

# Lesson 11:

## Spouse's Work

*"Some women try dressing up like a porn star; try incorporating pornography into the bedroom. They try to compete and they can't."*

*Steve Armitage*

### Who Fixes What?

As stated in the last lesson, it is important for both the addict and spouse to understand that 100% of the responsibility of the choices made to act out sexually and/or lie to cover them up, falls on the one who carried out the behavior. 100%.

The understanding that the spouse didn't cause the addiction frees him or her from feeling the responsibility of "fixing" it. This is an important concept because first, it is impossible for the spouse to "fix" the addict and second, any attempts, well-meaning though they maybe, that the spouse makes to fix the addict, control the addict, work the addict's recovery, etc. will actually serve as barriers to healing.

That being said, it is also important for both spouses to understand that a healthy couple and subsequently a healthy marriage, is made up of two healthy individuals.

**Each time addiction damages  
a marriage there will be work to do,  
for both partners...**

to bring about the true intimacy they long for. Each partner must take responsibility for their past choices in and their part in the dynamic of a marriage that is hurting.

For years it's been said in the addiction community, that the moment you give the addict back their problem is the moment they will start to do something about it. A spouse who feels a lot of fear over doing so, continues to believe it is their job to control the addict's behavior, to monitor it, and prevent any more acting out from occurring.

They often have the misconception that if they fail to continue doing these things the addict will get worse and the relationship will get worse. The fact of the matter is, it might to some degree, but relinquishing the illusion of control is necessary if things are genuinely going to get better.

So for the spouse and the addict as well, differentiating between the things that are within their individual control and the things that are without their control is very difficult and most of the time requires specialized help.

**The understanding  
that the spouse  
didn't cause the  
addiction frees him  
or her from feeling  
the responsibility of  
"fixing" it.**

**Questions for the Spouse of addict:**

1. What part have you played in the dynamics of the marriage for which you need to take ownership?

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2. What things do you believe you need to change in order for your marriage to become truly intimate?

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3. In what ways have you attempted to control your spouse's behavior?

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4. How effective have your efforts been to control your spouse's behavior? Explain.

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5. In what ways have you attempted to manipulate your spouse into working his/her recovery?

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**6. Has pornography been incorporated into the marriage? If yes, what has been the impact?**

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**7. Have you ever felt the need to compete with pornography? Explain.**

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**8. What is the difference between taking ownership of your role in the dynamics of the marriage and taking on the blame for your spouse's behavior?**

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**9. How has your anger and hurt over your spouse's behavior impacted your ability to look at your role in the dynamics of the marriage?**

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**10. In what ways have you enabled your spouse's addiction?**

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**11. What things have you done in the past that have been unhelpful or unhealthy for your marriage?**

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**12. What things are you doing now?**

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**13. Did you know of your spouse's addiction before you married? Explain.**

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**14. What things are obvious now to you about your spouse and his/her behavior that you didn't see clearly before?**

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**15. How good are you at taking care of yourself? Explain.**

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**16. How good are you at letting your spouse take care of his/her own issues?**

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**17. What common hurts do you and your spouse have from childhood?**

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**18. How open have you been with your spouse about your hurts from the past? Explain.**

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**19. Do you ever notice that your feelings/thoughts about yourself are dependent on how others feel or think about you? Explain.**

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**20. How do you handle it when somebody doesn't like you?**

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**21. Why do you think you handle it that way?**

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**22. Have you been referred to as a people pleaser? Explain.**

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**23. Are you willing to do whatever work is needed and within your control to become a healthy individual that is part of a healthy marriage? Explain.**

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**24. Homework: Write and share a letter to your spouse detailing what you believe God desires for you, your spouse, and your marriage in the future.**

**Questions for addict:**

**25. What part have you played in the dynamics of the marriage for which you need to take ownership?**

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**26. What things do you believe you need to change in order for your marriage to become truly intimate?**

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**27.** In what ways do you think your spouse has attempted to control your behavior?

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**28.** How effective have your spouse's efforts been to control your behavior? Explain.

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**29.** In what ways have you attempted to manipulate your spouse into working your recovery?.

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**30.** Has pornography been incorporated into the marriage? If yes, what has been the impact?

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**31.** What part have you played in the dynamics of the marriage for which you need to take ownership?

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**32.** What is the difference between your spouse taking ownership of his/her role in the dynamics of the marriage and taking the blame for your addiction?

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**33.** In what ways has your spouse enabled your addiction?

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**34.** What things have you done in the past that have been unhelpful or unhealthy for your marriage?

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**35.** What things are you doing now?

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**36.** Did your spouse know of your addiction before you married? Explain

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**37.** How good are you at taking care of yourself? Explain.

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**38.** How good are you at getting your spouse or others to take care of your problems?

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**39. What common hurts do you and your spouse have from childhood?**

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**40. How open have you been with your spouse about your hurts from the past? Explain.**

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**41. Do you ever notice that your feelings/thoughts about yourself are dependent on how others feel or think about you? Explain.**

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**42. How do you handle it when somebody doesn't like you?**

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**43. Why do you think you handle it that way?**

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**44. Have you been referred to as a people pleaser? Explain.**

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