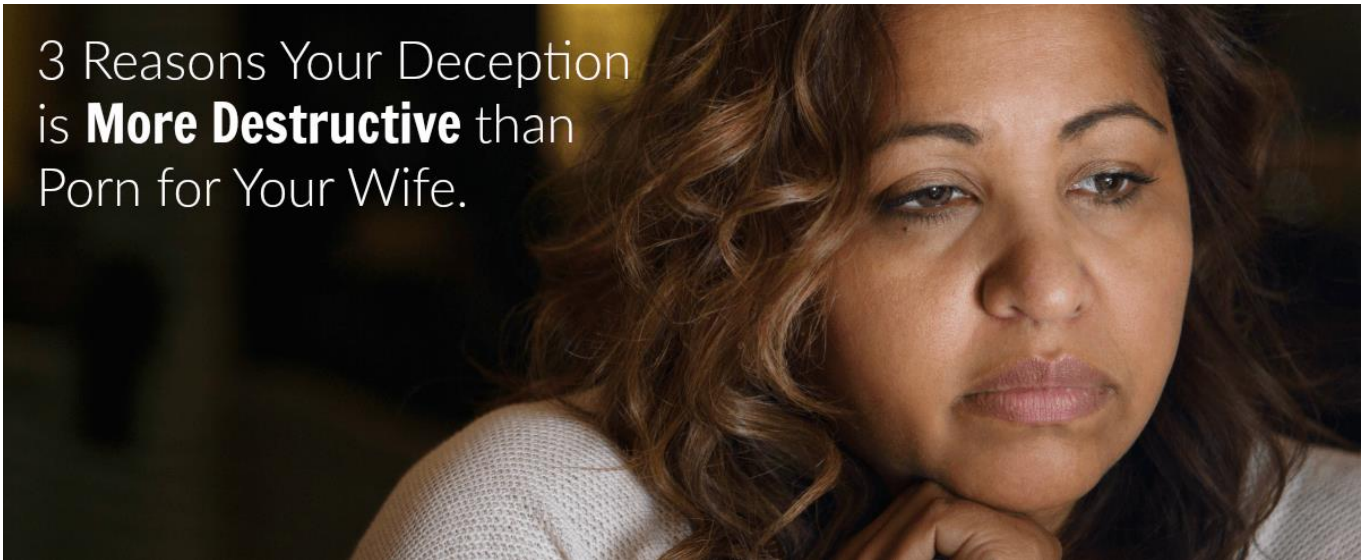


3 Reasons Your Deception is **More Destructive** than Porn for Your Wife.



Written by Carl Stewart, author of "The Porn Antidote: God's Secret Weapon for Crushing Porn's Grip," & "Creating the Life and Marriage You Dream Of".

"I can't keep doing this!" she screams with bulging eyes and face wrenched in a tormented mix of anger, fear, and pain. "I can't keep going through this again and again. I feel like I am going crazy! How can I stay married to a man I can't trust?"

This is the scene I encounter every week in my office as a counselor working with men and marriages devastated by pornography. Her hair is on fire, and he is in panic mode.

Seeing his wife's anger and pain is overwhelming, so he resorts to the oldest trick in the Book (literally) in an attempt to fix the situation. He lies, minimizes, and blames. Adam did it in the Garden, and we have been doing it ever since—with grave consequences.

When I tell a couple that lying and deception are more damaging than looking at porn, the response is shockingly predictable.

The wife looks up to catch my eyes in an "a-ha moment." "That's it! You nailed it on the head!" She felt this truth but couldn't put it into words. She is relieved to have someone understand this realization resonating inside of her.

He looks, well, shocked and confused. He gives me the head cocked "cocker spaniel" look, letting me know this is all Greek to him. "How can that be?" he asks. "I was just trying to protect her from details that would only hurt her more." Another half-truth no one really believes.

Here is what I share with the men and marriages in my office about why deception is worse than looking at pornography.

1. Violated trust cracks the foundation of your marriage.

A fundamental breach of trust in a marriage brings *everything* into question. Wholeheartedly trusting someone to love and protect your heart and to act in your best interest is foundational for marriage. Having that trust violated is an act of intimate betrayal.

"Et Tu, Brute?"

The violation of lusting after other women is painful enough. Lying about it makes things worse. Now she wonders if she can trust you about anything.

Read that last statement a few times, and let it sink in.

She isn't just afraid you are lying about looking at pornography, she is afraid she can't trust you about anything. The naive trust is gone—it is like a death.

