

Boredom is the devil's favourite plaything!

Dear Member,

Hopefully, you have reached that point where the strong cravings for pornography or other sexual pleasures have diminished. Although you will still have impure thoughts to push away – the *actual* chemical stimulus produced by your brain has been over written. What you are now having to battle is the habitual craving formed from years of repetitive sexual behaviours developed since your first 'sexual attachment'. This will be discussed in detail during Stage 2 when we look at our formative years.

I have deliberately tried to keep each unit focussed on just one or two aspects of addiction. Each unit is intended to be meditated upon and new behaviour developed from its theme. However, many of you may already have had to address the subject of today's topic – boredom. In my case, pornography and cross dressing took up a great deal of my *free* time. Whether that is the time actually spent participating in the activities or the time spent *thinking* about when and how I was going to 'participate'.

Firstly, let us consider *free* time. I have highlighted this word because of the difficulty I had understanding the concept whilst under the dominion of addiction. I believe that God has allowed us all 'recreational' opportunities in which we can enjoy the pleasures he intended us to have. Whether it is the marvels of nature, the variety of skills we can learn or the charity we can demonstrate to others - free time will be unique to each of us, dependent on our vocation.



It is not a sin to enjoy the gift of life. It is not a sin to *sometimes* while away hours of the day in seemingly 'useless' activity. I am not sufficiently educated to make a correct distinction of what constitutes a prudent use of this time but I do recognise that we must be aware of how we impact on others in what we do – especially our families. In relation to Our Lord, it is easy – he gave us priests and the Ten Commandments to guide our choices.

When we are in our addiction cycle, our time is literally sucked up with sexually related thoughts, desires and activities. We carry out our 'normal' duties with an apparent enthusiasm that deceives everyone close to us. They are not aware that all they are seeing is a 'mask'.

In truth, I spent all my day finding ways to avoid using up time that could be spent indulging my addiction. What is more alarming is just how easy it was to disguise this from those who knew me best.

I have put together a rough guide on how I used my time to help demonstrate the depth of my problem and more importantly, the amount of 'potential' free time I could gain if free from addiction.

Weekdays:

- Once or twice a week I would be up at 3am because I couldn't 'switch off' from pornography
- I would often rise at 5am to secretly watch pornography before work
- I would leave for work early to ensure I could get home earlier
- I would often spend working time daydreaming about cross dressing / pornography
- I would sometimes leave work for an hour to cross dress in private

- Many lunch times were extended for the purpose of looking at female clothing
- I would leave work early to have an hour at home alone to cross dress / watch pornography
- I would spend a couple of hours playing a computer game in the early evening
- I would watch Netflix and other streaming sites after dinner (that was my quality family time)
- I would stay up when others went to bed to watch pornography (often till 2am)
- I would go to bed with bad headaches and my head full of images – making it difficult to sleep.

Weekends:

- Even worse sleep pattern. (I didn't have to work!)
- Saturday afternoon sport (However, this was part of another addiction)
- I would avoid attending family events so I could be home alone cross dressing / watching pornography.
- Sundays, I would find any reason to avoid Mass and Confession. This then allowed me more time to be alone with my addiction and more importantly gave me another week before I would face the 'you need to go to Mass' issue.



This cycle was not only destructive to my health but was also extremely harmful to my family. I didn't just sin against impurity but also in relation to my duties as a parent, a husband and as an employee.

The lies I told myself to avoid attending Mass and the number of sins that I didn't consider 'serious enough' to confess meant many of my Masses were also sacrilegious.

At the worst of my addictive cycle I could lie to myself convincingly that my sins that were 'no longer' mortal or grievous...but merely, venial. My denial was so complete that I actually felt pride in the battle I was fighting against such 'impossible' foes.

So what to do with all that free time you now have?



One of the first things to understand is that pornography saps your motivation and creative urges. You now have to redirect your energy into something productive if you are to continue a successful battle against addiction. Think back to your youth – what did you like to do? What was fun and what were you really good at? Find those interests that exist within you and use them to fill this time.

I cannot find them for you and I cannot make you do them. If you don't make the real effort to do this now then it is very likely you will fall into old sexual habits through boredom.

It is also important to have a range of activities that will keep you engaged in any weather. I think you will be surprised just how many things you forgot you like to do...

My recreational list:

- I read religious books and histories (I now don't read any other type of book)
- I research all aspects of addiction (not just sexual)
- I write daily articles for the website (when I was younger I wanted to be a journalist)
- I have become an avid gardener (I never had the patience before)
- I have rekindled my interest in plastic model kits (I used to win competitions before pornography)
- I spend 'real' time talking with my family and playing games (not when I have no choice)
- I still play a limited amount of computer games but not as a means to avoid other activities
- I have an extensive prayer regime which takes about 90 minutes of my day
- In the evenings I listen to Sensus Fidelium sermons / other talks (with my family or alone)
- I sometimes cook meals and desserts
- Learning guitar and Spanish (badly)
- DIY improvements



My employment:

- Self employed business
- Support worker / Site Administrator for Men of Hope
- Primary Carer for a family member.



Initially, some of these activities felt like a chore and I struggled to find any enjoyment in them. I couldn't concentrate properly and I really didn't want to do them – I wanted my addiction back! However, with perseverance I soon discovered that a lot of my childhood interests fuel the activities I now do. Pornography had stifled so many parts of my life that I am only now just re-discovering...and enjoying. But you have to work at it...

To move forwards in your recovery process you must have this aspect of your life functioning properly. If not, you will quickly discover that idle hands and mind can become play things for the devil once more! This unit is a lot harder than any of the others so don't be surprised if you find yourself tempted to sin – the devil wants to divert you away from healthy recreation.

Good Luck and stay in daily contact with your support.

To complete this unit:

1. List the ways you used your free time during your addiction (Be detailed and honest)
2. Write a comprehensive list of every activity you have enjoyed in your life
3. Start to replace the 'empty' hours with some of the activities you listed
4. Make sure to have a mix of educational, physical and fun
5. Do activities in company and re-engage with other people (forgotten friends?)
6. If you cannot fill a time of boredom, then pray for the recovery of other addicts (work of mercy)