

BREAKING THE CHAINS

OVERCOME THE INNER OBSTACLES
TO HEALING AND CHANGE FROM
UNWANTED SEXUAL BEHAVIORS



by Zeyad Ramadan

PURIFY
YOUR GAZE

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The Path to Freedom requires you to see your sexual patterns of behavior long controlling your life not as a trusted friend, but as they truly are – **destructive, unhealthy, cunning, and isolating.**

The very characteristics of an **enemy** with an intent to **destroy you.**

What holds you back from the freedom and change you desire most are not your external temptations – be they a sexual trigger, or the very device you've used to easily and anonymously access sexual material online.

Your obstacles to healing and change are coming from within you and there are three you must be aware of.

Until you overcome these three obstacles, you remain chained down on a path to self-destruction.

This special report titled Breaking The Chains will help you recognize your own inner obstacles to change and healing.

You will also be introduced to the one powerful strategy that will help you break the chains of addiction so you could rewire your brain to experience healing and change.

Obstacle #1:
FEAR

Obstacle #1: Fear

When it comes to healing and change there's nothing that could trap you more from beginning the healing process than **FEAR**.

Oftentimes fear is said to be the acronym F.E.A.R standing for: *"Forget Everything And Run"*.

When you are afraid you turn your back away from that which scares you and cling onto that which is comfortable -- **even if it is the misery of consistently falling back into your addiction.**

The two main ways that fear is serving as obstacle to getting onto the Path to Freedom are:

1. You are afraid of acknowledging that you are "sexually addicted".
2. You are afraid of journeying into an unknown territory and are not sure what lies ahead.

Let's investigate these two fears and how they relate to you personally.

Fear Of “Being An Addict”

The fear of self-identifying as an addict because of the stereotypes attached to this word, prevents many from turning towards the Path to Freedom.

Often this fear has to do with an inner sense of inadequacy, and worthlessness and the term “addict” is only a confirmation of this inner reality.

Popular stereotypes hold an “addict” to be a “weak, lazy, and indulgent individual with no sense of control or shame”.

The term “sex addict” has even greater negative connotations from it being synonymous with “pervert” and “sleazy”.

Fear Of “Being An Addict”

When you see the word “sex addiction” or “porn addiction”, what does that cause you to think or feel?

How does your definition of what it means to “be addicted” affect your ability to begin the process of healing and get outside help?

Fear Of Uncertainty

While you may desire the personal transformation and the sense of personal freedom that the Path to Freedom will bring you, another part of you is equally afraid.

Our human nature likes to cling and attach itself to the familiar – be it our schedules, our relationships, our belongings, our roles.

This security and certainty is all challenged by a path that seeks to transform everything about your life.

Such circumstances or imagined losses can trigger feelings of fear, powerlessness, anxiety, or despair.

To make this life transforming transition you must be prepared for this inevitable reality and use this as a time to let go of the old ways.

Fear Of Uncertainty

In the space below, make a list of all the things you are uncertain about that could potentially come about with your seeking of help and beginning the healing journey.

How has this fear of uncertainty affected your ability to begin the process of healing and get outside help?

Obstacle #2:
DENIAL

Obstacle #2: Denial

To be in denial simply means the inability to admit the obvious without any resistance.

The inability to accept reality and the truth is heavily influenced by fear.

Instead of openly embracing and dealing with reality, despite how painful it is, this inner obstacle will have you resist and battle the truth.

This obstacle is how you manage the experience of fear which is by fighting back at that which threatens your stability.

The three main forms of resistance are:

1. Resistance through justification
2. Resistance through minimization
3. Resistance through control

Denial By Justification

Denial takes the form of justification when you makes “rational arguments” as to why you must persist in your addictive behavior

Common Examples...

- ❑ “The reason I masturbate is because of not having an Islamically permissible way to let out my desires in marriage”
- ❑ “If only my spouse were sexually more responsive then I wouldn’t do these things”
- ❑ “As long as I can hide my behavior and it doesn’t hurt others it should be OK”
- ❑ “I only masturbate and this isn’t clearly as sinful like pornography or actual fornication”
- ❑ “I am no different than any other man or woman – everyone today does this.”
- ❑ “I just have a very high sex drive”
- ❑ “It’s not like I do this every time”

My Justification Defenses

In the space below, write your own examples of how you have justified your behavior or tried to rationalize your persistence in unacceptable behaviors.

