

"Porn? Shhhhhh...."

Vauna Davis, executive director of Utah Coalition Against Pornography and founder of Reach 10
BYU Unraveling Pornography Education Week, November 2016 Transcript

INTRO

Thank you for being here. It isn't easy to walk into a public event on this subject! Be honest, you had some hesitation about showing up tonight. But you came anyway. That means you are a change maker at heart. I take it as a sign that we are going to be able to stop saying SHHH and start reaching out and changing the culture together.

I've seen the impact of porn on the lives of young adults like you. I've know some who have overcome addiction, and some who are still figuring it out. The dating relationships abandoned because they had no idea how to talk about pornography in an open way. The young spouses who share how traumatic it is to learn about their partner's addiction after the wedding. Some have grown up in a home with an addicted parent. The women who felt abandoned by the recovery community that seemed slow to recognize that women get addicted too. I've heard how difficult marriage is when both partners have sexual addictions. And almost all young adults find themselves needing to get the subject out in the open with people close to them. Since about 80% of young adult men and 1/3 of young adult women view pornography, you are pretty much guaranteed an opportunity to reach out and talk to someone about it.

So let's talk about what we can do!

I'm going to focus on how we can help family and friends that may be struggling with pornography. By the end of our time here, I hope you will understand how to respond with compassion to someone who is facing this challenge, know some things you can do to help, have a better idea of what recovery, accountability, and boundaries are, and be committed to speaking up when you have a chance.

I am going to post these slides and the whole text of this talk online for you, so you can be free to just take notes on the inspiration you get tonight of what your Heavenly Father wants you to do to help with this really big important issue. I encourage you to ask Heavenly Father to bring to your mind the things he wants you to know. The website is reach10.org

To be clear, I am not a therapist. My background is communications, I earned my masters here at BYU just 4 years ago. I have been actively involved in the anti-porn movement for about 6 years.

Two words I always hear people complaining about in connection with pornography: silence and shame. That's the shhhh that we've absorbed since childhood.

Why silence? Why shame? There is a vicious cycle at play here. Let's start with shame.

SHAME

What is shame?

Here's one family's experience. Some parents were trying to support their son who had been struggling with porn since he was in grade school. By the time he was in college, when his parents would how ask he was doing, it seemed he had given up. He came home for a holiday, and just before he left for school, his mom tried again. She told him about some recovery programs and how he should make a plan, but the more she talked, the more she felt like she was just talking at him. He was looking down, he wasn't responding. So finally she stopped and asked, Son, Is there anything you want to ask? It got very, very quiet for a while. Finally he looked up and said, "What do you think of me?"

What do you think of me? Do you still love me? Am I still worth something in your eyes or do you think I am a hopeless mess? This is the very heart of shame.

As I talk to young adults, they keep telling me shame has got to go. It is keeping them from getting help. It is keeping them from giving help.

Shame is that painful feeling of humiliating disgrace when we feel we have done something wrong. We feel not good enough, worthless, inadequate, undeserving, unlovable, and hopeless.

There are certain conditions that lead to shame.

1. We are aware of rules or social norms that determine whether our actions are seen as right or wrong, good or bad.
2. We believe that because of what we are doing wrong, others will judge us and will think we are not good enough, worthless, inadequate, undeserving, unlovable, and hopeless. (Note that the belief that others feel this way is enough, it doesn't have to be true).
3. We accept and internalize that judgment and believe we are not good enough, worthless, inadequate, undeserving, unlovable, and hopeless.

Notice that shame is felt in relationship to others. That can mean family, friends, our social network, and even our Heavenly Father. Shame is the worst possible emotion because it makes us feel we are not fit to be part of our own community. We want to hide or disappear.

Carl Jung got it right when he said "Shame is a soul-eating emotion."

Think for a moment about a time you felt shame. How were these conditions present?

What rules did you believe you had broken? Was your fear of someone's reaction enough to cause shame? Did other's reactions help or harm you? How did it change how you felt about yourself?

Why is shame so tied to this issue of pornography?

For many people using pornography, shame drives a downward spiral. Using pornography causes feelings of shame, and then to numb those painful feelings the person turns to using pornography again because it's a pretty effective distraction from discomfort.

