

**WINNING
THE IMPOSSIBLE
FIGHT**



**Winning the Impossible Fight:
Why Porn is the Worst and What You Can Do to Emerge Victorious**

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Strength to Fight

www.strengthtofight.ca

ISBN: 978-0-9950146-0-2

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WHAT YOU'RE UP AGAINST

Pornography is the worst.

“Worst” doesn’t really do it justice. We don’t seem to have the right word in the English language for just how horrible, pervasive, awful, and destructive pornography actually is.

But by “worst,” I’m referring to it in comparison to other destructive things.

Yes, alcohol and drugs have led many to a quicker, more painful death. They have ripped apart so many families and turned many overnight from potential to pitiful. But nothing is like porn for its sheer pervasiveness. People trying to recover from drug and alcohol addictions sometimes move cities to get away from bad friends. At the very least they know that if they can stay away from their old bars and their old neighbourhoods, they can put themselves in a “place to succeed.”

There is no such hope for the porn addict. Imagine if you were an alcoholic and every person was a walking liquor store. It’s not just that *your* phone and *your* computer are a connection to your addiction. EVERYONE’s phones, EVERYONE’s computers are. Your spouse’s phone, your family computer, every public computer, every library. All a means to endless entrapment.

Crack, from what I hear, is a devastating drug. It has ruined millions of lives. Killed untold thousands. It has been my pleasure, however, to have as friends a number of brave men and women who have overcome their crack addictions and are now leading full lives, many of them in healthy relationships and by all accounts now healthy in body and mind. But I wonder, how many of them would remain free if every single time they entered a mall or watched TV with their families they were given “soft crack” the same way the recovering porn addict is confronted with “softcore” porn everywhere he or she goes.

By no means am I belittling the horror that is drug and alcohol addiction. I'd simply like you to think about the difficult odds that an addict of any type of substance has of breaking free, and then realize that in terms of far-reaching tentacles, pornography is the worst.

That's why you are struggling. That's why you probably feel like you are losing. It's not because you are weak. It's because porn is the worst.

But it can be overcome. That's why I wrote this book, and that's why you should continue reading.

Why Victory Is Possible

You know the scene in the movie where the good guys are wondering how they will ever be able to stop the bad guys because they seem too dangerous, too evil, too powerful? Someone always stands up and says something along the lines of, “They'll slip up. They always do.”

That's the thing with porn. Porn is a lie. Porn is a fake. Porn can't fulfill any of its promises. Despite its

ruthless pervasiveness, porn will slip up. Not just once. A million times. It's never real. And though porn is lurking around every corner, if you decide to fight it, you can win. Because no matter how defeated you feel right now, porn will fail you again and give you another opportunity to fight.

YOUR BRAIN IS A BATTLEGROUN

You ever hear the saying “the eyes are the window to the soul”? Well, how about this one: “*Your eyes are the doorway to your brain.*”

Everything you see enters your brain. Whether you want it to or not, everything you see makes its way through the intricate network of your brain. It doesn't matter if you don't want it to. Ever see an image, maybe of something gross, that made you say, “I wish I could get that out of my mind”? Even though you didn't want that image to enter your brain, it's there.

Your brain is incredible. It's powerful, it's adaptive, it can grow and change and learn. Like anything so complicated, though, it can also be damaged, be compromised, deteriorate.

You need to understand the battle that is going on inside your brain right now. You want to be free! You don't want your brain to crave porn! And right this very second, your brain is taking in these pages because it wants to learn how to be free. But your brain is at war with itself.

What's your favourite food? Do you like ice cream? When you eat ice cream, your brain recognizes the pleasurable chemicals that are firing and it says, “Self. This is good. We like this. When we want to feel this again, we will remember that we need ice cream.” Now, how often do you

crave ice cream? Probably just about every time you think of it. When your friend says, “Let’s get ice cream!”, your brain says, “YES! We know what that is! We like it!”

And even if you know that you don’t *really* want it, because you are trying to stick to your new diet or stay away from sugar, you don’t say, “I don’t want to.” Nope, instead you probably say, “*I want to, but I know I shouldn’t.*”

In that moment, your brain is at war with itself. The part of the brain that knows what is good for your whole body is telling you to say no to ice cream. But the part of the brain that remembers how good ice cream tastes is furious!

