

# Rotary



## Rotary Action Group Against Slavery



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### A SURVIVOR'S VIEW OF PORNOGRAPHY

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*Editor's note: With a surge in visits to internet pornography sites and reports of more victims of sex trafficking being forced to perform sexual acts—often very violent and degrading—online during the COVID-19 pandemic, the viewpoint of a survivor of sex trafficking must be included in current conversation.*

I was sold from age 13-18. I was manipulated for years after that so that I would not talk. I won't go into all the details of my past, but want to share a little of what I shared with my five sons about human trafficking, my story and staying safe.

With my father deceased, things changed for me when I was 12 years old. I was easy prey for someone to manipulate me and then sell me. Drugged food was part of my training when I was for sale. I was fortunate to be physically released when I was around 18 years old, but the heartache continued for decades.

Part of my teenage years involved pornography. It took many years to be able to talk about this. Many people today, both men and women, think that pornography is a victimless crime. It is not victimless. I was a victim. It was painful. I still do not ever think I look good in a picture. It is painful to see myself in a picture. When I see myself, I still see ugliness.

I taught my sons that pornography is not okay. It breaks my heart that even after I told my one son my story that he believes that pornography is okay and that it does not hurt anyone. He thinks I do not know what I am talking about. I am still hoping someday his view will change. He does believe in stepping in when he hears men degrade women. He believes that consent is the right thing. He believes that a stable relationship is the right thing. He just does not see viewing

pornography as an extension of the right treatment of women YET. Growing does not take a long time, but a *life* time.

Talk to your child about what is going on in the world and on the internet. Help them feel loved and valued. If we show our kids these things, maybe they will not be snared. They can show others what love and being valued feels like.

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