

“LIFE AFTER PORN: 5 THINGS MY HUSBAND DID TO REBUILD TRUST”

“Standing in a dark Las Vegas hotel room with my ear cupped to the bathroom door, I heard a voice that I had never heard before. This was not the man I married eight years ago.”

“I was overhearing my husband ‘chatting with’ and making arrangements to meet with a prostitute later that evening.”

“Immediately fear seemed to strangle me. My body shook uncontrollably at just the glimpse of the depth of darkness my husband was entangled in.”

“This moment became just the beginning of the unveiling of my husband’s secret life of sexual addiction. I was finally seeing that his ‘little problem’ with pornography wasn’t such a little problem at all. The next few days and weeks became his horrendous unveiling of a lifestyle of infidelity, beginning with pornography and spiraling into a limitless pit of sexual sin.”

“Although there were specific things Michael did that helped rebuild my trust, each action would have been meaningless apart from a foundation of true brokenness and repentance. I had seen lots of tears over the years, but genuine repentance looked very different than anything I had ever seen in him before. No longer was he just sorry he got caught or that he had to face consequences, but he was literally sick over where this addiction had taken him.”

“Of course, I could have forgiven Michael without continuing a relationship with him, because forgiveness only requires *one*. However, rebuilding trust requires *two*. It requires a relationship and at least the start of reconciliation. As I worked on forgiveness, he worked on doing anything necessary for rebuilding trust into our marriage. Here are five of those things.”

1. “Commitment to a Full Disclosure of the Truth”

“Initially there were three major dump-truck type confessions of ‘junk.’ But beyond that, he made a commitment to being a ‘truth-teller’ every time a memory was triggered.”

“I got to where I hated the words, ‘Micah, I need to tell you something.’ It was odd. Even though I hated hearing it, those moments of truth were also somehow rebuilding trust. We both knew that if he never disclosed those things, I would’ve never known. Yet he made the continual choice to wipe the slate clean and repair the foundation that had been cracked with lies.”

2. “Took Full Responsibility”

“His lifestyle cost us a lot. It nearly destroyed our marriage, small business, finances, reputation, friendships, family relationships, and testimony—pretty much everything that was important to us. Previously, he was the king of excuses. After real repentance, however, he no longer tried to minimize, deny, or justify his actions or their consequences. He didn’t try to shift the blame to someone else. Instead, I saw him consistently take ownership of his actions by humbling himself before others and me, admitting his wrongs, and asking for the opportunity to make the wrongs right.”

3. “Willingly Set Up Boundaries”

“Initially, I gave him a list of practical things he could do that would help me see that he was sincerely striving for purity. I never had to enforce or nag these issues. He willingly put up boundaries in his life, and then set up others on his own. Boundaries will look a little different for everyone, but some of the boundaries looked like:”

- “Being accountable to other godly men”
- “Submitting to godly marriage counseling and cooperating with anything asked of him”
- “Installing Internet protection and not being on an unprotected computer”
- “Changing cell phone number; getting rid of old contacts”
- “Having no unaccountable time”
- “Giving me a list of all e-mail accounts and passwords”
- “Going to bed at the same time I did”
- “Not watching anything that could trigger lustful desires”

4. “Pursued Other Forms of Intimacy Besides Sex”

“After our separation, Michael initiated a 90-day abstinence period in order to work on building emotional and spiritual intimacy back into our

marriage. That time was both fulfilling and draining. It was draining because issues surfaced that we couldn't gloss over with sex. We had to deal with them. But it was fulfilling because it took the pressure of physical intimacy off the table. It allowed us to actively pursue rebuilding our relationship with physical intimacy as the overflow of our emotional and spiritual intimacy. It also helped to 'reset' his brain chemically, and prove to us both that sex was no longer going to be an idol his life."

5. "Passionately Pursued God"

"Without a doubt, the most important thing he did to rebuild my trust was passionately pursue God. In his own strength, I knew that I would never be able to trust him again. He'd tried in the past to quit viewing porn on his own. The results were always a deeper spiral of degrading sin. I determined that as long as I saw an active pursuit on his part, and I saw evidences of the Spirit's work in his life, then I was going to choose to trust. I may not be able to trust him, but I could trust the Lord in him! This may be a good start, but it's just that...a start. I can still hear my counselor saying, 'Trust is lost by the bucketfuls, and gained by the dropfuls. The only way to rebuild trust is by consistency over a period of time.'"

"To anyone looking in, we were a hopeless case. The sin was just too extensive. It took no less than the supernatural power of God and two willing hearts to do the tough work of obedience. That was six years ago. Despite near destruction, our marriage continues to flourish as Michael continues to walk in purity and submission to the Lord."

(Micah Horner, "Life After Porn: 5 Things My Husband Did to Rebuild Trust," Covenant Eyes, May 12, 2014, http://www.covenanteyes.com/2014/05/12/5-things-husband-rebuild-trust/?utm_campaign=pure-minds-online&utm_source=hs_email&utm_medium=email&utm_content=12779767&hsenc=p2ANqtz-XZudUTe_QTghMHvD3dMVoYHz5JamYn8yq8axA3y5NOEvnRN1tAN_sOx04Ultx4uXt24yhJQiOEbFFX5sf8_kk7Ehbw&hsmi=12779767)