Anyone who has ever tried to change unhealthy eating or exercise habits knows what this feels like. The end result all has to do with which voice in your brain wins.

That’s what this battle is. Every time you viewed pornography, your brain released chemicals that made your body feel good. The more it happened, the more the brain categorized the experience as something to repeat.

Right now, at this very moment, there is a war going on inside your brain. The logical part of your brain, the thinking part, is telling you that you want to quit porn. The other part, the part that *feels*, is furious. It remembers what those chemicals feel like when you watch porn. It wants more of them. In fact, like with any drug, it wants more than the last time. And it is yelling at you to do as it says, to feed it, give in, let your body have what it wants.

If you’d like to understand how this is actually all working, you can download the free ebook *The Porn Circuit* from CovenantEyes.com. It will explain all the different chemicals firing around in your brain right now, how they got there, and more detail about how to fight them. But for

now, you just need to understand that your brain is a battleground. There are physical chemicals inside you that are trying to make you behave a certain way.

In a way, your mind is not your own. You need to be willing to fight so that your thinking brain, the part that can reason and knows that you WANT to quit porn, will win.

There are four steps to winning the impossible fight.

- 1. Block it**
- 2. Renew your mind**
- 3. Get accountable**
- 4. Let go**

One more thing before we get into the details of how to fight this beast. Talk to any recovering addict, and you'll most likely hear mention of a "higher power." What's that about? Well, I'll tell you my story a little later, and I promise you, it'll make sense.

HOW TO WIN, STEP 1: Block It!

Imagine your house. Count the closets. In my modest-sized house, there are five. I would become very, very concerned if I knew that there was a dangerous poison in any one of them. If there were poison in *all* of them, I would take drastic action. I would try to remove it, or I would change houses.

What if there was an epidemic, and suddenly all the closets across the world were full of poison? Well, in that case, I would probably board up the closets. I would do **WHATEVER IT TOOK** to stop that poison from getting out of the closet and into my living space.

The world we live in is just like this. Every computer, every smartphone, your TV, your Xbox, your Playstation—all are a direct pipeline to pornography. Not only can you get to it, but it is getting sent to you.

Bad links, malware, popups, all are trying to get your eyes to gaze upon porn, whether you are looking for it or not. Consider that approximately four out of ten kids under twelve are coming across pornography just while doing homework, and now think of the greater access that you as an adult or teenager have to the Internet. Well, it's a tough situation to be in.

So here is what you need to do. **BLOCK IT.**

First things first, lock down all your electronic

devices. Install a filter on your computer. On your phone. If you don't know how, check out sites like StrengthToFight.ca or CovenantEyes.com for helpful information on choosing and setting up filters. But do it.

The day that I decided freedom was necessary, that addiction was no longer an option, that very day I installed a filter on my computer. Looking back, I actually installed a filter that was not a very good one. Later on I switched to use a better one, but the point is that I didn't wait and start perusing filters in order to choose the best one. I didn't give myself an opportunity to rethink my decision to install a filter; I just went and installed one right away.

Next, I tried to figure out how to protect my phone. I couldn't figure out how to filter my iPhone properly at the time, so I sold it and got a Blackberry in order to have better protection. When that didn't work well, I switched to yet another phone. Now I'm back with an iPhone, but only with a proper understanding of how to lock it down.

This goes along with everything that we already know and accept when it comes to addiction. If your friend is struggling with alcoholism and trying to get sober, and you found out that his buddy is always bringing around a case of beer, you would tell him to cut that guy out of his life. If you were hanging out with your friend and this other guy showed up offering him a beer, you would get in his face, tell him to get out of there. You would plead with your friend to cut off all connection with his friends.

That is how you have to treat your electronic devices. They are constantly bringing you a substance that destroys you, if you can't figure out how to block them, then cut them out. Sell them. Smash them. Think about how much you hate what pornography is doing to you. Would

you rather keep your phone and keep that awful feeling along with it? Or would you rather take that phone outside, run it over with your car, and know that porn can't get to you tonight?

Some people call this "radical amputation." Porn is a disease. When people have cancer spreading through their body and amputation is required to get rid of it, the doctor doesn't just cut out the majority of the cancer hoping that the rest will disappear. They cut until they get to the healthy muscle around that tumour, making sure they have absolutely ALL of the cancer.

