



EPISODE 19

When is the Right Time to Talk to Someone You're Dating About Pornography?

[Breaking the Silence Podcast by Reach 10](#) with hosts **Creed Orme** and **Crishelle Simons**

No need to worry about when to start talking about the issue of pornography Creed and Crishelle share thoughts about how to know when it's a good time depending on the phase of the relationship. And whenever that time is, it's often helpful to give someone time to prepare for the conversation instead of just jumping in without warning.

SEE THE SHOW NOTES AT REACH10.ORG

Creed:

Welcome back listeners to our podcast. We're really excited to have you today. We're going to talk about when to talk about healthy sexuality and pornography and dating—the "when" part of it. Last episode we talked about the "why" do we talk about these things in dating. Next, we're going to talk about "how," but for this episode we're talking about when and just so you all know where we are and what we're up to. I'm currently in the library at Brigham Young University due to Corona virus, there's hardly anybody here. We're all, Crishelle is also here, but we're all here via zoom and Crishelle you're in your house, right?

Crishelle:

Yup. At my house coming in virtually and I'm so grateful for technology so we can continue to record our podcasts.

Creed:

Yeah, it's so awesome and helpful. And we all survived the earthquake that rumbled through Utah. Was that yesterday? It was crazy. Crazy stuff going on. But we're so grateful to have this technology and to talk about these awesome subjects still. So a lot of what we're talking about today, you can read about also from a free online guide that is on our website, reach10.org. The guide is called "Love, trust and truth: Talking about pornography when you're dating." You can find that guide once again on our website, reach10.org under the tab Help, you'll see it there and download that guide. That's what we're going to be referring to as we talk today. And it's just an awesome way to reread about the different steps of taking for why, when, and how to talk about healthy sexuality and pornography when you're dating. It was written by Reach 10 director Vauna Davis, who also helps direct this podcast and it's just super helpful. We love it.

Crishelle:

So I'm a big fan of this guide and so yes, we will reference it a couple of times throughout the podcast. And a lot of our principles are found within that. So if you're like, man, I love that and I want a little bit more on that. You might find more in the guide. And today we are, especially as we talk about when, we really want to talk about the different stages of relationships. Because I think that when you understand the stages of a relationship, it makes it more intuitive as to when. We don't want to give prescriptive like it's on the fourth date in the fourth hour of your relationship. Like I don't think, I don't think that that fits everyone. There's no one size fits all. But rather we want to focus on the principles and like the stage of your relationship and what is maybe appropriate and helpful to talk about in those stages.

Creed:

So what kind of stages do we go through in a dating relationship? There's the meeting someone, right? Whether that's just a friend at first or through a dating site or app or

somehow, right? We meet someone, we get together. What's wrong with like bringing up personal questions that could pertain to these subjects on the first date.

Crishelle:

Totally. I like to think of this as like an interview and not, I don't want to make this too like stuffy, but in a job interview you talk about important things but you're not like telling them everything about you in that first interaction with a company. And same goes for on a first date. First dates are so fun. They're incredibly awkward and sometimes the worst. But they're also, they're also just like you're testing things out. You're seeing if you guys jive, you're seeing if you can have fun. And I think that there has been a culture in the past, and I hope that it's in the past, of "Oh, I should ask you about it on a first date to weed people out to know whether or not this person is safe." I think that that is such a faulty frame of mind because on a first date, you do not have the trust established in order to have an open and honest conversation about that. And maybe you do, maybe you've been like friends forever. But I think on like a first date where you just met, that isn't the time to interrogate someone or ask them about their sexual history. Because it's just, that's really deep into someone. And you're still establishing even like the norms of your relationship at that point.

Creed:

Exactly. Yeah. I mean, if you've been friends for a while and then you're only just starting maybe a romantic side of things where you're getting to know each other more deeply, maybe it's appropriate. But definitely right off the bat when you're getting to know someone, you don't want to ask such personal questions right off the bat. 'Cause I mean, just think about it, if you asked this question, would you honestly give a correct answer? If they asked you a similar question or something that you could potentially be ashamed about or something very personal. So, and you don't want to ask questions that are just not ready for the relationship. And it's like, yeah. So like as you were saying, Crishelle, if the purpose is to weed people out, that is not a good reason to ask these questions. I mean, you can start to talk about values a little bit as you're getting to know this person, of course, like what kind of spiritual values do they have? Values around family and sexuality. But when it comes down to personal histories of sexuality, that's when it gets personally and

you want to create an atmosphere of trust or have an atmosphere of trust already with this person before you ask those kinds of things.

