



## Is There Hope?



Is it too late? Can I fix this? What do I do next? These questions are often crippling. If any of these questions have invaded your brain in the last few moments, then you're in the vast majority. These questions are normal. This article won't give you all the answers, but that is not the point. The point is Hope.

In a later article, we will discuss "next steps," but for now there is a step necessary to take prior to that. The illusive step is finding and believing there is Hope. Hope is not the notion that we can step into a time machine and go back to how things were before. Recovery and restoration will require transparency, vulnerability, and humility. Hope is believing that things can change for the better.

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Our aim is that people from all genders, jobs, statuses, and stages of life will find themselves reading this article. Maybe your spouse "caught you" looking at illicit material and you have repairing to do; repairs are possible. Maybe you're single and this secret is hiding in the shadows with no one the wiser. There is an old AA (Alcoholics Anonymous) adage which goes "we're only as sick as our secrets." Meaning secrets that stay in the dark continue to grow, we only fight them with light. This is because they have been given the perfect environment to grow. Take a look at mold, it needs a dark environment to flourish but when we shine a light, it can no longer spread. Light and hope metaphors are used to describe each other, this is not coincidence. Hope does not mean it's easy or seamless. Hope does mean things can change, relationships can heal, addictions can be broken, and health can prevail.

**"We're only as sick as our secrets"**

If you find yourself at the crossroad between feeling hopeless and wanting to change, you're in the right place. If we believed people were incapable of change we would be in the wrong business. Humans are resilient. We go through traumatic, difficult, heart breaking, and painful things every day. We learn to cope and adjust. Maybe that's how you found yourself here now, maybe pornography use began as a stress reliever. It was supposed to be a harmless way to cope.

I'll explain it through a story. If one day you find yourself drowning in a river and a tree floats by you, what will you do? Likely, you will reach out and grab the tree. This tree isn't a life boat, it's not even a life jacket. But the tree floats, which means it will keep you afloat. That took strength. Grabbing on and fighting to stay afloat was brave. That is how most



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copied mechanisms begin. We find ourselves in a stressful place, the fight or flight portion of our brain kicks in and we desperately seek a way to survive. The problem arises later. Eventually, we float downstream and find ourselves at the river bank. We start to walk out of the river, knowing we are no longer drowning. But we don't get very far, only then do we notice it is because we haven't let go of the tree. We are trying to pull it along with us. This is what recovery is. It is letting go of something that once served a purpose, probably that helped us cope with something very difficult.

We believe there is hope. We believe you can adapt. It won't always be pretty. Restoring relationships can often get worse before it gets better. But it CAN get better. You just have to be willing to do the hard work of letting go, learning new skills, and allowing the light in.



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