Porn is your disease. Don't try to cut it out of your life somewhat, a little bit, partway, and hope it will fade. You know it won't. Cut things out of your life until you are SURE it's gone. When it pops up again, cut *that* out.

A lot of phone apps on the iPhone contain a built-in browser. This is very difficult to filter. So sometimes when I've downloaded an app, I'll suddenly realize it has browsing capabilities. At that moment I delete it. I don't want to wait until it could tempt me to use it to gain access to unfiltered Internet. I want it gone immediately.

Maybe I really liked that app. Maybe it was useful. Maybe I used it to actually fight porn; what about that, huh? Still not worth it. I will not give porn access to my life. I want it out. I want it gone. I hope you do too. I hope you cut it out of your life completely.

Things to Think About

1. What are my access points for porn?

2. What can I do today to block it?

HOW TO WIN, STEP 2: Renew Your Mind

I was addicted to porn for ten years. Early on I tried to stay away from it through sheer willpower. It's no surprise that as a young teen I was not able to. Growing up there were many, many times that I REALLY wanted to quit porn. Sometimes I could stay away from it for months, but as much as I stayed away from it, I knew there was a part of my brain that belonged to porn. It felt inevitable that one day I would go back to it. I may have been on furlough, but I knew that porn still owned me.

You've probably had similar experiences. We talked earlier about the fact that porn is quite literally like a drug. It actually changes the neurological pathways in your brain. Your physical body, and your emotions, and your desires and feelings are all messed up because of it. You can shout them down and win many times, but the only way to actually have lasting freedom is to change.

Porn has rewired you. So now you must be renewed.

The same day that I decided I was going to fight this once and for all, just after I installed a filter, I signed up for an online program designed to walk people just like me through the journey to freedom. I was nervous about what the program would be, but I knew I had to try something different than just promising myself I wouldn't look at porn again.

Right away this program started asking me questions I hadn't thought about for a while. Why did I look at porn? What led me there? What triggers did I have? And what were my priorities? It was going through these daily lessons that led me to sell my iPhone just a few days into the program. I realized that I was feeding not just my porn addiction but the things that drove me there.

For me, porn was a way to escape from stress. It shut down my emotions. When I didn't want to feel anything, good or bad, I turned to porn. I realized that I had been doing things in my life that fed this emotionally unstable state.

I sold my phone not just because it was a gateway to porn, but because I often used it to check out of life. And I realized that the other things I would "check out" with via that phone were all gateways to porn. Just sitting browsing Twitter for hours, or Facebook, or any other big time-killer would put my brain to sleep, and once my brain was asleep, I made bad decisions. I had to develop new habits.

Porn had also warped the way I viewed women. I had to actually think about that and purposely begin to see women in a healthy way. I had to change life habits the way some people have to change eating habits. If for health reasons you need to lose significant weight, you don't just try to cut down on getting the super-sized fries instead of regular fries. You start bringing healthy lunches to work so that you don't even have a *reason* to go to McDonalds at all.

Root Causes

Porn is never just about sex or anything related to sex. We all use it for different reasons. Maybe it's loneliness.

Maybe, like it was for me, it's a way to regulate emotions. In all cases, we have to consider the reasons behind what is leading us to want porn. In many cases it's childhood abuse or something like it. You could stop watching porn, but if you haven't found healing from your abuse, you will turn to something else to deal with the pain. We have to deal with our root causes.

Ever been walking through a field or the woods and discovered a path? Not a purposely made path, but a path that over time, as people have followed in the footsteps of others, has been worn down until it's naturally there. Over time, these trails become as obvious as any purposely planned trail.

You need to make new paths. You need to purposely create new habits, new ways of thinking. Laziness, boredom, stress, and loneliness are all common triggers. Replace these with exercise, reading good books, taking time to work on your friendships, signing up for new activities! Several people I know put crossword games or sudoku games on their phones specifically for the purpose of having something constructive to do when they are bored waiting in line (or on the toilet) instead of just browsing the Internet mindlessly.

When we create new habits, those old paths over time will get overgrown. They will fade away. It's likely that they'll never disappear completely, but your brain can heal itself over time as you build it back up again *on purpose* in the way you actually want it to be.

Things to Think About

1. What are some of my triggers?

2. What can I do to counter them?

HOW TO WIN, STEP 3: Get Accountable

Accountability is a word that has often been misused when it comes to matters of purity. Especially as it's been used when it comes to porn addiction. I know so many people who say that accountability doesn't work and hasn't worked for them.