So shame, which is essentially the fear of judgment, keeps us isolated and silent.

Brené Brown "Shame derives its power from being unspeakable."

Difference between guilt and shame

We need to be clear on the differences between shame and guilt.

Guilt – I did something bad. Shame – I am bad.

Guilt is helpful when we compare our actions to our values and feel uncomfortable.

It leads us to determine – I want to fix this. I will do better next time.

But because shame damages who we believe we are, it chips away at our motivation to change and we begin to feel powerless and hopeless.

Learning to talk in ways that overcome shame is one of the most important ways to help.

Looking back at the 3 conditions that create shame, we want to keep the social norm that it isn't good to view pornography, because we don't want to become shameless in the sense of accepting pornography and sexualized behavior as normal. That is what is happening to those who have not been taught, or have let go, of certain values regarding humanity and sexuality.

It is ok to allow guilt and a desire to change motivate people to live according to their values so they can be happier. That is called repentance.

What we need to stop is rejecting people as completely unworthy and unacceptable, and start realizing that really great people struggle with this weakness.

That includes how we think about ourselves. Look at that last point. Half of the work is within ourselves, becoming resilient to shame by accepting our infinite and eternal worth.

SILENCE

Now what about the silence on this issue?

When a topic is taboo, there are powerful social norms that are keeping people from speaking. We picked up on these norms from birth by absorbing the culture of our family, our friends, our teachers, our churches, and our society.

It feels unsafe to speak openly about pornography because

- Sexuality in general is difficult
- Sometimes we sense other people's disapproval of those who struggle with pornography
- We sense that there is a lot of misunderstanding and uncertainty on the issue
- We don't know the words to say because we haven't heard models of those conversations
- It's risky to be the first to break a taboo, it may turn out awkward, unpleasant or downright embarrassing.
- We're not sure how the other person will react or if they are open to talking
- We wonder about confidentiality – can I trust this person to keep confidences?
- There may be potential for damaging reputations, losing relationships, lost opportunities
- Feel we don't know enough
- I don't know enough, I'll sound stupid, I won't know what to say
- Someone will react annoyance or even hostility
- It will be awkward and uncomfortable.
- I might find out that someone is facing challenges and that will be hard
- They might think I am self-righteous, controlling, or preachy.
- It might harm our relationship.
- We will do anything to avoid the pain of shame

These are real concerns, but we can't let them stop us anymore. Be chain breakers, don't perpetuate this silence and pass it on to the next generation.

We can all see that erasing silence and shame will be powerful first steps to solving this problem on a wide scale.

COMPASSION AND ACCEPTANCE, NOT REJECTION

The result of all this shame and silence is disconnection.

Human connection is the greatest casualty of porn, but it is also the most powerful remedy.

First we need to let go of false ideas about the kind of people who get trapped in pornography.

When we look at what happened to your generation, it is not surprising that great kids from good homes were lured in.

In August 1991 Tim Berners-Lee made the World Wide Web publicly available. Within 10 years, 50% of homes had the Internet. Now, my husband and I have four children who are all millennials, and they were in grade school and jr. high when we first got a computer and that fabulous dial up Internet. So we know how you have been the experimental generation for both the good and bad online.

Parents and society in general were naïve and dismissive of the threat to children and teens and did not really prepare young people for this challenge. The most proactive parents put filters on their huge desktop computers and believed the problem was solved.

The vast majority of people who are addicted to pornography as adults today were introduced to it when they were young, 11-14 is very common and even as young as 6 years old. Sometimes not even old enough to be baptized. And yet, even before they reached the age of accountability, the seeds of an addiction were planted that would seriously hamper their free agency. Think about that. How fair is that? The adults around seemed to have abandoned them, since no one was talking openly or effectively about it. Young people were following a very natural interest in sexuality, and they had no idea how destructive the path would become. Some of us working in the anti-porn movement believe that pornography is the biggest perpetrator of sexual abuse to children in existence. It is not surprising that the adversary took advantage of this destructive weapon to try and take down the most promising, most powerful young people.

This is the situation you inherited. This situation wasn't your fault.

It was not your fault, but now it is your responsibility.

