



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Enough is Enough: Let's Stop the Threat of Porn to Our Children

Guest(s): Donna Rice Hughes

Air Date: February 24, 2023

[Listen to the broadcast](#)

Dr. James Dobson: Welcome everyone to Family Talk. It's a ministry of the James Dobson Family Institute supported by listeners just like you. I'm Dr. James Dobson and I'm thrilled that you've joined us.

Roger Marsh: The following program is intended from mature audiences. Listener discretion is advised.

Welcome to Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh. You know, so many of the devices we use on a daily basis are connected to the internet. Kids are online for school and play. We work on networks that are connected around the world via the internet. You can do shopping while you're in the waiting room of your doctor's office. You can answer your front door while you're away at work. While technology has brought with it many blessings and conveniences, there still are also many dangers that can harm our children. Today's guest here on Family Talk is Donna Rice Hughes, a woman who has dedicated her life to making the internet safer for our children. To tell us more about her is our own Dr. Tim Clinton. So let's join them right now, right here on Family Talk.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Hello friends, and welcome into another edition of Family Talk. I'm Dr. Tim Clinton, co-host here. I'm honored to serve alongside Dr. Dobson as the resident authority and mental health and relationships here at the James Dobson Family Institute. I also serve as president of the American Association of Christian Counselors and Executive Director of the Liberty University Global Center on Mental Health Addiction and Recovery.

Hey, thank you for joining us here on today's broadcast. Today's program is being recorded in Washington, DC. There's always a lot going on here, but we are at the 50th annual March For Life. Today's guest has dedicated her life to protecting children as they interact with the digital world. Internet safety expert, author, speaker Donna Rice Hughes, she's one of my favorite. She is the founder and president of Enough Is Enough. It's a nonprofit organization that seeks to make the internet a safe place for kids and families.

Donna and Enough Is Enough teamed up with the U.S. Department of Justice in the early 2000s to create the Internet Safety 101 program, which led Donna, by

the way, to becoming the executive producer and host of the Internet Safety 101 DVD series. The series aired on PBS, won an Emmy Award. Donna's appeared in all kinds of major news networks sharing a message about making the internet a safer place, something moms and dads are all concerned about all across this country. I hear it from everyone. She's married to Jack. They have two grown children, Mindy and Sean, and she's a grandma.

Donna Rice Hughes: Yes, I am.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Donna, what a delight to have you. Thank you for joining us. Dr. Dobson and his wife Shirley send their regards.

Donna Rice Hughes: Oh yes. Send them my love. They're wonderful. And Tim, it's so good to see you again. Gosh, we were talking about these issues years ago as well.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Donna it's just stunning to me that the internet, the whole digital world, the whole space continues to evolve, but I know that with the convenience of all of it, you can order groceries, you can do anything. I mean, you can check your door while you're driving down the highway. But Donna, with that comes growing concern and it's been in your heart for a long, long time. Let's go back and just talk about where that passion came from because what you do is critical for moms and dads.

Donna Rice Hughes: Well thank you, Tim. Yes. When I started in 1994, most people had not even heard of the internet. And in fact, the worldwide web was still under development at MIT. There was no such thing as email. There were two or three internet service providers. So this was very early on and I actually met a wonderful woman named Dee Jepson, who was the president and founder of Enough Is Enough. She started in 1992 with a group of women, bipartisan. They were concerned about pornography in the culture, not internet, just pornography, hardcore pornography, how it was impacting children, women, men, marriages, sexually oriented businesses, strip clubs and all of that.

They were looking for a communications director and someone to help run this organization eventually. And so along comes me. Well, I never thought I would be doing this because I had had a lot of sexual exploitation in my past and it just wasn't really on my radar screen, but you know how God is and it is oftentimes I've seen that it's those areas of trauma and suffering and pain that we've experienced that he uses to turn into ministry and to help others.

