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A Unificationist Perspective on Masturbation

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This essay is to help inform Unificationist pastoral and parental guidance regarding sexual matters, and to assist individuals within the faith community to reconcile the confusing messages from popular culture and mainstream psychology with their aspiration to sexual integrity.^[1]

It is based on my professional experience as a licensed mental health counselor trained in marriage therapy and who conducted a private practice specializing in compulsive masturbation and pornography use, a pastoral counselor to our members over the years, the first director of the High Noon sexual integrity program, and co-developer of the three levels of the American marriage Blessing preparation workshops.

It is rooted in the concepts of Divine Principle, the published speeches of Sun Myung Moon and anecdotes about him, and draws from the work of Yoshihiko Masuda, Ph.D. in his *True Love, Sex and Health*, published by Cheong Shim GST University Press (2009)^[2], and "True Love and Heavenly Sex in the Age After the Coming of Heaven," a talk given in Prague in 2007^[3]. I also borrowed from my prior reflections and research as a co-author of *Educating for True Love: Explaining Sun Myung Moon's Teaching on Morality, Family and Society* (2006)^[4], with some of this essay adapted directly from that book.

Unificationist Paradoxes

The Unificationist faith is full of intriguing paradoxes and extremes. It holds sex outside of sacred marriage as the gravest sin, the very origin of all evil and suffering. At the same time, it exalts sex within sacred marriage as the holiest of communions among husband, wife and God.

Another related paradox is while there is a strong emphasis on prayer, denial of bodily appetites and other efforts to mobilize spiritual forces, simultaneously it views the physical body and all its natural processes as holy^[5] and invaluable for spiritual growth.

A third paradox is upholding an uncompromising standard of aiming for such complete integrity and empathy with God's heart that we are incapable of sinning, while also teaching that even the worst criminals are cherished by God and every person will eventually be fully restored to heaven.

Sun Myung Moon embodied and harmonized these extremes^[6]. He would pray for hours on end, and caution followers to ruthlessly fight their physical desires, especially sexual urges. On the other hand, he was an earthy fisherman who delighted in talking, also for hours on end, about the great significance and joys of marital sex and how to make love well. He pushed followers to make supreme sacrifices to ease the divine suffering, yet he showed tremendous compassion to individuals grappling with inner conflicts and could offer measured and accessible guidance.^[7]

Hence, when we come to the topic of masturbation, which Father Moon seems to have spoken little about in recorded speeches, we might lean towards forbidding it as a selfish, sinful act. On the other hand, we might frame it as a relatively harmless way to relieve physical tensions -- indeed, maintain sexual integrity and prevent sexual sin -- if kept within moderation.

Ownership of the Sex Organs

Yet Father Moon's central teaching about sexual ethics certainly suggests that adult masturbation is at least mistaken or immature, if not immoral. He observes that the sex organs are only part of our bodies that fulfill their purpose through someone else. Let's consider this for a moment.

The genitals don't just fulfill their purposes of bonding and reproduction through their counterparts within the opposite sex. They are also most fully experienced by their owner through the other. The man must offer his body to the woman for her to experience the full meaning of her own physical sexuality, and vice versa. In other words, the husband will most fully feel his penis when gripped by his wife's vagina, and a wife uniquely experiences her own vagina when filled by her husband's penis. (I say this without reference to what

technologies can do. I also recognize that a woman's clitoris may not be stimulated to orgasm by intercourse alone.)

Therefore, our sexual organs are not ours to do with what we please. They belong to our future or present spouse^[8]. We are their caretaker of our genitals, but our mate is their owner. Father Moon says it quite bluntly: "You are only the custodian of your sexual organ, which exists for the sake of your mate, who has true ownership. You therefore have no freedom to abuse those parts."^[9]

This view echoes and focuses what the Jewish, Christian and Islamic scriptures also say in their ancient wisdom. "The believers are... those who guard their private parts except with their spouses." (Qur'an 23.511) "The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; and likewise, also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does." (1 Corinthians 7.4)

The Jewish tradition goes so far as to give wives the right to regular and satisfying sex (the Torah even stipulates the frequency and quality according to his occupation); the wife has no similar obligation except she may not refuse sex to punish him.

Of course, this divinely ordained entitlement and sense of ownership are based on an attitude of sacrificial love and respect. The Bible goes on to say that, "Even so, husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself." (1 Corinthians 7.5).

The spouse has no freedom to demand or abuse their mate's sexual parts. The duty of spouses to satisfy each other sexually is just part of the larger promise to care and deny themselves for each other, to be one in true love.

Sacred sexuality

Going one step further it might be helpful to also remind ourselves that Unificationism declares the sexual organs to be the most holy creation of all, God's most magnificent masterpiece: "The most precious part of the human body is not the nose, the eyes, the hands, or even the brain. It is the sexual organs, the main organs of love... [and] sanctuary of life."^[10]

When a spiritually mature husband and wife unite their genitals in lovemaking, there is a mystical meeting of the human and divine at that moment, for the enjoyment of all three participants, and generating tremendous creative power.

In marriage, lovemaking strengthens the partners' bond and renews their love^[11]. It reminds them of the uniqueness and exclusivity of their relationship. It helps to mend rifts and revitalize their connection. Learning to harmonize one another's opposite sexual responses represents the larger growth challenge of marriage, bringing two individuals into one.

The constant potential for creating a new life inherent in lovemaking symbolizes the greater purposes seeking to work through the couple beyond their control. When the partners lose themselves in orgasm, it reminds them to surrender to joy and play, and to humbly thank God and each other for this gift.

Thus, the implications of our use of our sex organs are immeasurable: "All love, life, and lineage are connected with the sexual organs of men and women. Heaven or hell begins at this point."^[12]

This echoes the sentiments of the Jewish and Christian traditions, which see sex relations as so important that they are forbidden outside the responsibilities and commitment of marriage. And the ancients included all sexually arousing activities in this category.

Given that the human genitals are so sensitive and orgasm is so intense, no sexual experience is insignificant. This is particularly true of those in youth. Each early sexual event is a learning moment, one that imprints the brain profoundly. These experiences are either training the brain to associate sex with high principles of the heart and conscience, or emptiness and instinct.^[13]

Father Moon reminds us that the act of sex is "lovemaking," that is, it generates an emotional bond between two people (the pretenses of our current hook up culture notwithstanding).^[14] It also miraculously creates life and perpetuates lineage.

Sexual love is arguably the most momentous of ordinary things that ordinary people do, given its far-ranging implications. One liaison can lead to the birth of a person who changes history for countless generations. Or create a bond with the wrong person such that it divides a family and even a community. Our genitals have this power.

The Holy Place

Christian scripture says, "Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral man sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit...?" If the body is this temple, then Unificationism asserts the sexual organs represents the innermost sanctuary, the holiest place, the shrine and palace of love.^[15]

The sexual organs truly represent our spirit and heart. Just as these organs cannot fully fulfill their purpose without our mate, so it is with the desire of our hearts for deep and intimate companionship -- this desire can't find fulfillment without our mate either.

