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““Pornography and Sexual Struggles: Treatment for Lasting Change””

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Good afternoon. It's a pleasure to be here and to follow such distinguished company. In the Cyber Secrets presentations that have been heard today, we have been able to listen to a number of people talk from a number of different perspectives and hear them address this issue as they see it. I would like to start by telling you some of the things that I will be addressing and outlining some of the things that I might not. I think it's important that we have an opportunity to hear about treatment options that are available. I'll outline one in particular, some of the components of this treatment option I see as being fairly salient to all those that have some empirical support and are subsequently evidencing themselves as being useful across the board in treating.

Today I'll tell you a little bit about some of the common client presentation issues that we see coming into the counseling center and into private practice. Now generally these folks who are going to be coming from this specific population of the Utah County area and from the Brigham Young University; however, their presentation is somewhat similar to those that I've experienced in other places as well. I'd like to illustrate the distinction between an addiction and someone superficially struggling or being tempted with these problems. I'd like to talk a little bit about what might be behind the addiction, society's view on emotions and feelings, which I find to be quite important in working with individuals struggling with this problem. And further, I'll finish up by talking to you about how we go about the business of treating this addiction.

Again as an empiricist, you won't hear me touting some of the other mechanisms or methods that people use to explain the struggle. You won't hear me talking about entrenched brain pathways or explanations of neurochemistry as alternatives for helping people work with this. I also won't be making any appeals to mechanisms that lock people into the struggle. I believe that people have the availability of working through this, albeit a slow and painful process, they have the opportunity to deal with them. Rather I see individuals who are truly motivated being able to change their lives and do the things that they feel like that they need to do. In the counseling center and in my private practice I see people coming in of both genders. Today, the majority of my presentation will be dedicated to speaking about men with sexual struggles concomitant to pornography addictions. However, that doesn't mean that they are the only type or only individuals who struggle with this.

Typically men are exposed to this in their early teen years, exposed to pornography and subsequently, as Dr. Buxton described in his presentation, discover masturbation or through the boys underground, as he called it, or through natural mechanisms that they find it themselves. This inherently pleasurable activity is often coupled with guilt and shame, as Dr. Harper illustrated this morning. People will often attempt to blame the

instigating events or to seek out those who were responsible for them being exposed to the pornography in the first place as being held accountable for their current struggle. Typically they will go through a process of repentance and discontinuance of their problematic behavior prior to an evaluation that might be considering moral guidelines. As they go in and see bishops in preparation for missions or going and talking to individuals who might have some sort of moral evaluation of them, to quickly they're able to refrain for a period of time. During their mission, typically we see people with no struggle, or a semi-struggle of masturbation during that period of moral dedication. However, within a couple months, usually two to four months of returning home from their mission, they return back to their previous behavior. These individuals have gone through heart-wrenching attempts to overcome their struggle. They've been diligent in their efforts, which include a clear understanding of the consequences of their behavior. It's not often that you'll find somebody who's unaware that they might lose their job, lose their marriage, or lose their family in response to some of the contingencies attached to the struggle. However, they continue to do so at great risk and at great cost.

Women that we see coming in have a slightly different content struggle, and that is instead of dealing with pornography as we typically think about it, they deal with it more on the level of more emotionally laden environment, such as chat rooms and other forms of communication. They are typically less visually oriented. However, these distinctions are rather arbitrary and might not hold in all cases. Some of the distinctions between temptation and addiction might occur with regard to how people are involved with it. Some people merely struggle with it as a curiosity, find things on the Internet. You'd be hard pressed to hold a non-filtered e-mail account without being sent some pornography from time to time. Sometimes those e-mails are followed up upon or investigated at some level.

However, these are people usually that are struggling on a superficial level, and some of the more traditional approaches that we use within a Church context are often helpful in dealing with these. People will often refer to singing a hymn or reciting a scripture or praying, thinking again that the mind is a stage and that their efforts should be diligently focused in crowding the thoughts, the bad thoughts, off the stage of their mind. Over the course of my presentation, you'll hear me talk about some of these strategies as less useful, and I wish to explain those prior to getting into it. People who are struggling with pornography as a temptation find these strategies to be extremely effective — in fact, help them overcome many of the struggles that they otherwise might face because again, they are dealing with it on a superficial level. However, when one takes instances and examples and has repeated pairings of pornographic images or thoughts or other such things and repeatedly couples them with any particular stimulus, be it a hymn or something else, they are establishing a pretty strong relationship between those things. Subsequently when that hymn or that scripture recurs outside of the situation, that they find themselves being drawn back to the pornographic images or thoughts or the sexual struggles in general. So repeatedly linking these things up typically results in poor outcomes in later instances. Those struggling with this as an addiction, again, differentiate from those that are struggling