Denial By Minimization

Denial takes the form of minimization when you try to decrease the significance of your actions or the impact of your actions on yourself or others.

Common Examples...

- ❑ “Others may have had it worse but my situation is unique”
- ❑ “This whole addiction talk is blowing “normal things” out of proportion
- ❑ “I’m not really that addicted where I do this every single day, it’s only a few times a week.”
- ❑ “My situation isn’t that bad take a look at so and so who’s got it worse”
- ❑ “It’s just pornography which is harmless and that’s the extent of my problem...”
- ❑ “At least I don’t spend any money on this stuff or engage in affairs with anyone.”

My Minimization Defenses

In the space below, write your own examples of how you have minimized your behavior or tried to decrease the significance of your actions or the impact of your actions on yourself or others.

Denial By Control

Denial takes the form of control when you try to resist admitting you've lost control by "trying harder" or "trying to avoid anything sexual"

Common Examples...

- ❑ Removing Internet from home to avoid being sexual online
- ❑ Making promises or oaths to Allah that you'll never do this again
- ❑ Trying to "white knuckle" it and not masturbate for a specified amount of days
- ❑ Counting the number of days you've been abstinent as the most important sign that you've prevailed
- ❑ Avoiding anything sexual or relations with spouse in fear that it would trigger your desire to seek pornography
- ❑ Experiencing despair or tremendous guilt when relapsing because you felt "you did not try hard enough"

My Control Defenses

In the space below, write your own examples of how you have tried to control your behavior when deep down you felt you were sexually out of control.

Have you tried to avoid sex or anything sexual in nature as a way to try to stop acting out?

Obstacle #3: **PRIDE**

Obstacle #3: Pride

Addicts are often characterized as “selfish” and “self-centered” and this is a result of the extreme pride they exhibit.

This pride is not built on a strong foundation, it is false and shaky, which naturally causes any small thing unplanned to trigger great insecurity to this big mask displayed to the world.

This is why often those that have the hardest time beginning the healing process are those that outwardly identifiable as “religious” or “practicing”

Pride also creates anxiety, and the temporary escape from this anxiety can be the addiction.

Pride As My Obstacle

Share your thoughts on how pride has influenced your sense of entitlement to act out sexually.

How has pride served as an obstacle to you beginning the process of healing and seeking help? Share your thoughts below.

My Realizations

My Realizations

Use this extra space to summarize any realizations or other thoughts you have from exploring your own inner obstacles.

You have now begun acknowledging your own inner obstacles that are holding you back from the healing and change you deeply desire.

You may be wondering, *“What do I do now so these obstacles don’t hold me back from the Path To Freedom?”*

These obstacles never truly go away completely and may re-emerge from time to time. But there is a process that you must continuously use to break out of these chains and weaken the effect of these obstacles.

I want you to understand this very critical concept that I am about to share with you that will allow you to start on the Path To Freedom, .

It may sound contrary to all the approaches you have read about or tried to use in the past, but it’s the most important lesson you need to build your entire foundation for change. I call this concept:

Starting With **SURRENDER**

For many months or years you may have exerted energy in hiding from others, running away, or numbing out, because of fear, pride, or denial.

What you need to break out of this cycle you've got to finally face the truth.

In other words, you've got to stop resisting and start surrendering.

As one Purify Your Gaze member said, "I've spent so much time surrounding myself with 'right answers' and pushing away what's really inside of me."

The inner obstacles to the Path to Freedom cloud you from seeing reality or developing the courage to work through your fears.

In fact they have you turn in the other direction and dive further and deeper into your destructive patterns, clinging tightly to your addiction.

The word surrender is often associated with defeat, loss, failure, weakness.

But on the Path to Freedom, surrendering is the only thing that gives you hope, victory and ultimately your life back.

