

# Teen Shares 7 Tips for Overcoming Pornography

by Claudine Gallacher, MA



A teenage boy reveals how **early pornography exposure** (at the age of **nine**) pulled him towards porn and shares the **seven steps** he used to get porn out of his life.

When I met 16-year old Brian (*not his real name*), I knew I wanted to interview him. His peers would call him a people person, friendly, and helpful. After talking with him for several hours, I agree.

## **Porn Talk is Common in Middle School**

Brian was exceptionally open with me about his personal experiences with pornography. He was exposed to pornography (in the form of scantily dressed sexualized females) at age 9. When he was 11, friends told him about Playboy, a term he quickly typed into an iPod.



At some point he realized that pornography was a “bad thing” and that it led boys to see girls as objects. Brian didn’t like how watching porn was affecting him. Still, porn had a powerful pull and he kept coming back to it for years.

“Pornography is constantly talked about in middle school,” Brian told me. “Probably every day you could walk around the lunch tables and hear boys discussing videos they had seen or telling stories about porn stars.” He emphasized that porn was new and exciting for tweens.

By high school, watching porn was so commonplace that it wasn’t talked about as much. But occasionally, Brian would hear about the experiences of friends. Brian knew a freshman boy that said he had to masturbate to porn at least twice a day or he would get the “jitters.” The boy knew he had a problem, but was afraid to tell his parents. Another friend told Brian that he had to masturbate to porn after getting home from a date where he “almost kissed a girl, but didn’t.” The sexual tension he felt seemed unbearable.

## Why Kids Use Porn



“Most boys see masturbating as a great stress reliever. That’s the main reason why they do it,” Brian explained. And with porn, it’s easy. Some young men cannot imagine what boys of previous generations did without easy access to porn.

By the time Brian was almost 15, he decided to get off porn for good. Fortunately, Brian has a good relationship with his parents and they helped him with his goal. Within six months, Brian was able to stop using pornography.

## What did Brian do? 7 Strategies

1. **He sacrificed having Internet on his phone** by deleting his app for the internet. His parents also utilized restrictions (protected by passwords) and disabled the Internet on the phone.
2. **He sacrificed watching some TV shows or movies** with sexualized girls. He learned to be conscious of how the things he saw made him feel. He practiced walking out of the room and distracting himself when images initiated arousal. His parents supported him in this.
3. **He sacrificed his personal email account.** He had given this email to a pornographic site advertisement and was bombarded with inappropriate spam. He terminated this email account and now only uses the email account provided by his high school.

4. **He sacrificed privacy** and left his bedroom door open at night.
5. **He learned to distract himself** any time the desire to watch porn came to him. He'd ride his bike, go to a friend's house, or find other ways to get active and around people.



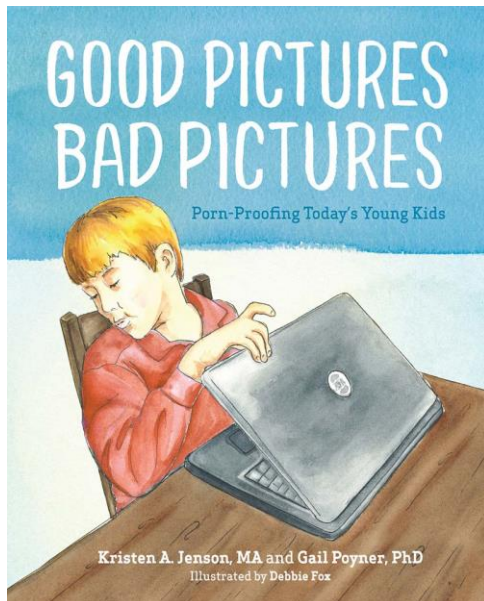
6. **He had lengthy conversations with parents**, who encouraged him, accepted him, and kept him accountable. They often asked him how he was doing with his goal to avoid porn.
7. **He started small.** His first goal was to go one day without porn. When he made it, he tried for two. Eventually, he tried for a week, then two. If he slipped, he got back on track. Brian says, **"Tell everyone the first month is by far the hardest. After a month it gets WAY easier.** I had times I would wonder, 'Why am I doing this?' But I would fight it and remind myself I was doing it because *I wanted to* and I believed it would get better. It has."

## The secrets to Brian's success?

Brian was able to make changes in his life because:

- He was **humble and honest;**
- He relied on others to keep him **accountable;**
- He was willing to make **changes to his environment that limited triggers;**
- He had **a plan to distract himself** when temptations came (like the CAN DO Plan!).

Brian told me that most teenage girls believe, like *Hunger Games* star [Jennifer Lawrence](#) ("...either your boyfriend is going to look at porn or he's going to look at you"), that they have to **compete with porn** to maintain a boy's attention. Though a lot of boys (and girls!) are getting hooked on porn, guys like Brian prove **it doesn't have to be that way**.



We at [Protect Young Minds](#) are hopeful that the tools we provide, like the read-aloud book [Good Pictures Bad Pictures](#), will enable more parents to warn their *young* children about the dangers of pornography. Kids empowered from a young age will know how to protect their brains from the pull of porn. And they'll have the best chance of creating [happy and healthy relationships](#) when they grow up.