with it superficially. And along these same lines, these avoidance strategies that we are taught to engage in have some beneficial effects for those that are again on the superficial level. If one has a candle and is about the business of blowing on that candle, what you'll find is great success in putting out the flame. However, if that fire has been raging for some time, blowing on it just adds to the mechanism for which it's consuming. The context of the problem is partially what it is that we struggle with in trying to help people overcome this. That is to say, we're trying to help them figure out when and where and why and how these problems occur in their life. This is a difficult process, and often for the majority of the young men that we work with, it's something that they've never done. And it sounds rather strange to say it that way, but it is indeed the case.

The typical addiction cycle is one that doesn't lend itself real well, and especially within a cultural context that suggests that this is an evil and pernicious sin. Typically what they'll find themselves doing is doing pretty well for a while, avoiding the things that the problematic behavior that they have previously engaged in that they've found to be distasteful. They'll continue for some period of time without any necessarily big repercussions. And then from time to time, as we tend to face things in our environment, an intrusive thought will occur, and be that based on something that they've seen in the media or somebody that they've noticed or other things that have been within their environment — the thought will show up; it will cause them to think back to possibly the last time they engaged in the problematic behavior. This intrusive thought is met on their part with a response at trying to push the thought away, actively trying to engage in alternate mechanisms of not thinking about it — again, some of the strategies that we talked about earlier are often employed. These distraction techniques are effective in the moment for delaying things, but are rarely effective in the long term for removing them from the thought processes. The thoughts then typically will show up with more frequency and more intensity over the course of time. As these become less and less effective, efforts are made to redouble, people typically redouble their efforts in trying to rid themselves of these struggles. Then the mysterious thing happens: it happens, and it's often referred to that way, as though the individual struggling with it had absolutely nothing to do with it. “It just happened” is often the report. Very quickly on the heels of it happening, there's a heartfelt promise made to — even in the absence of — but made to children, spouses, friends, God, themselves, that this behavior or this thing will never recur again. And they are diligent and thoughtful in their process of thinking about how they're going to rid themselves of this.

The guilt and shame that we spoke of earlier today is most prominent almost immediately after the behavior. Subsequently they are removing themselves again from the situation and thinking forward to a time where they are putting themselves outside of the context, outside of the reach of this struggle. Now if you think back over this process, which then will start over, they typically find themselves spending very little time looking at exactly what the problem is. They've been avoiding the thoughts at the onset, trying to run away from them, trying to make them go away. As it happens, very little is noticed. There is a funneling effect that takes place, and they find themselves

lost in time and space, which I'll talk about here again in a minute. Then immediately after the behavior, they try to remove themselves from the context and promising themselves it will never reoccur. Subsequently a detailed or thorough examination of what's going on in the moment or immediately preceding the behavior is never delved into, because again we're trying to put it behind us, making this the last time.

As we start to work with people during the initial phases of treatment, we try to encourage the clients to be where they are, to figure out what it is that they struggle, to look very deeply at how these situations arrive — what gives rise to the initial impulse, what gives rise to the behavior, what is it that they're doing that they find to be distasteful, and why is it that they find it to be distasteful. Just because it cuts across their value system or has some sort of debasing effect on women is often insufficient for them to be able to be motivated to overcome it. We try to help them to examine exactly where they are through the processes of utilizing journals. I want the individuals that I'm working with to be very clear about where it is that they are at this moment, not wishing they were someplace else. We have a very interesting cultural context or phenomena where we're always looking forward to the events that are coming. When we're five, we wish we were six — actually, when we're four, we wish we were five so that we could be in school. When we're six, we wish we were out of school for summer break. When we're out for summer break, we wish we were back in to be able to be with our friends again. One of the most disappointing moments is that recognition that occurs on Christmas afternoon when we realize that it's over and 365 more days await until the next occurrence.

So I want the individuals that I'm working with to be utilizing the mechanism of journaling to be able to take a look at what's going on. I want them to utilize something that some of our group members have helped us to create called an impulse record. It takes a detailed and thorough examination of some of the thoughts, feelings, and strategies that they have typically employed and what it was that they attempted to employ here. One of the things that happens as a result of the struggle is they recognize that they're in pain and come in to seek some counseling or some treatment with the notion that they want to avoid it immediately, and based in that notion it's sort of akin to our showing up to a doctor's office and being escorted from the front waiting room into the back waiting room, where they eventually show up and then saying to the doctor as every three or four seconds we strike ourselves in the forehead with a rubber mallet, proclaiming ourselves to be in a great amount of pain and really wishing he would give us something to take away the pain that we have. Without addressing the mallet's that in our hand and the repeated striking to the forehead, no amount of medication is ever going to cure the problem. It may mask or delude some of the symptoms for a period of time, but actually solving the problem is something that will not come by this mechanism.