Indeed, the heart and the sexual parts are mysteriously connected. One moves the other. We know that oxytocin and other neurochemicals are involved but it is still mysterious, this reinforcement between the communion of lovers' hearts and union of their genitals.[\[16\]](#)

Is masturbation a sin?

From this standpoint, it appears clear that engaging in sexual activity with someone other than the spouse is abusing the gift that we have been entrusted with. This is the most serious implication of the teaching, and Unificationism has insights that elaborate on the destructive consequences.

But it also follows that masturbating might be a problem too. It would seem our sex organs are not intended by God to be our private amusement park. Male and female genitals are designed for one another, not for reaching climax by mimicking the sensation of intercourse using hands or other means.

At Cheong Pyeong, the Unificationist international training center, husbands were cautioned that indulging in masturbation while living with their wives is wrong. On the other hand, according to Masuda, Father Moon allowed that husbands who will be months if not years away from their marriage beds on religious missions may masturbate while recalling their wives.[\[17\]](#)

It seems clear that although Father Moon was not opposed to sexual self-stimulation strictly on principle, masturbation under ordinary conditions of living with one's spouse is a sin, inasmuch as it violates God's purpose and desire.

Infidelity of the heart

In the Catholic tradition, this issue has long been unambiguous. Masturbation is "an intrinsically and seriously disordered and sinful act," which has nothing to do with the self-giving and uniting purposes of sex.[\[18\]](#) Likewise, "Jews are rabbinically forbidden to engage in... masturbation," declares one source.[\[19\]](#)

We also cannot ignore Jesus's famous reference to the problem of sexual fantasy. He warned that thinking of a person lustfully is committing adultery within our heart.[\[20\]](#) Certainly this covers someone bringing themselves to orgasm while thinking of someone to whom they are not married. Though the Bible says little that is directly relevant about masturbation per se, this teaching certainly indicts the sexual fantasies that accompany self-pleasuring as sin.

Sin, guilt and shame

Even as we understand the activity to be sinful, ironically, discussions of sin can do more harm than good when dealing with those indulging in masturbation. Guilt and shame over sin tend to readily become excessive and unproductive, aggravating stress and distress that might already be poorly coped with in the first place through sexual gratification.

Often the notion of sin feeds into doubts about being loveable and acceptable to God, which is particularly unhelpful for the child or adolescent or sex addict who needs to learn to trust in divine power and love. In other words, beyond a certain point, religious guilt and shame can just make the habit worse, and foster more discouragement, despair and isolation.[\[21\]](#)

In addition, research suggests that sexual arousal plus guilt ends up creating a mix of the usual dopamine plus adrenaline (from the fear of punishment). This combination is more potent than arousal without guilt, and can train a young person to get used to that experience. This is why many people crave pornography or actual situations involving what they think is "dirty," illicit and forbidden -- to reproduce the enhanced high they remembered in their youth.[\[22\]](#) This is one more reason why using guilt and shame to curb masturbation are counterproductive.

It is probably most useful to emphasize that, as with any moral error, the significance of masturbation being sinful is not that the Divine Parent rejects us when we participate in that behavior, but rather that the consequences of natural law punish us and cause harm to others, whether we notice this or not.

It is also to note the difference between adult masturbation and that of children and adolescents.[\[23\]](#)

Teenage masturbation

Masturbation is a common arena for self-exploration for young people past puberty, who discover the pleasure of orgasm either by accident or through the guidance of others.

Yoshihiko Masuda, author of an authoritative Unificationist sexuality guide, concedes this is nearly impossible to prevent, and excusable in the young adolescent. It can become a repetitive source of pleasure to provide comfort to deal with boredom or distress, however, and in this it is similar to the toddler who sucks her thumb.

Thumb sucking

The common habit of thumb sucking provides a useful reference point in several ways. Both behaviors use a body part for a purpose for which it is not designed. Both behaviors trick the body into responding as if another activity were going on. Both are commonly self-discovered as part of childhood. Both tend to be outgrown and cease on their own (at least this was true for masturbation before the days of ubiquitous internet

pornography). Both can be destructive if carried on too intensely and/or for too long (prolonged thumb sucking can distort the growing mouth and teeth, for example).

Comparing masturbation to sucking the thumb is useful to remind us that immaturity is naturally at least somewhat self-centered, so the selfish use of the genitals is simply what we might expect in youth. But as people mature and take on greater powers and responsibilities, they are expected to shed selfish behaviors, because selfishness becomes that much more damaging to others and ourselves. This can be applied to the juvenile behavior of masturbation.

One more related idea: Toilet training is one of the milestones of maturity for the toddler along with giving up thumb sucking. Control of the excretory functions is the first big physical control challenge for a child.

We could argue that the next great physical discipline challenge is presented after puberty. It too involves the pelvic area, but this time it is the reproductive organs. Control of sexual urges is another milestone of maturity, but one that many adults never fully achieve.^[24]

While on this subject, it is pertinent to remind ourselves of the basic premises of spiritual and emotional maturity: self-control and discipline of the body. Father Moon said his motto was, "I must control myself before I desire to control the universe."^[25] This builds on the foundation of the Bible's words: "I discipline my body and make it my slave,"^[26] and "know how to possess our bodies in sanctification and honor."^[27]

What is not masturbation

One point to clarify is what is not included in our topic of masturbation. For example, we have orgasms and ejaculations during sleep. In men, the release of semen during sleep, called nocturnal emissions or wet dreams, is not masturbation.

This is a natural and involuntary process in especially younger men to clear out stale semen and sperm -- and why neither masturbation nor partnered sex is necessary for that particular health purpose. Women also can readily have orgasms during sleep but unlike men, show no physical evidence.

Some make the case that erotic dreams are the cause of this phenomenon, and that a person can pray and cleanse their thoughts to discourage such dreams. In other words, there is the argument that people can be responsible for such nighttime orgasms, and that even they might be masturbating while asleep.

Even if there may be dreaming involved, unconscious self-stimulation or even the involvement of the spirits of deceased persons during sleep, pinning responsibility on the sleeping person is unreasonable fault-finding. Given the many unconscious early childhood and unknown ancestral factors affecting all of us, no one should be held accountable for what occurs during sleep.^[28]

In addition, for those who interpret both orgasms and ejaculations during sleep as well as masturbation itself to be a form of "spiritual fall" resembling our first ancestor's intercourse with the wholly spiritual being, this is an invalid interpretation, according to Masuda.^[29]

Now let's take a practical look at masturbation, both the possible benefits and problems.

Possible Benefits of Masturbation

Regarding specific benefits, some argue that having some experience in self-pleasuring allows you to understand your own arousal and therefore you can communicate this to your spouse to help him or her to bring you to sexual satisfaction.^[30] However, this kind of pleasuring can readily be done in the presence of and with your spouse as part of your shared sexual explorations in the beginning of your marriage.

Mutual masturbation between spouses can also have a place in your repertory of lovemaking, especially during the late stages of pregnancy or during illness or other time when physical challenges make intercourse difficult. It is ideal for one spouse to bring the other to orgasm in other ways when intercourse is not possible.

