

## 448: What to Think When Your Spouse Looks at Porn



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Jody Moore**

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Welcome to episode 448, What to Think When Your Spouse Looks at Porn.

In today's episode, I'm answering a question that came in on our podcast hotline. This question comes from a woman whose spouse is looking at porn and she wants to think about it in a way that serves her. Whether you can relate to this exact scenario or you just want to know, how do you think about a topic that you don't want to think positively about? The fact that you pressed play today means this message is meant for you. Let's do it.

Welcome to *Better Than Happy*. I'm Jody Moore and I'll be your coach today.

Wow, I am having a really good day. How about you? It's Friday as I record this and the sun is shining and I got so much work done this morning and then I ate a really good, healthy and filling lunch. So I feel full but not sick and stuffed. I love that feeling. Trying to get more of that feeling in my life. And then I took my dog Milo for a nice long walk. I talked to my sister. I listened to some coaching and got the blood flowing and my body got some fresh air. It's a beautiful day. And now I get to talk to you on the podcast and I'm so delighted to be here.

So today's episode is going to be my answer to a question that came in through our podcast hotline. So if you weren't aware, we have a podcast hotline now. We're so official. If you have a question you want to ask me about something you hear on this podcast or about nothing that you've heard on the podcast, just a random question in general about something going on in your life, especially something that you struggle with or a goal you're trying to achieve. or you just want to hear my thoughts and my opinion on something.

I'm always happy to share my thoughts and my opinion. But it's meant to help us all on the podcast. So you can call in and leave a comment or question any time at 888 hi Jody M. That's Jody with Y and M for Moore, 888 hi Jody M, also it is 888 445 6396. We choose ones that we think might be helpful for the podcast audience at large and we may play your question. And then I will answer it here on the podcast. So that's what

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we're going to do today. So we're going to start out by playing the question that was left on our podcast hotline. Here we go.

Hi. I have a question about how to choose which thought serves me best. My ex-husband was deep into porn and eventually it led him to cheating on me and the marriage ended. And now I've been married for a couple of years to a different guy and just found out that he's looking at porn too. So I'm trying to take some time to figure out which thought about the circumstance serves me best. Do I make a big deal of it? I told him when we got married it was a deal breaker.

Or do I just tell myself it's not about me, because I've done enough work with my ex-husband to know that porn isn't about me, but neither do I want to live with it for the rest of my marriage. So I'm just trying to figure out what to put on my thought line that's going to serve me best. Thank you. Bye.

Okay, you can see why I picked this question. It's such a beautiful question. I want to thank the person who called in and left it, for being willing to be a little vulnerable and share. I want to give you some help today. And again, I appreciate it because it's going to help all of us learn how to handle situations that are challenging and complicated as we all will have at times in our lives.

So the first thing that you asked me in this question is you said, "How do I know which thought serves me best?" And it's such a great question because the only way we can know the answer to that and I can tell that you're a listener of this podcast. I don't know if you've been in any of my programs, but I can tell you've listened to me because that is the language I often use. I say, "Let's choose a thought that will serve you best."

Because I purposely don't want people to think that what I'm saying is that we should always think positively or that they're even right thoughts or wrong thoughts to think about any particular circumstance. Thoughts are personal and the way that we know which thought is going to serve you best is by deciding what are you trying to create? What do you want more

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of in your life or what do you want less of that you may be experiencing right now due to your thoughts?

Now, here's what's challenging about answering this question. It's difficult for our brains to stop looping on the circumstance because a quick gut reaction to what do you want more or less of in your life is you would probably say I want less of a spouse that looks at pornography. I want less relationships where I don't trust the person, where the person isn't honoring whatever commitments or agreements the two of you have made in your relationship and when you got married. I want less of that.

Notice how that is outside of us. How your spouse behaves, whether or not he's looking at porn, whether or not he's being honest, whether or not he's faithful, whether or not you can trust him. All of, well, you trusting him is internal, but all the other things, your spouse's behavior is external. So that is always, at least when I ask myself this question, what do you want more or less of in your life, Jody Moore? It's, I would like more sunshine and less clouds.

I would like everybody getting along online and supporting one another unless people posting nasty, hateful comments about random ridiculous things. That's where our brains go immediately is to the things we would like that are outside of us. So what we want to do is just redirect it to not the circumstances. We're not talking about what you want more or less of in the circumstance line. We're talking about your result. What do I want to have more or less of that is within my own experience? What do I want to feel more of that I'm not feeling right now?

What do I want to feel less of than what I'm feeling right now? Or it might even be a new circumstance, but it's got to be one that's within my control, something that I can create. For example, do I want to change my body, my health in some way? That's something that's somewhat in my control. As opposed to me trying to change someone else's body? Not at all in my control.

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Do I want to behave differently or show up differently? And that might mean that I want to be more laid back and positive and easygoing and compassionate and forgiving. Or it might mean that I want to be more outspoken and stand up for what I want and have boundaries that I uphold and honor those boundaries for myself. So we're not talking about there being a right or wrong way for you to be, but how do you want to be? What do you want to experience? What do you want to create?

