likely than other parents to practice warm and expressive emotional work with their children.”

Strong religious faith also protects youth from destructive behaviors such as premature sexual activity. The *Journal of Marriage and the Family* reports that while the percentage of all white American female adolescents who were virgins fell from 51 percent in 1982 to 42 percent in 1988, the percent who were virgins among fundamentalist Protestants rose from 45 to 61 percent over the same six years. The authors credit this, in part, to the effect of “church sermons and Sunday school.”

In short, children thrive best within families that recognize Divine authority and seek to apply this faith in their daily lives.

To secure a Child’s Right to Religious Faith, governments shall respect families’ free exercise of religion.

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**Article VIII**

*Each Child Has the Right to Live in a Healthy Community*

No good home stands alone. Extended family
members—grandparents, aunts and uncles, cousins—properly take an interest in and help protect and rear children. In somewhat different ways, good neighbors also provide environments which give special protection to children. It is common, as well, for religious co-believers to seek to live near each other. And the evidence shows that this is good for all children.

A recent article in The Journal of Socio-Economics examined the role of religiosity among neighbors in building a healthy community. Even in the highly secularized, modern nation of Sweden, the researcher found the importance of religion to be strong. Specifically: “the higher the rate of Christians in a Swedish city, the lower the rates of divorce, abortion, ... and children born out of wedlock.” Even non-Christians living among a relatively high number of believers found themselves behaving in ways more friendly to children: they too were much less likely to get divorced, have an abortion, or beget a child outside marriage."

To secure a Child’s Right to Live in a Healthy Community, governments shall not unduly interfere with the spontaneous growth of neighborhoods and towns.

**Article IX**

**Each Child Has the Right to Innocence**

The word *innocence* here means the opportunity to have a true childhood, the chance to mature normally in terms of physical, emotional, and moral development.

Many outside forces threaten childhood: war; employers greedy for child labor; the modern media; ideologically-driven education. But the research does show one consistent protector of childhood innocence: living in an intact, two-natural-parent family.

For instance, new articles in *Child Development* and *The Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* show the same amazing result: “girls who were in single-mother homes at age 5 tend to experience earlier puberty.” This premature onset of sexual maturity occurs because “girls from paternally deprived homes are more likely to become exposed to the pheromones of stepfathers and other unrelated adult males,” which accelerates their physical development. Early puberty is worrisome because it is associated with poorer health, emotional problems such as depression and anxiety, problem behaviors such as alcohol consumption, and sexual promiscuity.10

Intact homes are also much more able to control the intrusions of the outside media—from television to the Internet—into the lives of children.

To secure a Child’s Right to Innocence, governments shall honor and protect the institution of marriage and they shall respect and support parental control of outside media directed at children.

**Article X**

**Each Child Has the Right to a Tradition**

Children are born into families, immediate and extended; they are also born into villages or neighborhoods which help and support families; and they are born into traditions or cultures, which give depth to their lives. G.K. Chesterton called Tradition “the democracy of the dead,” where the
living recognize the lessons of life learned, often with great difficulty and sacrifice, by those who came before. Respect for tradition does not require blind obedience to the past. But it does place the advocacy burden on those calling for change. Children find protection and meaning within the cloak of tradition, which gives them emotional stability and the means to survive even great tyranny.

The *Polish Sociological Review* carried a recent article on developments in Uzbekistan during the period of Soviet Communist rule. The author writes: “only traditional relationships enabled the people to survive the particularly difficult conditions which prevailed throughout the Soviet period...[W]hile the sovietization of Central Asian society rocked the religious and cultural foundations of the family, its basic... features were preserved.” In many cases, the task of preservation fell to women. The author again: “I know of families where the father was a teacher of scientific atheism, while the wife said her prayers five times a day and observed ‘Ramadan,’ so as to (as she put it) atone for her husband’s sins.” When the Communists fell, and Uzbekistan regained its freedom, these traditions were still there, so that the children and their parents could rebuild a nation.11

To secure a Child’s Right to Tradition, governments shall respect the inherited beliefs and customs of peoples as parts of their informal or social constitutions.

And so I call on the nations of the world to secure to each child Rights to a mother, a father, a home built on marriage, siblings, ancestors, posterity, religious faith, a healthy community, innocence, and tradition. The scientific evidence is overwhelming: these are the qualities that are best able to give children security, health, happiness, emotional stability, spiritual satisfaction, material abundance, and inner peace. These are what children really need.

Allan Carlson is president of The Howard Center for Family, Religion, and Society. This article was originally delivered at the World Family Policy Forum held in Provo, Utah, July 12, 2001. Additional information on The Howard Center is available at www.profam.org.

References

Years ago youngsters could make a little extra money by hunting raccoons with homemade traps. These young hunters built small wooden boxes with only one opening, and secured them to the trunk of a tree or fallen log. Around the opening they would drive nails at angles so the sharp ends pointed toward the back of the box. Next the hunters would drop a shiny piece of metal in the bottom. Inevitably, a curious raccoon would be attracted by the shiny object and, as skillfully as a monkey, reach his long, flexible fingers into the box and grasp it. Of course, it was no trouble to reach between the nails when his fingers were relaxed, but once the animal closed its strong claw around the object, there was no way to pull it out without running into the sharp nails. All the raccoon had to do was let go and withdraw its fingers to be free, but there it would sit—trapped by nothing but its own unwillingness to let go of the shiny—but worthless—metal. Pornography is a similar trap, drawing in the curious and then holding them by their unwillingness to let go of their appealing, but worthless, prize.
Pornography can be defined in many ways, but in common parlance, it usually means material that is sexually explicit and intended primarily for the purpose of sexual arousal (Cline, 2000). Shortly after Dr. Cline was named an Emeritus Professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of Utah, he began to expand his private practice as a psychotherapist. In doing so, he was puzzled by a deluge of new male patients, all with addictions to pornography. One evening he commented to his wife, Lois, that he was concerned because pornography was leading these men to broad-ranging sexual addictions, breakups in their marriages, and severe depression. He told her, “They feel shame and guilt. They lie chronically to the people they love. But worst of all, they feel they can’t stop what they are doing.”

His wife responded, “Well, tell them to quit it. Nobody has to look at dirty pictures or videos. Nobody has to go into a porn site on the Internet. Just tell them to stop looking at that stuff.”

Dr. Cline said, “It’s not that easy. These men are addicted. They can’t stop.”

“That’s nonsense,” his wife argued. “Just tell them to not look!”

It certainly sounds easy enough. If the raccoon would simply loosen its grip on the metal object, the trap could no longer hold it. If those struggling with pornography would just loosen their grips on the habit, they too could go free. Still, the number of dead raccoons and the ever-increasing number of people hooked on pornography indicate that the solution is not quite that quick and simple—and that over and over, the pattern is the same: addiction, desensitization, escalation, and acting out.

