

Young Women Giving Themselves Away For Nothing

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As internet pornography continues to make inroads into the daily lives of millions, greater numbers of young women are making the decision to participate in its production, with some even seeing it as a “path of empowerment” for themselves. They may hear about the “success stories” of porn stars, one of whom declared during a media interview a few years back that her breast implants were the best investment she had ever made, making her a multi-millionaire.

Young women today can indeed be tempted to “play the pornography card,” but as girls become women, parents and society face the important task of conveying to them that when they immodestly display their feminine attributes and participate in pornography, they end up objectifying themselves, trivializing their sexuality, and harming their interpersonal relationships.

In a recent interview, Pamela Anderson Lee, the former Baywatch actress, revealed how her Playboy photo spreads and pornographic videos impacted her sons and left them in tears after being teased at school about her sex tape with their father and her ex-husband Tommy Lee.

She explained: “I wasn't thinking when I was in Playboy that

I was going to have kids soon and they were going to grow up and it was going to be embarrassing for them...”

“I remember one day after school Dylan came to me in tears and he was like, ‘Mom why did you do that tape?’ ...But I always thought I'd tell them, age-appropriate — but I never got the chance — they always found out before I could really talk to them about it.”

Her other son Brandon described it this way: “When I was a kid, I thought everyone knew things about me and my family that they never should've known. Everyone had this dirty little secret about my family.”

The powerful misappropriation of a woman's sexuality through involvement in pornography can wreak havoc on multiple fronts.

Another front where chaos can arise as sexual mores shift is in the very delicate interpersonal area of sexual attraction that is ordered to connecting young women to young men through a stable marital commitment.

Many young women, for example, feel pressured to sleep with and cohabit with dates and boyfriends to try to win them over and perhaps one day marry

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them. It should come as little surprise that these kinds of relational mistakes on the part of a young woman often lead a young man to ask the proverbial question: Why buy the cow when you can get the milk for free? The unique influence or leverage that a young woman has with a potential future husband is squandered away.

A woman who is not sexually available before marriage is perceived and approached differently by men: they have to put in the effort to woo and win her, and later she is a “catch” and a “treasure” as she becomes a man’s “better half.”

In contemporary hook up culture, meanwhile, young women give themselves away for nothing, and men don’t have to woo anyone or bother with the complexities of interpersonal relationships or real-life intimacy skills.

As men are drawn into the addictive world of pornography, they similarly devalue women by reducing their gifts to a single highly sexualized dimension. This disrupts healthy patterns of attraction and courtship that are meant to lead to male-female friendship, bonding and marriage.

As Fred Rabinowitz, a psychologist and professor at the University of Redlands who studies masculinity has noted, young men today “are watching a lot of social media,

they’re watching a lot of porn, and I think they’re getting a lot of their needs met without having to go out. And I think that’s starting to be a habit.”

Parents face a real challenge in trying to convey to their sons and daughters that their sexuality is a gift to be treasured, not squandered. At times, they may need to be very direct in how they share their values with their children.

A friend once shared with me that as a teen, she and her mom were watching a movie at the local theater when a mostly unclad woman doing a pole dance unexpectedly flashed up on the screen. Her mom, a woman of fortitude, hardly missed a beat as she gently leaned over to her daughter to whisper just three words: “I’ll kill you...!” The moment left an indelible impression, and nearly 50 years later, my friend still appreciates her mother’s humorous but direct and loving approach in conveying the importance of modesty for a young woman’s maturing sexuality.

The remarkable gifts of a woman — her “feminine genius” as Pope John Paul II used to refer to it — including the gift of her sexual nature and her interpersonal acumen, need to be esteemed and safeguarded. Over the course of civilization, these gifts have built up the family, pro-

tected children, supported men through the bond of marriage, and more broadly strengthened the life of society itself. We need great courage and resolve today to protect and advance these precious gifts.

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