And I agree, at least by their definition of accountability.

Accountability has often simply been what a lot of people call the "cop approach." It means you have a system where, through a filter or "nanny software," you get caught if you view porn. And then a friend admonishes you, or whatever consequence you have set up. Or often, two friends will decide to "keep each other accountable," and they meet up once a week. The first week they both are doing great. Maybe that's the case for the first month. When they are tempted, they know they will have to confess to their friend, and that's enough of a deterrent.

But soon all that happens is that every week they meet up and the conversation goes something like this:

Person 1: "Yeah I fell again, I watched porn." *I feel so bad about myself.*

Person 2: "Yeah . . . I did too." *Sweet, we both fell, I don't have to feel so bad about myself.*

Person 1: “Well . . . keep fighting.” *But if you don’t, I probably won’t either.*

Person 2: “Keep fighting!” *I knew defeating porn was impossible. At least we are being accountable about it.*

You can see the flaw in this system. For years I tried “being accountable,” which meant confessing sporadically to people (often people I didn’t see that often; that way they wouldn’t be checking up on me). But I

- a. never told anyone it would hurt me to tell.
- b. never actually let anyone into how I lived my life.

All I was doing was tattletaling on myself every now and then. And no surprise, it never helped make anything significant change in my life.

The thing that made all the difference was when I learned what the main component of accountability is: ACCESSIBILITY.

When I finally decided to actually deal with my porn addiction, I told my housemates, I told my pastor, I told my parents, I told my siblings who were old enough to understand. I told all my closest friends. I pulled back the curtains of secrecy around my life.

Two days after confessing to my roommates and asking for their help as I tried to fight this, I was in my room working on my computer. All of a sudden my bedroom door opened, and there was one of my housemates, a guy I’d been friends with for nearly ten years. He was holding a giant rock. He opened my door all the way and placed the rock at the foot of the door as a doorstep. He wordlessly nodded and walked out. I knew what it meant. He was essentially saying “Hey, if you are serious about us helping you with this, you’re going

to have to let us into your life. All of your life. You've been living a life of secrets. We're taking away the *opportunity* for secrets.”

I am a very private person. I value privacy very highly, but thankfully, in that moment I got it. Because of what I was doing, I had lost the right to privacy. I had to live my life differently, in a radically open manner.

And I didn't just live my physical life more openly, but I had to live my online life more openly too. This didn't mean just making sure I was “caught” if I watched porn. It meant having people who would see my online activity and help keep me away from it. People I talked to about my triggers, my weak points. People who could spot it when I was starting to head down one of my old paths and call me out on it before I got too far.

We've talked about how pervasive porn is. When we treat accountability the way I described earlier in this section, it's as if we were an alcoholic and the only thing we did was tell a friend every time we got drunk. And they said, “Oh man, thanks for telling me, well . . . keep fighting!” And then walked away and left us **LIVING NEXT DOOR TO THE BEER STORE!**

One of the things that has made all the difference in my life is that several close friends and I have a messaging group. If someone falls, they confess, but much more importantly, when we are heading toward a situation that could lead us to stumble, we tell the other guys. When I haven't been sleeping well, I know that I'm vulnerable because I'm tired and weak. So I tell the group. When they have an extremely stressful week at work coming up, they tell the group. When our wives are out of town, when we're traveling, we try to let the other guys into our lives so they

know what's really going on without having to dig too hard to find out.

This might seem really weird to you, but it actually makes a lot of sense. I sometimes call guys out for spending too much time shopping for basketball shoes, or on Netflix. Sometimes my friends react, saying, "Why are you bothering me? It's not like I was watching porn!" But I just say, "Hey, if I saw you shopping for shoes for three hours in the mall, I would be like, 'Dude, what is wrong with your life? Go do something productive.' If every time I came to your house you were watching TV and never moved, I'd say, 'Come on! Get off your butt!'"

It should be no different with our online lives. The difference is that it's really easy to keep our online lives completely hidden. We don't even need to try. My wife and I each have our own phones. Most of our online browsing, our e-mail, everything can happen through that phone. If we never purposely shared what we do with our time, there would be no way for the other to know.

We have to purposely give others access to our lives. That's the essence of true accountability.