Crishelle:

Totally. I love that so much. In fact, I, like in reflecting back to when I was dating, you know, I've been married for a year and change now, but back when I was dating I would often I would bring it up in like the first couple of dates because it's something that's important to me. But I would always talk about it as like a third party thing. And, what I mean by that is like I was talking about like the fight against pornography or I'm really passionate about healthy sexuality and I would just like drop those little nuggets sometimes A) to see how they would react to that. B) to just like bring up topics that I care about because that's, you know, what you do in dating relationships so you see if you have mutual interests and that kind of thing and C) to kind of set the tone that that's something that I want to talk about in our relationship moving forward. But again, it was never in like, what do you think about, like I was never asking them about their sexuality or their pornography, but I was rather like talking about the third party. Like do you have feelings about the fight? Like Fight The New Drug or the fight against pornography? What do you think about that? And made it this like safe conversation where I just started asking about it in a safe way and I found that to be so helpful because then it wasn't a shock or surprise for people when we talked about it later.

Creed:

Exactly. I have a funny, quick story. So when I was on a first date with one girl, like she asked about what I did and I told them I was involved in this nonprofit organization, Reach 10 and talked about what it was about and it was awesome. And I went a little bit deeper. Maybe I was too open, but I was, I was up front and I was like, and I struggle with pornography a little bit, too maybe more than a little bit, but I struggle with pornography too. But this podcast, this organization helps us talk about it in a healthier light in a way that is not shaming. And I just think it's awesome. So I don't know if that, that scared her. I mean, we went on a second date and it was also great, but nothing really went off from there. But if it comes up naturally and you're natural to share about it, I think that's okay. As long as, you know, maybe sometimes people aren't quite ready for it or it's just things to keep in mind. But feel out within a relationship. And I think what's really cool, I, you've told me about this

Christian before of how with George right now, your husband, you set up a great way to talk about it in your dating relationship with him. Can you tell us a little bit about that?

Crishelle:

Totally. And this is something I learned and I just want to throw out there. Like, I had this conversation a lot in a lot of different, a lot of my different dating relationships and there were times that I did really well with it and there were times that I totally failed, totally failed. And I learned from both of those experiences and all the ones in between. And so I hope that like any of this just helps people to realize that it's okay to be imperfect, it's ok to mess up. And really what we're looking for is in dating is someone that we want to share our lives with, someone that we want that we feel like we can completely be transparent with about everything. And I think if we're hiding anything or we're scared that doesn't lead to us having that. And so coming back to a little bit of when, before I answer your question Creed, I think like those first couple of dates, when you're just like dating, you're dating other people still, I don't think that's the best time to start talking about it unless you feel, unless you feel like it's the right time. And again, I think that you should trust your heart and you should trust the spirit and you should trust your intuition more than you should trust me. And again, I don't want to prescribe anything, but I do think it is something that should be talked about before you're like, super committed to the person. And that doesn't mean that like you're not dating. I, I think that you can be in a committed dating relationship and not have talked about healthy sexuality and pornography, but specifically pornography. But I think that it should definitely happen before you personally decide whether or not you're going to marry the other person? Because I think that if you wait too long then there's more added pressure to make it work and there's more pressure to hide things even. And so the more you can take that pressure off, I think that that will lead to greater success in this conversation. And that too, I think that leads me to what I learned to be most effective was when it got to the point where I was like, man, I really like this guy. And I'm like, I really could see this going somewhere. That's usually when I'd be like, it's now time to talk about it specifically. And that's when I would know that it was time and, it was always before, like we were super serious. It was definitely before we ever talked about marriage. And it was definitely not a onetime conversation either. It's not like I just like checked that off box and we never talked about it again. But how I would introduce it is I

would just be like, Hey babe, or insert whoever their names was. I and I would just say, yeah, sometime this week, not today. But then in the next week or maybe two weeks, I want to make sure that you and I talk about our personal history with pornography and how that's affected our lives and how that's affected our relationships and how that's affected even like our spirituality and those kinds of things. And again, like I don't want to have that conversation today, but I just wanted to give you a heads up that that's something that's really important to me. And sometime in the next two weeks, let's make that conversation happen. And then we'd just like keep going on with whatever we were doing. Right. And what I found is that when I gave people the space to like A) it like took a lot of anxiety off of my my plate. I already had tons of anxiety about this conversation because of, what, I've been through and if you want more information on that, go back to the first episode, you know, learn more about that. But I already had tons of anxiety about it. And so that helped me to be like, okay, it's gonna happen, the conversation's going to happen and I don't have to worry about it anymore about when that's can happen and it's going to happen and I can allow it to unfold rather than like force it to happen. I think it also gave the person that I was dating the space to really consider what they wanted to share and disclose and how they wanted to go about that. And I found that to be really helpful. Because I think that when people have the choice to be honest or to like say the easy thing in the moment, they're going to say the easier thing. But when given the space to really like consider their values, people want to be honest and they generally will. And so for me, I found that just to be really helpful and effective.