During Separation

When spouses are separated for long periods of time or one spouse has an extended illness or exhaustion, masturbation may be an appropriate option for occasional relief of sexual tensions, especially if the spouse knows of this practice and is kept in mind during the climax.^[31]

The fullness of Father's guidance to missionaries was that self-stimulation was permissible, "When a husband and wife must live apart for a long time... [and] if a husband yearns with a pure heart and longs one hundred percent only for his wife while masturbating."^[32]

Notice the two conditions stipulated. One is a long separation, so this was not meant to provide an excuse for husbands or wives to indulge themselves due to a lack of lovemaking with their spouses or as a way to avoid their mates.

The other is a sincere, focused longing for the spouse as the object of sexual arousal and climax. "One hundred percent only for his wife" means not looking at or imagining others. "Yearns with a pure heart" suggests it is a desire for the mate as a whole person, not just his or her body as an object of sexual arousal.

Needless to say, these stipulations are clearly meant to exclude the typical accompaniment to married masturbation -- pornography or pornographic fantasies.

Health Reasons

Father Moon has declared, "Sexual satisfaction is absolutely necessary for a woman's health."^[33] Research confirms that married lovemaking fosters optimal health especially for women.

Regular sex -- let's assume one or two times a week -- promotes better sleep, relieves stress, improves immunity, boosts women's libido, bladder control and resistance to depression, protects men against heart disease and prostate cancer, lowers blood pressure for both, relieves all manner of pain, and even improves brain performance.

Masturbation does not seem to deliver these health benefits to the same degree.^[34] However, if a husband or wife cannot have marital intercourse or enjoy any kind of genital sex-play due to the spouse's long term unavailability, and if the partner agrees, it may be appropriate for a spouse to employ masturbation for health reasons.

Speaking of health, we have to acknowledge that for centuries, one treatment for women's nervous issues (until recently called hysteria) was for a doctor or nurse to masturbate them. This would temporarily alleviate nervousness, anxiety, fainting and irritability that until even in the 1950s was considered widespread.^[35]

Needed for singles?

Some of these benefits seem to transfer to those who have orgasm by whatever means, so many experts recommend masturbation for single persons. However, this has to be weighed against the many detrimental effects noted above.

And besides, it makes sense that sex would be advantageous for young adults because it is included among all the other myriad advantages that *marriage* holds -- for health, wealth, maturity and satisfaction. In other words, the real need people have is for marriage, so the answer is not solo sex; it is committing to a partner in early adulthood and helping to fulfill each other's many needs.

Exaggerated sexual "needs"

Let's take a moment to explore this unquestioned Western assumption that all people have sexual "needs" that must be satisfied one way or another -- partnered or unpartnered, married or unmarried, at just about any age -- which so often justifies masturbation.

Though our bodies may desire only another body -- or just sexual release -- the heart needs to connect with another heart, to love and be loved as a unique, irreplaceable person. This is essential for mental and physical health. We know, for example, that infants perish for lack of attention and touch from caregivers, and spouses often die of a broken heart soon after their partner passes away. The specific need of adults is for the experience of marital love -- whole-hearted, whole-person love.

Some experts question if sex is even a drive at all since it is so dependent upon learning and will. "Sex is a natural urge, but the role it plays in your life and the importance you attribute to it... is a matter of free choice," concludes psychologist Peter Koestenbaum.^[36] The pioneer sex researchers Masters and Johnson have stated, "In one respect, sex is like no other physical process... [it] can be denied indefinitely, even for a lifetime."^[37]

When opportunity for sex is not available for long periods of time as in military service, interest in it has been known to drop off to zero. Many married couples find themselves needing to schedule time for lovemaking because they otherwise become so busy that they forget. This is hardly on par with the need for food or sleep, which asserts itself within a matter of hours if neglected and becomes stronger, not weaker, the longer it is deferred.

Sexual abstinence then, rather than signifying a state of unhealthy deprivation and frustration, can simply represent a redirection of erotic impulses, a sublimation of creative energies.

Protection from greater mistakes

Then there is the issue of motivation and the lesser of evils. Unificationism allows that intention can help determine if an action is right or wrong, and this appears particularly relevant to this discussion.

If a single or widowed person or even a married person seeks relief and comfort through self-stimulation to avoid sexual involvement outside of marriage, certainly then masturbation can be a relative good. This may not be the most mature and responsible route, but it may be the best the person can do within the limits of their personal development, skills and circumstances.

Other examples might include a spouse using masturbation temporarily to avoid becoming sexually demanding with their partners while they learn to work through their anger and frustration over more primary issues. (Of course, "temporarily" is the key word here -- otherwise, it is simply avoiding the hard work of creating a more harmonious relationship and learning to ask respectfully for what they want.)

Releasing sexual energy

Various Yogic practices are claimed to release and harness single person's sexual urges more constructively and effectively than masturbation. Some involve gentle genital massage, though the goal is relax rather than arouse, and to avoid ejaculation and orgasm. All the practices use breath and mental focus to circulate sexual energy around the body, to energize and create a natural high.[\[38\]](#)

Problems with Masturbation

There is a host of possible practical and spiritual problems associated with masturbating. We have to admit however that many of these issues have not been methodically investigated, though there is anecdotal evidence from the thousands of individuals who are currently seeking to curb this practice in their lives and who document their observations on internet forums.[\[39\]](#)

This discussion is deliberately sidestepping the wider topic of internet pornography, since it has too many dimensions to discuss here. However, we will acknowledge that people rarely watch porn without masturbating and even among those who still masturbate after having given up pornography use retain those images in memory and they continue to influence their imaginations.

Masturbation and pornography have a toxic synergy. It is masturbation which indelibly imprints pornographic images onto young brains and makes it such an intense and pervasive influence in their development. And it is pornography that aggravates masturbation's addictive quality.

Distorted sexual desires

The one area where research points clearly to the dangers of masturbation is in the development of what clinicians call paraphilias -- distressing or dysfunctional focuses of sexual desire. This includes fetishes or being aroused by objects, exhibitionism, sadomasochism and other conditions.

Psychotherapist Michael Sheldon writes, "All paraphilias are primarily reinforced by masturbation."[\[40\]](#) Research shows that during heightened arousal brought on by masturbation, people are much more likely to find all kinds of unusual, morally questionable and illegal activities to be sexually appealing.[\[41\]](#)

The combination of secret fantasies accompanied by orgasm is a strong training force, which is only magnified by the power of internet pornography. One 14-year-old boy reported tremendous distress over learning to be aroused by children due to the child porn he masturbated with over time.[\[42\]](#) Others are alarmed to have developed all manner of bizarre or violent erotic arousal patterns due to pornographic conditioning.

Unfortunately, these distortions of desire that are imprinted during vulnerable adolescence are not easy to remedy. Sheldon further notes:

Each episode of masturbation only further reinforces the paraphilic interest and reduces the possibility of modifying or eradicating it in the future... Once a paraphilic interest has fully developed, it is almost impossible to ameliorate.[\[43\]](#)

Depression and intimacy issues

Multiple studies show a connection between men and women having greater unhappiness with life and relationships -- or having a clinical depression -- and greater frequency of masturbation. This is not necessarily a cause and effect relationship, just a correlation.[\[44\]](#) On the other hand, some research shows greater mental health and relationship satisfaction associated with solo sex, so it is unclear.[\[45\]](#) What is not debatable, however, is that marriage and sexual intercourse are repeatedly shown to protect persons from depression.