Things to Think About

1. Do I live a secret life, or do I live an open life?

2. What reasons do I have for living the way I do?

3. What can I do in the next few days to live a more accessible life?

HOW TO WIN, STEP 4: Let Go

There is one last pillar you need in your fight for freedom. You need to let go of your pride. You need to trust something greater than yourself. Why? Because the simple fact that you're reading this means that you have not been able to conquer your porn addiction on your own.

In the famous Twelve-Step Program, one of the steps is "trusting in a higher power." What does that even mean? It sounds like some sort of clichéd little phrase to make people feel better. Well, how about I just share my story.

I grew up in an awesome, loving family in Canada. My parents loved me. My dad is a Bible teacher. I was brought up with a clear understanding of morals, of right and wrong. I was in no way a perfect kid, but in every single way possible, I should have been set up to succeed. No bad parents, no bad friends, just a great life destined for happiness.

But it doesn't matter how great your family setup is if you aren't prepared for the world you live in. I was eight years old when I literally stumbled across pornography for the first time. Someone had strewn a magazine across the street. I pointed it out to my mom, who quickly threw it away, but I can still remember the images.

Just a few years later, in my early teens, I would stumble across pornography again, but this time instead of

one magazine in the middle of our street, it was four million websites on the vast ocean of the Internet. With no context for what I was seeing, with no preparation for how to handle it, with the neurons in my brain firing, mixing with shame and guilt, my life of secrecy began.

Several times early on I either confessed to my parents or was caught. Each time there were tears and promises to never do it again, but I didn't know how to fight it, and my parents for all their love and good intentions didn't know how to help me. After several times of confession not being enough to overcome the pull of pornography, I gave up. If I wasn't going to be able to overcome porn, why keep on inviting the shame of bringing it out into the open? It violated two things that I held dear, my pride and my privacy.

As I grew older and grew up, I was still living a "good life." I never got into any sort of big trouble, but I really wanted to just do my own thing, trust myself, and make my own plans. I was always kind of a control freak. Not that I wanted to control others, but I wanted to be in control of my own life, and I never made any decision without first thinking about all the possible ways it could affect my life.

I had a ton of cool opportunities in life, in music, in media, and in some pretty neat jobs. But nothing really made me happy. Nothing clicked for me. But I continued to try to do things my own way.

Throughout all this time, porn stole from me. It stole my time. It stole my self-worth. It stole my respect for others. It stole my ability to correctly assess my life, because there was a whole part of me that I wanted to pretend didn't exist.

Several years after college, I was still working what many would consider a cool job in radio, but I was not happy. Life decisions stressed me out, and nothing was fulfilling me. As I hit this point, I began to remember the truths my parents had taught me. About a God who created the whole world with a plan in mind. And not only the world, but *me*—on purpose, for a purpose. I began to think, maybe if this God is real and actually *did* create all of this, maybe he does actually know more than me. Maybe he has better ideas about what I should be doing with my life than I do.

I don't have one of those knocked-off-my-horse-and-saw-the-light conversion stories. I just know that as time went on, I began to let go. Let go of my pride. To think, *Maybe I don't know everything. Maybe I can't figure out everything by myself and make all the smart decisions all the time.*

Along this journey I remember visiting my sister's church one day, and the verse they were studying was Proverbs 3:5–6:

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him and he will make straight your paths.

As I began to give up control of my life, this verse became the absolute truth for me. I began to trust that God knew better than me. That I could trust that he would take care of me and even if I made mistakes in life, he could work it out. I began to lose the fear that controlled almost all of my decisions. I began to experience a real peace in life.

The kind that often doesn't make sense when living in this crazy world. And no matter what I was doing, I could wake up every day and know I didn't have to make everything work out on my own.

My coworkers noticed there was something different about me. In radio, people get fired out of nowhere all the time. There is almost zero job security, and we had a very unpredictable boss who would love you one day and hate you the next. Everyone lived in fear. But they would comment that somehow I didn't. I told them it was because I wasn't placing my trust in myself. Even if I got fired that day, I had peace that everything would be okay. I believed that the God who created the ocean and mountains, the Northern Lights and the Grand Canyon, had created me on purpose for a purpose. I would be okay.

But there was still one area of my life where I wasn't seeing improvement. My addiction to pornography. I was understanding more and more how awful porn was, and I wanted more than ever to be free. But I was still trying to fight on my own. I've shared throughout this booklet all the ways I wasn't taking the right actions, but behind my failings was one main reason nothing worked for me: I was trying to defeat it on my own. I thought this was a part of my life that I had to fix by myself. I still wanted to hold on to the last of my pride.