فَمَنْ أَسْلَمَ فَأُولَئِكَ تَحَرَّوْا رَشَدًا



“...And those who have surrendered (and submitted their wills to Allah), such have taken the right path purposefully.”

Qur'an 72:14

What does it mean to surrender?

To surrender means to acknowledge that your willpower is not more powerful than the forces from within you that have consistently drove you to act out sexually.

To surrender means understanding that your primary objective is not to just stop unwanted behaviors – be they masturbation, pornography, visiting dating sites or sexual chat rooms, or any other behavior and reach “x number of days being clean”.

To surrender means to acknowledge that your way is not working and you need outside intervention and guidance.

To surrender literally means to stop fighting with yourself and to stop fighting against the chain of events unraveling around you.

Despite what you may understand, surrendering does not mean doing nothing.

Nor does surrendering mean that you are less responsible for your behaviors and choices because you are “*addicted*” and “*don’t have control.*”

What many fail to realize is that admitting a loss of control and powerlessness to the sexual chaos is not what will make them trapped; in fact, it’s the very opposite.

Your resistance through denial, your pride that shields you from the truth, and your fear that keeps you immobile is what is shackling you from change.

These two paragraphs in bold are so important, that I suggest that you read them one more time.

Let these important words sink in...

In the context of your healing journey, surrendering is what gives you hope and life.

Your addiction has created tremendous pain and suffering in your life. It has created isolation, despair, and destroyed the things valuable to you.

And the only form of solace you find in this misery and pain is in the misery itself by further indulging for fleeting moments of pleasure.

This pleasure evaporates and turns into pain and after some time you just become numb to it all and continue life.

A hard outer shell starts to build where you focus on your external to give you validation that you are OK internally.

The inner obstacle of pride will have you holding on to the façade that everything is OK and nothing is wrong.

This pride builds high towering walls to the ego and the higher the walls become, the bigger the collapse is when you fall.

Surrendering is what allows you to fall gracefully.

It is what allows you to work through the inner turmoil and pain that is causing you to seek an escape through sex and porn.

It is what allows you to accept that you cannot do this alone. **You need help. Lots of it.**

To surrender means to letting go of your ego and admit that you have lost the battle.

And as the greatest military generals understood, sometimes in the context of winning a long-term war you must surrender and lose a battle as part of your strategy..

The Path To Freedom is a strategic and intentional path. It is not reactionary nor is it based off of temporary conditions.

Surrendering is what allows you to release the old map of using tremendous will power, avoiding everything sexual in nature, and motivating yourself through self-hate.

You are surrendering all of that misery, so you may be open to the vastness and openness that awaits you in life through this route.

But to get there you must make a decision.

You will do something with this pain in your life. You will have the courage to move and work through the pain, rather than try to avoid it.

By having faith and placing your trust in a Power much greater than you, you will endure through this tremendous ordeal.

This Power greater than you requires that you humble yourself completely and acknowledge your weakness and your destined fate of eternal loss if left to yourself.

It is Allahu Akbar. God is Greater.

To surrender means you stop trying to heal and change on your own terms and you embrace openly what you are advised to do.

Be the advise to work a recovery program, or take part in support group meetings, or work with a counselor, mentor, or therapist...

This act of surrender is not a one-time event; it will be an ongoing process of facing your fears, opening your heart in submission, and enduring through your hardships with faith and hope.

To the degree you are willing to deal with reality, despite how painful and difficult it may be, the more likely you will be able to move towards physical, mental, emotional and spiritual wellbeing.

To conclude, I end with the words of one Purify Your Gaze member who finally started with surrender on his Path to Freedom:

“Having seen Br Zeyad's message telling everybody that willpower is not enough, I knew this to be true, but I was afraid of letting go. I wanted to be in control. There is a strange freedom that I felt from adopting this idea of surrender. I felt a load off my shoulders that I am not fighting this fight on my own anymore. Previously, I had felt that Allah was with me, equipping me with willpower - but now I realise this is not true. Allah's help is far beyond this, it starts with surrendering to Him and giving the reins of the horse to Allah. And now I can finally face this habit and say "Allah is with me now".