Addiction

One young man was introduced to pornography at a friend’s home when he was about 11 years old. His natural curiosity combined with the awakening sexual desires of his growing body and soon created an almost overwhelming desire to view more and more. In short order, each exposure to the sexually explicit material was followed by masturbation. Each time he repeated the cycle, the sexual release reinforced his behavior and strengthened the hold the addiction had on him. He felt he could not stop. He says, “I’d tell myself I would never do it again, and then I’d do it anyway.” It got to the point where this cycle would recur not just several times in a month or a week, but several times each day. This young man continued in this cycle throughout his teenage years. He says, “Some boys can look back at adolescent years and recall the one or two occasions when they were exposed to pornography. I look back and recall the one or two days I wasn’t. It consumed my life. It affected my grades, faith, employment, and relationships.” Finally, in his twenties, this man determined to marry, thinking that if he had a regular and acceptable sexual outlet he might be able to quit. He never told his young fiancee about his problem for fear she would refuse to marry him, but she found out soon enough. In fact, it was on their honeymoon. He had stepped away from their hotel room to get something for them to eat, and she busied herself enhancing the romantic atmosphere for his return. After some time, she began to worry that perhaps he had been hurt. She left the room to investigate and found her husband in the hotel gift shop looking through pornographic magazines.

When powerful sexual urges are directly linked with the viewing of anything, the desires to view the same things again are increased. Such conditioning occurs when sex is mixed with
violence, abuse, children, or anything. Stanley Rachman (1968), a British psychologist at the London Maudsley Hospital, has repeatedly demonstrated in the laboratory how easy it is to condition adult males into sexual deviancy using erotic stimuli. Other researchers (McGuire, 1965; Evans, 1968; Marquis, 1970) have independently found this same kind of conditioning in out-of-laboratory experiences and identified it as a step to acquiring sexual deviations or illnesses.

To illustrate the addictive nature of pornography, Dr. Cline tells of a married, religious man—a young father in his thirties who could not seem to break the pornography habit. When he finally began acting out sexually, he sought help from Dr. Cline. The man explained, “It’s like being on Crack. I can see what it is doing to me and I want to be rid of the habit, but I can’t seem to stop. Nothing seems to work.”

Dr. Cline decided to give this man a powerful incentive not to look at pornography. He asked him for a thousand dollars and explained he would put it in a special bank account and hold it for 90 days. If the young father could stay porn free, he would get his money back. If he relapsed even once, the money would be donated to charity. With a big grin on his face, the man said, “Fantastic! How did you know that I’m such a tightwad with money? There’s no way I will look at porn if it’s going to cost me a thousand dollars. You couldn’t have chosen a better incentive for me.”

The therapy sessions that followed were productive, and the man stayed porn free for well over two months. However, on day 87, while on a business trip, he went to a porn shop and literally gorged himself. When he told Dr. Cline of his relapse, he was in tears. Dr. Cline said, “Look, I know we said you would lose the money if you messed up even once, but if you made it 87 days, you can make it 90. Let’s keep the money in the account and start over for another 90 days.” The man recommitted, but didn’t even last two weeks. The money went to charity.

Dr. Cline asked his patient, “What if it had been ten thousand dollars or twenty?” The man sadly raised his head, looked at his therapist, and said, “It wouldn’t have mattered how much it was. I’d have still lost it.” Dr. Cline determined to never use that technique again with any patients.

When this man whom Dr. Cline tried to help began viewing pornography, he probably felt he was liberating himself sexually. Instead, he found only enslavement and days full of guilt, shame, fear, and depression. He was caught in a negative, downward cycle. In an effort to ease his depression, he would view pornography, become sexually aroused, and masturbate. Then he would become even more depressed than before and once again turn to pornography as a temporary escape. While at first he had started viewing pornography because it was exciting and gave him a rush, that all changed. Later, he no longer turned to pornography to feel good, but to stop from feeling bad. He was addicted to pornography just as surely as if he were heavily involved with drugs or alcohol. Like a horse with blinders on, he just kept charging toward it with tunnel vision, oblivious to anyone or anything that would stand in his way.

Desensitization

Along with addiction comes desensitization. What was once shocking or revolting becomes commonplace and ordinary. Conscience and constraint are diminished as porn addicts become hardened. One young man said, “Pornography warps the way you see the world. I
would hear people talk about a movie or TV program they felt was inappropriate, and I didn’t understand what bothered them. The scenes they were upset by seemed like nothing to me.” Another young man said, “When I was engaged in pornography I was viewing rape, child abuse, incest, and sexual perversions so regularly that I became incapable of understanding the inappropriateness of the material I lusted after. When I would read in the paper about someone getting raped or abused, and I would think, ‘So, what’s the big deal?’”

Another example of desensitization is found in the way many try to justify their involvement in pornography. Consider the comment of one young college student who made the erroneous assumption, “Pornography can’t be all that bad since everyone does it. All of mainstream America indulges in it so don’t try to tell me it’s wrong.”

Escalation
Following desensitization, the problem usually escalates. In order to get their highs, kicks, and erotic turn-ons, those addicted to pornography develop a desire for more aberrant materials. One man explained, “If I saw something gross yesterday, I need to find something even more gross today. If I see something deviant today, I must look for something more deviant tomorrow.” Another young man said, “After a few months of viewing pornography I found myself less and less satisfied with the soft stuff. I wanted pictures that were more graphic and more extreme. It’s like taking a drug that loses its effectiveness over time. Soon you have to take more and more just to get the same feeling you used to get with less.”

The Internet makes such graphic portrayals accessible and affordable—and allows the viewers anonymity. Accessible, affordable, and anonymous—those three “A” words combine to feed the escalation and create an almost insurmountable challenge for those trying to escape the trap of pornography.

Acting Out
Another consequence of involvement in pornography is an eventual acting out—people trying the things they are viewing. Desensitization and escalation affect judgment to such a degree that those involved seem no longer able to discriminate between what is appropriate and what is illegal and could land them in jail. One such man became involved in sexually harassing female coworkers in his place of work. In the pornography he viewed regularly, the women seemed to “like it.” However, in real life, he and his employer got sued, and the man lost his job. Another man began to act out by exposing himself to youngsters. When he was caught and the pattern of behavior was documented, he ended up losing his wife and family as well as facing criminal charges.

