

5 Things Teens Wish Their Parents Knew About Porn

by Clay Olsen, CEO of Fight the New Drug

[Excerpted from a [presentation](#) Clay Olsen gave at the [Utah Coalition Against Pornography](#)'s annual conference.]

There is a disconnect between kids and parents on the subject of pornography. You can only help your kids if you bridge that gap with knowledge and understanding. Fight the New Drug has received thousands of emails from teens and spoken to tens of thousands of teens at school presentations. From their experience, they have pulled together these 5 things kids really wish their parents understood about pornography.

#1 They wish you knew that **porn can lead to an actual addiction.**

Parents need to understand that pornography can become an actual chemical addiction in the brain. Of the thousands of emails FTND has received from porn addicts, not one became addicted as an adult. All started as kids or as teens.

Emails from teens

- "Please help me!!! I have been suffering from watching porn since I was 11 and now I am 15. Please how do I stop this?! I cannot tell my parents." Isabel, 15
- "This addiction has been horrible. I'm becoming numb to all of the simple pleasures that I used to enjoy. I'm becoming depressed because of my own weakness and every time I fall, I fall harder." Eric 18
- "My life now would have been much different if my father had understood that pornography was a true addiction and that 'just stop' wasn't an option." Stephen, 16
- "I've been struggling with pornography for three years. I've thought of suicide as a result of this." Leo, 13

Clay: "If you don't talk to your young kids, the porn industry will, and you won't like what they'll say."

#2 They wish you knew that **porn is different today** than what it was when you were growing up.

Pornography is accessible via the internet 24/7 with no social barriers to impede kids from finding it. It's become violent and degraded to the point that Playboy images are considered soft core.

- "My parents don't know how bad it really is. They think porn is just naked people. Today porn is much worse than people with no clothes." Mike, 16

Today porn is **Accessible, Anonymous, Affordable** and **Addictive**.



#3 They wish you knew **they are being targeted.**

Kids are the victims of sophisticated and intentional marketing. If the porn industry can get them hooked when they're young, they know they'll have a long term customers. Here are 5 ways the porn industry targets your kids:

1. Free teaser images pull kids into porn
2. Innocent word searches bring up pornography
3. Cartoon characters and child icons are pornified
4. Pop-ups and Banner Ads play on a child's curiosity and lead to porn sites
5. Flash Games--kids love to play games and many games become sexual and include porn ads

#4 They wish you knew that **you need to talk with them.**

- "I don't remember my parents talking to me about it until it had become a problem. I was 10 or 11. I wish I had understood the issue sooner." Matt, 19
- "I wish they knew how to address it or speak about it openly and without feeling shy/disgusted." Olivia, 17

Don't succumb to the *Curiosity Myth* (thinking that by talking to your kids you'll incite their curiosity). You need to talk with kids sooner than you think and have layered, ongoing conversations.

Tips for parents:

1. Get Educated
2. Take time to talk
3. Find the right place
4. Make it one-on-one
5. Stay calm
6. Don't judge (you aren't perfect either)

#5 They wish you knew that **YOU are part of the solution.**

Be prepared, pay attention, help protect, set a standard and be an example. Parents set standards with them (not *for* them) that the entire family (including parents) will follow. Parents can set an example of what love and healthy intimacy looks like and that porn portrays the opposite.

Resources for Parents from Fight the New Drug

- Check out a great resource for parents: The Guideline [here](#).
- Find out more about FTND's FREE pornography recovery program for teens called Fortify at www.fortifyprogram.org.
- To see this entire presentation, click [here](#).

"As far as I'm concerned, reading and implementing [Good Pictures Bad Pictures](#) with your kids isn't an option: it's a necessity." Clay Olsen