And I had gone through a very dark time in my life, in my early twenties. I grew up as a Southern Baptist gal in South Carolina, came to know the Lord at a very early age, served in the church, was a summer missionary, just was at the top of my game in every area, academic sports, you name it, and loving life. And as I graduated from college to go to New York to compete in the Miss South Carolina World contest, I lost my virginity against my will when a senior person involved in the pageant world, a man took my virginity away from me against

my will. We call it now date rape, but I didn't know what it was. So as often happens, I kept it a secret. I ran off to New York and that began my prodigal years. And God in His mercy and grace and my grandmom's and my mom all praying for me, knew I was way off in a left turn.

As a Christian, we don't go from A to Z overnight. We usually go from A to B and then C to G. And before we know it, we're way off course and... But God in His mercy, he pulled me back. It took a very difficult situation in 1987 where I felt like I did hit rock bottom and really lost my reputation worldwide. And God got my attention and drew me back to Him and seven years underground, living through a lot of trauma, daily trauma because of those situations that happened then.

I just say, "God, just use this. I want my pain to count for something." And then I met Dee Jenson and she got me involved in Enough Is Enough. Two weeks into the job, we saw the beginnings of pornographers, pedophiles, child pornographers, using the pre-internet to trade hardcore pornography that you couldn't even buy in a triple X-rated bookstore then and child pornography depicting young babies, toddlers, et cetera, and predators interacting with each other. And I said, "now I know why I am here," because I loved the idea of the internet, but I also knew that it was neutral. It could be used for good or evil. And so we launched the Internet Safety Movement and now here we are 30 years later, this is our 30-year anniversary.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Donna, you focus in on children and I need moms and dads to hear this. What are some of the statistics? What are some of the stories that really have your attention that we need to hear? Because most parents think, not my kids, not on my kids' phones. And that's not happening.

Donna Rice Hughes: That's right.

Dr. Tim Clinton: But truth is we often want to just turn a blind eye to it or we just don't want to believe it. We're praying, "God, don't let that be true."

Donna Rice Hughes: Right. But yeah, I would say to every parent, "no child is immune." You can have a smart child, a child who loves God, a child who, I hear this a lot, they're not even interested in the opposite sex. I said, "look, the problem is not your child. The problem is we have an unregulated internet." And the pornographers, the sexual predators, the traffickers and the bullies are seeking out vulnerable children, which could be your child, which could be your grandchild. I have never had a parent or a grandparent who has had to deal with their child getting addicted to hardcore porn at 10 years old or getting seduced by a predator at 12 or being trafficked at 14 by a kid in school who's running a gang into the sex trafficking world, that did not tell me, "I never thought that this would happen to my child."

So please listen up. You have to be vigilant. Our children are living in this digital world, and unless the parent becomes super cyber savvy, and we've got a little bit of time to try to pour as much into you about what you need to know and how to protect your children, then they really are very vulnerable to all of these dangers. It's a whole different ballgame out there. Let me just give you a few stats, Tim. 58% of kids under the age of 14 are consuming hardcore pornography. Of those, a number of them are under the age of eight years old.

Dr. Tim Clinton: So a lot of kids accidentally come across it, is what you're saying.

Donna Rice Hughes: That's right. And the pornographers-

Dr. Tim Clinton: Innocently, they're just up online and these guys are targeting, going after kids.

Donna Rice Hughes: They are. They're targeting them.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Because I saw something up on your website Enough Is Enough about how many children actually felt like they had engaged a stranger online.

Donna Rice Hughes: Yes, and this is happening as well. See, the internet is neutral. It's really important we understand that. It's just a technology. Can be used for good or evil. Right now we're using it for good, but the bad guys, the criminals are using it for evil. 40% of kids in grades four through eight say that they have connected with a stranger online. This is very dangerous because-

Dr. Tim Clinton: That's scary.

Donna Rice Hughes: These strangers-

Dr. Tim Clinton: Horrific.

