

# Porn addict boyfriend made me feel dirty

Originally published in the Weekend Argus

Originally published in the Weekend Argus Saturday 24/05/2003 on page 5

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Life with an addict can be nightmarish and that includes the scourge of the e-age; addiction to Internet porn.

A Cape Town woman this week told of her life with an Internet porn addict and how the addiction to pornography downloaded from the Net also hooked her teenage brother.

The woman, who asked not to be identified, and her boyfriend ran a website design company from their home. The most time-consuming part of the job was uploading files, so they would do that overnight.

'I felt dirty, gross and that I was not satisfying him' The woman used to wake up to check that the connection had not been broken and it was then that she discovered that her boyfriend had been viewing and downloading pornographic photographs and films.

"I confronted him a number of times but he felt it was his private thing and did not influence our relationship," she said. "I felt that his porn addiction was a violation of my trust. That he was having an affair in his mind."

It also affected their sex life. "When we were being intimate I felt he was comparing me to the tall blonde model he had been downloading 10 minutes before.

"I am a woman and I appreciate my body. I feel it is beautiful, but I felt I was not good enough for him and I am a pretty rock solid person, so I don't know how other less confident people would feel if their partner was addicted to porn."

Over the three years of their relationship, her boyfriend built up an extensive stash of pornography.

"The kind of things he was downloading got worse and worse," she said. "There was crude, violent, really ugly stuff."

It affected her boyfriend's expectations - eventually he wanted to act out what he had seen - looking at the images was not enough.

"He started asking me to do other things in bed," she said. "It was a manifestation of the things he had seen. I felt dirty, gross and that I was not satisfying him."

She also felt he encouraged her teenage brother to develop an interest in Internet porn.

"Pornography makes you look at women differently and here my own brother is looking at someone else's mother or sister or daughter and those are the pictures he carries around inside his brain.

"How do you lead a teenage boy away from that?"

Porn addicts can spend thousands of rands a month surfing the Internet and using their credit cards to pay for access to websites.

However, that was not the case with her boyfriend. Because of the nature of their business the couple paid a set amount each month for an "open line" to the Internet.

"It is very expensive for people who dial up every time, so the open line made it even easier for him."

Her boyfriend was also able to download material from pay sites because hackers provided the necessary passwords that enabled him to access those sites free.

She described him as a creative and loving person whose addictive personality was to blame for his intense interest in pornography.

When she met him he was in the music industry and had a cocaine addiction.

"The addictive personality coupled with porn makes you want to experiment, especially as drugs take you to a level where you have no conscience.

"He did not see the pornography as a problem. He said he loved me. But how does your husband or boyfriend looking at another naked woman not hurt you? In the end you build a wall to protect yourself."

The couple broke up eight months ago. She encouraged couples battling with porn addiction to lead lives of transparency. "You need to say this really hurts me so please change your behaviour."

She knew of no official support network for people affected by porn addiction so she turned to her local pastor.

"But the churches deal with this quite gingerly because the subject has been taboo and is only now coming into the open," she said.

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