Creed:

Yeah, I think giving people that space, preparing people, yourself even, for that kind of conversation is so helpful. People can prepare their emotions, what they want to share, how they want to share it and how ready they are. And if somebody is honestly not ready for that conversation, for example, if one person or relationship is like feeling more out of the relationship than the other, the other person who's not ready for that can be like, you know what, I think this is really important to talk about and to talk personally about our own personal histories for sexuality and pornography. I'm just not quite there yet with you, but I would love to talk about this at some point. So let's keep it, you know, let's put tabs on that and make sure we get back through that at some point. I'm just not quite ready for that.

'Cause that's totally valid and totally fine too because both partners should respect the privacy of each other and the readiness for each other.

Creed:

And if someone's a little bit too pushy, you know, that could be a red flag in itself of someone just being too pushy about something or maybe they need to have a DTR or Determine The Relationship talk and maybe they're, neither of them are not, maybe they're both not on the same page yet. But it is really important just to be open and communicative and even if you're like fearful talk about that. You know, I'm kind of scared to bring this up or talk about it because it's affected my life but I think it's really important that we do, you know, things like that just be open and honest. A couple other pointers from the guide about some things to look for when determining the best time to bring that the topics of healthy sex, of sexuality and pornography up in a relationship are do you truly care about each other? Are you able to appreciate the good things about each other and be patient with weaknesses? You trust each other to be sensitive, kind, and respectful? You are talking about other significant personal issues, you are together exclusively. You might be thinking about becoming engaged or married but are not engaged yet. Any of those bullet points could help you gauge when is this the right time for this relationship to talk about these things.

Crishelle:

Yeah, I really love that. I also love that you mentioned like just giving it the space. Like maybe it isn't the right time but you at least brought it up and it's something that you're like, this is something that's important to me. And at some point in our relationship I want to make sure that we begin this conversation. And that's something that I want to come back to too, is making sure that it's not just like a one time conversation that you have like, and you check it off the box, but rather it's, I want to start a dialogue so that like you and I really understand one another, and to me in a relationship that's not something that happens on the first date. Like, and that's why I think I'm so willing to say like, don't I have this conversation on your first date? Because there's no way, that I would be in a place that I could have, I could be that open and honest with someone on a first date, first time I met them, like, and so knowing that about myself, like, and knowing that I like that honesty and

that trust comes as you spend time together and you realize, wow, we are committed in some sort of relationship. Like we, we're committed to each other. We're exclusive. And that's why we're talking about this.

Creed:

Exactly. So I think it'd be important to talk about a little what to look for in a conversation and this type of conversation. And I think it's important to remember that it's still to gauge the relationship. Maybe you can talk about certain aspects of personal histories, but maybe not things entirely. But at least when you're thinking about getting engaged or marrying this person, I think at least by then you should be completely open and honest to your partner about personal sexual histories, so that your partner knows exactly where you're coming from, what issues you're bringing into the relationship. Do you have any thoughts on that, Crishelle? Would you agree that at least if you're thinking about getting engaged, like you should talk about your sexual history with pornography, with sexuality in general?

Crishelle:

Yeah, I definitely think so. I think just especially because feelings get even more intense when you're engaged and they get even more intense when you're married. And the reason why is because there's new levels of commitment there and so again, like taking the pressure off by having the conversation earlier so that you're already establishing that I think just leads to greater results and greater success in really understanding one another. I think also like if you already are engaged or you're already married and haven't established those, it's not the end of the world. You can have this conversation, like, I'm not saying that your marriage or your relationship is failing or is doomed because you haven't had this conversation. I think that now's the time. Just start with that. Start it, because it is so important and there are so many, like it's so vulnerable to connect with people on that level and to connect with your partner on that level. And so to really make sure that you feel safe and understood and on the same page, that's why we're having this conversation. And so I think when we understand the why, the when really takes care of itself. And that's what I found. There was a time in my life though that I was like, I'm never going to talk about it in a dating relationship because I just don't want to know it's too painful. Or on the other flip side, like four months later when I was like in so much pain, I was like, Oh my gosh, I'm

