

OLD MYTHS MADE NEW

On March 11, 2019 the *New York Times* ran an opinion piece by Andrea Barrica. In it she attacked what she called “abstinence-only” education. Evidently her fear-based sex education course at a Catholic School, so terrified her that the first time she saw a naked man she cried. Her entire argument is predicated on her erroneous belief that all programs which focus on abstinence are identical.

While we are sympathetic to Ms. Barrica’s experience, and don’t doubt there are some very poor sex education courses, the “abstinence only” education she describes doesn’t do what she claims. There are no serious and reputable programs which fail to acknowledge birth control and same-sex attractions **exists**.

Ms. Barrica makes absurd charges that abstinence programs are responsible for

- ◆ The one in four American women who will become pregnant by the time they turn 20.
- ◆ The one quarter of all new cases of sexually transmitted infections which occur in teenagers
- ◆ That 41% of American women have described their first sexual experience as wanted.

She claims, “Abstinence education negates the possibility of consent and inflicts a lifetime of physical and psychological harm on young people.”

This is a typical ‘straw man’ argument which has been used to bully school districts and states to adopt what is referred to as “Comprehensive Sex Ed.” or CSE. The most important distinction between these two forms of sex education are the GOALS.

The GOAL of CSE is to reduce the number of “unprotected” sexual acts. In other words, if your child was NOT sexually active before receiving CSE, but IS sexually active and using “protection,” that is a positive result. Even though from a parent’s



prospective, having their child initiate sexual activity (even with “protection”) is MORE risky.

The GOAL of abstinence programs is to AVOID RISKY BEHAVIOR. Therefore if your child answer “No,” when asked, “Did you use a condom during the last 3 months?” that is considered a NEGATIVE result. Even if the answer is NO– because they did not participate in any sexual activity.

Ms. Barrica objects to parents being allowed to have their child opt out of CSE programs in states such as California where CSE is mandatory. She, like many others, believes theirs is only one acceptable view of sexual behavior: which is, as long as a child (of any age) gets consent, gets tested and uses protection, they should be allowed to explore any sexual behavior that appeals to them.

Far from “inflicting a lifetime of physical and psychological harm” developing sexual self-control not only avoids risk, but is significantly more likely to lead to healthy and emotionally stable relationships in the future.

Sadly, because parents rarely make their voices heard, people who make money off adolescent sexual activity are making decisions for your children.

School districts pay huge sums of money for instructional materials such as Ms. Barrica's that promote "safer" sexual behavior. Local clinics and abortion providers present CSE programs in classrooms. Pharmaceutical companies provide "prom kits" with emergency contraception and condoms.

Unlike *Positively Waiting*, we provide our service free of charge to public schools. As one of the "social conservatives teaching sex ed" Ms. Barrica has so much contempt for, I am sympathetic that her religious instruction in this arena was negative. But, I can say our message is far from negative. We are happy to proclaim that SEX IS GREAT. We are also willing to make the case that a great sex life is worth the effort and skill it takes to enjoy it within the healthiest possible context (one uninfected faithful partner).

We make the argument that sexual self-control keeps the ones you love 100% safe from risk and is a much higher standard of behavior than using others for sexual gratification.

But perhaps, the reason Ms. Barrica thinks teens can't do it, is because she couldn't do it. I know I didn't, and I live with the consequences of my decisions. By presenting the benefits of sexual self-control to teens in our community, we give them a chance to choose a much higher standard than my generation (and Ms. Barrica's) ever imagined.

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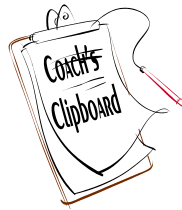
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COACH'S CORNER



The number of people hooked on pornography and virtual "relationships," is rising. It is causing them to miss out on actual human connections. Porn-users typically shy away from real-life connections. It's linked to worsening anxiety issues, and deepening depression. Real sex becomes less appealing than pornography, and may cause a user to become withdrawn and disconnected from people who love them.

The reality is that by age 8, most if not all, your son or daughter will have seen something you would call pornographic. Whether they were looking for it or not, the imagery will cause a significant rush of dopamine that will permanently burn that image into their memory. It is inevitable that your child will see porn. It is inevitable that their body and mind will respond. And it is inevitable that they will be uncomfortable telling you it happened.

Your best strategy is to get in front of it. This month's tip is to challenge you to develop your own version of this:

"I want you to look forward to sex as a part of a lifetime commitment to one person. Unfortunately, we live in a world where a lot of people have sex for another purpose. Instead of seeing it as a way to bond and honor their partner, they treat sex as if it means little more than a game of tennis. As much as I want to keep it from happening, they will try to convince YOU that sex is not a big deal. They are trying to steal not only your health and safety, but your ability to bond faithfully for a lifetime to the one you love."

Your little speech should be truthful and POSITIVE. Fear will only work as long as the fear lasts. The minute they take a risk and nothing happens, they are fearless. Your objective is to give your son or daughter a way to choose to reject porn when it is around or offered because they realize it is not going to move them toward their GOAL of happily, faithfully, in love, forever, with great sex.

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