

A Reading for the Difficult Moment

When the wound is awake and the pull is strong

A Life Telling Processing Companion

A note before you begin

You picked this up. That matters more than you may realize right now. The part of you that reached for this instead of reaching for the other thing is the truest part of you. It is the part that knows, even in this moment, that what is pulling at you is not what you actually want.

This is not a willpower exercise. This is not a checklist to complete or a technique to deploy. This is an invitation to slow down long enough to listen to what is happening inside you right now, beneath the pull, beneath the urgency, beneath the familiar pull toward escape.

You do not have to be strong right now. You only have to be willing to be honest. Read slowly. Breathe. Let the questions land.

FIRST: PAUSE AND LOCATE YOURSELF

Before anything else, just stop for a moment. You do not have to go anywhere. You do not have to fix anything. Just stop, and notice where you are.

Where are you right now, physically? What room, what chair, what hour of the day or night?

What is your body doing? Notice your breath. Notice whether your chest is tight or your shoulders are raised. Notice if your jaw is clenched. Just observe it, without trying to change it.

How long have you been feeling this pull? Did it arrive suddenly, or has it been building across the day?

There is nothing wrong with noticing any of this. The noticing itself is the beginning of something.

SECOND: NAME WHAT IS HAPPENING BENEATH THE SURFACE

The pull toward pornography is never only about pornography. It is carrying something. Something that was there before the pull arrived, something that the pull is offering to cover or quiet or temporarily dissolve. Beneath the urgency, there is almost always one of these things, or more than one at once. Read through them slowly and notice which ones feel true right now.

There is loneliness here.

A sense of being unseen, unconnected, or isolated. A hunger for something that feels like closeness or warmth or the experience of mattering to someone. If this is present, the wound is real. The longing is real. The loneliness beneath it deserves to be acknowledged, not numbed.

There is exhaustion here.

The weight of holding everything together, of performing, of being who everyone needs you to be, has become too heavy in this moment. You are tired in a way that sleep does not fix. If this is present, the exhaustion is real. It has a name. You have been carrying something very heavy for a very long time.

There is pain here.

Something happened today, or this week, or a long time ago, and it is awake right now. A rejection, a failure, a conversation that left you feeling inadequate or unseen or ashamed. Maybe it is an old pain that has no recent cause but arrived anyway, the way old wounds do. If this is present, the pain is real. It deserves to be felt, not escaped.

There is anger here.

Something has felt unjust or out of control. You have had to contain yourself in a situation that required you to be smaller than you wanted to be. The anger has nowhere legitimate to go right now, and the pull toward pornography is the Warrior in you trying to take something, to assert something, to feel the force of yourself again. If this is present, the anger is real. It is pointing toward something that matters to you.

There is emptiness here.

Not quite loneliness and not quite pain. Just a hollow, flat absence of meaning. A sense that the things you are doing do not fully belong to you, that the life you are living is slightly off from the life that is actually yours. The pull toward pornography feels, in this moment, like it might be the one place where something is at least real, at least felt. If this is present, the emptiness is real. It is the Sovereign in you asking for a life that is genuinely inhabited.

Take a moment now. Without judgment, without trying to solve anything, just name what is most true right now. You might even say it quietly aloud, or write it down.

What is actually here beneath the pull?

THIRD: SPEAK TO THE WOUND WITH COMPASSION

What you are feeling right now is not evidence that you are broken beyond repair. It is evidence that something in you has been hurt and has not yet been fully seen, named, or held.

The part of you that is pulling toward pornography right now is not the enemy. It is a wounded part. It learned, somewhere along the way, that this particular door offered something that felt like relief or connection or release or control. It is not wrong to want those things. It is deeply human

to want those things. The door it has been reaching for simply cannot give what it promises.

Try, if you are able, to speak to that part of yourself the way you would speak to a man you cared deeply about who was sitting across from you in his pain. Not with contempt. Not with shame. With the simple, honest acknowledgment of what is real.