So to the person who left this message, if I were coaching you, that's what I would ask you first and foremost. And I know that's not easy to identify. Don't think that it has to be specific. Don't think that it can't change. It can change, sometimes it does. But the easiest place I always begin with, with a question like this is, do you still want to be married to this guy today?

Usually people are pretty easily able to answer, either I'm not ready to walk away from this marriage. I don't want to get a divorce. Or the opposite, I don't want to be in this marriage. I'm just scared. I don't know how to move on and what to do next. So my guess is you wouldn't be asking me this question if you were the latter. My guess is that your answer would be, I want to stay in this marriage. I'm just afraid of where it might be going. If the porn habit continues or if there's infidelity or something like that, then I'm not going to want to stay in this marriage.

But as of today, I still want to be married to this guy. So that's one thing we know that you want. So what are you experiencing right now that you want to experience differently? Again, do you want to be less suspicious? Do you find yourself constantly checking up on him, checking his phone or his computer or not trusting that he says he's going to be where he's going to be or doing what he's going to do? And if so, do you not want to do that? Or do you want to be, again, more clear about what you're willing to tolerate and what you're not?

Do you want to have boundaries that you uphold? Do you want to have those conversations from maybe a different energy, a different place? Maybe, sometimes I coach people who are like, "Yeah, no, I told him that. I told him I'm not okay with this. And then it just turns into a big fight and he

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feels like I'm judging him and whatever." And I'm like, "Okay, so what you want it sounds like is to be able to communicate your fears, your thoughts, your feelings. What you're willing to tolerate, and what you're not from a place of vulnerability and openness, not from a place of attack or defense."

Is that what you want? Do you want to be able to have more open and what feel like more useful and real conversations? Do you see what I mean? There can be so many things that you might want. You might want to feel more empowered. This is common, is, I coach people who, what we realize after a lot of discussion, is that we're feeling victimized. And that might be the case for you. I'm not sure based on what you told me. But you might be feeling afraid that something's going to go wrong in your marriage like it did in your first marriage.

That your husband is going to be unfaithful, or that your marriage is going to end and that you're going to then experience all the pain that I would imagine you experienced the first time. Is that what you're afraid of? And if so, do you want to just be more confident? I am not saying that any of us wouldn't want to try to avoid discomfort like this, of course we do. But what I'm talking about is reminding yourself, listen, Jody Moore, if that happens, we will know what to do and I will be here for you and we will get the help we need.

And yes, it will be challenging, but the worst thing that could happen ever is negative emotion. And I know how to do negative emotion and I will make space for you and I will be compassionate for you and I will get you the support that you need. So we're not going to freak out about what might happen in the future and create problems in the present that aren't even necessary because even if something does happen, I can do it. I'll know what to do. I'll be able to get through it and I'll be there for me.

Now, again, I'm not talking about turning a blind eye and not having conversations. I'm just talking about not feeling your stability, your comfort, your happiness is dependent on any other person or something like pornography. We give pornography so much power when we make it bigger and scarier than it needs to be. And I'm not saying pornography isn't

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terrible and harmful and powerful. It is. I'm saying in my mind, I don't want to spend a lot of time thinking about it and feeding that monster because that takes away my own power.

So I want to remember there are terrible, toxic, horrible things in the world. And I am not immune from them impacting my family or me in some way, but I have me and I have my brain and I have my spirituality. If you are religious and you like to turn to God to get help or you have supportive friends or family, or you know you'll be able to find them. It comes back to telling yourself, whatever happens, I'll take care of you and we'll get through it. Do you see what I'm saying?

That moves you out of that victim place, out of making all these other things so terrible and scary into more empowered and more peaceful and more confident right now.

Today's episode is brought to you by The Lab. If you find what you're learning on the podcast to be interesting or helpful, you're going to absolutely love The Lab. This \$59 a month gym for your mental and emotional health is where we experiment with the concepts from the podcast until we fine tune the way you can use them to create any result you want to in your life. Yes, any result is possible. Achieve your financial goals, your health goals, your random wouldn't it be cool if, goals.

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Here's the next thing I want to point out is, you said to me, "Do I make a big deal of it?" You're like, "I'm trying to figure out which thoughts serve me best." I love that you're doing that. And then the next thing you said is, "Do I make a big deal of it?." So here's what I want to show you. It sounds like you know the model that I teach, the Brooke Castillo Life Coach School

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model. So we have our thoughts and then we have our feelings and then we have our actions.

So when you say, “Do I make a big deal of it”, I would put that in your action line. So you’re asking me, “What do I think about this?” But then what you’re really playing with in your mind is, how do I behave? What do I say or do? And it’s not wrong to ask yourself, what should I do? But it’s true that starting with how do I want to think about this will make it so much easier for you to know what to say or do. Notice even just the discussion we just had about what is the result that you want.

