

- *[After a couple of months porn-free]* I am starting to find it easier to deal with stress. Things come up that should stress me out and I do better with it and can handle it. What is more I do not think of porn/masturbation/orgasm to help with it. I just deal with the stressful situation. I am seeing things at work that I did not see before.

I work with guys older than me. (I'm in my thirties, and used porn heavily for 20 years.) They have talked about sex a lot the whole time I have worked with them and I never cared. Now, though, I am bothered by what they're saying. It is I who've changed. I am just not numb to it; it hurts to hear some of the things they say. The sex talk, the porn talk, the relationship talk. The way they talk about women and how they view women are just starting to piss me off. How did I not notice this before? It is hard to describe or explain really. I just know I do not want to hear that crap any more. So that is one thing that has changed in me.

The other is the way I carry myself. I walk with more confidence. I feel better about myself. I do not feel like isolating myself as much as I did in the past. Well, actually the longer I go without porn the more the desire to be with a woman is increasing. It is starting to get almost uncomfortable. I am not sure how to deal with these new feelings sometimes.

Another thing is that now I am not happy or content with my job. It is a dead-end job. I was numb and happy to just live out my porn life right where I was before all of this. Now I am getting myself back in school. I am doing it now instead of talking about it.

For another thing, I am starting to work very hard at getting some other aspects of my life fixed. It will take a little while but I will be straight in my finances. I was not working on any of this, or even cared to, before I started this process. I have severe social anxiety, but somehow I recently found the courage to join Toastmasters, and I've given my first speech without passing out.

Had a thought today about myself that may be a sign of a big improvement for me. I thought, "Well I do not look half bad. I look OK." That thought just stopped me. I was in shock at even thinking that. I have not thought of my self-image in a positive way, I do not think, *ever*. To just have the thought come into my head as if it were the most natural thing or way to think about myself was just, well, a shock to the system.

- *[After three months of no porn]* I'm in a much better place than I was before I tackled my addiction. This is the long-term route to happiness for me. Also, my wife recently initiated more intimacy than we have experienced in many years. Despite her not knowing about my addiction or more recent abstinence from masturbation, it has obviously had a good effect on her too.
- *[After a month porn-free]* I never even thought about things like grief until I started this experiment. These emotions and feelings surfacing since abstaining from porn have shown me that I am a much more coherent and emotional person than I thought. One "odd" thing: at times I cry recklessly to moving music, which I haven't done before, but it feels very soothing to me. It has been crucial to come across these feelings. I'm more interested in spending time with friends, exercise, enjoying good food, taking up activities I've forgotten about, especially enjoying good music, traveling. I sleep less. The extra energy has been spent on better things, and I have been more sociable, more outgoing. I had someone note a few days ago that I had a very positive aura about me, and that it was in stark contrast to my past persona. I like that.
- I have now gone almost 4 weeks without looking at porn (I quit due to recurring erectile dysfunction while I was viewing it regularly). I have masturbated maybe twice. I feel a lot more responsive right now as far as sex drive and I know it can get even better. I'm happy cause at this point porn is not part of my daily routine anymore; I'm starting to get used to living without it, and starting to appreciate everyday women more. Fantasies and old videos still pop in my head, but it's a lot easier to get them out now, it's a lot easier to not associate different scenarios with porn. I notice it's a lot easier to be aroused by little things. I now believe that watching P and MB have also had a negative effect on my confidence. When I was anxious I would MB several times a day, which would make me more nervous. Now, though, I don't have to worry and I can just enjoy myself during sex.
- *[Day 17, student suffering from erectile dysfunction and appalled by what he was watching to get it up]* Things are starting to clear up a little bit. I am starting to see the light at the end of the tunnel. I am still pretty tired, but less so. I am able to exercise and focus on work more. I find women in the streets pleasant to look at again. I feel happier and more confident. I

realized now that since I stopped porn, my friends, and girls in general, seem to want to hang out more with me or hug me way more often, 75% more maybe.