Similarly, there is some evidence that the super-stimulation from a strong masturbation habit may actively encourage shyness or social anxiety, an avoidance of relationships. Because the brain's reward system is important for socializing, any intense habit that hijacks that reward system -- such as a sex-related habit -- may rob people of motivation to connect with others. Likewise, those who have anxious and avoidant attitudes towards closeness and trust with others are more likely to favor masturbation over lovemaking with a partner, thus reinforcing those attitudes.[\[46\]](#)

There are countless testimonies of people reporting that they lost their anxiety, depression and other issues when they stopped their masturbation habit.[\[47\]](#)

To sum up:

Masturbation has been associated -- mainly among men -- with less sexual activity with a partner, less sexual and relationship satisfaction, higher sexual dysfunction, and lower satisfaction with mental health and life in general.[\[48\]](#)

Addictiveness

Because orgasm is such a strong experience, it is natural that a depleted period follows as the brain returns to normal. It is also natural for many people that this period of low energy and mood -- especially when aggravated by depression, anxiety or guilt -- can translate into cravings for more orgasm to feel better. In other words, urges to masturbate can get worse the more they are indulged, particularly if it is every time they come up.[49]

As with sugar and video games, masturbation is simply easily habit-forming. It can cause a cycle of sexual frustration that can never be quite satisfied, like drinking salt water. Studies show climaxes by masturbation are only a fraction as effective in reducing sexual desire as compared to partnered intercourse.[50]

In addition, women find the hyperstimulation of vibrators to be particularly problematic. Almost half the users in one study expressed fear of becoming dependent on them.[51]

Sexual problems

Masturbation is more common among those reporting various problems of sexual functioning.[52] It is not hard to imagine how this could happen. If a boy started masturbating at age 13, say, and did this three times a week, especially with the current level of social and cultural support as he got older, he may have engaged in such self-pleasuring thousands of times before getting into a committed relationship in his late-twenties as most men do. It seems likely that such training as the brain was developing has profoundly conditioned the brain and sexual response for solo sex -- not in a way that encourages the best sexual functioning long-term with the same partner.[53]

Risk of reduced capacity for orgasm

Research shows that for many women, unlike men, the ability to experience orgasm is learned from experience. Many experts have assumed that if women masturbate, it can help them become more orgasmic during intercourse. However, extensive studies have shown no such benefit. Despite the recent widespread practice of self-pleasuring among women in Finland, for example, there has been no increase in capacity for orgasm; in fact, rates have declined.[54] Given that married women report the most sexual satisfaction, it seems likely that the best situation to learn to be orgasmic is in a secure and loving relationship, not alone.

Quick climax

Many men commonly masturbate in a way that trains their body to ejaculate quickly, which is exactly the opposite of the ability they need in marriage to bring their wives to sexual satisfaction.[55] The skillful lover seeks to sustain his erection long enough to allow his wife to savor the sensation and possibly come to climax this way, which may take many minutes.

Premature ejaculation is the source of a lot of frustration, embarrassment and even shame for husbands. Though no research as yet confirms that masturbation is a contributing factor, it is reasonable to assume that it does not help.[56]

Friction and frequency

The carefully self-calibrated friction of using hands or some other aid to masturbate over time can prove problematic in the marriage bed. No spouse can ever duplicate those sensations, or at least not without a learning curve that the long masturbating spouse may have no patience for.

In addition, no mate can provide the quick and predictable climax that masturbation brings, so it tends to set the person up for disappointment. "I can do it better myself, with less hassle" is the inevitable pattern of thinking that must be resisted, and many eventually succumb. Recall the scolding given to husbands at the Unificationist workshops in Cheong Pyeong; masturbating while married is not a rare problem even among highly religious spouses.

Reinforced immaturity and selfishness

The most obvious problem with habitual masturbation is the training it gives in using the part of ourselves solely designed for bonding with and dedicating ourselves to another -- our genitals and sexual expression -- and using them for personal gratification. That impulse that would lead us to grow and expand our hearts, minds and lives is instead turned inward, to tend to keep us small and immature. Again, the analogy to sucking the thumb seems apt.

In the worst-case scenario, the long masturbating mate finds ordinary intercourse unsatisfying or even frustrating, and their spouse may discover them later masturbating to achieve orgasm.

In addition, masturbation is essentially orgasm-on-demand. Given that partnered lovemaking depends on the availability and preferences of the other, the problem is obvious. When someone is accustomed to having orgasm on their own terms and timetable -- and this can sometimes be daily -- then adjusting to the partner's inclinations can be challenging, and the basis for demanding behavior and resentment.

This is captured well by the British author, C.S. Lewis:

For me the real evil of masturbation would be that it takes an appetite which, in lawful use, leads the individual out of himself to complete (and correct) his own personality in that of another (and finally in children and even grandchildren) and turns it back, sends it back into the prison of himself, there to keep a harem of imaginary brides.[\[57\]](#)

Entrenched solitary habits

When two truly virginal people marry, they can discover lovemaking together and learn how to accommodate each other. They have what Buddhists call the "beginner's mind" -- open, eager and free of preconceptions and expectations. They are easily delighted and the pleasure of their shared experience overshadows each other's clumsy first efforts.

On the other hand, when one is technically a virgin but has a long history of sexual self-gratification -- and especially when it has been fueled by pornography -- then the innocent mind is long gone. The lovers are unequal as learning partners. The masturbator has all kinds of sexual preferences, solitary behavior routines, arousal patterns and often inaccurate, fantasy-fueled preconceived notions about what sex should be like.

The highly opinionated spouse tends to dominate their early lovemaking experiments and explorations, pushing for this, being unsatisfied with that, and wanting what the other spouse is unaware of, too inexperienced to provide or as yet uncomfortable with. How can this be helpful?

Relational laziness

Good sex in marriage requires the skill of effective yet sensitive communication of your likes and dislikes. Masturbation makes this skill unnecessary. It thus promotes laziness and self-absorption, and turns what is naturally supposed to be a shared experience that fortifies a relationship into a solitary, selfish pursuit.[\[58\]](#)

Orgasm is more challenging in the context of the actual relationship between a man and woman, but it is far more satisfying. In fact, brain studies show that intercourse produces four times more prolactin than a masturbatory climax, and prolactin is responsible for the quality of orgasm and sexual satisfaction. In other words, one could argue that compared to the potential joy of man/woman intercourse, the pleasure of masturbation is a mere shadow, what one author called "imitation orgasm."[\[59\]](#)

Indeed, masturbation can make marriage itself seem unnecessary. Many have observed that the unprecedented scope of habitual use of masturbation and pornography has changed dating and mating patterns worldwide. In Japan, for example, two thirds of those under 35 years old are not in any romantic relationship at all, and half of those are virgins.[\[60\]](#) The young people themselves give masturbation as the cause. Twenty percent of Australian porn users prefer it to sex.[\[61\]](#) Why pursue a relationship when fantasizing and gratifying oneself is so much easier?