However, if we continue to persist in believing that this was the strategy that would help us to overcome it, we might go back for more and more medication or stronger and stronger implementation of the same medication, thinking that it was just the way that we implemented the strategy that was flawed rather than the strategy itself. This is very much akin to the way that people will go about trying to overcome these struggles

that they have. We turn to a coping mechanism of waiting, and this is generally a result of trying to medicate ourselves against some of the other emotional struggles that we have in our lives, not unlike some of the other addictions that we might have. Often we're doing one of two things.

One, we're running from some of the emotions that are outside in our environment. Sometimes we have stress from school, sometimes a problematic relationship, sometimes we're dealing with depression or other anxiety disorders — and these struggles can be instantly eliminated — run from, if you will — by turning to this completely enveloping, funneling thing that happens as we get into pornography, masturbation, and other sexual struggles. As with some of the other addictions, they're also a number of factors that are really common to people's life experience. Being hungry, bored, angry, lonely, tired, stressed, and sad are often things that we find completely unpleasant and try to avoid at any cost. We medicate ourselves against these things by running to this place where we feel very little. As I said before, during this time where we're doing this, we have a sense that time has passed, as other presenters have indicated today. In a way that we haven't really noticed, several hours will go back when people perceive themselves as only transpiring across the course of a half hour. They lose sense of who they are, typically they give themselves into the struggles that they have and report engaging in all sorts of extended behavioral sequences that are outside of the realm of things that they would typically engage in. They have a rapid elevation in mood; they feel better almost instantly, even though the behavioral end result has not yet been engaged in. If they're seeking out somebody in a chat room or in a public place even, as soon as they begin about the behaviors, things about their family, their job, or other things tend to fall away at this time. And they start to feel better — at least that's their report. However, there's also in the post-talk analyses a rapid deceleration in the mood that they're experiencing, and because there's such a flight into feeling good and a flight into feeling bad that occurs on the heels of this behavior, frequent administrations of mood are required to remain the same type of medicating effect against some of these emotions that we experience.

The second thing that we often will medicate ourselves against or attempt to run away from, if you will, are the feelings themselves, sometimes in recollection of prior events or behaviors that people have engaged in. They find the thoughts about these things distasteful in and of themselves, and as ways of trying to go about getting rid of these, they'll engage in some of the same type of processes in which they engage in trying to get rid of the emotions. I'll come back to this later.

Again as people show up on my doorstep, typically what they want to do is come in to our office and receive an immediate painless solution. However, this is not possible, and the one thing that I promise them on the onset is if they're really diligent about wanting to get through this, it will be slow and incredibly painful. Not painful in the way that we typically think about things, but painful in the way that we experience emotions that are uncomfortable, and this is part of the process that we'll go through. Those with the highest recovery rates that come in to see us in the counseling center or in private practice or in outpatient treatment groups that exist around the valley are typically those who are coming in to therapy and in doing so are learning new patterns

of dealing with the issues. If the strategies they had previously employed were going to work, they would have worked by now. It's typically not the amount or type of pain medication that they're receiving for the headache; it's the hammer and the hand that's the problem. And reengaging in these old interventions typically result in the old strategies, so as they come into therapy, hopefully during that experience they'll be taught new strategies of dealing with the issues at hand. This provides, in the context of therapy, a supportive environment that is typically free of the judgmental approaches that we find in the outside world that want us to restrict these feelings and thoughts and impulses that we have to the state of nondisclosure. We find ourselves trying to not tell anybody about it, as Dr. Buxton stated earlier. The intimacy solution is often the one that is most beneficial. In addition we also as therapists find ourselves to be in a unique position of being able to press people towards uncomfortable situations, and that is being able to do things a little bit different. As they recognize the supportiveness of the environment, we're also able to help them to understand that getting through this is going to be something very difficult that they're going to have to work towards on their own. We might be able to turn towards other people, which I'll talk about here momentarily, or turn towards our God or turn toward other resources that we have personally. But nonetheless, this will be a difficult and thorny road.

Also as a second mechanism, people can turn to their ecclesiastical leaders, and I don't put these in any particular order. In fact, I would suggest that ecclesiastical leaders are quite important to be able to be sought out. Those that serve in that capacity have a tremendous ability to help people work through these problems and to be able to work through them without this assistance is often quite difficult. In the context of an ecclesiastical leader, they provide religious judgment and absolution from the struggles as the individual continues to press themselves to work through them. However, thinking of these two things is not altogether uncommon.