I got to spend several hours a few weeks ago talking to an amazing couple who have been on a recovery journey together for a few years. I'll call them Ryan and Shay (not real names). Ryan had been using porn since he was young, and never told anyone until after his mission. Listen to this story for how we can change the culture of shame by how we respond.

Ryan's first confession was to his mom, when they were in a car after his mission. I asked, Why did he choose his mom? He thought she was the most likely person to still love him. Unfortunately, her reaction was WHAT? She had such a strong negative emotional response with crying and all the rest, that it created some serious shame and made his addiction worse. He spent many more years entrenched in porn.

Years later, Ryan met Shay and they knew each other for about 3 years before they started a dating relationship. Shay had a previous boyfriend who had issues with porn. Talking to him changed her view of who porn addicts could be and she had more compassion. Shay invited Ryan to attend the temple with her, and when he declined she asked why he couldn't attend. Ryan hesitated. As an LDS single he knew that if it leaked out it would marginalize him. But he decided a relationship with Shay was worth the risk. He knew it was his responsibility to tell the truth. When he told her about his problem, he could tell from Shay's reaction that she had previous experience talking about pornography, and he could feel that she accepted him. Shay felt that in spite of this challenge, she felt that knew Ryan and who he was, and believed she could trust him.

Shay's acceptance and Ryan's honesty allowed the relationship to grow. Ryan's attitude became, I can't give you perfection but I can give you honesty.

There is much more to their story after that and it wasn't all smooth sailing. On one New Year's Eve during their dating, they celebrated the end of a really difficult year that they were glad to put behind them. But now Ryan has achieved a healthy recovery and maintains very high standards to keep safe, they have been married for almost 2 years and have a truly extraordinary level of communication, accountability, and honesty.

What do we learn from these experiences?

Our first response to someone who is brave enough to open up has a powerful, long lasting impact. Whether we react with negativity, shock, crying, rejection in any form, or if we respond with acceptance, respect, and listening to understand makes all the difference. Ryan's definition of acceptance is giving someone a chance, not leniency.

Can we soften our hearts and have compassion? The most important thing is to see whole people, with strengths and weaknesses, and not dismiss the good things we see in someone when we get close enough to learn of their struggles. We all have weaknesses, as Elder Uchtdorf reminded us, Don't judge me because I sin differently than you. We are not our addictions. Let's decide who someone is by learning more about the whole person. Accepting each other is the first step to stopping shame in its tracks.

In general conversation, in groups of friends, at church, over dinner, be aware of how what we say might come across to someone who is struggling. Always assume there is someone who is struggling. Girls and women too! Don't speak in ways that assume only men have this problem. Be sensitive about how we might deepen shame through a careless comment.

Disclosure

For many years we've been telling people trapped in pornography to talk to someone else about it. We call this disclosure. Disclosure is a very important first step and everyone I have talked to who has found successful recovery has eventually found someone to open up to who made all the difference.

Rory Reid - Being truthful frees up energy previously used to maintain secrets.

However I have been concerned that we haven't prepared enough people to be really good at receiving disclosure. We can help others make progress in recovery by knowing how to respond well.

Disclosure for married people, is a significantly different issue than for other relationships, because of the covenants made, the intimacy of the relationship, and the trauma of betrayal. Something I have heard many times is that disclosure for committed couples, can have the effect of making the confessor feel much lighter but the person hearing the disclosure being devastated. For married couples, counselors often plan a joint meeting for disclosure with the therapist present to mediate and guide the discussion. So for married people, I highly recommend meeting with a qualified counselor when they are ready to take the step of disclosure.

Here's some suggestions for what to say if a friend, family member, or someone you are dating, tells you about their challenges.

1. Appreciate
 - a. Thank you for telling me
 - b. I'm proud of you for talking
 - c. You are doing the right thing by speaking up
 - d. Your honesty helps build my trust in you
2. Acknowledge
 - a. I'm sorry you are experiencing this
 - b. I know it's common and lots of people are struggling
 - c. Help me understand what it's been like for you
3. Ask
 - a. Have you been able to find help
 - b. If so, who is helping and how often do you reach out to them
 - c. If not, would you like help finding some resources
 - d. What is your recovery plan and how is it working for you?
4. Assist appropriately
 - a. How can I help (understand what is appropriate, we will talk about accountability)
 - b. Let's plan when to follow up

Be aware, full disclosure often happens slowly. Someone will tell a little at a time, to see how their friend reacts. If they feel safe, they will disclose more over time. Big problems happen when either side claims or assumes that the whole story has been shared and then feels deceived and betrayed when more comes out later. Be honest: "that's what I am ready to share for now" "I appreciate you sharing that, we can talk again in the future" The key is honesty all the way through.