That quote from C.S. Lewis continues:

And this harem, once admitted, works against his ever getting out and really uniting with a real woman. For the harem is always accessible, always subservient, calls for no sacrifices or adjustments, and can be endowed with erotic and psychological attractions which no real woman can rival.[\[62\]](#)

Unificationist John Lowen flatly asserts that male masturbation with pornography is "the scared response to a woman's God-given power."[\[63\]](#) Both sexes use this practice as an illicit way of managing their need for -- and anxiety about -- the opposite sex.

Cheap escape through fantasy

Fantasy can be a harmless diversion that renews us for stronger activity in the real world, or it can be an intoxicant that saps our motivation and keeps us from gaining traction towards our goals. Masturbation to sexual fantasies provides a false sense of receiving comfort, nurturance and affirmation while doing nothing, giving nothing and achieving nothing. It is one more example of using a physical activity to attempt to meet emotional and spiritual needs. At the very least, we are distracted from pursuing more satisfying and growthful activities.

Ungroundedness

The genital play of a child is purely a sensual experience. They enjoy the sensations and remain grounded in the body. Though they may come to rely on this distraction longer or more often than might be ideal, this kind of childish masturbation is a wholly physical pleasure like eating ice cream or sucking the thumb and as such is rather harmless.

The self-stimulation of the adolescent and adult -- and the child corrupted by sexualized media -- is fundamentally different, however. This kind of masturbation is accompanied by images and memories that are

amplified and animated by imagination. In this way, the activity takes the person more and more away from the here and now reality of the body and helps them escape into an ever more richly populated fantasy world.

Apart from the problem of leaving the real world where actual growth and solutions can be found, there is the issue of the person developing the habit of associating sexual sensations with focusing within themselves.

Focusing within and savoring our own bodily sensations -- what experts call entrancement -- is a common way to enjoy lovemaking. But a flesh-and-blood spouse likes a partner who is at least occasionally focuses outward and is emotionally present, engaged and responsive to their subtle signals, moment to moment, not someone always enraptured by visions in their own head -- not to mention visions which probably exclude the spouse. This is just another dimension of the problem of training ourselves in non-relational solo sex.

Crippled motivation and performance

Many men swear that the habit drains ambition and drive.^[64] One blogger has sworn off the habit because it damages his professional performance: "When I masturbate, I become... lethargic, and my writing becomes limp and languid. I lose any motivation to do anything aside from lazing around in front of the TV."^[65] Another blogger writes about how after masturbation, his sexual tension was gone, "[b]ut so was the focus and determination that I had before I looked at the porn the first time. That focus was useful. Transmutation of sexual energy is real."^[66]

Many men and women report a noticeable slump in libido and energy after orgasm that can last weeks, probably due to brain chemistry.^[67]

Indeed, sexual energy is our divine creative force. There are many traditions that speak of consciously channeling this force into genius and achievement and caution against dissipating it in useless sexual activity. Even among sports teams, for example, there used to be the practice of athletes abstaining from sex to boost their performance on the field the next day.

Further, men are particularly motivated to advance themselves in life to attract the attention of a good woman, and to feel worthy of one. Thus, "[w]hen you are able to easily satisfy your needs without the hassle of being rejected by women," notes one writer, "then there leaves little motivation to improve oneself."^[68]

Not Necessarily Natural

The usual argument for the healthfulness of masturbation begins with the unquestioned assumption of its normality. Studies show almost all men and many women indulge in it. How could something so universal possibly be harmful?

However, this assumption is based on the fact that virtually all sexual research uses Western middle class, consumerist and sedentary college students as its subjects, a group that hardly reflects all of humanity. For example, among certain peoples living close to the land in Africa, they have no word for masturbation and have a hard time understanding it.^[69]

Research also shows animals masturbate when caged, and our over-scheduled, "over-screened," "over-seated" modern way of life is a kind of confinement unknown to humanity a few generations ago. "Might today's nonstop pursuit of orgasm may be an attempt to self-medicate in the face of stressful conditions that our brains have not evolved to handle well?," asks one author.^[70]

Tellingly, the first concern about the destructive effects of masturbation was recorded in the 1700s when European children started going to boarding schools -- disconnected from parents, regimented and harshly disciplined, and in other words, confined.

Obstacle to marriage

Many of the problems of masturbation are well expressed by a young Unificationist:

I attended a [marriage preparation] workshop when I was 15 and was told for the first time that masturbation was morally wrong. I became frustrated with my body as I tried to stop. It was like an itch that I had to scratch. Eventually I gave up trying to resist. I thought that I only masturbated because I wasn't having sex. I thought sex would feel much better, and replace masturbation.

I was blessed [in marriage] at 20. I would ejaculate when I had sex, just as I would when I masturbated. It was upsetting to learn that sex didn't feel much different. Also, I became angry at God, because I wanted to experience something better, but couldn't...

As soon as my spouse and I weren't having sex often enough, the itch to masturbate came back and I couldn't resist. During periods of no sex, I would become passive-aggressive toward my spouse, upset that she wasn't sensitive to my "needs"... needs that at the time, I assumed she was supposed to fulfill.

Masturbation is wrong because it goes against what the sexual powers were designed for, because it is inseparable from illicit fantasies, because these fantasies take on a life of their own, and because it draws the erotic longing backward into Self instead of outward. It doesn't "release" lust, but reinforces it, so that next time the temptation is stronger yet.[\[71\]](#)

Practical Guidelines

What then are practical guidelines regarding masturbation?

Ask your spouse

Given the many detrimental aspects of masturbation especially for couples -- not to mention the spiritual cautions against it -- it seems clear that it is something to be avoided as much as possible.

However, for spouses, the fairest way to deal with masturbation is as with a joint bank account. Would anyone like to find out that their spouse has been secretly withdrawing about 25% of their account for their own personal use? On the other hand, this would not be a problem if indeed they both had agreed to it.

In the same way, if a spouse wants to masturbate -- when their mate is ill or on a long trip, for example -- they can ask their husband or wife for permission and if they would like to be informed if and when they masturbate. Then they are treating each other like the co-owner of their bodies that they are. (This requires that each spouse is empowered enough to set a boundary.)

Meet the greater need

For young people not yet married, sexual tensions can be very great in the present culture, where commercial interests constantly seek to inflame sexual desire to sell products. It is not just the sexualized environment that increases vulnerability to masturbation, however -- it is also the endemic loneliness, stress and spiritual emptiness of our hyper-individualistic society. The latter conditions perhaps pose the greater threat.

Wise singles avoid sex-saturated media as best they can, but more importantly, they recognize their need for strong friendships and family connections, healthy stress-relieving pastimes, and spiritually nourishing practices. When tempted to masturbate, they ask themselves, "What do I really want and need?" and seek it.

What is too much?

Inevitably the question arises for youth and other single persons who are unable or unwilling to forego masturbation entirely: How often is relatively harmless? What is excessive?