Following up on this close relationship idea, which is one of the third components of successful people that come in to see us, is something that they typically want to avoid doing. They don't want to turn to a friend or a spouse, a sibling or a parent, because again that would make them a little bit more vulnerable than they care to be. However, in my experience in helping people work through this, the most beneficial person that they can turn to is their spouse, which is typically the one that they want to avoid the most.

The fourth thing is a level of motivation. When I'm working with people, I want them to have been everywhere, tried everything, and done everything that they could possibly think of prior to their arrival at my doorstep, simply because in doing so, they feel at their wit's end, they'll be willing to try anything that you're going to ask them to do, and because of the nature of what I see as the effective therapies in dealing with this, because it's inherently paradoxical, somebody has to have felt like they've tried everything they can possibly try before they're willing to do what it is that we're going to ask them to do.

This struggle, although it appears to be simply based in pornography or other sexual

activity, actually has its origins in many different places, and some of those origins include how people deal with emotions in general, so this time I'd like to turn to some of the common examples of how people deal with, or are taught to deal with emotion. If you remember back to a time when you may have been very small and maybe had the opportunity to go to a movie with a parent, going into that movie, which was typically found to be a Disney movie on a Saturday matinee, we find ourselves walking in from bright lights such as these into the darkness of the theatre. Now most little kids find themselves to be incredibly afraid of the dark, leaping from the switch to turn off their lights into their beds so that the monsters that live under there won't eat their feet. The dark is a scary place as a child, and as that parent looks down and maybe looking down at you remarks something akin to, "Don't be afraid; Mom or Dad's not afraid." From that child's perspective, something very powerful has just occurred. Now it will be repeated over the course of time and many instances and by many people. It's not necessarily the fault of the parent that this happens, but more of a societal repercussion from the way that we deal with emotions. From the child's perspective looking up at the parent, the parent doesn't appear to be afraid. There's noticing that I'm feeling something called fear, and I shouldn't be. But I can't seem to stop. So as the child struggles with the efforts to try and make this thing called fear go away and recognizing that Mom or Dad isn't feeling it and also recognizing that Mom or Dad is suggesting that we not feel it, a very strong relationship between some of these less pleasant internal emotional states and it being bad or wrong to feel is reinforced quite heavily. So again we reflect on ourselves as being bad or wrong for feeling them and being bad or wrong for not being able to stop them, as Mom or Dad appears to be. Subsequently after that recognition occurs, we then try to think, "Well, I need to just do it harder, do it better, do it more to be able to overcome this — bear down, as it were, to be able to make this thing be put behind me." Functionally that doesn't seem to happen.

Further as the parent, who's said something to a child, often our attempts are to do something that we understand and also to do something that we typically don't understand. The thing that we do understand is our recognition that when our child is in pain, we want to try to help them so that they no longer feel that. It's difficult to be so loving and caring for somebody who's struggling and want them to be able to overcome it, and yet being able to do very little for them. Subsequently we ask the child to stop feeling this negative emotion that they're feeling. And I would ask you, what is it that in the service of? Why is it that we're asking the child to stop feeling that? And I would submit to you that part of the reason why we'd ask a child to stop feeling scared is because it's uncomfortable for us. We feel bad when we watch them feel scared. So inherently what we're asking them to do is something more akin to "Since I can't control my internal negative emotional states, I'm placing the burden of that responsibility on your little five-year-old head as we enter this Disney movie." Obviously that results in problematic responses. Clients that come in again typically are in a position where they're just searching for that gold plated steam shovel, that thing that's going to help them dig them out of the hole that they found themselves in. They want to be able to overcome that, and they assume that since I'm in a position where I try and help people work through this, that I have such a device to be able to

get them out.

However, it's not for my doing; it's for their doing that they're going to be able to overcome this, and to try and help them see this is incredibly frustrating and often feels very disappointing, that there isn't really this magic bullet that's going to take this problem away. They've gone through diligent attempts to rectify their behavior with their values, and none of the traditional approaches seem to really work, and they feel quite stuck.

Now as I alluded to earlier, this is actually a really productive place for them to be in recognizing the futility of some of the attempts that they have previously engaged in. Part of what we want them to feel at this point is a sense that the way that they've been going about doing things isn't the problem; sometimes the solution that they're trying to overcome is part of the problem. Zen master Zang Zhon said, "If you work on your mind with your mind, how can you avoid great confusion?" And I would argue that this is the process that we go through in trying to help people in therapy, is we're working on their mind with their mind, and sometimes it folds back on itself and becomes quite confusing. We engage in things that feel logical on the surface and yet seem to fail at their very core. Being able to give voice to how frustrated and how stuck and how debilitating and how problematic these things are in one's life is incredibly healing in and of itself, and to take an open and honest look at the behaviors engaged in and how lacking in production they've been.