In a more serious case, another man found himself facing a stiff sentence in federal prison for sexually abusing a child—and videotaping the act. The tape was found by investigators who searched his house and discovered an abundance of both adult and child pornography, some purchased and some homemade. The man’s attorney explained, “It began with experimenting with pornography on the Internet, which then led to stockpiling videotapes, which eventually led to his acting out and actually videotaping himself.” The man apologized to the court and to his family saying, “I can’t undo what happened, but I want a chance to make things better.” This man’s plea for help in this difficult circumstance highlights the need to treat those involved with pornography before it gets to such a point.

Treatment
Is there a way to make things better? Is there an effec-

“Along with addiction comes desensitization. What was once shocking or revolting becomes commonplace and ordinary. Conscience and constraint are diminished as porn addicts become hardened.”
Admit the Problem

An ancient Japanese proverb states, “A problem, clearly identified, is half the solution.” One reason so many continue to struggle with pornography addictions is due to a growing trend in our society to refuse to see pornography as a problem. One young law student was surprised when he read in the student newspaper that “correlation does not prove causation when it comes to pornography and sex crimes and those who say pornography is a trigger for deviance and/or violence need to be doused with a bucket of science and reason.” The law student said, “Not only do such comments overlook the scientific research and sound reasoning that substantiates such links, it demonstrates how society is trivializing the problem of pornography. We hear phrases like, ‘adult entertainment’ or ‘minor indiscretion,’ and people justify involvement by saying, ‘Boys will be boys’ or ‘It’s just another form of self-expression—a genre of literature and art.’”

One of the most important steps toward a solution is first to admit there is a problem. The raccoon caught in a trap gains absolutely nothing by trying to convince itself there is no trap. Those struggling with pornography must realize that their choices and actions, however private they may seem, have long-lasting and devastating effects for them, their families, and society in general.

Seek Help

Hiding and attempting to cover up the problem is often as hurtful as the problem itself. Those involved in pornography don’t usually want to have anyone find out about their personal problems, but as hard as it may be, that disclosure is an essential step toward a long-term solution. Secrets must be brought to light. Only then can they be seen for what they are and be reasonably approached and overcome. One man said, “I didn’t tell anyone in my family about my problem and I stopped praying because I felt hypocritical. I determined that all I needed was will power and that once I conquered this on my own, I would again pray and speak openly with my wife.”

Such thinking seems somewhat akin to someone with a broken arm saying, “Once I take care of this myself, I will talk to the doctor and go to the hospital.” A commitment made to yourself can easily be broken. But when you make a commitment to another person who loves you and who cares deeply for you, there is an increased incentive to change right now. It’s fairly obvious that a person who arranges to exercise with a valued friend usually hangs in there longer than someone who...
does not. When the alarm goes off in the morning, it’s easy to turn it off and roll over unless you know that someone you care about and who genuinely cares about you is waiting. People who make public commitments to quit smoking have a much greater chance of success than those who try to do it secretly. Talking to a trusted friend, a family member, a religious leader, a family physician, or a professional therapist is an important way of seeking help in overcoming a problem like pornography addiction. For those who know of God’s unconditional love for them, turning to Him and letting Him share in the heavy burden and shame of addiction can, over time, bring “rest unto [their] souls” (Matthew 11:29).

**Become Informed**

Closing eyes doesn’t make problems go away, just as covering clocks doesn’t change the time. Those struggling with pornography and those seeking to help them all need to obtain credible information about the problem. While care must be taken that the sources are indeed credible and useful—and that the readings do not stimulate the addiction or acting-out behavior—solid information is always part of the solution. Steven Cramer’s (1983) book, *Worth of a Soul* and Patrick Carnes’ (1991; 1993) books, *Out of the Shadows: Understanding Sexual Addictions* and *Don’t Call it Love: Recovery for Sexual Addictions*, are helpful resources, as is a book called *Lonely All the Time: Recognizing, Understanding, and Overcoming Sex Addictions* (Early & Crow, 1989). A talk Dr. Wilcox (2000) gave on the subject is also available on tape. In 2001, Brigham Young University sponsored a conference on the topic of pornography called, *Cyber Secrets*. Transcripts of the presentations can be accessed on Brigham Young University’s web site (www.byu.edu). Other Internet sites, such as www.enough.org, provide information and statistics about pornography.

**Build a Support System**

Beyond spouses and other family members, some find a needed support in groups of people who have gone through similar experiences. Sexaholics Anonymous (a cousin to Alcoholics Anonymous) is one such group. There are weekly meetings in nearly every major city across North America, and there is no cost for participating. One man said, “I checked the phone book and found out where the nearest meeting was. I attended and began using their 12-step therapeutic program. I liked it because it was spiritual at its core and encouraged me to look to a higher power than myself. That’s what I needed.” Another man said, “After I attended S.A. for some time, I chose someone there to be my sponsor. It was another man who had achieved significant sobriety. I respected him and liked him. He was someone I knew would not judge me unfairly. He said I could call him anytime I felt myself crumbling. I did and he would talk me through the moment and help me keep the bigger picture in mind. He reminded me to avoid

“**One of the most important steps toward a solution is first to admitting there is a problem….Those struggling with pornography must realize that their choices and actions, however private they may seem, have long-lasting and devastating effects for them, their families, and society in general.”**
the pitfalls that would set me back, and to do the positive things in my life that would get me where I really wanted to be.”

Those struggling with pornography must find or develop a circle of examples, mentors, and supporters who can encourage instead of scold, educate instead of embarrass. Once in such a group, it is vital they stay with it. Change takes time. It is a long process and not a single effort. Small victories must be celebrated along the way, and slip-ups must be times for learning. Failure needs to be seen as an event, not as a person. It must always be looked at upon as something temporary.

Engage in Relationships and Life

Many engage in addictive behaviors as a way to avoid becoming engaged with relationships and life. Such escapes are never permanent solutions. Being involved in a relationship and in life requires commitment and honesty, which leaves one open to possible hurt and disappointment. Pornography only distracts those involved from meeting their needs for closeness, control, entertainment, and relaxation in healthy and positive ways. Pornography addicts often keep themselves from the very relationships of trust and caring that should be filling their emotional and social needs. They seek love in pornography, but there is no love, only lust. There is no concern for another, only for self. There is no intimacy, only the illusion of it. There is no relationship to be strengthened, only nameless bodies, dehumanized as sexual objects. Even those attempting simply to satisfy sexual needs through pornography are ultimately disappointed, as pornography presents highly inaccurate and distorted information about human sexuality.

It is, in a sense, sex mis-education that is created and marketed for financial gain. Those individuals who settle for it are usually no more satisfied in the long run than those who settle for counterfeit money over real money. It may look great at first glance, but pornography offers nothing of value in the long run.

