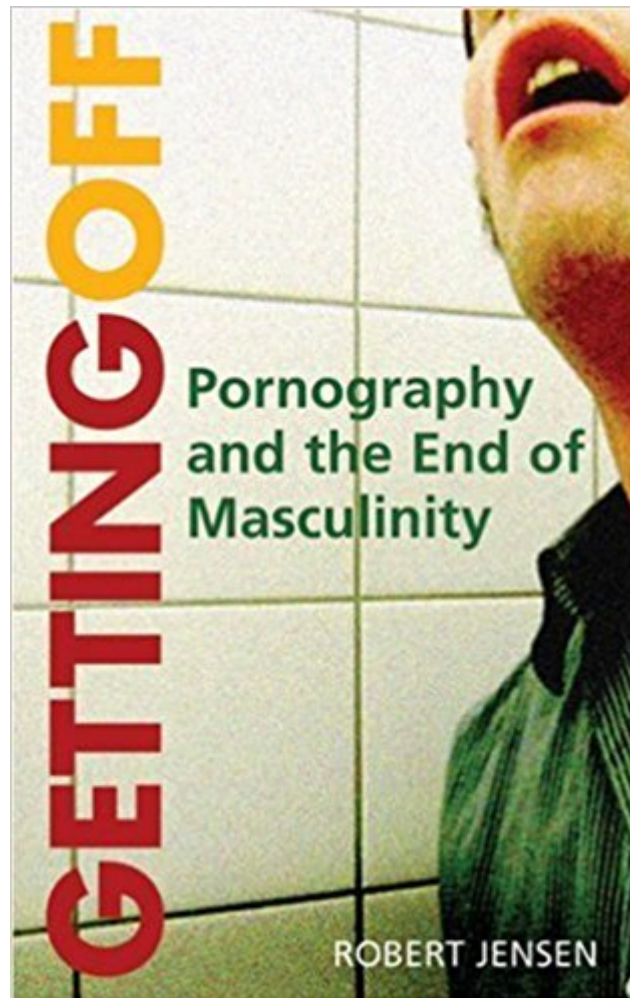




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# Getting Off: Pornography And The End Of Masculinity



## Synopsis

In our culture, porn makes the man. So argues Robert Jensen in *Getting Off: Pornography and the End of Masculinity*. Jensen's treatise begins with a simple demand: "Be a man." It ends with a defiant response: "I chose to struggle to be a human being." The journey from masculinity to humanity is found in the candid and intelligent exploration of pornography's devastating role in defining masculinity. *Getting Off* seamlessly blends personal anecdotes from Jensen's years as a feminist anti-pornography activist with scholarly research. In his trademark conversational style, he shows how mainstream pornography reinforces social definitions of manhood and influences men's attitudes about women and how to treat them. Pornography is a thriving multi-billion-dollar industry; it drives the direction of emerging media technology. Pornography also makes for complicated politics. These days, anti-porn arguments are assumed to be "anti-sex" and thus a critical debate is silenced. This book breaks that silence. Alarming and thought-provoking, *Getting Off* asks tough, but crucial, questions about pornography, sex, manhood, and the way toward genuine social justice. Robert Jensen is an associate professor in the School of Journalism at the University of Texas at Austin. He is the author of *The Heart of Whiteness: Confronting Race, Racism and White Privilege* and *Citizens of the Empire: The Struggle to Claim Our Humanity*.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Robert Jensen is a professor of media law, ethics and politics at the University of Texas, Austin. He

is the author of *Heart of Whiteness* and *Citizens of Empire*. He also writes for popular media, and his opinion and analytic pieces on foreign policy, politics and race have appeared in papers and magazines throughout the United States.