Donna Rice Hughes: Like I said, they're trolling for kids. Oftentimes they are sexual predators. They might be a trafficker who seeks to engage that child and get them into a sexual encounter online where nude pictures and sexual explicit video may be exchanged. Then will often what we say, "sextort " that child and say, "if you say anything or you do anything or you tell your mom or your school, then we're going to put this out there and destroy your life. We're going to spread it online. It's going to go viral." So it's a form of virtual blackmail. So all of this is wrapped up. Sexting by kids is also pandemic.

Dr. Tim Clinton: And sexting being?

Donna Rice Hughes: Sexting being when anyone takes a nude or sexually provocative or explicit photo or video of themselves and they share it with someone else, either online or through a-

Dr. Tim Clinton: Happened so much with their kids.

Donna Rice Hughes: ...text, that's why they call it sexting. Yeah.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Donna, the only way you can win this battle is at home, isn't it?

Donna Rice Hughes: That's true. I mean, we believe... Well, we're fighting it at Enough Is Enough on many fronts. So parents have got to be the first line of defense. They just to be. They should not be having to shoulder the entire burden of protecting their children from criminal activity. That should be regulated and we should have more law enforcement there. I'm going to talk about that in just a minute. But parents still have to be the first line of defense.

And Christian parents understand this more than anyone. Because God has given us these children to steward and to train up in the way that they should go. But the way they're being bombarded everywhere in the culture and in particular on the internet is very difficult. So if you recognize the nature of the war because it is a war, and also recognize that this is a spiritual war, first of all, and we've got to win this war on the spiritual level as well and be praying for our kids and be praying for their protections, because I'm going to give you all the things in the natural that you need to be doing as a parent here, as when we start to wrap up.

But even if you do all the right things, it doesn't mean something might not happen. And that's where it's important to be in tune with the Holy Spirit to say, "Hey, that was a red flag."

Dr. Tim Clinton: Through the years we've talked about this journey of quote, "shutting down pornography" by putting filters on and all kinds of different things. What's interesting is most kids, they know how to get around all that stuff.

Donna Rice Hughes: I'm sorry?

Dr. Tim Clinton: Mom and dad, they're better than you. They're way out in front of you. Matter of fact, they know stuff. They have language that they use online, et cetera, that you have no idea. That's the concerning piece here. The other piece, and I want to add to that is not only just their knowledge and skill because they've grown up with this. A lot of us older adults aren't that savvy. But there's a piece on mom and dad's end that I think is an indictment. I think a lot of dads, for example, don't want to talk about this because they have their own issues.

Donna Rice Hughes: That's true.

Dr. Tim Clinton: And they struggle and don't want necessarily to quote, "sit down" and share the phone, take a look at each other, hold each other accountable and more because of what might happen there. And so Donna, it's just like quagmire. Keeps getting deeper and deeper and deeper. Yet, I mean, if we're going to fight, we've got to get honest. We've got to get open. We've got to get to a place where it says, "okay, let's do these things together. God help us." Because

this is an enemy. I mean, this is like all Hell coming against you wanting to destroy the very thing that God has created you for in this relationship with Him and with each other and for freedom.

Donna Rice Hughes: And for genuine relationship. We're here now and the March of Life is going on, and I'm telling all of my pro-life leaders, once we get these children born, we still have to fight for their life. Because once they're born, they are sitting ducks for how the enemy is going to attempt to destroy them. And as parents, if we realize this, this is just one area. There are other areas, but online, I haven't even talked about the rule of the internet and trafficking. It's-

Dr. Tim Clinton: Yeah. Let's talk about exploitation of kids-

Donna Rice Hughes: Yeah, exploitation.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Because people talk pornography, but they don't talk about exploitation.

Donna Rice Hughes: That's right. It's all connected.

Dr. Tim Clinton: And you show the link between the two of those.

Donna Rice Hughes: That's right. It's all connected. So pornography for instance, is driving the demand for sex trafficking. It is driving the demand also for child, what we are now calling child sex abuse images. Because the pornography industry and the child pornography industry co-market one another. The porn industry actually has what we call barely legal content where they use girls that look like they're 12, 13 years old, but they're actually 18.

