

## Day One Again – Your Path to Freedom.

Dear Member,

Welcome – let me congratulate you on taking that first incredible step toward sexual sobriety. I don't care how many 'first days' you have celebrated...and neither should you! You have not given in to despair – WELL DONE. Yesterday does not matter. Tomorrow has not happened. Right now, you are determined to start anew – that is all that matters.

There is a lot you have to do and you already understand it will not be easy. Over the coming weeks, months or years you will be working through a self-help program designed by us, for us. I am not a professional, I am an addict. Like all recovering addicts, I live one day at a time and I never lose contact with my support group. I never fall into despair and I never, ever, stop talking to those who want to help me. That is what *Men of Hope* has been designed for.

This program is so new that it barely has a completed introductory letter...but in ten minutes, it will. This program has no affiliation and no professional accreditation. What it does contain, or will contain, is a wealth of hard earned and sometimes bitter experiences.

With your help, we aim to learn and profit from those experiences and 'good practices' to eventually produce a reputable and successful guide to recovery.



This is not just 'Day One' for you...but for *Men of Hope* also.

So why is it that we are all so ready to give up on ourselves when things get tough? I have suffered this addiction for nearly 30 years but I only started to fight it 3 years ago. Why was that? I hate my addiction and I hate the damage it has done to me and to those nearest to me. I hate that it kept me away from God; that it destroyed my career and that it very nearly took my family. I hate me?

Brilliant – so I've got all the hate out in plain sight. Addicts are really good at 'hate' but we are even better with blame and guilt. So with all this hate and hurt why did it take me so long to start to fight? The answer will be different for us all. I could suggest that it has something to do with: chemical addictions, broken childhood, over-bearing boss, demanding family, or an unrealistic expectation of faith. All of these, regardless of their truth, have fed my addiction in one way or another. The only one that matters, however, is not mentioned.

*“Deep down, I didn't want to give up. I craved the pleasure it gave. I must have, otherwise I would have given it up for something better...SURELY?”*

This program is to be worked through within the support structure of *Men of Hope*. By agreeing to this you are also agreeing to become a part of the fellowship. You will be given full access to the site and support from your peers via: telephone, text and crypt chat sessions. Ultimately, it will be your responsibility to manage any progression and development.

*Men of Hope* is a voluntary support service and decisions on whether any individual is ready to progress to the next 'Self-Help Unit' is in their own hands, however, we would suggest that this should be taken on peer advisement. (During Crypt Chat sessions)

### The first question you must answer - NOW:

Can I avoid the temptations of pornography without first removing the source. If that source is the internet do I either:

- Use a broadband 'pornography' filter, via the provider
- Use an accountability service / package (free and paid are available)
- Block all internet until I have gained some level of control



This is not an easy question to answer as we all have differing family and working environments. I have found that applying a pornography filter to my broadband 'at source' has eliminated the opportunity to look at images without interfering with my families internet usage. It also allows my children to remain unaware of my issues whilst still keeping them safe from any improper searches. You do not want to risk your family stumbling onto your 'secret' internet history.

Accountability software can be very effective if you have the right support and are already honest about the 'things' that trigger your sexual addictions. It is no good having reports sent to your accountability partner that show you have been avoiding pornography when he is unaware that you actually use YouTube or another media vehicle to fuel your lust. This is something that will be considered in Section 2 as we learn more about our triggers and permission givers.

Blocking the internet entirely is impractical in this age of social media and mandatory online services. It is nearly impossible to book a flight, transfer money or search for a job without first completing an online submission. If you have a family then the children will need access for homework and your wife will also need access to supervise what they are doing online. In short, if you have not yet reached the point of 'full disclosure' then this option could cause large relationship issues.

### But Beware...

When I had no internet access I resorted to:

- impure daydreaming and deliberate fantasies
- Looking at immodestly dressed women and fantasising
- Finding internet cafes and other public places where I could surf undetected
- Using the internet at work and deleting history (I got fired)
- Writing impure stories that satisfied my sexual needs
- Cross dressing

If you do block the internet entirely or have limited access then please try to have the following internet sites de-restricted:

1. [www.menofhope.co.uk](http://www.menofhope.co.uk)
2. [www.chatcrypt.com/chat.html](http://www.chatcrypt.com/chat.html)

## The second question you must answer - NOW:

Do I tell my wife / family?

For many of us this question has already become irrelevant because family already know. They either discovered our secret life by accident or circumstances / despair forced us to tell them. I will not expand on this further because I have no right to. It will be an aspect of Section 2 Units and the confidential crypt chat meetings.

In *my* experience telling my wife early was a big mistake. I had not yet reached a point where I was willing to accept full responsibility for my sexual addiction and had not yet recognised I was an addict. I really only told her because I had run out of lies for my secretive behaviours - which she had discovered. I had done nothing to try and resolve my issues and I was still not willing to give up the cross dressing or masturbation. I wasn't 'honestly' ready to change and I wasn't willing to get help from anyone else. By tearfully admitting all my faults to my wife I effectively made her jointly responsible for my recovery.

I was in 'selfish' despair and though truly sorry for all the pain I had caused was unable to understand just how much of a betrayal of trust this was to her. By making such an admission my wife was naturally disposed to help me recover - that was unfair and unrealistic. She hid all the hurt and betrayal behind a mask of hope. Every time she found I had relapsed she blamed herself. Every time I promised 'never again' she prayed to Our Lady that it would be true. Then one day my wife broke down and left...and I was still selfish and very, very broken.

This decision should not be taken lightly so please, please discuss it with your Spiritual Director first.

### To complete this introductory unit

1. Have had a referral to *Men of Hope* and your membership approved.
2. Have a spiritual director aware of your addiction and willing to provide 'appropriate' support outside of this group.
3. Be able to demonstrate a willingness to maintain regular contact with the fellowship.
4. Recognise and accept that this battle cannot be fought alone – especially during the 'bad times'.
5. Be willing to discuss your addiction and personal history when able to do so.
6. Have taken the appropriate internet option
7. Be ready to embrace 'Day One' as a positive step – regardless of the number of times you have done so previously.

**Day One is a success – every time you have it. So be proud of yourself!!**