I want to review the techniques that on the surface are quite logical and point them out as being logical and suggest to people that if those things were going to work, they would have worked by now, and that it's time to try something different. If somebody can find themselves being in a position where they're willing to do something different, the success rates in reducing this as a problematic behavior are incredibly high. However, again it's endemic in our society that we've engaged in all sorts of problematic strategies to try to get rid of the thoughts and feelings that we have, because we see them as less preferential than other things that we might feel. We try to rid ourselves of them quite quickly. However this, as with other things, is quite paradoxical.

So I want to try a little experiment with all of you out there, and I'd like to hear actually verbally out loud your response to this situation. I'm going to say a sentence, and at the end of the sentence I want you to fill in the blank with any word that you want and want you to do it out loud. And that word can be anything that you want to choose except for the word "lamb." Not only do I now want you say that word, I don't want you to think it.

Mary had a little.....

Okay. Now from the perspectives that you're in, if you listened to the folks in your immediate environment, typically what you're going to hear as responses that are strongly associated with animals you might find on Old McDonald's farm. So I'd ask you, what did you say? What did you think of? And were those two the same? And typically they're not. Typically most people thought of lamb, and typically most

people came up with cow or sheep or dog or some other animal. Occasionally you'll get a strange response that is outside of the normal, and sometimes people are actually when I say I'm going to say a sentence and fill in the blank, they'll come up with a word at that point, and given that they don't have a particular context in which to fit that word, sometimes it is completely random and doesn't go with the rest of the sentence. However, in your examples, I would submit that part of the problem is that I used two things against you. First I used your history. You have a history that every time someone says, "Mary had a little....." you think of "lamb." It always goes in the blank; it always will and always has. If I brought in somebody from another country who'd never heard this before, they might be placed in a position where if I just said fill in the blank, picking something out of our immediate environment to fill in the blank with — almost anything will fit. However, you have a history where these two things have been often and repeatedly paired across the course of your lifespan. So this history can be quite problematic. The second thing that I used against you was your current context. Not only did I say don't fill in the blank with the word, but don't even think of it. Now here's part of the paradox that people struggling with this face, and that is, if you're not going to think of it, how do you know what it is you're trying to avoid? So if you're avoiding something you have to know what it is to avoid thinking about it, but by doing so you've already lost. This is a struggle that puts them in a really difficult place, because it's like going around all day things saying, "Don't think of lamb, don't think of lamb, don't think of lamb." Really problematic, because then you have a much, much higher probability of thinking about lamb in the first place. So these struggles become omnipresent for people because that's what they're context is filled with. And I'd also submit to you that as the struggle becomes more and more important to get rid of, the processes of the thoughts that they have are more and more infested with them.

In the outside world we have some rules that seem to be pretty effective. If you don't like something, you can figure out how to get rid of it. If you don't like the dirt, vacuum the carpet; if you don't like ignorance, go to school; if your car's broken, fix it yourself or take it to a mechanic. There's something active and engaging we can do to avoid it in our lives. However, the rule inside of our heads, inside of our experiences, inside of our emotion tends to be if you don't want it, you've got it, as evidenced by the "Mary had a little lamb....." We're in a place where contacting that becomes much more important. The outside-in rule is if you don't want it, you can fix it. The inside-out rule is if you don't want it, you've got it. So we struggle with things at a more problematic level. As a child some of the innate fears that we have include something called looming. If somebody's hovering above us, one of the things that we'll find ourselves being able to do or wanting to do as soon as we're mobile is to back out of that situation until we're where we can get them in that perspective that we want them to be. So if you recall back to your first experience with an ocean wave, and imagine that rather than in the place where typically you may have found yourself, you might find yourself in a place where you're feeling overwhelmed by this wave that's headed towards you. You might feel like you're encrusted in it. Sometimes this is the result of emotional regulation, and the strategies and attempts that we try and engage in to rid ourselves of events. Now I want to take you through a

process that I think lots of people go through in our environment, and although I'll be using two in particular, they could be almost any thoughts or feelings that we might have.

