

It's Christmas, my partner prefers porn to me.

It's rare that I'm told this. Usually problematic use of porn emerges for another reason. It's not often that a man does not find his partner attractive e.g. he wants a quick result and porn gives him this, which can develop into porn being the go-to for dealing with stress about a host of situations, which then escalates and can become compulsive.

\*Using porn mins/hours daily?

If he only uses porn for e.g. 30 min per week – abstaining for Xmas in theory should be possible. If porn hijacks him for hours per day and he is in denial and is belligerent, please read on.

\*Has no erection, he may have PIED.

If your partner has PIED (porn induced erectile dysfunction) when you are attempting sex together – PIED is a sign of over stimulation by heavy porn use and inability to become erect in any other way. So this is an indicator of how much porn is being/has been watched. This is usually seen in younger men that have 'trained their brain' to be stimulated and their body to be physically aroused by watching porn. Older men have a better chance of recovering their erections as they are less likely to have trained themselves from pubescence to respond to porn, as it would not have been available 24/7 as it currently is. Be careful not to make the mistake of accusing your older partner of porn indulgence as loss of erections becomes more common as men get older, i.e. give him the benefit of the doubt and try to talk about it.

\*Disconnects during sex fantasy?

Being unable to connect with your partner during sex can leave you feeling like an extra, as your partner is on planet porn and planet earth feels like a wilderness.

\*'Poses' you like porn

If you feel your partner 'has' to put you in specific poses, (e.g. move your legs here and your head like this etc) – he could be recreating what he has seen in porn. A big hint is that it will actually 'feel' staged to you.

\*Betrayal is cruel

Betrayal is indeed cruel. The man you love and are committed to and who may be the father to your children, has shattered your trust and smashed your self-confidence into non-existence. You feel you can never compete with the bodies of the porn stars and

that leaves you feeling ugly and unwanted. He may argue that he has never touched another woman and therefore how can he be accused of cheating? Research and my own experience has found that women feel equally betrayed by their porn watching partners as they would if he was having a 'real-life' sex experience.

### \*Send partner-parents for Xmas

If you know that every time your partner is out of your sight for 10 mins he is using porn, although it may be hard to salvage any happy Xmas moments to be e.g. with your children, ask him to leave until the festivities are over. The children not seeing their Dad may be worrying you – but age appropriate explanations to children are by far more healthy for them, than an absent father holed up in the bedroom, entombed in porn, with their Mother's anger and resentment so thick in the air that it could stuff a turkey. Often parents make the mistake of believing 'the children are too young to know anything'. Believe me, they know when there are bad feelings between parents and may have even seen porn on their father's screen e.g. when he has gone to the loo and left the porn playing on his laptop.

If you get angry phone calls from his parents/family/friends blaming you for 'throwing him out, keeping him away from the children', don't make excuses for him. You may be ashamed of your partner – but the situation has reached crisis point and covering up for his behaviour is not helping anybody – let alone you or your partner. Talk to your friends and tell them what is happening, they can't support you if they don't know. If you feel you don't want to be 'a burden' to your friends, after telling them what is going on – also say you don't want to bother them at Xmas – so if they get a chance could they phone you later in the evening/tomorrow etc.

This is not the time to make any big decisions about your relationship. If deep down you still love him, there may be a chance of repairing your relationship. Betrayed partners will often say 'I just want to go back to the way we were before'. That's not possible as your trust has been betrayed and also – why would you want to go back to something that wasn't working (as hard as that is to hear)? You can't have the honeymoon phase or the 'getting along just fine' stage again. Although it is hard to believe, you can have a better relationship than before and for the best chance for this to be possible you need insight and understanding.

### Men

Firstly, I would like you to know that as a Psychosexual Therapist I do not 'blame' any partner for whatever behaviour they engage in. I am not on 'anybody's side'. If your porn use has become a problem that you can't solve on your own and you are facing the fire on your own – I can help you to do some genuine fire-fighting and also to understand yourself better. Why has this happened? I love my partner and think the world of the children, what can I do?

If you want a Professional & experienced person to help you to try understanding what is going on under the porn use, i.e. 'why'? I would be delighted to hear from you. For more information please visit my website and/or email me.

### Couples

My role is to help you both have a very hard but honest conversation and then to support the Porn using partner to develop positive behaviours and leave destructive behaviours behind

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