This answer varies with each individual because of differences in temperament, libido and sensitivity, environmental pressures, past experience and other factors.[\[72\]](#) As a general guideline, a person needs to find the frequency that does not create cravings for more and does not become a substitute for healthier habits to relieve stress or other discomfort. And of course, this activity should not interfere with any responsibilities.[\[73\]](#)

Besides frequency, there is the matter of method. Avoidance of unnatural pressure and friction is important -- no vibrators or strong grip that trains the body to expect what is not part of married lovemaking.[\[74\]](#)

In addition, mindfulness to actual body sensations is best, so that it constitutes simple self soothing. This is contrast to getting lost in imaginary pornographic scenarios of fantasy sex or voyeurism with real people. As much as possible, it is best to imitate the innocent self-stimulation of childhood, anchored in the body and the moment instead of in the head, though this may be nearly impossible in our sex-saturated culture.[\[75\]](#)

Help with quitting

If the masturbation habit has already taken hold, it is smart to treat it as we might an overeating or smoking habit. Get additional guidance and support. Many effective programs exist, such as High Noon's *Ascend*,[\[76\]](#) but most vital is to end the secrecy regarding the habit.

Talking honestly about the struggle not only reduces the guilt and shame around it -- which ironically, as we discussed, aggravates the habit -- but also creates an opportunity to feel accepted and respected unconditionally, despite an embarrassing habit. Experiences of true love like this are potent antidotes to any issues aggravating the problem.

Treat it as childish

For parents of children and teenagers, the way most would regard the toddler's habit of sucking the thumb may be the best response to the masturbation issue:

Accept it as natural, inevitable and innocent at its inception. The child has discovered a pleasurable and soothing activity. They indulge in it for the same reason they like eating fruit: It's enjoyable. For them, it is not a "sexual" activity per se (unless and until it is linked to an overtly sexual activity like viewing pornography).

As with thumb sucking, we can teach the young person it is a childish behavior to grow out of. Until then, tell them it is like any other activity involving their private parts -- do it privately, in the bathroom or bedroom, or other people become uncomfortable. But we can let them know we are always open and interested to hear about how they are managing their genitals, and want to guide them. (Given the shame that most of us grew up with regarding our genitals and sex, we have to overcome quite a bit of embarrassment to avoid shaming and scolding the child and avoid giving the signal that we would rather not talk about it.)

Describing it as immature is more constructive than to frame it as sinful. (I have heard that prior to the Sexual Revolution in the 1960s, it was commonly considered juvenile and a passing phase, at least for boys, even as it was also considered sinful.[77]) Every young person naturally seeks maturity, while avoidance of sin as the single motivation can be problematic. It can create excessive guilt if the young person cannot control their habit.[78] And they may learn to cope by resorting to defensive atheism: "If I just deny God, then I don't have to worry about sin."

As mentioned above, research is clear that healthy and balanced guilt can be an impetus to self-discipline, but shaming and cultivating excessive guilt and shame is demoralizing and reduces incentive to improve oneself.

The Christian ministry *Focus on the Family* strikes the balance this way:

It's important that we avoid heaping guilt on teenagers who find the urge to masturbate almost uncontrollable... We shouldn't condemn anyone for masturbating, but neither should we encourage them to continue in the habit.[79]

Manage feelings

Guide the young person towards more mature forms of managing their feelings, just as when dealing with an older child sucking their thumb. Parental attention is best aimed at teaching emotional regulation and resolving the distress behind the behavior more than focusing on the behavior. In other words, regard the self-stimulation as evidence of possibly excessive anxiety or other unpleasant feelings, and a lack of skill in and too few other outlets for managing those feelings.

Teaching the child to talk about their unwanted feelings with the parents, friends and God, reading uplifting books or listening to music, employing exercise -- these and plenty of other methods are what mature people do to regulate their emotions. Since loneliness seems to be most common distress that masturbation seeks to alleviate, this is the key area for parents to help remedy.

In general, the best route is helping the child to develop a host of healthy habits so that masturbation is simply not necessary. Masuda agrees; he advises parents to "discourage" the habit "but [also] create an environment where it is easier to not do it." [80]

Accountability

Like thumb sucking, concern is warranted if masturbation continues past a certain age and frequency. Perhaps when the child is old enough to understand the full purpose of their sexual parts -- in service to the heart's desire for marriage and the related idea of the ownership of their sexual organs -- then they are beginning to be mature enough to be accountable to avoid masturbation.

Parents can introduce the goal of growing out of the habit and offer to help them with it. They can also certainly sympathize that it takes time to overcome a comforting habit, and in times of stress, it is normal to expect the young person to revert to more juvenile behavior. It may take quite a while for the habit to fade to occasional status (the goal of control may be more realistic than elimination for certain personalities and situations). If the youth seems to be unable to break a frequent habit, then more support may be needed.

Vision of Greater Satisfaction

Focus on the Family summarizes their faith-informed, practical approach this way:

"We should do everything we can to help adolescents, young adults and married couples see that self-gratification is inconsistent

with the purpose, goal and basic nature of sex... God has created men and women to experience sexual fulfillment on a much higher level – within the context of a marital relationship – and we don't want anything to jeopardize their chances of knowing that joy to the fullest extent."^[81]

High Noon, an organization of Unificationists, exemplifies and builds on this perspective. Its mission is to "champion True Parents' vision for heavenly intimacy" using a multi-pronged approach. High Noon Living offers information on the effects of pornography and masturbation, and provides recovery support to individuals (single men and women, husbands and wives) through small groups, educational courses, and accountability. These international programs are available in several languages and have already impacted thousands worldwide.

High Noon Couples offers interactive education on lovemaking for married couples through retreats, courses, and webinars. High Noon Families' mission is to empower parents to have authentic, ongoing conversations with their children about love and sex through their curriculum and parent support community.

Father Moon has said, "We must make best use of this precious gift from God and transform our married sexual life into a work of art. We are to make our spouse feel great joy."

Ultimately what is behind the Unificationist concern regarding masturbation and other aspects of sexual morality is not just the avoidance of sin or the many detrimental consequences we have noted. Rather, it is the desire to clear away any obstacles to the optimal life of physical and emotional intimacy and joy that God has intended for us. Sexual expression in the right context has the power to bless the partners -- and the world -- in a way that nothing else can.

Notes

[1] Called purity in Unificationist sacred texts and traditionally also called chastity.

[2] Masuda, Y. (2009). *True Love, Sex and Health: Questions and Answers Regarding The Way to the Happiest Married Life in the Age after The Coming of Heaven*. Seoul: CheongShim GST University Press, 345.

[3] Masuda, Y. (2007). "True Love and Heavenly Sex in the Age after the Coming of Heaven." www.tparents.org/Library/Unification/Talks/Masuda/Masuda-070903.pdf

[4] Saunders, J. and Williams, J.R., ed. Wilson, A. (2006). *Educating for True Love: Explaining Sun Myung Moon's Teaching On Morality, Family And Society*. New York: International Educational Foundation.

[5] Father Moon has stated there is nothing dirty or shameful about the body, as God's gift and the temple of the spirit.

[6] This is easier to understand when we consider that Father Moon came from a Korean Christian background. He integrated the Judeo-Christian tradition with the Confucian-Taoist influences within himself. Asian philosophy can hold the tensions between apparent opposites more comfortably than Western worldviews. This no doubt contributed to Father Moon's fascinating capacity to balance extremes. (J. Hauer, Ed.D., in private conversation, 2017.)