We can mentally practice ahead of time how we will respond calmly if a friend, roommate, romantic interest, spouse, sibling, or parent tells us they are struggling with porn. (Take a moment to imagine how they would like to be treated if it were them)

Thinking ahead and being prepared will help us change these conversations from traumatic to supportive.

You feel you should bring it up

What if you suspect or discover that someone is struggling, but they haven't talked to you? Or maybe you are getting closer to someone you are dating and it's time to ask each other about it.

What makes you hesitate?

Remember our long list of things that drive silence?

These are valid concerns, but again we can't let them stop us or we will perpetuate the silence.

PERSONAL MOTIVATION

To overcome these fears, we need more powerful beliefs in place.

- I have a responsibility to change the damaging culture of silence by speaking up.
- I show I care by speaking up even at the risk of my own of discomfort.
- When I speak up I give permission and inspiration to others to do the same. I start a positive chain reaction.
- No one should feel alone in their struggles. My friend might appreciate me reaching out.
- If I don't speak up, who will?
- I don't have to know everything – just caring enough to talk helps.
- Learning to speak up will help me build happy, honest, trusting relationships through my whole life.
- Everyone is worthy of human connection.

Do any of these speak to you? Pick one of these or create your own and make it your anti-silence mantra.

When your attempts to bring it out in the open don't go perfectly, don't see it as a failure but evidence of the need to continue this work.

I wish I could promise that if you just open your mouth, magical things will happen and everyone will respond with appreciation and good will. The truth is, revolution is not easy and there will be disappointing, awkward experiences along the way.

Please keep trying anyway.

If an attempt doesn't go well, acknowledge it.

"I know this has been a little awkward, I'm sorry if I put you on the spot. We are all learning how to talk about this and I think if we keep trying we can make it better and easier for everyone."

Helping

A study this year found that 79% of teens and young adults who want to stop using porn have no one in their life helping them. Sadly, it's even worse for adults over 25, 87% have no one to help. I find this heartbreaking.

How can I help someone?

1. Listen, talk, check in.
2. Send kindness their way.
3. Recognize and remind them of their good qualities.
4. Follow up. Ask how their recovery plan is working since the last time you talked.
5. Encourage them to work with an accountability partner, either you or someone else.
6. Encourage them to use all the resources available for recovery.
7. Keep your boundaries, it helps them too.
8. Don't protect them from the consequences of their actions.
9. Recognize your limits – you are not a therapist, bishop, or their Savior.
10. Be patient.

Accountability

Accountability is absolutely critical to recovery from pornography addiction. Accountability means reporting to another person the truth about our actions. Without accountability, we get stuck minimizing our problems, thinking it only affects us, and feeling isolated. Knowing others are aware of our actions makes a difference in our behavior.

Remember our friends Ryan and Shay? Ryan said, "we can get in caveman mode: selfish and unaware of selfishness. I knew porn was affecting me, but didn't think I could hurt another. Realizing I was capable of hurting someone I love was a revelation."

There is a difference between being more accountable because someone cares about us and what we do affects them, and working with an accountability partner. Both are important.

Ryan said that having Shay in his life made him feel accountable because he knew what he did would affect her too. He is now very honest with her about how he is doing.

Having an accountability partner is a more specific working relationship. A sponsor or accountability partner is someone who has successfully worked recovery themselves, has a real understanding of what it takes and can give experienced advice. This is more than just confessing failures; it is reaching out for help in the middle of a temptation. Ryan attended a group of men working on recovery that served this role for him.

Most therapists advise against a spouse or romantic partner being an accountability partner. It is too much to expect them to separate their feelings and be able to be objective, it distracts from their own emotional work, It can be hard for a spouse to try to take the role of counselor or parent or feel like the "Internet cop," and they shouldn't be the sole person their spouse depends on for help.