One man said, “The worst part about my involvement with pornography was that I felt so totally alone, completely on my own. I thought I was the only one struggling with the problem and that it affected no one but me. I figured I could take care of it myself. Out of guilt, fear, or low self-esteem (or a combination of all three), I determined to distance myself from everyone until I got my problem taken care of. Alone is not an easy place to be—especially when you really don’t like yourself much to begin with.”

Those who are struggling must reach out, not only for help and support, but also for full lives and meaningful relationships with others. People cannot be helped in isolation. By engaging in relationships and life, they can truly meet many of the needs they were unsuccessfully attempting to meet with pornography.
Hope and Healing

Charlie was an up-and-coming businessman in his early thirties. He had gotten into pornography in his early teens and then with the advent of the Internet found himself wildly out of control. He admitted there was a problem and sought help from a professional therapist. His therapist encouraged him to become part of a support group as part of his therapy and, in time, he found himself 95 percent porn free. Since his greatest temptations to view pornography came in hotel rooms when he was away on business trips, his therapist committed him to ask the desk clerk to block certain television channels at the moment he checked in. The man further committed to call his wife and his sponsor at 9:30 each night any time he was away. Finally, in this way, Charlie was able to resist even the strongest temptations.

Richard, a 23-year-old college student, became heavily involved with pornography when he moved away from home. He finally had the courage to meet with his religious leader and told him everything. The leader was understanding and compassionate. With his support Richard was able to seek help from parents and siblings and became involved with a 12-step support program that led to gradually diminishing relapses. He began dating and pursued his career goals. Two years later, he moved into long-term sobriety and was also happily married. He continues to attend S.A. meetings, but mainly to give help to newcomers.

For those caught in the pornography trap, there is always hope and the possibility of healing. It takes time, education, and support from others. It takes hard work to build positive relationships and engage in a full life, but it can happen and it's worth it. The grip the raccoon maintains on the shiny metal leads to nothing but destruction. The grip many maintain on pornography leads to the same end. It is time to loosen the grip, escape the trap, and truly be free.

Dr. Victor B. Cline is professor emeritus of psychology at the University of Utah and is a practicing psychologist. Over the past 25 years, he has treated approximately 350 patients who have been addicted to pornography.

Dr. Brad Wilcox has spent the last 20 years working closely with young people in connection with his work as an educator and through his involvement with various youth programs throughout North America. He has spoken informally with hundreds of young men who have confided their involvement with pornography to him.

References

Given the ease of access to such materials—made possible in large measure by the Internet—it is not surprising that there has been a marked increase in those who access and then become addicted, at varying levels, to pornography. For those wanting to overcome the effects of pornography in their lives, is there hope and where can they turn?

Fortunately, a wealth of information and resources exist to help individuals deal with these difficulties. The work of psychologists Victor Cline (see pp. 10-17), Patrick Carnes, and others have opened our understanding to the idea that sexual behavior can be highly addictive, just as much or more so than drugs or alcohol. Additional insights about the causes, consequences, and cures of these problems are available from the great religious traditions of the world. In this article, I will explores the real harm of pornography use from both a social science and my particular religious perspective and suggest a model for breaking the grip that pornography has on so many lives.

**Broadening the Perspective on the Nature of Pornography**

There are those who argue that pornography is a matter of free choice—and that there are no negative consequences of its use. With regard to the issue of “freedom of expression” or First Amendment issues, suffice it to say that this argument does not stand up to reason or the rule of law, as is evidenced by U.S. Supreme Court rulings that allow communities to regulate the display and distribution of patently offensive material of a sexual nature. In addition, the very idea that pornography use is a matter of free choice is challenged by the work of Patrick Carnes, who cogently argues that sexual behavior, including pornography use, is highly susceptible to becoming addictive, which by definition means that self-control—or choice—is lost.

Those who address the issue of whether pornography is
harmful have often sought to demonstrate a causal relationship between pornography and sex crimes. While scientific research is as yet unable to demonstrate irrefutably that pornography causes sex crimes, it is clear that there is a strong correlation between pornography and sex crimes. Numerous studies have demonstrated that pornography is a common antecedent to sexual crimes, that sex crimes often mirror behaviors viewed in pornographic depictions, and that most sexual criminals have been heavily involved with pornography use.4

While these studies are an important step in demonstrating why pornography is a problem, there are drawbacks to this line of thinking. If our understanding of the “harm” of using pornography is reduced to the idea that, if it is used, the user will end up committing a sex crime, we fail to recognize the broader potential “harms.” Certainly not all who use pornography become sex criminals, which might suggest to some that pornography isn’t all that bad. However, such thinking is misdirected, as Carnes’ work on levels of severity of sexual addiction illustrates. Level I involves behaviors commonly considered to be “harmless” or socially acceptable such as the private use of “soft-core” pornography that generally leads to sexual arousal, often culminating in masturbation or other forms of self-abuse. Level II includes behaviors that cause significant negative consequences to the individual and perhaps annoy, offend, or frighten innocent people, such as sexual harassment or exhibitionism. Level III includes behaviors that place innocent victims at risk of major harm or trauma, such as child sexual abuse or rape. Carnes also presents anecdotal evidence that suggests at least two important things. First, most people engaging in behaviors at a more serious level have had experience with behaviors in the levels below it. Second, many people have engaged in behavior at only one of the three levels of severity, but the intensity of their addiction to those behaviors has escalated over time.

In other words, of those who engage in Level I behaviors, some, but not all, will eventually end up in Level III. But if we define harm as ending up in Level III, we entirely miss a huge segment of the pornography user population that may be experiencing intense addiction to behaviors at the lower levels of severity.

So, if we don’t define harm as ending up at a point where one commits sexual crimes, how should we define it? I would like to offer two major harms in which pornography use is likely to result, even for those who never progress beyond Level I or Level II.

The True “Harms” of Pornography

Educator and religious leader Jeffrey R. Holland delivered a profound treatise on the subject of why unhealthy sexual behavior is harmful. “In approaching this subject [of personal sexual purity],” he said, “I do not document a host of social ills for which the statistics are as grim as the example are offensive. ... What I wish to do is more personal—I wish to try to answer questions some of you may have been asking: Why should we be morally clean? Why is it such an important issue to God? Does the Church have to be so strict about it when others don’t seem to be? How could anything society exploits and glamorizes so openly be very sacred or serious?”

