



5 MYTHS ABOUT PORN YOU'LL BE GLAD AREN'T TRUE

(Pssst: The Doctor Says it Can Actually be Good For You)

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by Dr. Laura Dabney, the Intimacy MD

If only I had a dollar for every time I got to tell someone that there was nothing wrong with what they were doing—or wanted to do—in the bedroom. Chief among them: porn. So this month I've chosen to bust 5 of the most common myths about porn and why it may actually be anything *but* bad for you.

Myth #1: Porn is bad for you.

Not so fast. Historically, anti-porn arguments have primarily been moral in nature and have little basis in medical science. And while porn can lead to addiction (like hundreds of other behaviors) it more often supports and reinforces wholly acceptable sexual behavior. In a healthy, adult relationship, porn can be wonderfully useful. Not only do many couples find it fun, but they often use it to spice up or reignite their sex lives. Many watch it together for new ideas and some occasionally watch it to help get themselves in the mood when necessary. Like much of life, the secret to porn use is moderation and is not damaging to a relationship unless one partner regularly chooses it instead of sex with their "real" partner.

Myth #2: Porn is the same as cheating.

Many women feel betrayed when faced with the realization that a husband or boyfriend is looking at porn—some as deeply betrayed as if they'd been cheated on. Often, their immediate reaction is, "What's wrong with me? Am I not enough?" Some relationships even end over porn. When my patients face this issue, I help them understand that porn and cheating are not the same thing. What is the same, however, is the feeling of betrayal. It's legitimate for a woman to feel betrayed by a man who secretly goes to another woman for sexual satisfaction, even if she is an image on the screen. Yet the real problem is not the porn. The problem lies in the fact that couple has either not openly discussed or been able to find a resolution to their individual sexual needs. One patient, Gail, caught her husband turning to porn soon after the birth of their first child. She thought it was because he found her unattractive, that she hadn't been able to shed the baby weight. He explained, however, that even though her sexual energy had fallen since the baby came, his remained the same. He even, he admitted, hated to wake her when she was already so sleep deprived. Porn, therefore, was simply a stop-gap for him until life returned to normal. So, unless a man has a compulsion to turn to porn instead of to his wife or partner for sexual satisfaction, it can actually serve as a perfectly acceptable stand-in for times when partners' sexual energy or appetite differ.

Myth #3: Porn is a sign that something is “wrong” with you.

Let’s be clear: porn doesn’t make you a pervert. It can, however, be a sign that you’re avoiding dealing with uncomfortable feelings or experiences. If you find yourself turning to porn instead of to your real partner, or if you find it interfering in your ability to function in daily life or fulfill your responsibilities, please seek professional help to deal with your compulsive behaviors. If you use it in moderation, however—enjoy.

Myth #4: Porn is a sign that a marriage is in trouble.

Maybe. The question to ask yourself is: Are we reliant on it? Do we use it from time to time for inspiration and fun, or do we need it more often than not to get excited and in the mood? Do we turn to porn for a night of hot sex instead of communicating or working out our issues? Do we turn to each other for comfort, or to the fictional characters on our screen? Porn isn’t a sign that a marriage is in trouble unless it’s used as a tool to mask underlying issues.

Myth #5: Porn leads to unrealistic sexual expectations.

Porn is at no more risk of creating unrealistic sexual expectations than watching “Top Chef” is likely to lead you to believe that you could walk into your kitchen and replicate everything that you just saw on your TV screen. Emotionally healthy people are able to differentiate between fictional characters and situations and real life. While it is true that overexposure to porn among teenagers and young adults can warp sexual perceptions and expectations, this can be mitigated through open communication with parents and other trusted adults about how to build and maintain healthy, adult relationships.

It’s easy to criticize things we don’t understand. Like most sexual activities, however, porn is perfectly acceptable when engaged in by committed, consenting adults. It’s only when it begins to interfere with our relationships or our day-to-day lives that it becomes a problem.

If you have questions about your porn use or other aspects of your sexual life, call us at 757-340-8800 to talk about it for free.

“5 Myths About Porn” excerpted from Dr. Dabney’s forthcoming guide, Taboo: A Man’s Guide to Sex Drive, Porn, Affairs and Kink (and how to get exactly what you want), available August, 2016.

Want to learn more?

Call now for your free, 15-minute consultation with a member of Dr. Dabney's team. Geography is never a problem and your access to one of the nation's top relationship experts is unparalleled.

757-340-8800

www.DrLDabney.com



About Dr. Laura Dabney, the Intimacy MD

Relationship stress is no match for Dr. Dabney. Every week, she works with patients in dozens of cities across the United States, helping them break the patterns of past relationships and beat a path to a happier, healthier future. She owns a leading clinical practice in Virginia Beach and has been Board Certified in Psychiatry. Download her latest articles, read real-life case studies and learn more about her offerings at DrLDabney.com.