So how can you play a role in accountability?

With your friends and family you can ask them regularly how they are doing overall in their recovery and be a safe place to talk. If you haven't worked on recovery yourself, encourage them to also find a true accountability partner to work with.

If you have experienced successful recovery, please reach out to others who need a sponsor or accountability partner and offer your help. One BYU student said that his home teacher told him the first time they met that he had overcome a pornography problem, that he was grateful for the help he received and that he would be happy to help anytime if needed. This home teacher completely circumvented the shame and silence issue by just making it comfortable for someone to talk to him right off the bat.

DATING

Let's talk about dating. I've learned that for young single adults, talking with someone they are dating about pornography is a charged issue. There is a lot of fear – wanting to get it out in the open, but not knowing how. But getting the marriage they hope for means they need to talk to their romantic interest about big issues such as pornography.

With the help of some great partners and feedback from young adults, we wrote a lesson on this subject called Love Trust & Truth: How to Talk About Pornography When You Are Dating. You can download it for free at reach10.org. It's a tool you can use to read on your own, teach a lesson, or guide a discussion with friends.

What was amazing is that a network of BYU students have used the lesson to gather sometimes 20-30 of their friends at a time at their home for discussions, and it has gone really well.

SLIDE 7 Crishelle

Crishelle was one of those students, and when she went to study for a semester abroad in Israel this summer, she just kept going. There she is with Syria in the background. She trained 5 of her fellow students to hold discussions and said that 70 of their friends listened. That's the amazing thing to watch, is that young adults are ready to get out and make a difference.

So let's highlight some of the ideas in this lesson. You can learn more from the guide. Many of these ideas apply just as well to communicating with friends and family, not just someone you are dating.

SLIDE 8: Signs that it is a good time to talk

I've heard way too often about women asking men on the first date if they use pornography. I understand why, but asking about such a personal issue early, before we have built trust and commitment, is misguided. Everyone deserves respect for their privacy. We gain more access to someone's private life as we earn trust over time.

It can create a perception that we are trying to quickly weed out people, without caring enough to get to know who they are.

Talking later in a relationship also creates some issues to be aware of. A couple that is already engaged and making plans for marriage before they discuss this has an emotional involvement that will make it harder to be objective about whether they are ready for marriage. It can lead to minimizing or denying problems, or hoping that marriage will solve everything.

Of course, it is never too late to start talking. If a couple is making marriage plans, now is the right time!

SLIDE 9: Starters

How can we start talking without it being awkward?

"My parents didn't really warn me pornography. I wish we had been able to talk about what it was like for me in high school when my friends were sharing it all the time. I wasn't sure how to handle it, and I got more involved in than I should have. Did your parents do a good job?"

SLIDE 10: What to talk about? Attitudes experiences plans

Think about one of your young adult friends. Do you know what their attitude to pornography is? Do they accept it as normal and harmless? Maybe they are outraged by the objectification and exploitation. Maybe they oppose pornography because of their religious views. These are important things to talk about.

Experiences can be a range from unintentional exposure as a child, to habitual use as a teen, to being involved in sexting, to seeing the struggles of family members.

What is their plan? How are they dealing with these experiences? Are they denying they might need help, trying to figure it out on their own, or getting good help?

To talk about porn, we need to know basics of what real recovery is.

SLIDE 11: Sobriety is not Recovery

Think for a moment, if you were going to explain to a friend what the differences between these are, what would you say?

SLIDE 12: What Recovery is

Sobriety or abstinence is simply not viewing pornography for a length of time. It is an important step, but just part of full recovery. We must work on the underlying issues that have contributed to the problem.

Good signs that someone is committed to recovery:

- Understanding the difference between abstinence and recovery
- Building new, healthy ways to deal with stress
- Working on relationships
- Humble and teachable
- Being honest about their struggles —without wallowing in shame
- Have a plan, able to describe what they are doing to recover
- Committed to maintain recovery through their life

SLIDE 13

Many people who reach recovery take advantage of four resources:

Full participation in therapy, 12-step group or other recovery group, education, and regular visits with a church leader or accountability partner.