[7] A church member told me about the following scene as he attended a leader's meeting with Father Moon in the late 1980s or 1990s, as I recall it: A member staffing Father Moon's residence began pouring out his heart to Father, confessing and repenting to Father about his many inner conflicts, including sexual struggles. Father patiently and compassionately listened, and finally quietly gave his guidance, "Love your wife. That's why I gave her to you." One of Father Moon's fellow inmates at the Federal Correctional Institution in Danbury, CT, gave a public talk replete with stories of down-to-earth advice to them while he resided there in 1984-85.

[8] A related teaching is that of the responsibilities of sexual love -- we are accountable to three entities for the use of our sexual powers, for they each have a vested interest. One is the present or future spouse. Another is our conscience/God, and by extension, our parents and ancestors. Finally, we are accountable to our present or potential children and descendants. *Educating for True Love*, 379-383.

[9] Moon, S.M. (1986, June 7). "The Day of All Things." www.tparents.org/Moon-Talks/SunMyungMoon86/SunMyungMoon-860707.htm

[10] Moon, S.M. (1999, November 20). "Everybody Wants True Love." www.unification.net/1999/991120.html.

[11] Hyo Nam Kim, an authoritative teacher at the time, speaking in Cheongpyeong, 2004, quoted in Masuda (2007), p. 16.

[12] Moon, S.M. (1996, August 4) "The Parents of Heaven and Earth and the Family of Absolute Unity." www.unification.net/1996/960804.html

[13] Tomasini, M.G. (2018). *Meta-Connected Sex Guidebook: The Moral Case for the Power of the Brain's Chemistry and Connectivity for Sex*. Self-published, 301

[14] One example is, "If man and women had not fallen, the reproductive organs would be the palace of love... They are the source of our life, our lineage and our love." Moon, S.M. (1993, October 3). In Ch. 3, Sec. 2.1, of *Cheon Seong Gyeong*, Seoul: Family Federation of World Peace and Unification, 206-125. Another is, "The origin of true love is not in your head... Where is this origin, then? It is in the sexual organs." Moon, S.M. (1993, June 17). In Ch. 3, Sec. 2.2, of *Cheon Seong Gyeong*, 203-104. Masuda recounts that Cheong Pyeong in 2004, wives were told, "The act of love creates an emotional bond. It is not that the emotional bond is there first, and then you make love. You should not think in reverse. You must not say, 'I do not feel love, so how can I make love to my husband?' You are to nurture a loving heart while making love." Masuda (2009), 117

[15] Maybe it is this connection between the spiritual heart and the physical sexual organs that is the basis for the universal regard for sexual modesty, even among peoples who scarcely wear any clothes. Just as individuals show self-respect by revealing their heart only to special people in their lives, so people have always honored the sexual parts of the body by hiding them from public scrutiny. Certainly this has implications for pornography, but again, that is for another discussion.

[16] Saunders and Williams, *Educating for True Love* (2006), 368-371

[17] Masuda, (2009), 227

[18] The degree of the sin -- whether mortal or venial -- depends on the degree of the consent of the will. "The Pastoral Problem of Masturbation," by John F. Harvey, OSFS (1993). journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1080/20508549.1993.11878200

[19] [www, Mechon-mamre.org/Jewfaq/sex.htm](http://www.Mechon-mamre.org/Jewfaq/sex.htm)

[20] Matthew 5.28.

[21] Research indicates that simple guilt tends to motivate us to improve ourselves, while shame is a demoralizing influence that impedes self improvement. This might be one reason why the medical model of describing alcoholism -- as a disease instead of a moral failure -- has persisted for decades, despite its logical limitations. It destigmatizes the problem and the resultant reduction in guilt and shame facilitates recovery.

[22] Robinson, M. (2009). "What Would Kinsey Say Now?" [www, reuniting.info/kinsey_sexual_repression_addiction](http://www.reuniting.info/kinsey_sexual_repression_addiction)

[23] Noted Catholic authority Father Benedict Groeschel calls the self-stimulation of older adolescents and adults "auto-eroticism," to highlight its selfish nature, while labeling that done by children as "masturbation." Harvey (1993).

[24] Perhaps the most pertinent psychological implication of Divine Principle's insight into the first ancestors' misuse of love is that as a result we all have the tendency to sexualize emotional and spiritual needs. This is what makes habitual masturbation, pornography use, lusting after other people, and the whole host of sexual misbehaviors so easy to fall into.

[25] Father Moon even challenged his male followers to reach such a point of self control that they could view a naked woman and not be aroused, as he said Jesus could. Author's memory and reinforced by such scripture as June 5, 1983, in *World Scripture and the Teachings of Sun Myung Moon*, p. 492.

[26] 1 Corinthians 9.27.

[27] 1 Thessolonians 4.4.

[28] Groeschel equates masturbation by adults during sleep or semi-sleep with that of children. Harvey (1993).

[29] Masuda (2009).

[30] The Penners, Christian sex counselors, make a persuasive argument for virginal young men preparing for marriage to practice self stimulation to learn to tolerate sustained erection without ejaculating to better prepare to bring satisfaction to their new wives. *Getting Your Sex Life Off to a Great Start: A Guide for Engaged and Newlywed Couples*. Dallas: Thomas Nelson, 1994.

[31] Cutrer, W., and Glahn, S. (2001). *Sexual Intimacy in Marriage, revised edition*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 409.

[32] Masuda (2009), 228.

[33] December 21, 1993, at a Japanese women's special workshop, quoted in Masuda (2009), 201.

[34] Brody, 2010; Wilson, G. (2011). "Ejaculation: How Often for Good Health?" Retrieved from: www.yourbrainonporn.com/ybop-articles-on-porn-addiction-porn-induced-problems/masturbation-ejaculation-articles/ejaculation-how-often-for-good-health-2010/.

[35] Therapist John Gray makes an interesting conjecture: This clinical masturbation would regulate the women's high estrogen by stimulating more testosterone. He points out that the same result could have been obtained by encouraging women to fulfill roles and carry out activities that naturally bring out their "male side" for balance. In other words, the artificially restricted social roles assigned to women left them vulnerable to hormonal issues that clinical masturbation was correcting.

[36] Koestenbaum, P., *Existential Sexuality: Choosing To Love*. Cited in Gabriel Brown, *The New Celibacy A Journey To Love, Intimacy And Good Health In The New Age*, New York: McGraw Hill, 1989, 21

[37] Masters, W. H., Johnson, V. E., Levin, R. J., *The Pleasure Bond: A New Look at Sexuality and Commitment*, Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1973.

[38] Anonymous contributors. Solo "energy" circulation practices. Retrieved October 25, 2018 from: www.yourbrainonporn.com/tools-for-change-recovery-from-porn-addiction/%E2%99%A6solo-tools/solo-energy-circulation-practices/

[39]

For a sampling from these and many of the arguments around it, see: www.yourbrainonporn.com/ybop-articles-on-porn-addiction-porn-induced-problems/masturbation-ejaculation-articles/rethinking-the-wonders-of-adult-masturbation-2012/

[40] Sheldon, M. (2013). "An Unacknowledged Harm of Masturbation." www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/sex-life-the-american-male/201403/unacknowledged-harm-masturbation

[41] Ariely D., Loewenstein G. (2006). "The Heat of the Moment: The effect of Sexual Arousal on Sexual Decision Making," *Journal of Behavioral Decision Making* 19, 87–98.