But think about everything we've said about pornography. It's everywhere. It hits you in every way. To fight it, you need to make serious changes in your life and stick to them. Was I able to do that through willpower and good intentions? No. I have enough trouble staying away from eating potato chips, and to eat potato chips I have to go to the store, exchange money for the chips, and bring them

home to eat. There are no obstacles to me getting porn and porn getting to me. I failed and I failed and I failed.

Then there was that one day. One day I finally quit trying. I was so desperate I finally admitted that I was too weak. That porn was a monster outside of my weight class that I could not take on in a fight. I needed help.

At that moment I said, “God, you’re going to have to help me through this.” And you know what? He did. The God who created me on purpose for a purpose helped me to do all the things I wasn’t able to do on my own. When I stopped just relying on my own convictions (which came and went), when I stopped worrying about what would happen if I opened up and let people into my life, and when I began to find my self-worth in knowing that the Creator of all things loved me and cared about me, I was able to take the steps I couldn’t take on my own. When I fell, I was able to get back up and keep fighting because I wasn’t trusting in myself to hold my life together. The wounds to my pride didn’t cut so deep.

This isn’t just my experience. Professor Gail Dines, the author of *Pornland: How Porn Has Hijacked Our Sexuality*, has done some of the most devastating research out there into the harm that porn does to our society. A couple years ago Dines, a self-proclaimed secular feminist, was giving a presentation in Ottawa. After the presentation was over and the crowd was thoroughly distraught at the state of things, someone asked if there was any hope for porn addicts. Dines’s response was essentially that the only people she ever met after her presentations who had stories of true victory were people who claimed to have “found religion.” She found this curious and expressed an interest in doing further research into “the phenomenon.”

I don't think it's a phenomenon. In fact, after talking with thousands of Canadians and hearing their stories of being enslaved to porn and of finding freedom, it's pretty clear. My story is not unusual. Many men and women have the same story. Of finding freedom when they gave up trying to do it on their own. When they gave up their pride. When they put their trust in a God who created them on purpose, for a purpose.

In a tiny book like this, I don't have the time to convince you that God is real. I just want you to consider one thing. If you have tried to fight this without him and failed, why not try to fight this with him?

For me, it made all the difference.

Things to Think About

1. Have you failed in defeating porn on your own?
-

THE JOURNEY TAKES TIME

When the ancient Israelites left Egypt, they traveled a long way before they reached their home. They were even chased by the Egyptians.

When slaves in the Southern states fled their chains, they often didn't stop running until they got all the way up to Canada.

Getting free is always a big deal. But in order to stay free, you have to get to the land of freedom. And that takes time.

Set goals for yourself and celebrate them. The difference between a literal slave and your situation is that in a way, you are running from yourself. You can't be literally rechained and dragged back to your past unless you let yourself do it *to yourself*. If and when you stumble in your fight to freedom, you don't have to go backwards. You can stop, recognize the situation, and choose to keep going forward.

A lot of men and women I've talked to about their journey to freedom have gotten discouraged along the way. When they make a mistake, they let their shame convince them that they aren't making progress. They are embarrassed to tell their friends and accountability partners that they messed up, so they go back to the habits of secrecy and self-loathing. The things that kept them trapped in the first place.

This journey is a fight. In a lot of ways it's like a war. It's not over until the victory is complete. But celebrating the winning battles will give you the encouragement and the confidence to keep going. When an opportunity to indulge presents itself and you say no, that's winning a battle. When you are in a situation that might have been a trigger before and you realize it wasn't, that's winning a battle. When you have the courage to confess to someone instead of hiding it, that's winning a battle.

As long as you don't quit fighting, you're on your journey to freedom. I do have to clarify something, though. I say that I battled porn addiction for two years. But like I said, I was addicted for ten. The first eight years, I didn't really fight back that hard. Any victories were meaningless. Saying no to porn at 3:01 p.m. and giving in at 3:04 doesn't really count as a victory. Watching porn five times a week instead of seven is only a victory if the next week it's four and then three and then two.