Imagine a continuum and on that continuum on one end we might have something like happy or any other pleasant emotional experience or something that we have preferences around. On the other end we might have something like sadness, and somewhere in the middle there is a dividing line, albeit arbitrary, there's someplace that seems to separate those experiences. And one side we might have something that's just slightly sad, hardly noticeable from that midline, but slightly sad nonetheless, and on the opposite side, again, something slightly pleasurable or happy. We also have experiences near the polar extremes in which we feel things that are really pleasant to be with. These are events and situations where we reflect back on them and say, "That was a really neat time." But our life is not always full of these kinds of things; in fact, there are many instances where our life is full of things, situations, that might be described as the least happy that we can feel. These situations are numerous and the result of our being alive, not the result of our sinning or doing anything wrong. They are the result of just being alive, being in our mortality — they will come to us whether we like them or not. Bad things happen to good people, as do good things to bad people.

Now I think our culture in general teaches us that experiencing anything on that right side of the continuum is problematic, that we should go about the business of ridding ourselves from it. In fact, contrary to what I just said, oftentimes people will submit the fact that we're doing something wrong for feeling something bad. So the popular cultural notion would be to get rid of all of that that exists on the right side of that continuum and make it go away, to be able to feel only that which is on the left. Now while I don't think that that's possible, let's just for argument's sake suggest that it is. What have we just done? Well, on one level we might suggest that we've rid our lives of all unhappiness; however, that's not the way that we're composed. Typically what we'll find ourselves doing is just making another arbitrary dividing line in the middle and then everything on the right-hand side of that is the least happy that we could be and less preferential to the stuff that's on the left-hand side. And again we want to rid ourselves of it. This process goes on ad infinitum until that dot that used to be the most joyous experience that we ever had is getting carved up into little pieces and some of which are less preferable.

Now if we start back with our continuum, what I do think is possible and what I typically see people doing is seeing this continuum again as something that's problematic on the right-hand side. We have phrases in our culture that are akin to getting the rug jerked out from under us or waiting for the other shoe to drop, suggesting that when we have something of that great happiness, that there is some vulnerability to great sadness, or that when we find ourselves engaged in relationships of deep intimacy, there's also the possibility of deep hurt. One way to rid ourselves of that possibility of deep hurt or deep sadness is try to cut it off, but the way that we cut off that is by cutting off the opportunity for the great happiness that we also feel. In doing so we're able to rid ourselves of those particular experiences. Now moving in

from the outside, I think that this process continues as we try and rid ourselves from the least happy we can be till we reside in a place that's very, very similar to one another, and that is this place of emotional apathy. We find ourselves being in a position where we just don't feel too much because those emotions that we feel within that range are hardly discernable one from another. We find ourselves being here and in so doing we have indeed been able to rid ourselves of feeling anything negative, but at the sacrifice of feeling very much this positive. I also submit that in this process, we've also because of the high connectivity between our emotional feelings and our spirituality numb that process as well. The process that we go through with people is to try and encourage them to press out from the inside, being able to be willing to have some decent emotional experiences that are theirs anyway and increasing the sensitivity that they have to them by being able to feel sad when sadness is what's present.

You're typically able to encourage people to again recover that which is lost on the happy side of the scale as well. As I referred moments ago to an ocean wave, if you consider yourself to be in Hawaii to experience that first wave that crashed over your head and we have that fear of looming and the desire to run from something, typically that's our first innate response if that wave is curling over top of us, is to get away as fast as we can. But as things are happening to us — i.e., the water rushing in the opposite direction as this wave encroaches on us from behind — by running away from it, all we're doing is adding to its momentum and exacerbating the effects that it's going to have on us. Our second option that we typically think of is to lower our center of gravity and brace ourselves, which has the beneficial effect of at least not adding to the function of the wave and burying our head in the sand, but often doesn't have the desired effects either. As we watch the swimmers and the bogey boarders and the surfers dive into the wave, it seems a very paradoxical thing to do, but exactly the right thing to do: not that the wave doesn't impact them — certainly the rise and fall of their bodies is part of the results of the wave. However, the criteria on which they define the utility of this maneuver is on how successful it worked, which is often the something that we find lacking in our return back to positions again and again, trying to get that medication that's going to help us.

In trying to help people to discover processes that they can work through, one of the things that we'll encourage them to do is to imagine a chessboard that extends out in all directions. Now when a typical person thinks of a chessboard, often they think of black and white pieces and black and white squares, and when given their choice, people typically go with the lighter color, whatever that one may be, because it gets to move first. So if you think of a process akin to the Harry Potter movie, where people are on the back of particular chess pieces and riding into battle, this is often a situation that we find ourselves in with our thoughts and our feelings. We climb on board on the back of that white queen and ride into battle, and as you imagine, people playing this game of chess, they typically hold their fingers on top of it, looking for unforeseen contingencies they didn't notice prior to being in that space. How much more attentive would you be if you felt like your very existence was at stake? If your spiritual well being, if your spiritual life were at stake, let alone your mortal well being? All of a

sudden you become extremely hyper vigilant to anything that might be going on out there. And in so doing everything that we see is the enemy pieces — in this case, the black pieces — strikes us as the enemy to be fought and to be eradicated. However, if you are happening to land on a square where previously there was another piece, what do you do with it? In the typical game of chess, you take it and move it off the board, but in this situation there is no off board. These are emotions that we get to have and things that we have to feel throughout the course of our life, unless we run to that place of apathy. So where do you move that emotion or thought?