So they're whetting the appetite of those using the quote unquote "adult content" to actually desire sex with a minor child, which drives the child porn industry. And the internet is being used by traffickers to groom kids and to seduce them into the internet world. It's the same way that sexual predators groom kids online to have an actual sexual relationship with that child, first online and then carry it offline. So all of this is going on, but here's the good news.

The tide is starting to turn, Tim. I just want to encourage your audience. You're hearing all bad stuff because it really is bad and it's really been bad. But when we started the movement in '94, we were three organizations, now we're hundreds of us fighting this. Congress is focused on this now, again. There's some really exciting things starting to happen, but we felt as the leaders a number of years ago that we had to reframe these issues. The online exploitation of children as a public health issue.

That's what we did with the seatbelt laws. That's what we did with drinking and driving. That's what happened with smoking. Each one was reframed as a public health issue. That then drove public opinion, which then drove public policy.

And at Enough Is Enough we focus on educating parents. We've got every resource you can think about, but how to protect your kids from pornography, cyber-bullying, trafficking, sexual predators, all of it.

Keep them safe on gaming sites, on social media sites. But we're also working with corporate America to hold their feet to the fire to create what we call safety by design technologies. When you hold up that phone, we're looking at legislation now when you turn it on, this hasn't happened yet, but five states are looking to pass the law that all the filtering and the safety measures are on. The parent does not have to go figure it all out.

And we're working with the social media companies to what we call default to safety. Now, this has been a long time coming. It hasn't happened yet, but this is all in the works. We are also hoping and praying that the Department of Justice will start aggressively enforcing all these laws.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Donna, in this journey, and I love the statement. "He makes all things new." He can take broken lives and broken situations, broken homes, maybe homes that are filled with pornography and what have you. And if we yield to him and we take measured steps, God can make all things new.

Donna Rice Hughes: That's right.

Dr. Tim Clinton: That plan. What do you say to the mom who has turned this one up and said, "I know we got a problem at home and we're not addressing it. And you know what? I'm worried for my kids. I'm worried for my marriage." Well, where do we go? What do we do?

Donna Rice Hughes: Well, first of all, you're right. There is hope, but there's also practical resources, and it's really important to get the resources that you need at the right time. What we've done enough.org is created a resource library. So if you've got a child struggling with having been sexually abused or being addicted to pornography or a marriage is falling apart, we've put all those resources together.

We haven't created them, but we've aggregated what we believe is the best of the best. And our focus is prevention. So we really for those families where you haven't had a problem yet, beware. And can I just give some safety tips?

Dr. Tim Clinton: Yes.

Donna Rice Hughes: Okay. This is not exhaustive, but I'm going to give you the biggies. Okay?

Dr. Tim Clinton: Yes.

Donna Rice Hughes: We call them rules and tools. These are not rules and tools for your kid. These are rules and tools for mom and dad. All right? The rules are the non-technical things that you've got to do as a parent.

Number one, if you're going to get your child any kind of device, be prepared and willing to be a cyber parent regarding that device. That means you've got to implement all the safety tools available and the software tools and the safety rules. So what are some of the rules? Know what your kids are doing all the time online. Okay. Have conversations with them regularly. The most important thing you can do is talk to them about who they're talking to, see who they're talking to, and have open communication because you want to be the safe person that your kid comes to.

If they see pornography, if they're already using it, if one of their friends is being groomed, they think online by a predator or a trafficker, you want them to come to you and you want to help them understand that you're not going to freak out.

Dr. Tim Clinton: You're the safe place.

Donna Rice Hughes: You're the safe place because a lot of times-

Dr. Tim Clinton: This is a place to get help. Mom and dad love you.

Donna Rice Hughes: That's right. And so try not to freak out. Listen. Be that safe person. That is the most important piece of advice I can give you. And like I said, if you're going to get a device and you're not willing to get engaged with that device and make sure that device is safe, then don't get it. All right? And that goes with a smartphone, online gaming device. Here's the good thing though. All these softwares and all these devices have parental control tools built in, but they're turned off. We're trying to get them turned on automatically. So as the parent, you've got to turn them on. I say the three top tools to turn on, on your computer, on the gaming platforms, social media platforms are the filters. They're not going to catch everything.