This book is something every man needs to read. The material contained within this book is powerful, without a doubt, and would be no matter who wrote it. However, the fact that it is researched and written from the perspective of a male (a male who admits to years of pornography use) makes it all the more worthwhile. It's probably a bit ironic, too, since one of the negative stereotypes of masculinity is an inability to admit wrongdoing, and here is a male human being who admits to wrongdoing while in the process of deconstructing our notions of masculinity as a whole. It helps the work to feel authentic and trustworthy. Yes, the content can be disturbing at times. If pornography weren't disturbing, this book wouldn't exist. Like many women, I have struggled to put my own criticisms of pornography into words, so I want to thank Mr Jensen for doing so. Often we women are written off as being "jealous" or "insecure". They say we're scared that our partner likes big fake boobs, or that he thinks the girls in the movies are prettier than us, or some such petty stuff. While I'm sure there are women who feel that way, that would only be an immature and reactive thought process. Adult human females have concerns about pornography for much more complex reasons, that are often shoved under the rug and ignored. Worse, we're told we're lying or being too emotional (isn't that how it always goes, with all of our concerns)? I, too, have struggled with men who see me as an object, to use to practice something they saw in a movie. Or, the very nature of our activities in the bedroom are an exercise in asserting a perverted dominance over me. Even worse is when you know a man wants to inflict pain upon you, and would if you'd let him. Luckily I've always been able to set firm boundaries about that, but many women have found themselves pressured into activities that were not only painful or degrading emotionally, but also degrading to the entire relationship. So that brings me to my point: Porn harms men, too. Maybe not to the extent that it harms women, but it does. I've seen countless relationships fall apart due to these issues. And while I generally take the viewpoint that there are three sides to every relationship - his side, her side, and the truth - in this case, the responsibility falls on the porn user. If you are doing something that interferes in your ability to feel an emotional response to your partner, you're damaging your sex life. And in turn, you're damaging your relationship. And in turn, you are damaging yourself. At best, you're going to suffer through a series of dissatisfying relationships or outright romantic disasters. At worst, you're training your brain to think like a sociopath. It's a wide spectrum. I hope that this conversation continues to evolve. Men and women need each other. Porn

comes between us, and pushes us apart. I do wish there had been a longer section devoted to the "but it's natural" argument that is so common when this topic is discussed. I get that the author didn't want to delve too far into the biological end of things, preferring to discuss how we are conditioned, as that is more the focus of the book. But since it's such a common argument, I would have loved a longer, more detailed rebuttal. It's truly difficult to separate biology and societal conditioning, and becomes a chicken-and-egg argument at times. I guess I'd like to point out that there are all sorts of things that are "natural" - but we don't do them, because they can harm others. Here's to all you women out there, who struggle to get your partners to connect with you emotionally. We truly are fighting an uphill battle, because as Jensen points out, those in the dominant position are loathe to give up something that benefits them. I hope to read more in the future, on how this does not actually benefit men in the ways they imagine, and is actually harming them as well.

This was a difficult read. Very well done, very direct and utterly non-sensationalist. It must have been an absolute horror to research and write and I commend the author for tackling this subject. Jensen identifies himself right at the get-go as a feminist, and I must say, I was glad to see that, as it brought a thread of sanity to the rest of the book. Jensen brings to this study not only a great deal of street-cred, being male, but also a tremendous sense of dismay on behalf of women and girls. And compassion. Lots of what's in this book is downright ugly. Very ugly. The porn business, the descriptions of the films, the lives of the "actors" and the visible results of increasingly more and more depersonalized and violent films. Jensen calls it the "rape culture" and after reading about the real-life results of filmed and distributed sexualized violence, particularly among younger people. . . it will make the reader think for a very long time. Especially if you have young adult kids. Especially a daughter. Don't read this if you think you are going to 'get off' on the descriptions. You won't. In fact, beware in general about the graphic and sad nature of this study; it's not for the faint of heart. Jensen approaches this social phenomenon as thoughtfully as I imagine possible, tracks its history, plots out its likely future and shines a glaring light on the financial underworld of the porn industry and its measurably destructive results. Sobering. I recommend it for anybody who has an interest in social history, human behavior & group psychology, feminism, sexual violence, sociopathology, or kids. But NOT for kids.

This was a textbook for a class, and for that purpose it was great. I would never buy this to read for a nice relaxing read on a spring day, however! Very intense--is about what you would think it

is about, but it was one of the extra books for a Womens Studies class, and it was what I needed to have. So yes, thanks , you always have what I need. And somehow that sounds odd given the book. So I am quitting now while I am ahead!

If you've ever struggled with pornography or sex addiction I recommend you read this book - cover to cover - objectively. You will be triggered and tempted to stop reading and may likely want to put it down but I challenge you to complete it. Robert Jensen's book provides us an explicit and honest look at the pornography industry and it's impact on our personal psyches as men and it's devastating impact on women and children as well as our humanity. Anyone with a soul and a shred of empathy who has used pornography or currently uses pornography, after reading this book, will never be able to view it the same or 'get off' on it in good conscience. It might just be the missing component to your sexual sobriety. You want to break your addiction to porn? This book is your answer to "getting off" for good. Thank you Robert Jensen! You are a brave Soul.

This was a really interesting book. I don't know if any new information was brought to light. Details on the porn industry were a little too detailed, these alone could be triggering for a recovering addict. For my taste, not enough time was spent on the WHY porn is emasculating, too much on the HOW. But none the less, a good read.

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