Our argument is that in playing a piece level, you're inherently flawed to engage in unproductive strategies; that is, you ride into battle, you'll be so worried about eradicating these emotions, the thoughts and feelings, that you hardly get the chance to notice what it is you're doing. And that is, if you had indeed taken the square previously held by that evil black queen, you would have to climb down off the back of the white queen that you're on, lay hold to that piece, and push it off as far as you're able to push. However, as we know queens move very quickly and can be back in play within one or two moves. Further, the thing that we often don't notice is that we've got in more contact with that black queen than we ever had from the back of our piece. Subsequently people find themselves engaging more and more deeply with this material. What I would submit is that we would rather encourage our clients that we're helping work with this to climb down off the back of that white queen and be the board instead. And in so doing, certain sacrifices are made — from the board's position, there are no attempts to rid ourselves of any particular emotion or thought or feeling. Now I'm not talking about behavior again, but I'm talking about impulses and things that people might be feeling. And from a place where one can be the board, feel the impulses, and have the things that are accompanying us, as they are already are, we can be in a place of complete acceptance. This is one of the fundamental processes that allows people to make this part of their past instead of part of their present, is being able to get in contact with what it feels like to be them in that moment without trying to escape. As we do so, as we play at board level, typically what we find is that emotions, whether they be on that happy or sad end of the continuum, are seen not so much in the black and white colors, but rather marbled. We see events, we see feelings, we see processes, as being the stuff that life is made up of. Some of them are more preferable and some of them are less preferable - be it the test anxiety that we might feel that teaches us that our academics matter; be it the pain that we watch our children go through in walking into a dark theatre, teaching us that having our kids be in a place of comfort matters to us. All these things take on new facets and new qualities where we'll be able to recognize that we're having a particular feeling, and it's just a feeling. We treat our feelings, emotions, and thoughts as though they were real things to be grappled with. Now when we're doing, have some sort of random thought that includes being able to take flight, we don't often respond to it by leaping into the air with the assumption we're going to be able to do it. However, when we have a negative self-evaluation or when we have an intrusive thought of another nature, we often respond to it as though it were a real, living, breathing thing that dictated the course of our behavior, or in just in the having of it we've already made a mistake and then must succumb to the behavior that it might result in. Being able to work through

this is a very difficult thing for people to do. From a place where they're not their feelings and there's nothing to run from, part of what we try and help people to discover is that although an outcome is important, having one isn't the only goal of therapy. In other words, being able to overcome this process is not the most important thing; the most important thing is to be able to seek out a path on which they want to tread and continue to head in that direction.

I have a very confusing statement for which I will provide an example and try and make it more clear to you. The statement is, "The process is the outcome through which the outcome is the process." Now imagine yourself having purchased a brand new snowboard — best bindings you can find, a brand new package, everything that seems to make this trip, this potential trip that you're planning, have the utmost opportunity for success. You purchase tickets to some place that you've always wanted to go and you set out to go there. You find yourself strapping on at the bottom of the lift, you go up the ski lift, and at the time as you're clicking in to your other binding, a little man comes out from the ski lodge there and says, "What are you trying to do here?" And you say, "Well, I'm snowboarding." And he said, "Yeah, but what's the ultimate goal?" And you respond by saying, "Well, I'm trying to get to the bottom of the hill." And he says, "Okay, just as I thought," and he whispers into his walkie-talkie, and as you're strapping on this binding, up across the top of the horizon comes this helicopter whipping down on the snow. Two big guys jump out, they grab you, they throw you inside the helicopter, they take off down to the bottom of the ski lift they go, they shove you out the door, and there you are at the bottom of the lift. Now what was that? So you get back on the lift and you go up there and you're looking for this guy, trying to give him a piece of your mind upon your arrival, and the very same thing happens — helicopter, two guys shove you out at the bottom, you're at the bottom of the hill. Now you're really upset. You get back to the top of the hill and you want to give this guy a sound talking to, and you explain to him that you purchased a snowboard package and that you really, really want to be about the process of going down the hill, and he says, "I was just helping you with this." And you say, "Well, I want to go down the hill. The idea is to snowboard, not to just be at the bottom, because when I'm at the bottom, I just start over and go back to the top."