[Day 19] How can I tell you how I am happier about myself now? I noticed that I am really getting closer to girls now. Yes, it is totally happening. I've noticed a lot of woman (well, of my age) that are my friends, hugging me a lot and talking to me more, or just come see me more. This is not my imagination, it is truly happening. I'm more confident and I'm coming back to enjoying life. I am more confident generally now too. I think I am coming back to my old self! Today I had an erection thinking about having sex with a girl I find really beautiful and nice [instead of only finding kinky porn fantasies arousing]. The erection came spontaneously and surprised me. I was sitting on a chair and it took time before I could stand up without anyone noticing I had an erection. I think I am progressively recovering. Though I am sure I am not totally back to myself, I see some kind of hope now. I am so happy!

[Day 22] I had a morning erection, which I didn't have for a long time.

- *[Posted a couple months after stopping porn]* I experienced social anxiety right from my childhood. I was too much interested in science, unlike normal kids, so I always had a feeling that I am not "one of them." After I started watching porn, my social anxiety was boosted. I experienced a huge improvement in my confidence and self-assurance when I stopped masturbating to porn. I have more energy now and I am exercising daily. (I never did before.) I now perceive myself as a self-assured, successful guy rather than some introverted jerk. I am enjoying my new lifestyle.
- *[Written in response to a distressed man's inquiry about how long it might take to lose a recently acquired taste for shemale porn.]* I went through my phase of shemale and male only porn images and vids. I mean the other stuff just was no longer doing it for me. I rejected the male images at first. I then slowly I got to the point where it did not bother me, not only did not bother me, but I wanted to watch it. And then *needed* to watch it. Like you, I am very attracted to women. I am not attracted to men outside of my porn viewings.

I now am sure I am not gay. It took some time away from porn for my brain to fully figure that out. Not sure how long you will have to go

without porn. It will take more than your current 15 days though. I have been 89 days without porn as of today. I assume I would go back to those types of vids at some point if I fell back into the addiction. Right now, though, I have no feelings towards men, only women. I have lost my "need" to view men in that way since I have been this long without porn.

- *[Two weeks porn-free]* Today I worked with a friend on my shy bladder syndrome. It was a great success. I truly believe that my cutting out porn was a big part of it. It's as if all the bad things in my life that manifested from my masturbation addiction are falling apart. What a great feeling. I am optimistic about the future.
- *[Experimenting with abstaining from porn, due to noticing a "hangover" after masturbation/orgasm]* I find myself less and less willing to suffer the after-effects of the orgasm. I am finding greater control over my sexual impulses, and am not preoccupied with masturbation so much, and perhaps not sexualizing things like I was when I was on that roller coaster of masturbating all the time (and then feeling low and then getting off again to feel better, only to feel worse and not know why). I see my "hangover" differently now, as some kind of natural mechanism to realign me with the more civil side of life, heighten my spirit to greater connection with love and matters of the heart. In other words, I think perhaps that this condition is pointing me in a direction away from being so controlled by my sexual desires and impulses. In that sense it is a positive.
- *[A woman experimenting with a period of abstinence from porn/masturbation/orgasm]* It has been an interesting experience. It was really hard at first to give up. My libido has always been a little voice in my ear. If I was online, I'd feel the need to go and look at porn. If I was bored, I'd look at porn. It had a tendency to put sexual connotations on every intimate moment with my boyfriend and at times I felt more like my libido was in charge than I was! But as time wore on, and I got more determined. It got easier, until some time in January I realised that I had gone 4 weeks without even thinking about sex and the voice was totally absent. That was the nicest experience. It was then that I also saw the effect on my relationship.

When I am abstaining, I feel freer. I see my boyfriend in a kinder light. I really feel in love with him, and I feel more comfortable with him. I also

feel more relaxed and rational. It is like a weight has been lifted off of us. We are still trying to figure out what works. My period has a tendency to make me incredibly horny, so I am trying to see how long I can abstain. The longest has been 6 weeks.