quizzing everyone down the minute I meet them, and I kind of polarized on both of those ends because I was in so much pain and because I was so scared and I'd seen so many people get hurt by pornography, I'd seen so many relationships in so much pain because of pornography. And I didn't want that. In my own life and either I didn't want to know about it or I didn't want it at all. Right. But I think coming from a place of fear, 'cause that's how I was motivated in both of those cases, it never led to me really understanding the other person and developing a healthy and good relationship. And I'm so grateful that none of those relationships at that time in my life like really moved forward because I just wasn't in a good space. But I also learned in that that I needed to come back to the why and that why is motivated out of a genuine want and desire to really connect intimately with the other person and to feel safe and to have transparency and honesty and no longer became about finding a perfect man who'd never messed up. It became about finding someone who valued honesty and values repentance and valued me and really trusted me with who they were.

Creed:

I love that, Crishelle, I love the fact that you talked about, you're not going to date a perfect man. You know, we're not going to date perfect people and we can't seek after perfection. I mean pornography is a big issue if someone is struggling with that at the time. But there's other big issues too. What if your partner could be just, you know, struggling with laziness, struggling with getting a job, struggling with poor eating habits. You know, we take many different types of issues as we choose to engage with a partner in a relationship. And pornography just happens to be a common one nowadays. And so it's important to recognize that if you have these conversations and your partner, whether it's a girl or a boy, opens up that they struggled with pornography to remember that doesn't mean that's the end of it. But that you can progress with them and see, check in, see where their values are at, if they share your same values and if they're, for example, if they struggle with pornography, it's really important to know how they're dealing with it, how big of a problem is it and what they're doing to take care of it. But just be patient and work with the relationship. But don't just drop it or throw in the towel as soon as you hear that somebody, you know, has messed up with pornography in the past, but gauge the person, not just the struggle.

Crishelle:

Totally. Totally. And I feel like with that, I would just say that there...I was in one, actually a couple of different relationships, when like ultimately pornography was part of the reason that we broke up. And I had a lot of guilt about that for a lot of years. Because I was like, man, I'm that girl. I'm that girl that's breaking up with a guy because they messed up. Right. Which is just compounding their shame. And I think, and looking back at that, and the reason I wanted to bring this up, is that I'm like, you need to make the best decision for you in the relationship, which is why I think it's so important to have this conversation before you're engaged. So there's not added pressure to like be able to make that decision. And I think also what I realized is those relationships that didn't work out, like, yes, pornography was a factor, but it wasn't actually the deal breaking factor. It was more of like who the person was and where they were in their experience. And that's why I chose not to move forward in those relationships. And so whatever you choose, I hope that you can choose in a place of faith and a place of hope and a place of really understanding. And that's why you should have this conversation and that will help you to figure out when to have this conversation and in our next episode, and it might not be our next episode, but in an upcoming episode we're going to have a conversation about how to have this conversation. And I'm so excited about that one because I think that there's a lot of principles that can help you navigate how to have this conversation, what's appropriate to talk about, how to figure out what's not appropriate to talk about. And I'm excited to share some of those ideas and thoughts with you. Again, a lot of these principles are found within that really incredible guide that's found on our website called "Love, trust and truth: Talking about pornography when you're dating." If you haven't already checked it out, check it out. It's a really incredible guide and it helps so much. And as well we are... No, I have nothing more to say, so.

Creed:

Yeah, we're also taking your anonymous stories, we want to hear from you, our listeners. We want to hear your experiences dealing with these topics. So please submit those. You can find a link to share your anonymous stories with us in our show notes, which you can find on your favorite podcast platform. It's just the description for the podcast. Find a link there

or on our website reach10.org. We wanna hear from you and we want to keep continuing this conversation with many different experiences and stories.

Crishelle:

Totally. We also want more people to find our podcast and you can help us reach more people by rating and reviewing our podcast on iTunes or whatever app you use to listen to podcasts. So please take a second to just rate and review our podcast. We are so grateful for your feedback, so A) it's helpful for feedback and B) it helps more people find us. And we want more people to find this podcast so that they can have more resources to have healthier and happier lives. Also we want you to share this podcast, please share what you're learning. Share it in conversations you're having, share the podcast itself. And reach out, reach out to the people that you care about and share these things with them.