[42] Sheldon.

[43] Ariely D., Loewenstein G.

[44] Brody, S. (2010). "Review: The Relative Health Benefits of Different Sexual Activities," *Journal of Sexual Medicine* 7, pp 1336-136. Brody, S, and Costa, R.M. (2009). "Satisfaction (Sexual, Life, Relationship, and Mental Health) Is Associated Directly with Penile-Vaginal Intercourse, but Inversely with Other Sexual Behavior Frequencies," *Journal of Sexual Medicine* 6, pp 1947–1954. Långström, N, and Hanson, RK. (2006). "High Rates of Sexual Behavior in the General Population: Correlates and Predictors," *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 35:1, pp 37–52. Husted JR, and Edwards AE. (1976). "Personality Correlates of Male Sexual Arousal and Behavior," *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 5:2, pp 149-56.

[45] Farley Hurlbert, D. and Whittaker, K. E. (1991) "The Role of Masturbation in Marital and Sexual Satisfaction: A Comparative Study of Female Masturbators and Nonmasturbators," *Journal of Sex Education and Therapy* 17:4, 272-282.

[46] Costa R. M. and Brody S. (2011). "Anxious and Avoidant Attachment, Vibrator Use, Anal Sex, and Impaired Vaginal Orgasm," *Journal of Sexual Medicine* 8, 2493–2500.

[47] For a list of research studies and anecdotal evidence, see Wilson, G. "Is Porn Making My Social Anxiety/Confidence/Depression/Anxiety/OCD/Bipolar Worse?" Retrieved October 2018 from: www.yourbrainonporn.com/porn-making-my-social-anxietyconfidence-depression-ocd-worse

[48] Costa, 2012; Gerressu, M., Mercer, C.H., Graham, C.A. et al. (2008). "Masturbation Is Related to Psychopathology and Prostate Dysfunction: Comment on Quinsey," *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 37: 266.

[49] Wilson, G. (2010). "The Right Masturbation Advice: No Guilt, No Problem?" Retrieved from: www.yourbrainonporn.com/ybop-articles-on-porn-addiction-porn-induced-problems/masturbation-ejaculation-articles/the-right-masturbation-advice-2010/

[50] Brody, S. 2010.

[51] Marcus, B.S. (2011) "Changes in a Woman's Sexual Experience and Expectations Following the Introduction of Electric Vibrator Assistance," *Journal of Sexual Medicine* 8: 12, 3398-3406

[52] Gerressu; Nutter, D.E. and Condrón, M.K., (1985) "Sexual Fantasy And Activity Patterns of Males with Inhibited Sexual Desire and Males with Erectile Dysfunction versus Normal Controls," *Journal of Sex and Marital Therapy* 11:2, 91-98.

[53] Tomasini, 285.

[54] Tomasini, 276.

[55] McCluskey, C. (2002). "When Two Become One," In Stoop, D. and Stoop, J. *The Complete Marriage Book: Collected Wisdom from Leading Marriage Experts*. Baker, 189.

[56] McCluskey, 189.

[57] Lewis, C. S. (2007). *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis, Volume 3: Narnia, Cambridge, and Joy, 1950–1963*, ed. Hooper, W. New York: HarperCollins, 758–59.

[58] Cutrer, W., and Glahn, S., 411.

[59] Brody, 2010. Tomasini, 280, 284.

[60] Haworth, A. (2013, October 19). "Why Have Young People in Japan Stopped Having Sex?" *The Observer*, Oct. 19, 2013. Retrieved from: yourbrainonporn.com.

[61] "Study Exposes Secret World Of Porn Addiction," *University of Sydney News* (2012, May 12) Retrieved from: sydney.edu.au/news/84.html?newsstoryid=9176

[62] Lewis.

[63] Lowen is a filmmaker and former psychiatric social worker. (Personal conversation, 2018).

[64] This is still anecdotal since research has not been done, but over half a million are on the Post-orgasmic Illness Syndrome site: www.thenakedscientists.com/forum/index.php?topic=6576.0.

[65] Bardamu, F. (2017). "Why I've Resolved to Stop Masturbating." Retrieved July, 2018, from a site no longer available.

[66] Savage, M. (2010). goesavage.blogspot.com/2010/05/no-woman-diet-pt3.html

[67] Wilson, G. (2012). "Men: Does Frequent Ejaculation Cause a Hangover?" www.yourbrainonporn.com/ybop-articles-on-porn-addiction-porn-induced-problems/masturbation-ejaculation-articles/men-does-frequent-ejaculation-cause-a-hangover-2012/

[68] Savage, M. "Porn Addiction and the Fall of Men." Retrieved July 2018 from a site no longer available.

[69] Wilson, G. (2011). "Weird Masturbation Habits: Who Are the Solo Sex Champs?" www.yourbrainonporn.com/ybop-articles-on-porn-addiction-porn-induced-problems/masturbation-ejaculation-articles/weird-masturbation-habits-2011/

[70] Wilson, G. (2010). "Masturbation, Fantasy and Captivity: Is Intense Sexual Stimulation Tied to Unnatural Modern Conditions?" Retrieved from: www.yourbrainonporn.com/masturbation-fantasy-and-captivity

[71] Hickler, E., on or about 2013, on website no longer available. Mr. Hickler gave permission to use this quote though his sexual philosophy has become more nuanced and complex since then.

[72] I have met healthy young men who masturbated weekly, minus pornography, throughout their teen years and married in their early 20s with no discernable detrimental effect on their married life or achievements, though of course there may have been some.

[73] Wilson, G. (2011). "The Right Masturbation Advice: No Guilt, No Problem?" 2010.

[74] Masuda (2009), 221.

[75] Though it must be conceded that it seems to be very difficult for most persons to stop fantasizing during masturbation once the habit is established. Dr. Doug Weiss, sex addiction therapist, states he has rarely seen anyone successfully transition from "lust based" masturbation to sensation based. Gilkerson, L. (2013, January 13) "Can You Masturbate without Lusting?" Retrieved from: www.covenanteyes.com/2013/01/14/masturbate-without-lusting/.

[76] We must acknowledge that the great majority of young people struggling with masturbation today have primarily a pornography habit. The two together are a significantly more complicated challenge to overcome than the self-pleasuring habit alone.

[77] It was Hugh Hefner's *Playboy* magazine in 1954 that launched an assault on sexual restraint and popularized masturbation and pornography as adult, sophisticated and liberated behavior.

[78] Masuda agrees that prohibition is simply not realistic since the habit can become uncontrollable. Masuda (2007), 35.

[79] Focus on the Family. www.focusonthefamily.com/family-q-and-a/sexuality/questions-and-concerns-about-masturbation. Retrieved July 25, 2018.

[80] Masuda (2007), 35.

[81] Focus on the Family.