Warning Signs

What if the discussions aren't going well? What if a partner won't talk, or isn't being fully honest? Do you have a gut feeling that something is wrong?

Warning signs that someone is not committed to recovery yet:

- Not being willing to talk about the issue even in a committed, long-term relationship
- Giving vague answers
- Being defensive
- Emotional withdrawal, detachment
- Lying
- Criticism, blaming you or others for their problems
- Rejecting resources for help, not having a plan for recovery

SLIDE 16: Decisions

If you notice some warning flags such as these, express your concerns and consider ending the relationship if your concerns are not resolved. As you decide whether to continue a relationship, be patient and set healthy boundaries. Some experts recommend at least 1 year of solid recovery before making serious commitments. Couples may decide to wait to move forward, set and follow boundaries, or end a relationship.

Remember, abstinence can be temporary and is not the same as recovery. I haven't looked at porn for 2 months is not a recovery plan.

Again, we have to recognize that pornography is truly dangerous. Continuing a dating relationship, or going into marriage, with a person who is in active pornography addiction can have very serious and traumatic consequences.

Important: marriage does not cure pornography addiction. For some this is a big news flash. Many couples have hoped that being married would solve the problem, only to find that marriage complicates the issue.

Enjoying the relationship, we really want sometimes requires the courage to walk away from an unhealthy relationship if needed.

What if they're not getting any better?

Repeat how you can be supportive. It doesn't change.

Come to terms with the fact that you cannot control whether your loved one gets in recovery or stays in recovery.

No one can fix another person. Surrendering our illusion of control over another person is critical.

Your friends and family already have a Savior, and it isn't you.

What you can work on is how you feel – out of control, unappreciated, concerned or even terrified.

Identify and take responsibility for your own issues. Your friend has a habit, and you have emotions about that. While your friend does their work, you do yours as well.

Not enough people know that the emotional distress of having someone you love get involved in pornography deserves, even requires, a program of recovery as well. We call it betrayal trauma recovery.

Honestly all of the resources for betrayal trauma right now focus on wives of pornography addicts. We need more resources for both men and women, for couples who are not married yet, for parents of addicted children, for children of addicted parents, for siblings with addicted brothers or sisters. Maybe you will be the ones to create those resources.

All of the 12 step programs for pornography and sexual addiction have family support or betrayal trauma meetings for the friends and family of people struggling. Your loved one does not have to be attending recovery meetings for you to attend. If you are considering marriage and your friend or fiancée is attending 12 step meetings, I highly recommend you also attend the family support meetings.

In addition you can also meet with qualified counselors, trusted church leaders, and friends who are in recovery from betrayal trauma. If you are experiencing difficult emotions you have a right to find help and talk to friends who can support you.

My friends Steven and Rhyll Crowshaw provide 12-steps recovery groups both for the addict and their families. Rhyll was surprised to open a wedding invitation and recognize both the groom and bride-to-be as participants in 12 step meetings! She had no idea they had a relationship. Rhyll's reaction was "Oh, that's cool!" The young man had started working on his recovery as a teen 5 years ago. He left to serve as a missionary for 2 years but came right back to recovery meetings when he returned. In time both his girlfriend and his mom began consistently attending the family support meetings. When Rhyll and Steven attended the wedding reception, the new couple and the parents expressed how grateful they were for recovery. The new couple missed 2 weeks of meetings for the wedding and honeymoon, but then came right back. The new bride told Rhyll that at first she thought, I'm married now, I'm good and happy, I don't need to go any more. But then I realized, if we want to live in recovery we need to keep going. This is the happy result of being honest and being able to talk about recovery together.

Boundaries

Boundaries are an important concept that you can find out more as needed.

We can be accepting and compassionate AND also stay safe and true to our own standards.

I want to stay as hopeful and positive as possible, but we do have to acknowledge that if pornography were not dangerous, if it didn't change people's thoughts and behaviors in damaging way, we would not be here tonight, there would be nothing to talk about. As important as it is for us to overcome shame and silence, nothing I say tonight should be taken to mean that you put your own safety, happiness, or standards at risk. When we are clear about our own boundaries we help our friend's recovery.