Can a kid get around it? Yes, they can. But that's why the second tool is so important. Monitoring technology. Monitoring is different than filtering. Monitoring will let you see where your kids are trying to get through the filters. It will also send you a report of where they're going online and even what they're doing in conversations that they might be having. And this third tool is time limiting tools. So what's really cool, you can have three kids and they have three devices each, let's say. You can set the controls different for each child based on where they are in their maturity and their age. It's a lot of work, but being a cyber parent is a lot of work. It's harder than my mom and dad.

Dr. Tim Clinton: A whole lot better than trying to dig out of a ditch.

Donna Rice Hughes: That's right. And you can be dealing with a lifetime of trauma and brokenness that can go well into adulthood, but their help is available and God can restore and He does, but He's the perfect daddy, right? He doesn't want us to be hurt like this. He doesn't want our kids to go prodigal. He doesn't want the enemy to entrap them through all these mechanisms and in the criminal elements that are everywhere in our culture and in particularly running rampant on the internet.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Donna, we, I think, stirred up a conversation today that has probably created a lot of buzz and energy. I'd love to hear from our listeners out there. If you were moved by this conversation and feel like this is an issue that's a challenge in your home, in your church and more, let us know. We'd love to hear from you. And also be sure and go up on Donna's website.

Donna Rice Hughes: That's right. We have two. Enough.org and internetsafety101.org. Sign up for our newsletters. We are keeping people up to speed every week on what's happening. If there's a new app, if there's something new happening in Congress, you have the opportunity through us to speak to Congress. We also have free downloadable material. They're little one-pagers on how to keep your kids safe from pornography, cyber bullying, trafficking, and exactly what you need to do. Just download them. Share them. Spread the word because we need each other as parents and as grandparents. And grandparents, message to grandparents, get engaged because sometimes you are the one that can speak into that child's life when they might be afraid to go to mommy and daddy.

Dr. Tim Clinton: And that website again is enough.org. Enough.org.

Donna Rice Hughes: That's right.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Our special guest again today has been Donna Rice Hughes. She's the president and CEO of Enough Is Enough. Internationally known internet safety expert, author, speaker, producer, and someone who's got a lot of Jesus in her heart, and we love your passion. And Donna, we're going to have you back. On behalf of Dr. Dobson, his wife Shirley, the entire team. We salute you, you and pray that God continues to give you courage and strength and a voice for such a time as this. Thank you for joining us.

Donna Rice Hughes: Thank you for having me.

Roger Marsh: With the overwhelming challenges of keeping our children safe in our technology driven world, you really can see God's Hand is at work. You've been listening to Family Talk, and our guest today has been Donna Rice Hughes, the president and CEO of the organization called Enough Is Enough. Donna is working hard to keep our children safe online.

And by the way, if you'd like to share today's program with someone who would benefit from this conversation, remember, you can find it on our website at

www.drjamesdobson.org/familytalk. That's
www.drjamesdobson.org/familytalk.

Now, perhaps you might need some encouragement or support of your family as they might be dealing with some of the issues discussed in today's program. Well, good news, our trained customer care team is ready to help you. Simply call 877-732-6825 and our team will be happy to guide you and provide you with some resources that will help you and your family heal. Again, that number is 877-732-6825. And remember, when you contact us by phone, our customer care team will be happy to pray with and for you. As Paul writes in Romans 12:12, "be joyful in hope, patient in affliction and faithful in prayer."

I'm Roger Marsh, and from all of us here at the JDFI, the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, thank you for your support and for joining us for today's program. Have a blessed and peaceful weekend, and be sure to join us again next time for another edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

Announcer: This has been a presentation of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute.

Dr. James Dobson: This is James Dobson again. As we close today's program, I just want to thank so many of you out there who make this broadcast possible with your contributions, and I want to tell you how much your generosity is appreciated.