His answer to this question, in essence, is that any sexual behavior outside of marriage (or unhealthy sexual behavior within marriage, for that matter) is damaging because we are abusing and misusing sexuality for the gratification of personal lusts and desires rather than to accomplish the divine purpose for which it was given. If viewed within a Judeo-Christian context, sex was designed to be the force that creates life and that promotes healthy, long-term intimacy and bonding between spouses. All forms of unhealthy sexual behavior can be viewed as exchanging these divine benefits for the gratification of temporary, carnal lusts. In so doing, we abuse the souls of ourselves and other individuals, we initiate a natural drive within us that is designed to bond us together as one with our spouse and often leave it no true object to bind us to, and we miss a profound opportunity for what many have described as a spiritual connection between ourselves, our spouse, and God, in exchange for the temporary gratification of...
our individual lusts and desires. Pornography use is a particularly stark example of this because it is impossible to even approach the realization of these divine purposes by using it. It is also exploitative to use these individuals for our gratification, even though we may argue that they have “chosen” to pose or perform.

The second major harm is that pornography use has the effect of increasingly cutting us off from our feelings. Our feelings serve to provide us with feedback that keeps us connected with ourselves, with God, and with others. Unpleasant feelings suggest to us the need to make changes, such as guilt over treating a spouse unfairly, which can lead to a positive change in behavior. Pleasant feelings serve to give us peace and reinforce spiritually healthy behavior. Essentially, pornography users experience an ever-increasing cycle of using pornography to deal with unpleasant feelings. This then leads to difficulties in their relationship with themselves, with others, and with God. Being thus cut off from these sources of emotional strength, the person is then more susceptible to the influence of negative thoughts and beliefs that end up in their minds. As Briere describes as replacing the healthy emotional regulation strategies with destructive emotional avoidance strategies.

Negative or unpleasant thoughts and feelings (such as feeling you are worthless and/or inadequate; you always will be, you can’t change your situation), if dealt with in a “regulatory” way, can actually be quite functional as the person experiences healthy guilt over mistaken behavior and then makes appropriate changes. However, when we deal with these thoughts by using “avoidance,” the thoughts become more and more destructive. The reason is that the harder we try to keep such thoughts out, the more they try to come in. As this occurs, we find that increasingly powerful avoidance experiences are necessary to get away from the thoughts. For those who have found “release” in pornography, the pornography itself becomes that avoidance experience. This usually leads to the development of compulsive behavior patterns as we find that pornography use temporarily relieves our negative feelings. The problem with this cycle is that this same behavior—the viewing of pornography—then causes more negative feelings (guilt, shame, etc.) and is ultimately inadequate for relieving the cause of the negative feeling because we have not dealt with it directly.

At one level, pornography is a sign, a symptom if you will, of an inappropriate perspective on the sacred gift of sexuality. But that is only one symptom. I submit that the real problem in our society is not the proliferation of pornography. The real problem is that our understanding of the true nature of sexual relationships is becoming increasingly polluted. We have traded that which is of most worth for something less—life giving, commitment-solidifying, joy-producing sexuality for transient, sensual, immediate gratification. In so doing, we have also stumbled onto a powerful “mood-altering experience,” as Carnes puts it, to deal with the stresses of everyday life.

In working with clients who are struggling to overcome pornography use and the associated dynamics, I have seen a host of negative effects. Depression, low self-worth, hopelessness, fear, guilt, shame, financial problems, eating problems, anxiety disorders, inability to deal with sexual abuse issues, inability to form lasting relationships, idealization of hoped for relationships, intense criticism of actual relationships, disturbances in relationships (particularly spousal and parental) are
Why should we be morally clean? Why is it such an important issue to God?

just some of the negative consequences I have seen associated with pornography use. And as individuals struggle to deal with these issues, they feel that their progress is washed away with each relapse.

There are those who would argue that there is not conclusive proof that pornography use causes these problems, but I think the true importance in understanding the issue of harm in pornography use is in knowing not only what bad, even criminal, things might happen if it is used. Rather, the other side of this issue is what good things are not likely to occur because of the fundamental misuse of this sacred binding power for an impersonal, two-dimensional encounter.

Indeed, the true harm of pornography use is much broader than previously thought: marital happiness, self-esteem, stress management, parenting relationships, etc., are all potentially compromised by the use of pornography, particularly if that use is addictive in nature. There are many people whose addictions are not, in their view, very “severe,” but who are nonetheless suffering a great deal because of the intensity of the addictions. Even those who are only “dabbling” are still playing with fire and, at best, are failing to experience the great benefits that come with an appropriate understanding and practice of sexuality.

Overcoming Pornography Habits and Addictions

Inasmuch as many pornography users—or those trying to help them—don’t know where to go for help, I will now recommend where a person can obtain help and then describe the process I use when counseling with those who use pornography.

Three main sources of help are currently available to deal with this problem. Each of the following sources is described only briefly, and the reader is referred to a range of additional resources for more information.

Ecclesiastical Intervention: Currently, there are several Christian ministries that provide basic education about the problem of pornography—its causes, consequences, and cures—and refer people seeking treatment to resources in the community. Many clergy members also provide ongoing counseling and support to individuals and their families.

Professional Intervention: By far the most influential work on the issue of sexual addiction is the work done by Patrick Carnes, and I would recommend that anyone seeking professional intervention should find out if the agency or therapist is thoroughly aware of Carnes’ work, although this is only one prerequisite for seeking appropriate treatment. Additionally, there is a wealth of information on addictions and compulsive behaviors in general that are very applicable to the issue of pornography addiction.

Peer Groups: Twelve-step groups such as Sexual Addicts Anonymous, Sexaholics Anonymous, and others provide an important resource to the community. These groups provide an atmosphere of tolerance and understanding about the person’s problems and offer guidance and support to them as they go
through treatment. Such groups represent groundbreaking efforts in informing us that pornography is a problem, that it has harmful effects, and that we understand a great deal about why the problem occurs and how to deal with it.

**A Model for Helping One Out of Pornography Addiction**

By way of clarification, the model I describe assumes a religious dimension that is compatible with the views on sexuality that I have previously described. In the model I use in the treatment of pornography addiction, there are five primary ideas: Hope infusion/shame reduction, structural analysis and change, process analysis and change, relapse analysis, and getting help.

**Hope Infusion/Shame Reduction Activities:** As previously stated, individuals with pornography problems are in a cycle wherein the core beliefs of “I am bad, insufficient, or inadequate,” “I always will be,” and “Nothing I do seems to change these facts” compel them to use pornography as an escape. Faith is the opposite of these beliefs. Faith says, “I make mistakes but believe that I can be made whole through repentance and change”; “Even if I never fully recover in this life from my flaws, if I do all I can do, I will be better in the next life”; and “With help from God, I can do anything.”