The aim, in the long run, is for me to find some modicum of balance. I don't intend to abstain permanently, and my boyfriend is free to ask for sex if he wants it. I guess we're just seeing how things go.

I think that the best thing is that I feel like I have gotten my relationship back. We have always said we were perfect for one another, but the sex thing kept on getting in the way. Now that I am in control, I feel that my boyfriend and I are perfect for one another more than ever.

- I found the longer I went without masturbation, porn and orgasm the less I needed them. Porn began to disgust me. I would look at augmented breasts and it would look unnatural and weird. I would see a beautiful woman and instead of picturing myself having sex with her, I would just admire her beauty. I felt free and I knew this was the way to be so I just stuck with it. Now, it seems as if the whole world is crazy with lust.
- Not only do you see/view women differently, you also think of yourself differently. I do not feel so inadequate anymore. I felt a lot worse about myself...and then I felt negative things toward women. Now, my thoughts on a healthy relationship are nothing like what I thought while caught up in porn. I thought relationship meant as much sex as possible and "learning" things so I could make a partner happy. I was so backwards in my thinking. That is why I felt inadequate. I could never live up to what I saw in porn videos. Looking back on it, porn just caused me confusion, pain and depression. Now when I do get to experience a relationship, I stand a much better chance of it being healthy and lasting. This was a big revelation for me.
- Here's an update of how things have changed during my second trial to stop porn:
 1. Even after having masturbated to porn yesterday, I had no shemale fantasy. (Only straight fantasy – he he)
 2. I know now that the "erectile dysfunction" is going away. I can get an erection. It works. I have to concentrate on my girlfriend and not think

about myself.

3. No more crying, no more panic attacks, very much less general anxiety.

4. Exercise helped me to get some self-confidence. I'm happy with my weight loss and myself.

5. I am extremely more optimistic than I was one month ago. I'm coming back to myself! This is a big achievement 🥳. Brain plasticity works!

- *[After a couple of months of experimentation with no porn.]* Since I cut back I feel a lot better about myself. I'll admit I still have issues, but I find it's easier to work on them. For me porn/MB was an outlet to deal with depression. I find that I really don't need it anymore. I also mentioned it was messing up my love life (erectile dysfunction), so that's even more incentive to stay away. I believe things have improved a lot in that area as well. All in all I would say I still have a ways to go, but things are definitely better than they were. I think a big part of it is I'm not only changing my P and MB habits, but my lifestyle as a whole. I feel good, better than I have in years.
- *[After more than a year.]* I (finally) realized the dangers of pornography and impulsive masturbation, so I started my effort to abandon these practices. I had many relapses of indulgence and overstimulation. The cravings, second thoughts and different approaches were a constant for more than a year. Finally, pornography and anxiety driven orgasm are no longer part of my life. Naturally I still have a very strong sexual drive but I handle the energy in different directions. The violent, impulsive, porn-industry-driven fantasies have slowly vanished and new fantasies of affection have replaced them. Now I crave companionship instead of orgasm. I also quit four psychiatric medications thanks to the support and info from the Icarus project and the Bipolarawakingup YouTube channel, I feel much better now and don't need the drugs at all. (I've been free of them from 4 months).
- *[After less than two weeks of no porn.]* The more I walk through my journey of abstaining from masturbation to porn the more the need to lust is melting away and the need to love is growing inside me.
- *[After months of experimentation.]* At one point I could go and watch porn for hours, but now my body and mind have adapted and are accustomed to being around real girls. I'm just not aroused by a 2-D substitute anymore. It's just not interesting or arousing, even if I want to

be aroused by it. It's all body parts and anonymous people. Looking into someone's eyes, hearing her voice say your name, feeling her hands on you, seeing the curves of her body in real-life, that is amazingly different than porn. It just FEELS better to be around real girls.