Boundaries are a way of keeping safe physically, emotionally, and spiritually. They are relational limits that set how you will respond when others act. For example Dr. Adam Moore has a suggestion, in a dating relationship,

"I feel safer and more able to trust you when you are attending your recovery meetings every week. If you choose not to go, I am not comfortable continuing our relationship as usual and will limit how much time we spend together until I feel safe again."

Henry Cloud and John Townsend define a boundary simply as "a property line" between one person and another. When two people together take responsibility to do what is best for the relationship, it can grow. When they do not, one takes on too much responsibility and resents it; the other does not take on enough, and becomes self-centered or controlling.

Together, we can work on understanding what belongs to you, and what belongs to me. We each have God-given freedom and responsibility to manage our own growth.

In setting boundaries, we can still be kind, compassionate, accepting of them as a person. Boundaries are not punishment. They actually help both people even though it might feel scary to speak up and maintain them.

You can all be prepared to give some very needed and possibly life-changing counsel to your young friends. This is a prevention strategy – preventing the devastating divorces, personal trauma, and family chaos that are the result of unresolved porn issues. We can work together to move from scarred and scared to peaceful and powerful.

REACH 10

I hope you have sensed that I really believe that young adults are the key to changing this issue. You are the future parents, church leaders, teachers, and leaders in the movement to end sexual exploitation in all forms including pornography.

So I am excited to tell you that a group of young adults are working with me in the first stages of creating an organization that will help young adults connect and solve these social concerns. It is called Reach 10. Why Reach 10? Because 1 person can make a difference by having 10 conversations with 10 people, that's all it takes for that one person to help end the silence and shame that perpetuates a culture of porn-impaired relationships. Reach 10 will help young adults find productive ways to talk about the issue and connect more deeply with the real people in their lives. Reach 10 will prepare young adults to lead this growing movement.

Please stay tuned for more information. You can give us your email on our website (which has been connected for just a few days) and we will let you know what is happening in the future. Feel free to email me your thoughts at vauna@reach10.org.

Another resource I want to share with you is our UCAP Conference March 11 in Salt Lake City. Last year 1/3 of our attendees were under age 30, which is really exciting to see them getting educated. You can learn more at utahcoalition.org, there will be updates in the next few weeks. You can get announcements about the conference by subscribing to the [ucap newsletter](#).

SUMMARY AND CALL TO ACTION

Now we have talked about overcoming silence and shame, responding with compassion, how we can help someone, ideas for talking with someone we are dating. We have learned about disclosure, recovery, and accountability. We've learned about boundaries and recognizing that we cannot control another persons recovery.

The LDS culture, and BYU culture, are unique and like all unique cultures, we have particular ways of talking this issue. Sometimes people blame the church for creating shame, but actually our church is way ahead of any others in talking about pornography and providing practical resources. I once searched on LDS.org and found over 1,000 articles warning church members about pornography dating way back to the 1970s. In contrast, the Catholic Bishops came out with a great statement just a year ago *Create in Me a Clean Heart: A Pastoral Response to Pornography*, and a study this year found that 90% of evangelical churches have no program to help members overcome pornography. My board chair at UCAP who is Presbyterian has been the one telling me that no other church is as open and proactive as the LDS Church. We actually have a head start, but more to learn.

We know the gap between the world's standards and the Lord's standards is rapidly diverging. Pornography has become so acceptable that only 1 in 20 young adults can say their friends think viewing porn is a bad thing. The same study found teens and young adults think not recycling is more immoral than viewing porn. 56% felt not recycling was immoral, while only 32% think that viewing pornography is immoral.

I love this thought from Father Sean Kilcawley, a Catholic priest who is active in the anti-porn cause. Recovery is not for a few addicted people. It is for world that has been pornified.

I believe we can have an influence on the larger society, for example, the idea that pornography is a public health issue is gaining traction. But I am even more convinced that we can create a safe place, a healthy culture within the larger disordered culture, for people who value truth, honesty, dignity, respect, real relationships, and the divine gift of sexuality as a means for creating happy families, uniting couples and bringing joy.

Your Heavenly Father knew the conditions you would face, and he sent you here to succeed in the middle of all this. It is your calling to find solutions, break the code of silence and reset this culture. You will heal together. You will protect your marriages and your children, together. You will lead in the church, in your careers, and in your communities, together.