When individuals have initially accepted the need to overcome pornography, one of the most important things is for them to experience an increase in hope and a reduction in shame attributable to their problem. The messages that the problem should not be seen as evidence of their worthlessness, that help is available, and that God and others are interested in helping them overcome this problem are all crucial. In order to receive this message, they need the kind of information provided in Carnes’ and others’ works to understand the true scope and cause of their problem, to identify and accept the consequences of the problem, and to start working on comprehensively changing themselves. They need support from spouses, ecclesiastical leaders, and trusted friends. Spouses also need to be helped to understand that the addiction is not their fault and is not evidence of their worth as a person. What is needed is to understand that pornography is not the problem, it is a symptom. The true problem is the “vicious cycle” between the lack of connection with feelings and lack of connection with others (i.e., spouse, God, others). Pornography has...
the unfortunate effect of increasing the intensity of that cycle. Once this understanding is gained, individuals can go to work on changing the problem through structural and process interventions, with help from others as needed.

**Structural Analysis and Change:** Once individuals decide they are ready to change, the next step is to find a way to get the behavior stopped or slowed significantly. Finding someone to call in times of escalation in the addictive cycle, creating a relapse avoidance plan, and reducing or eliminating access to troublesome materials are all key to making this happen.

My clients then conduct what I call a **Structural Analysis** in which they identify situations, conditions, habits, and materials that tend to lead to pornography use. After doing this, we work together to begin changing their environment in ways that will bring about immediate reductions in the ease with which they can access pornography and the extent to which they are inadvertently exposed to tempting materials. Placing the computer at home in high traffic areas, putting Internet filters on the computer, and canceling cable subscriptions are examples of basic structural changes.

It is important to be realistic about what level of structural intervention is necessary to prevent a person from accessing pornography when faced with the temptation to do so. The key to knowing how intense these interventions need to be is to ask, “What wouldn’t I do to access pornography in the heat of temptation?” Anything less will fail in preventing the individual from accessing pornography or other tempting materials. Even if some things that are very enjoyable and even worthwhile have to be lost initially to effectively “filter” one’s self, drastic changes may have to be made (e.g., canceling cable will lead to the loss of many good programs but will also reduce access to the bad).

As recovery progresses, many of these structural changes will fall away, either because they are not practical to maintain (e.g., the Internet home page designer who has no access to the Internet) or because they are not necessary anymore (e.g., “The TV can come out of storage but the VCR stays; I can watch television without feeling tempted to go rent pornographic videos as long as the VCR isn’t there”). As restrictions are reduced, individuals should be careful to not go too fast and should always err on the side of not having access to tempting materials, even when good things are still given up.

In addition to making structural changes to avoid things they choose to access, individuals should also make changes to avoid unwanted or inadvertent exposures. Examples might include choosing to avoid “good” websites that have inappropriate advertisements, going through the grocery drive through while a spouse pays for groceries rather than waiting in line near troublesome magazines, and sitting facing the wall at restaurants to avoid lustful thoughts while watching others.

**Process Analysis and Change:** As individuals gain some control over their behavior, the focus shifts from reducing incidences of relapse to doing the intense and centrally important work of learning a new way of viewing life and dealing with distressing and unpleasant feelings. Individuals should understand and recognize polar thinking (e.g., “I am either good or bad”), performance orientation (e.g., “My worth is only as good as my performance”), emotional avoidance as opposed to regulation, and knowing when they are “under the influence” of the core negative beliefs about themselves. Learning to work through and regulate—rather than avoid—their emotions is key to recovery. Individuals and spouses should focus on learning to employ this same model in their marriage to help them learn to discuss unacknowledged needs and feelings instead of blaming each other for hurt feelings in the relationships. Many individuals actually appear to be “addicted” to the belief that their spouse doesn’t accept them, leading them to create conflict, which supports this assertion and helps them avoid their core beliefs that they are the one who is an inadequate spouse.

Analyzing and changing how such individuals deal with negative emotions will both help them deal with temptation more effectively and also to live their lives in such a new way that old temptations don’t carry the same weight. Repairing and strengthening one’s relationship with
themselves, their spouse, God, and others is central to the process. Scriptural and other religious exercises are an essential part of learning to deal with emotions more effectively. Under professional guidance, there are also many useful processes that can be learned from the areas of self-hypnosis, relaxation training, stress and anger management, yoga, martial arts, physical exercise, and neuro-linguistic programming.

Relapse Management/Analysis: For some wanting to quit using pornography, the obvious goal is to never use it again. Unfortunately, it probably never occurs that one day they have, for the first time, the thought of quitting—and then never use again. In fact, multiple relapses are common. These relapses undermine the users’ motivation as they are consumed with thoughts of despair and hopelessness. Because of the tendency for pornography users to have a “performance orientation,” they are inclined to believe that being completely “over” the problem is the only true sign of progress. I propose that, instead, the following four factors should be viewed as signs of progress. 1) Increased ability in emotional regulation. 2) Decreasing severity of the relapse; for example attempting to access pornography on the Internet but quickly turning it off as soon as it comes on the screen is less severe than viewing pornographic sites for 10 minutes on average before having the inclination or strength to exit. 3) Increased time between relapses. 4) A decrease in how long it takes after a relapse to “get back on the wagon” and use the relapse management skills to deal with the relapse.

Then, in order to deal with the relapse, the individual should follow this five-step process: 1) Openly and explicitly confess to God, and do whatever possible to connect to Him. 2) Go to the spouse (or other trusted friend, clergy, or professional) and do the same. As they talk with God and others about the problem, some focus should be on recognizing the signs of progress listed above, without minimizing the seriousness of the relapse itself. 3) Conduct a structural analysis and commit to specific changes.

4) Conduct a process analysis that includes asking, “What was I thinking about that led to the relapse? How was I handling stress? How was I handling my relationships with myself, others, and God? What were the core negative beliefs I allowed to influence me?” Then make specific change commitments suggested by the answers to these questions. 5) Get busy living life differently.

Getting help: Motivation is an emotion that occurs when desire and hope come together. Since those who struggle with pornography also struggle with hope and shame, they often appear to suffer from a lack of motivation. Individuals report profound deficits in faith and hope and feelings of futility in overcoming the problem. Spouses of pornography users often report feeling angry or hurt that the user appears to be indifferent about a relapse.

As stated above, some relapses are probably to be expected. Making the changes outlined above is a very new and difficult process that can take years to fully learn for any of us, more so for the user of pornography. Such individuals will only work on overcoming the problem to the extent they are “motivated” to do so. The difference between the motivation they have and the amount they require can be made up with the help of others. Ecclesiastical leaders, spouses, parents, siblings, friends, peers, members of 12-step groups, and professionals can all play a role at different times and in different ways. The main thing offered by others is that they can promote knowledge, hope, and accountability. As they do so, the individual will increase in motivation (which is really an increase in faith). In this way, the support network and the individual get into a “virtuous cycle,” which leads to an increased ability to obtain the necessary information, hope, and accountability without as much assistance from others, as well as provide that same stability to others.

