

## Video Games

### Confessions of an addict parent

"Honey, we have to talk."

No one likes to hear these words, especially from your boyfriend, girlfriend, husband or wife. That is why, when my husband said this to me, I became nervous.

"Sure," I said. "What's up?"

"It's about your ... new interests," he answered hesitantly.

"You mean my gaming?"

"Yes, exactly. Honey, I think that you're spending too much time in front of the computer. It can't be good for you. Not only that, but you're not a good role model for Luc."

Luc is our five-year-old son. Actually, I blame Luc for my new addiction. It all started like this...

*At six a.m. one Saturday, while we were still sleeping, Luc ran into our room and jumped on the bed.*

*"Mom! Come and play 'Elmo's Adventure' with me!"*

*"Luc, **sweetheart**, it's too early for that! Give Mommy a few more minutes of sleep and then I will come and play with you."*

*"Mom! Come now! I'm at a really hard part and I need your help."*

*I was **awake** now. I knew that I would not get back to sleep easily so I decided to go downstairs and look at the video game with Luc. On the computer screen, Elmo was **stuck** at the top of a tree and could not get down. I tried to get Elmo to jump. He wouldn't. I tried to get Elmo to call*

## Smart

## Words

**sweetheart** =  
a way of speaking  
to someone  
you love

**awake** =  
conscious, not  
asleep

**stuck** =  
caught, unable to  
get free

**scared** =  
feeling fear

**carefully** =  
with caution

for help. He was too **scared**. This was hard!

Finally, after about fifteen minutes Luc and I figured it out together. I was amazed. This was not an easy game!

Three hours later, my husband came downstairs and found Luc and me – still playing the game.

"This is really amazing!" I said to my husband. "The game is challenging and it really makes you think creatively. Luc and I are solving our problems together. This is so much fun, isn't it Luc?"

"I'm hungry," Luc answered. We stopped playing to have breakfast, but I kept thinking about the game all day.

Video games are challenging. They make you think. Luc and I had to use a lot of different skills to help us solve the problems in "Elmo's Adventure." When we finished the game we felt amazing, powerful, smart.

I decided to go out and buy a video game for adults for me. I bought "Interpol," a game about travelling around the world looking for clues to help you catch international criminals. It was really hard – and a lot of fun! I spent six hours one day and seven hours the next trying to solve the puzzles. Maybe this was too much.

"You are right," I said to my husband. "I am probably spending too much time in front of the computer screen and not enough time with my family. But video games aren't all bad you know. I think that Luc is learning some important skills by playing these games – and they give my brain exercise too. As long as we choose the games **carefully** – no violence and only strategy-type games – Luc should be O.K."

"I also think that one hour a day maximum is enough time on the computer – for you and for Luc," my husband added.

"O.K.," I answered. "It's a deal."

Luc and I still play games – we just limit our time on the computer. And guess what? We even have a new video-gamer in our family: my husband.