That's another reason accountability is important. It keeps us from fooling ourselves. Several men have told me that they only watch porn that reminds them of their wife. That's not victory. Some people say they only watch porn they have carefully researched to make sure it was made ethically. That's not victory. Our friends who truly keep us accountable can help us see the victories in places we may not see them, the improvements we're not aware of, and they can also call us out when we think we are doing better than we actually are.

Things to Think About

1. What are some tangible victories I could see in my life this week?

2. What are my goals that I want to achieve this year?

3. What does victory really look like for me?
(Make sure to share this with someone)

WINNING THE FIGHT

This booklet is called “Winning the Impossible Fight.” It’s called that because when we just think about all that we face in overcoming pornography, it truly does seem impossible. But it’s not. We finished by discussing how to assess your journey to freedom. I hope you have hope now.

This isn’t one of those self-help things where I say, “I quit eating sugar and lost two hundred pounds, and I’ve NEVER looked back! And you can do it too!” Porn is still everywhere. It takes a lot of intentional action, and filters, and accountability to stay free. But I am not a slave to porn. You can find freedom too.

Here is one last story.

A few years ago, my friends and family stood and cheered as it was announced, “For the first time, Josh and Megan GILMAN!”

Since that time, my wonderful wife has been absolutely the best thing that has ever happened to me. Ten months after our wedding day we welcomed our first child, and lo and behold, it turns out Megan isn’t just an incredible wife, but a world-class mother. Fast-forward to today, and we have two wonderful children. Megan continues to be an incredible mother, wife, and my best friend through the crazy life we have had since launching Strength to Fight.

But one *yes* could have turned my current life into vapour. Into nothing. My own version of *It's A Wonderful Life*, where the world is a dark, hopeless dream, but unlike George Bailey, I wouldn't wake up.

You see, well before we got to the point of exchanging vows, making promises, and sharing our lives, Megan asked me a question. It was after I had asked her if we could start a relationship and before she agreed to do so. She had several questions about things where she wanted to make sure we were on the same page. There were a lot of good, smart questions a girl should ask a guy before beginning a serious relationship on that list, but one stood out.

She asked, "Are you addicted to pornography?"

This is the part that makes me oh, so happy. If she had asked me that question a few years earlier, I couldn't have honestly answered anything besides yes. Frankly, if she had asked me that question anytime between the ages of fourteen and twenty-four, I couldn't have looked her in the eye and answered anything but the affirmative.

And yet instead, here we were and I could tell her, "No. I was. I was a slave to pornography. But now I am free. Its hold on me is gone. No, I am not addicted to pornography."

Afterward, the incredible "what ifs" flooded my mind. What if I hadn't reached that point, where after years of hiding my struggle I said "enough is enough" and brought it into the light? What if I hadn't gone through the pain, and healing, and tears? What if after tasting freedom I had decided I didn't want to keep fighting? That it wasn't worth it? I would not have been able to answer "no." And my darling Megan, who knew what a relationship destroyed

by porn looks like, would have walked away. (And that would have been the right thing to do.*)

There are a lot of reasons to quit porn, and there are a lot of reasons why I have made it my life goal to fight it. But a big part of it is my “no” moment. I know what it takes to get there. Even harder, I know what it takes to *stay* there. I want to help men and women around the world get to that place.

It doesn't always end with a Megan. Everyone's story is slightly different. The lasting consequences of our past actions play out in various ways. But everyone can have that moment where they can look back and think, *Wow. I'm so glad I could answer "no."*

Today, I'm not just grateful for who Megan is in my life, but I'm also so grateful for the reminder she is to me of who I was and who I am now.

To the men or women struggling with pornography today, I point to my life and say, “It's possible.” It actually is possible. Keep fighting, as I need to fight. Every day. Victory is possible. Keep fighting.

You CAN win this impossible fight.

**While I would not counsel anyone to start a relationship with someone who is addicted (and not fighting) a porn addiction, this does not mean there isn't hope for those already married or in a relationship. Healing is possible for everyone and every situation.*

For additional reading and suggestions for filters and accountability software, visit StrengthToFight.ca

JOIN THE FIGHT!

Strength To Fight is a non-profit organization that exists to equip Canadians to live porn-free lives and build porn-free communities.

If you would like to join the fight against porn in our country and help us create more resources like the one you're holding in your hand. Please visit, strengthtofight.ca/donate

We fight because victory is possible!
Keep fighting!

*For additional resources and help, visit
Strengthtofight.ca.*