Professionals working in this field can help in providing all three of these key factors. However, I suggest that their role more appropriately is to be one of a “team” of individuals working to promote these three goals. They can assist individuals in setting up their support network and offer professional direction to both the individual and their network. They can also assist in accelerating change, especially in the area of process...
skills such as marital conflict resolution skills or emotional regulation skills. As the support network of the individual grows in helpfulness, the need for professional help will decrease. This is especially true if few serious issues are present. Professional help should definitely be sought in more serious situations such as when there is significant addiction, other addictions, severe consequences (especially in regards to relationships), a history of sexual abuse or perpetration, or other commonly co-occurring psychological difficulties (e.g., depression or suicidal thoughts).

**Conclusion**

The use of pornography is an increasingly common and potentially very harmful behavior. As individuals follow the model that has been presented, their ability to connect to feelings will start to increase, which has as its outgrowth an increased ability to connect to spouse, God, and others because they are now feeling emotions of love and joy as well as sorrow and healthy guilt. Church leaders, spouses, friends, peers, and therapists can assist and in so doing empower the individual to increasingly apply these principles on their own. As individuals make these changes, they will experience increased stability in their sense of self worth, have more fulfilling relationships with God and others, and begin to experience the joy and peace for which our emotions were designed. They will begin viewing life through a healthier lens, and their relationships will improve also. Thus, a period of reparation and healing occurs where the effects of the unhealthy belief system and cycle are overcome, relationships are mended, connection with God and others is strengthened, healthy sexuality is learned, and the individual is transformed.

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**References**

2. See chapters 4 and 6 of Kastleman, op. cit.
8. See chapters 4 and 6 of Kastleman, op. cit.
14. See Carnes, op. cit., p. 14
15. The website www.latterdayfamilies.com provides a list of community, faith-based, and 12-step resources. (Click on the link, “Overcoming Pornography.”) A list of scriptural and doctrinal exercises is also listed here as well as information for how to set up a systemic social support system.
16. Ibid.
17. The area of neuro-linguistic programming is very new and, to my knowledge, has not yet been applied to treating pornography. I list it here as something I think can be a useful adjunct to traditional approaches.

As the individual makes these changes, they will... begin to experience the joy and peace for which our emotions were designed.
Virtually every law that we pass—either at the local or national level—has an impact on families. We often hear that you cannot legislate morality. I would suggest to you that in one sense that’s true—meaning you cannot and should not do things by compulsory means or force; indeed, my belief is that we must allow people their free agency. But in another sense, every law we pass—I hope—has a moral predicate to it. I hope our environmental laws have a moral foundation, I hope our tax structure has a moral foundation, I hope our traffic laws are based upon morality—upon the greater good of society. So the truth is, every time we legislate, we are legislating somebody’s view of what is right and wrong. And that’s called morality.

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My colleague from Oregon in the U.S. Senate, Ron Wyden, is Jewish and a loyal Democrat. And yet Oregon is so tolerant, open-minded, and politically diverse that it also elected, in me, a Mormon who is a conservative Republican. That creates a tremendous challenge for each of us to maintain a majority, or 51 percent, in any election, particularly when it comes to issues of morality and family.

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When you are elected to public office, you’re not asked to check your values at the door. In fact, when people cast a vote for a candidate, what they really need to do is look for someone who agrees with their general political philosophy, someone in whom they have confidence in their judgment and in their integrity. I have never met anyone I have voted for, with whom I agree 100 percent of the time. And you never will find such a candidate. So what I have worked to do as I have run for and served in elected offices is to be true to what I regard as absolutes and to state those clearly whenever asked—but also to not be so closed-minded that I could not hear the opinions of others.

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Senator Gordon H. Smith (R-Oregon) was elected to the United States Senate in November 1996, where he serves on the committees of Energy and Natural Resources; Foreign Relations; Budget; and Commerce, Science, and Transportation. He also serves on the Special Committee on Aging and has twice been selected by the Senate leadership to serve as a Deputy Whip, a position he currently holds.

A native of Pendleton, Oregon, and a 1976 graduate of Brigham Young University, Senator Smith earned a law degree from Southwestern University in 1979. After graduating from law school, he worked as an attorney in private practice and then managed his family’s business before being elected to the Oregon State Senate in 1992. Senator Smith and his wife, Sharon, have three children and maintain homes in Pendleton and in Bethesda, Maryland.

The following excerpts are adapted from an address delivered at BYU on December 10, 2001.
Let me share with you some of the obvious issues that I have had to deal with as an elected official. The first is the issue of abortion, which probably brings into conflict my fundamental beliefs more than any issue I have ever wrestled with. My religious view is that, before being born in mortality, we lived in a pre-earthly state where we were presented with two plans: One was based on compulsion and the other was the Savior’s plan, which was based on our having free agency. We wanted two things in coming to earth: we wanted life, and we wanted choice. And as you hear me say those words, you will hear the two slogans of the two sides of the abortion issue.

I believe that free agency, or choice, is extremely important to God’s plan for his children. I also believe that no matter what the law is, we ultimately have the choice—as individuals—about whether we will do right or wrong. I also believe that we don’t have to make legal everything that people choose to do.

In the Judeo-Christian tradition, the first great laws passed on this earth were the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments are about choices, and they’re about promises. And yet the fact that many in this country steal does not mean that we should suspend all of our laws of property or make theft legal.

It does seem to me that law is a teacher. It sets up standards, by which, if we keep them, we will ultimately be saved from harm and disease and all kinds of heartache.

There are other issues that affect family life enunciated in the Ten Commandments. For example, “Thou shalt not commit adultery.” And I will tell you that if you struggle with policies relating to heterosexuality and homosexuality, heterosexual adultery is far more destructive of the American family than is homosexuality because it is far more common and leaves far more homes damaged, with government often left to pick up the pieces.

In my state there is large gay and lesbian community. And I think that one of the things that should always characterize people of faith is not sanctimony but love, not a spirit of exclusion but inclusion. Now, loving people doesn’t mean you accept everything about them, but you do try to understand and listen. And so when I deal with the issue of gays and lesbians who are demanding more public recognition, what I have done is to try to distinguish between real family values and their counterfeits. For example, in trying to influence the issue of same-sex marriages, my view on the matter is one of those absolutes, and I am opposed. At the same time, there are issues like protecting gays and lesbians from violence, or helping them with employment and housing, that I support.

So, I believe that it is not inappropriate, for example, to find ways to say to people in the gay and lesbian community, “I care about you. I value you. And these are the ways I can help you.” But then I make it clear where I can’t.