If the result that you want is to not be emotional all the time, not let your emotions hang on whether or not your husband had a good day when it comes to his porn habits. Then what you do might be, I don’t know, have discussions with him. Maybe it’s, “Hey, I don’t want to know when you look at porn. I don’t want to be on that roller-coaster and I’m having a hard time getting off of it. So I don’t want to know about it.”

Or maybe you do want to know, but you want to have somebody that you can call that can help you talk through it and help you process the emotions you’re experiencing so that you can allow them and breathe into them. But not react and have them creating a bunch of drama in your life. Maybe you want to have a close friend or family member that can do that for you. So understanding what you want will help you determine not only what’s going to be a useful thought to think, but also then, what am I going to do? What would my action line be?

One of the things you asked me is, “Should I just keep thinking this thought it’s not about me?” And it sounds like that’s been a useful thought for you and you made a comment about knowing that that’s true from your experience with your previous husband. I absolutely agree with that thought that pornography is not about the spouse of the porn user or the partner of the porn user. It’s about the person using the porn. But here’s how we know what’s the right thought to think.



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We ask ourselves, first of all, do we believe it? Is it believable? If when I say it, you're like, "No, I don't believe that at all." Then it's not a useful thought for you. But if you're like, "I do believe that. I just don't go to that thought often. I forget about it. It's not my go to default thought." But it's still believable, then that might be a good thought.

The next question we ask is, how do you feel when you think it? Do you feel some peace? Do you feel more of what you want to feel? And is that feeling going to generate the action that's necessary to get the result that you want? So again, if the result that you want is to be more outspoken about your own needs and desires, and what you're willing to tolerate in a marriage or not. Then it's not about me, might not be the right thought because I would think that that would generate a feeling of, I mean probably peace, but also sort of a redirecting.

It's a redirection away from, I don't need to think about that because it's not about me. But if what you want is to have more honest conversations, then that thought, you don't want to redirect away and ignore it and block it. So what would be a thought that would generate the confidence, the willingness to be vulnerable, to have those conversations? It might be a thought like, my needs matter. It's my responsibility to share what I want and what I need.

And it's not his responsibility to meet it, but it's my responsibility in the relationship to be open about it. And all I can do is own my side of the relationship, which is be real and tell the truth. Do you see what I mean? A thought like that is going to generate some confidence for me to go, "Hey, I've got to tell you, I'm understanding right now, and I'm willing to forgive what's happened, but I'm not willing to live with this forever." To be clear and communicate.

So the last thing I'll just touch on because again, you asked me this in your question. You said, "I know this isn't about me, but I also do not want to live with this." And you absolutely don't have to, my friend. You can decide that you don't want to live with this for the rest of your marriage, but I would encourage you to tell yourself the truth about where you're at today. And I

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don't know where you're at. I'm honestly not trying to feed you where I think you should be, because I don't know where you should be.

If I were talking to you, I would ask you more questions to help me gauge, are you in a healthy, empowered place around this right now or are you in a really more victimized, this is really maybe even traumatic experience for you? And that would determine the kinds of thoughts that I would offer you to consider. But what I mean by tell yourself the truth is, are you willing to live with it today?

If you thought that your spouse was going to get help, if he's willing to work on this problem in whatever way you guys decide, he would be working on it. And he's willing to make progress and you believe that he's not going to cheat on you and he's going to make progress in this area and it's not going to be an ongoing problem for you. Then are you willing for that to take six months? Are you willing for it to take six years? And again, I don't know what the right answer is. I'm not trying to give you answers. I just want you to own what's true for you.

Maybe it's, I'm willing to right now, but I may change my mind. I don't know how long I'll be willing to tolerate this. Tell yourself the truth. At some point, of course, you want to communicate with your spouse as well, but I don't think that everything you're experiencing has to be communicated to him. I think that you're trying to manage how to best support him and at the same time be the spouse that you want to be that is open and communicative.

Okay, so let's just sum up what we learned here today, which thought will serve me best is a great question to ask yourself. I should say that we always start with awareness of what you're thinking currently. So if I had you on a coaching call that is what I would ask you. What do you think about all of it currently? And I know you have lots of different thoughts but get some awareness as to what you're thinking currently. Make sure you're separating out circumstances from thoughts. And then which thoughts are going to serve me best depends on what result you're trying to create.

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Remember that we can't control circumstances in most cases, but we can always control our results. What is the result you have right now that you don't like and what result do you want? Your current result might be indecision. It might be overwhelm. It might be confusion. It might be that you're defensive and disconnected from your spouse. It might be that you're distrusting. It might be all kinds of things. What is the result that you want? And then make sure not to mix up actions with thoughts and feelings.

It's okay to explore all of them because your thoughts, feelings, and actions are all up to you. And those are going to create your result, but just get clear with yourself about what you're trying to decide. Am I trying to decide how to think, how to feel, or how to act? And ultimately, you're going to want to decide them all, but keep them in alignment with each other in the end. Alright, thanks for joining me today, everybody. Have a beautiful rest of your week. I'll see you next time.

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