Now she questions if you are really at the store, at the gym, or if you were actually checking work email on your phone. It understandably creates a state of paranoia, and she feels like her hair is on fire.

She feels like she lost her best friend. Now your wife's best friend, her most intimate companion, is simultaneously the person she fears the most.

Wives tell me they feel like they are going crazy when this happens. It is torturous, and there is nothing you can say or do to make it all better in the moment.

Interestingly, the *part of the brain that processes relationships is the same part of the brain that processes life and death*

experiences. Whether you hold a gun to my head, or my wife tells me she is leaving me, I will feel the same thing.

This gives you an idea of what your wife is feeling when you lie, deceive, or blame her to take the focus off yourself. It feels like she has a gun to her head—it is horrifying.

Solomon nailed it on the head when he wrote, “*An honest answer is like a kiss on lips*” (Prov. 24:26).

2. Lying after the first disclosure is like trying to put out a fire with gasoline.

Relapse is a part of recovery. This is hard for wives to understand, so they are predictably angry and hurt that you acted out again.

Relapse may take you back to square one. Lying, deceiving or blaming takes you to square negative 100. If you want to make a bad situation worse, this is a great way to do it.

When this process of relapse, deception, and getting busted plays out over and over again, it gets pretty raw for both of you. She is more angry and hurt, and he is tired of the emotional explosions.

Whether it is out of pride or fear, the worst type of deception is the fearful counterattack. Knowing your wife’s suspicions—that you have been looking again even though she doesn’t have the evidence—are dead on, your best defense becomes a good offense.

Attacking your wife and calling her “crazy.” Accusing her of never forgiving you. Thinking “you’ll never trust me so why try.” These are toxic responses to an already bad situation.

The problem is your wife will take these words to heart and actually question her reality. Even if she doesn’t tell you or show you she is doing this, it is happening. When she questions her grip on reality, it is another experience of free fall—out of control and hopeless.

When, not if, she later finds out she was right and allowed herself to doubt what she knew to be true, the sense of betrayal is magnified. This isn’t pretty for either one of you.

Please, do not go down this road. If you have been doing this—stop it now. It is psychological abuse, and you are better than that.

3. Repeated deception is death by 1,000 cuts.

Listen closely to what I am about to say: when your wife first finds out you have been looking at pornography, *she is in shock*. This means she is not feeling the full extent of the pain and betrayal.

This is the best and most loving time to tell her everything and to really come clean. Shock is God’s anesthesia, so spill the beans and spill all the beans at once.

Wounds from a friend can be trusted. —Prov. 27:6

Every time you go through the process of rebuilding trust then lying to her again, it deepens the wound. Wives in my office repeatedly tell me, “If I let my guard down, I’ll just be devastated again. It is easier not to trust or to care anymore.” Hearing your wife feels this way is terrifying. It is hard to find much hope in those words, even if she doesn’t completely feel that way.

This trickling out of the truth is torturous—literally death by 1000 cuts. Today, a wife whose husband has repeatedly gone back to porn put it this way, “I’ve been cut so many times that I don’t have any more blood to give.”

Around 75% of the time, the wife discovers pornography rather than the husband confessing on his own. Repeated deceptions drive home her belief: “I can only trust what I discover, and I am convinced there is always more to discover.”

Honesty really is the best policy. Not just for your wife and her recovery—it *is in your best interest*. Being honest about the good, the bad, and the ugly actually re-builds trust with your wife and helps her heal. That means less time on the emotional roller coaster of recovery.

Think of it this way: honesty creates emotional safety for your wife (and therefore for you). Emotional safety is the foundation for any type of close relationship. Honesty and transparency actually help repair a cracked foundation (i.e. using tools like Covenant Eyes and letting her see your phone, e-mail, texts, and iPad without pouting).

I can’t overstate how powerful it is to tell your wife the truth, *even when it is painful*. Every wife I have worked with emphatically tells me how helpful and healing it is when her husband tells her the truth. It is a literal and visceral relief for her.

Even if she is upset because of what you are telling her—she will respect you and be more able to forgive you if you are honest with her. I beg you... no, I dare you, to try it.

The next time you feel the reflexive urge to lie to save your own skin, or “protect your wife” from further pain, picture yourself standing over a camp fire with a bucket of full of gasoline. What you are about to do will not help anyone.

If you want to keep your eyebrows, I recommend telling her the truth.