



### **Sexual Obsession? Step away from the porn.**

We're not talking about the old Playboy or Penthouse from years ago. That stuff of yore is tame in comparison to what is more easily and readily available without the embarrassment of taking it off the store shelf. We are talking about the effortlessly accessible material from the Internet, ready for the asking within the comfort of your own home.

With the accessibility and availability of porn from the Internet there is no filter like the neighbor or grocery clerk looking over your shoulder to cause any embarrassment or discomfort. Without these kind of natural filters, anything goes. And apparently, anything does go.

More to the point, the more obscene, the more counter-culture, the greater the audience as the material appeals to voyeuristic tendencies. What starts as a sneak peak, turns into a long gaze followed by the hunt for more graphic and more outlandish material. The titillation of simple and softcore pornography wanes and the voyeur come viewer, come consumer, eventually seeks material that is increasingly disturbing as a deeper obsession-like desire develops for extreme forms of erotica.

Trailing behind is the partner of those persons obsessed by ever increasing extreme forms of erotica and sexual gratification.

In the context of an intimate relationship, the partner is subjected to greater demands for sexual experimentation. Eventually the request goes beyond the partner's comfort. A conflict develops with the partner feeling blamed for not meeting the sexual needs of the one whose secret passions are fueled by an undisclosed obsession with far more outlandish forms of sexual behaviour brought on by exposure to material from the Internet.

For the one seeking the more outlandish forms of sexual behaviour, their time on the Internet has desensitized them and shifted their thinking in terms of more usual forms of sexual expression. Further, the more usual forms of sexual expression are now

minimized or dismissed as too simplistic and certainly unsatisfying.

When couples grappling with a conflict of sexual behaviour are seen in counselling, the issues may be disguised as a myriad of other conflicts. If the issue is raised, it is often done sheepishly, particularly with one being blamed a prude with the other whose sexual preferences has shifted being presented as normal and reasonable.

From a gender perspective, this is most frequently but not exclusively seen with the woman presented as prudish and the man as normal. There is the air of controlling or power and control issues as typically the fellow seeks to meet his needs for sexual gratification over the needs and comfort of the woman. Careful exploration of this dynamic may show other indicators or power and control issues, some as precursors to the sexual issues.

Counselling is aimed not only at facilitating communication between the couple with respect to mutually acceptable sexual behaviour, but is also aimed at addressing any co-existing power and control imbalances.

In addition to counseling, it may be necessary for the sexual adventurer to step away from the porn to reduce the impact of sexual exploration from the Internet. In other words, controlled access to the Net.

Monkey see, in this case, is not monkey do. It is not likely that your partner will want to participate in the sexual behaviour you see on the Internet. Don't push it and address what has become your own sexual obsession.

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Gary Direnfeld is a social worker. Courts in Ontario, Canada, consider him an expert on child development, parent-child relations, marital and family therapy, custody and access recommendations, social work and an expert for the purpose of giving a critique on a Section 112 (social work) report. Call him for your next conference and for expert opinion on family matters. Services include counselling, mediation, assessment, assessment critiques and workshops.