Being able to have the goal of being at the bottom is requisite to being able to get there, to engage in the process of going to the bottom. If we don't have that as a goal, we never end up anyplace that we really, really want to be. So being able to have the process, be about this outcome of being to the bottom of the hill while focusing on the process of the snowboarding itself as our desired goal, is exemplified in this statement, "Process is the outcome through which the outcome is the process." Being about moving in a particular direction is at least as important as being in your desired outcome, and in the snowboarding example, much more preferable. As we work with individuals and they struggle with these things, we want them to be moving in that direction and with each step that they take towards engaging with their emotions, it permeates not only this struggle with pornography that they've had or sexual struggles in other forms, but also gets into the rest of their lives, into their studies, into their relationship with their spouses, into engaging with emotion in general, and from a

place where these things aren't felt to be negative, or the things that we have to run from. We're able to make progress towards this outcome, but when the outcome is the only thing that we're about — you know, a nice day helicopter riding from the top to the bottom of the lift is all that we get. And typically you'll see the same fluctuations when people are about the business of just solving this problem — they'll stop for a period of time, and then reengage at the same previous level that they were, and then they'll stop for a period of time again, and the cycle continues. However, when they're about the business of moving towards a direction, what you'll see is a declaration, a slow and steady decline in the intensity and frequency in which they struggle with this stuff.

Now I don't want to leave anybody open, and that is, this is a struggle that most people that have had this behavioral pattern established in their life will deal with at some level for the rest of their lives. It will be tempting. However, with each subsequent iteration of this process, where they're willing to engage with their emotions, the temptations will become less and less problematic. The ultimate question that we want people to ask themselves, the question: out of the place from which there is a distinction between you and the things you've been struggling with and trying to change, are you willing to experience those things, fully and without defense, as they are and not as they say they are, and do what works for you and your values, in this situation? So in this case, as intrusive thoughts show up, grapple with the fact that they're there, notice the fact that they showed up in a particular context yet again, or at a particular time. Notice that you have them as a natural course of your mortality. Accept them for what they are; they don't dictate behavior, they don't mean you have to engage in anything. In fact, typically what we're trying to get our clients to do is to fight less by being more accepting of the thoughts, feelings, and emotions that they have. I want them to value what it is that they value; subsequently they can determine what direction they want to move - that is, if each option is equally available, I can behave on this impulse or I can not behave on it; then they can choose it consistent with their value system. However, if they're always about the business of saying, "I can't think of lamb, I can't think of lamb," typically what they're going to end up doing is being in a place where lamb is what they think of. This behavior is what they engage in. If for the first time they discover an option of having that as a choice, they can also discover that not doing is also a choice. Our goals, our outcomes that we're looking to shoot for is a reduction for people in the intensity, frequency, and duration of these impulses. As they're able to successfully navigate one or the other, or through this process the difficulty that they encounter often becomes less and less. From *Hamlet* we read, "Refrain tonight, and that shall lend a kind of easiness to the next abstinence, the next more easy, for use almost can change the stamp of nature, and either master the devil or throw him out with wondrous potency."

In closing I'd like to re-describe for you a couple things. The struggle that is engaged in at this level is often based in our own efforts to avoid thoughts, feelings, and emotions. The more that we try and avoid them, the more typically that they show up in that five percent of the world that resides within our skin. Our emotions, our own sexuality, and other things that we find ourselves dealing with are often a result of this

same type of struggle. If you struggle, go see your bishop. Start there. Contact myself or someone else at the counseling center, somebody else in the community that specializes in treating these issues. The complexity of behavior that reinforces itself, coupled with avoidance strategies, it's very difficult to work with and I would suggest to you that finding somebody who has a track record of dealing with this in a productive and successful way would be to your benefit. Most importantly, talk to someone who's close to you, find someone — either a spouse or a sibling or a roommate, someone that you can check in, that you can find support with, someone that can be there for you as you turn to them. If you know someone that struggles, be open with them about your knowledge. Help them to understand that you want to be there for them and share their progress through this process. Encourage them. However, I would warn you extensively, don't take responsibility for either the origins or the solution to this problem; it's one of the most common mistakes that I see spouses make, and that is to accept the fact that it's their fault and if they were just different somehow this wouldn't be a problem, or that it's their job to go about policing their boyfriend or their spouse in some manner that's going to help them to overcome it. Typically these interventions just result in people's efforts being thwarted and a certain amount of resentment being present. Again this is a big struggle and I have the utmost empathy for people who struggle with it and the greatest amount of respect for those who are able to overcome it through diligence. Thank you.