What you are feeling is real. What you are longing for is legitimate. The wound beneath this moment is worth something more than escape.

If the pain or longing or exhaustion you are feeling right now had a voice, what would it most need to say?

What has this wound been trying to tell you that you have not yet had space to hear?

Is there something from today, or from a long time ago, that is alive in this moment and has not yet been acknowledged?

You do not have to answer these questions with certainty. You only have to stay with them long enough to let them do their quiet work.

FOURTH: REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE IN THE LARGER STORY

This moment, as heavy as it feels right now, is not the whole of your story. It is one moment inside a much larger arc. And the larger arc is not finished.

You are a man in the middle of a couragepath. You have already done things that required genuine courage. You have already shown up for the work of your own integration in ways that matter. The fact that you are here, reading this rather than giving in without a second thought, is evidence of something real in you that is worth honoring.

What is one thing about who you are becoming that this moment is trying to threaten? Name it, even quietly.

What do you know, in the part of you that is most honest, about what genuine freedom in this area of your life would actually feel like?

Who are you when you are most fully yourself? Not the performing self, not the managed self, but the man you most deeply are underneath all of it?

That man is still here. He did not leave when the wound woke up. He is the one who reached for this reading.

FIFTH: CHOOSE WHAT THIS MOMENT WILL CARRY

You are not being asked to white-knuckle your way through this. You are not being asked to be strong. You are being invited to make one small, honest choice in the direction of the man you are becoming.

That choice does not have to be dramatic. It does not have to resolve anything. It only has to be true.

Is there one person you could reach out to right now, not to confess or perform, but simply to make contact with another human being?

Is there one small thing you could do with your body in the next five minutes, take a walk, splash cold water on your face, step outside, that would help your nervous system move out of the urgency of this moment?

Is there something the wound beneath this pull genuinely needs that is not pornography? Rest? To be heard? To grieve something? To feel the force of yourself in a legitimate way? To simply not be alone for a little while?

You do not have to solve the wound tonight. You only have to not abandon yourself to the counterfeit.

One honest movement. One true choice. That is enough for this moment.

SIXTH: A WORD IF YOU ARE A MAN OF FAITH

If you carry faith alongside this struggle, there is something worth resting in right now.

You are not hidden from God in this moment. The pull you are feeling is not beyond the reach of the One who sat at a well and waited for a wounded person to arrive. The same gaze that held the woman in her full complexity, without flinching and without condemning, is the gaze that holds you right now, in this particular hour, in this specific struggle.

Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?

If I go up to the heavens, you are there. If I make my bed in the depths, you are there.

Psalm 139:7-8

You are not too far. You are not too broken. You are not beyond the arc of grace.

The thorn has not been removed. But the presence has not withdrawn either. And in the middle of the night, when the wound is awake and the pull is strong, presence is what the soul most needs, not performance, not resolution, not the proof that you have finally conquered this.

Just presence. His and, if you are willing, your own.

Can you, in this moment, simply acknowledge that you are here and that you are known?

Is there something you need to say to God right now that you have not said? Not formally. Just honestly.

You do not have to arrive anywhere tonight. You only have to not leave yourself.

When this moment has passed

When the urgency has quieted, even a little, it is worth returning to what surfaced in these pages. Not to analyze it to death, but to carry it gently into your next conversation with your therapist, your journal, or whoever walks this path with you.

The wound that woke up tonight is a tile in your mosaic. It is not the whole picture. But it belongs in the picture, and it has something to tell you about the larger story you are living.

The fact that you stayed with this reading, that you moved through these questions instead of through the other door, is not a small thing. It is evidence that the deeper part of you is alive and working and oriented toward something true.

That is worth acknowledging. Quietly, without fanfare, in the privacy of this moment.

You stayed. That matters.

This reading was developed within the Life Telling Processing framework by Jon M. Holmes, MDiv., MA, LMFT.

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