- *[Observations over fifteen months without frequent porn use.]* Some guy was talking about censorship of porn and violence on TV, and said, "If I see violence, I am repulsed and want to see justice. If I see porn, I want to fuck." Using porn did not fit with my desire to be a loving person. Just didn't. Those images still have a tremendous pull, and I have succumbed from time to time, but not to the point of obsession and climax, which was so central to my life for so long.

I have become a more loving man: more gifts for my wife, and less hurt and drama when she has not responded in the ways I wanted. Feeling grateful is certainly better than feeling entitled. Lying in bed, me cuddling and caressing her, it is all good. No expectation or desire to direct or control the situation, to make *something* happen....just being in the Love Zone. I don't have to do anything (except keep out of my own way) to make it happen again.

Over the years she has asked me to see more of her than just her cute, sexy body. My pitiful response has been to be hurt by her not seeing how I loved her. I actually blamed her for not seeing my love in the sex and for reducing my love to sex! Any question or confrontation that threatened access to my sex "drug" was a serious threat that I defended against fiercely. The underlying motive for so much of my action came from fear and need to protect my supply. *sigh* My work has been cut out for me. With these new not-seeking-orgasm eyes I am challenged to see this woman anew. I feel like my "drug" use has stunted my growth in our relationship. At 57 years I am just now emerging from adolescence.

Let me tell ya boys...love is so much better. Here are some random examples of how things have changed:

My wife is much less irritable, and when she is, I am better able to hear her and respond appropriately. There is much less drama in my life.

Lying close, she starts talking about my how ugly my beard is and when am I going to shave it. It's wonderful how I can let her criticism roll off. I

don't need to impress her, or be some way in order to seduce her. The absence of fear is pretty damn nice. I just love her. I teased her and she started laughing. It was marvelous to lie next to her, my hand on her heart, and feel the laughter flow between us. Typically, we are serious people, and laughter has not been part of our bedding. I like to think this new way of loving has an element of joy that makes our old ways seem pretty funny.

I empty the dishwasher, but the motive is completely turned around. Of course it needs to be done, but the old way was coming from fear of her displeasure. Now I am joyous that I thought of a way to please her.

I tell her, "You're beautiful," and she really starts hooting.

"I can't believe the changes I'm seeing in you. You come around like a horn dog, but don't try to mount me. You don't pout when I say "No." And all that porn, for years, you've defended at the Supreme Court level is gone (I paraphrase). You're talking about kundalini. You've changed. Does that frighten you? (I say this to a laughing woman)

Not yet.

Let me lie on top of you to touch hearts.

As she pulls away I ask, "What's up?"

"I can't breathe."

"With a honker like that?" I question.

This is a breakthrough. There is no way I would ever tease her about her nose (which she thinks is disproportionately large). I am a sensitive new-age guy, and respectful of her tender feelings. BUT standing firmly in a place of love, I could say it free of all that bullshit and we could laugh.

I find myself composing poetry:

In the selfish haze of porn, I took her gifts for granted.
My head filled with false images, I could not remember what it was
like to touch her.
I could only demand more.
Now I hold the memory of the feel of her
I carry it to do battle with the demons that plague me.
For every thought of lack or ache of desire
I can bring forth a clear image of her under my hand,
And a deep feeling of gratitude comes to rescue me.

I am an American puer
I want it fixed, now!
30 years of lies and porn
A year of sobriety (ah, well, there was a slip or two).
30 years of "You fix me!"
Single-dimensional woman
A dimension less than paper or video screen. ...

So...I don't do the porn; I write a poem.
I don't manipulate her to fix me; I give her the loving hug.
I don't cry to be seen; I learn to see her.
I don't threaten to leave (in, oh so many, little ways); I offer my
devotion.
I don't tell her, "You need to give more;" I glow in gratitude of her
gifts.