It is important to remember that our Constitution was made for an imperfect people; in fact, it deals with how we as imperfect people relate with one another in our society. As a result, the constitution covers murderers, and felons of all kinds.

What I have found in my wonderful opportunities to serve my state and my country is that while I’m in the minority on many family law issues, I’m respected for my positions. And what I also find is that the world is hungry for people who have an anchor in their lives. They believe that not all values are relative, and are willing to fight for some ultimate truths—because the family, in the end, is something that government cannot replace and must not ever replace.
CONSTRUCTING FAMILY-FRIENDLY CAREERS

A new study explores ways women can have more time for family while maintaining a passion for their career.

The dramatic increase of women entering the working field during the past 30 years has placed women in a position where they are often expected to choose between a full-time career and staying at home. However, a growing number of women are experiencing the best of both worlds as they explore the uncharted territory of family-friendly careers.

These women are the creative pioneers, challenging the idea that an individual must work 40 hours a week during regular business hours to make a legitimate contribution.

Unfortunately, while the number of such women may be growing, the number remains small. Researchers Aaron P. Jackson, Ph.D., assistant professor of counseling psychology at Brigham Young University, and Janet S. Scharman, Ph.D., vice president of student life BYU, recognized the on-going battle of the either/or option and set out to discover how women can successfully develop a family-friendly career.

“We’re both involved in counseling, and we began noticing how so many of our women students saw their choices as dichotomous. They felt they could either have a career, or they could have a home and family,” Scharman said. “But we think there are a lot more choices. We want them to be aware there’s a wide range of possibilities.”

According to the research, the possibilities are not limited to specific career tracks; but, rather, family-friendly careers are created in many fields as options are investigated and unusual vocational tracks are considered. Many women are finding high levels of satisfaction in all areas of their life by implementing flexible hours, flexible location, and often cutting back to less than 30 hours a week. They creatively construct their careers to maximize time with their families. Now, they plan their work around their family instead of their family life around their work.

“These women have found great satisfaction in the fact that they have achieved a level of success professionally while maintaining their priority of being a mom first,” Jackson said. “However, most of the women enjoying a successful balance between their work and their career had to take considerable risks as they paved the way. They were often the first in their company to identify and pursue the possibility of an alternative work schedule and other creative options. Many also had to trade some of the perks of their job, but, interestingly, did not consider it a sacrifice.”

While each woman who participated in the study had to make her own sacrifices and negotiate her own working arrangements, the following themes emerged for most of them: partner/family decision making, creative pioneering, work satisfaction, pleasant stress, ambiguous preparation, peaceful trade-offs, surprise feelings, and partner career flexibility.

Partner/Family Decision Making

Participants did not decide the “if, how, and when” of their flexible career alone. Most shared the decision making with their spouse as they reviewed goals and responsibilities. Compromises had to be made on both ends. Children also played an integral role in the decision-making. Inasmuch as children contribute to a successful transition, their opinions were often requested and considered. Results also showed a pattern of ongoing reevaluation of the situation.

“Most decision making was done with the spouse,” Jackson said. “Some of the women also expressed a reliance on the entire family. They would request feedback from their spouse and children on how the situation was working.”

Creative Pioneering

Often times without precedent or an existing structure to support a flexible career, research participants had to take considerable risks to develop, negotiate, and implement their plan. They were able to create or identify the possibility of an alternative work schedule. Some took a smaller work or client load, worked more from home to accommodate children’s schedules, contracted for 30 or less hours a week, worked weekends, or worked nontraditional hours of the day.

Each working arrangement was as different as the lives and family situations of each woman. No one formula or schedule works for all or it would once again cease to be considered a flexible career.

One woman shared the schedule that worked for her, “My situation is I’m home every day until 4 p.m. Then I go to work from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. I come home and have dinner and then get the homework and the practicing and all that kind of stuff done. I go back about 8:30 p.m.”

Work Satisfaction

Participants emphatically reported that they enjoyed their work. They reported feeling their work was meaningful and personally very satisfying.

“I love my life right now,” said one woman. “It’s a good amount of work. I feel that I’m stimulated and excited by my work, but then when I go back to being with my daughter, I feel fresh and excited to be with her again.”

Pleasant Stress

Although a contradiction of terms, pleasant stress was a common theme found throughout the research. Juggling a career and family can often wear a woman thin as she is pulled from each end. While women in flexible careers recognized the stresses, they did not feel...
overwhelmed, but were rather satisfied with their current situation. The flexibility gave them the control they needed to keep the demands of work and family life in balance.

“I’ve been happy with being able to juggle both work and my son and my husband,” one woman said. “Sometimes, I think I’d like to have more time, but I think I have a good balance.”

**Ambiguous Preparation**

While participants all had a general plan for their family and career, they also had to accept a level of uncertainty as their situations evolved. Not knowing how their current flexible career would accommodate family life from year to year demanded that the participants live with ambiguity.

“What makes me happy now, I might not be satisfied with next year. I don’t know. But I realize that, hey, maybe that’s true, and I’ll reassess at that point. I’ll just continue to do this for as long as it makes me and my family happy, as long as it works for us,” reported one woman.

**Peaceful Trade-Offs and Surprise Feelings**

Participants acknowledged that they had made some important trade-offs in the process. Some passed up promotions, turned down pay increases, or gave up personal outside interests and hobbies. However, they did not feel they had made sacrifices or paid a price. Jackson said this semantic difference seems to reflect the level of personal satisfaction and peace the participants reported.

“I feel like I’ve lost the prestige that I used to have. I feel like I’ve lost power. I think everything I’ve lost has been worth it,” said one woman.

A passion for both work and family drove the women who participated in the study to pursue a flexible career. However, many reported that they did not know just how strong their feelings were until their plan was implemented.

**Partner Career Flexibility**

Many of the women who participated in the research found that a successful flexible career required small vocational adjustments from their partner as well. While some women enjoyed their partner’s support and flexibility from the beginning, others reported that it was something that had to evolve.

One woman shared how her husband made adjustments to accommodate her evolving career, “We’ve had to make a couple of changes in our family. My husband has been very good about it. He changed his schedule around a little bit. He goes into work earlier. He’s at his desk ready to work before 7 a.m. but he’s home by 4 p.m. So that gives us a little bit of family time.”

Although the work experiences for the participants were quite different, these eight common themes emerged from the interviews.

“Given the high levels of satisfaction reported by the participants, creating a family-friendly career may be a viable option for many parents,” Scharman said.

Jackson and Scharman hope career counselors will use these findings to help women construct their careers in a manner that will allow for the desired family time while maintaining their contributions to their profession.

— Tonya Fischio
“God made all the creatures, and gave them our love and our fear, To give sign we and they are his children, one family here.”

—ROBERT BROWNING