

69. 3 Things That Keep You Stuck in Porn



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Sara Brewer

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You are listening to the *Overcome Pornography for Good* podcast episode 69, Three Things That Keep You Stuck in Porn.

Welcome to the *Overcome Pornography For Good* podcast where we take a research-based, trauma informed and results focused approach to quitting porn. This approach has been revolutionary and changed thousands and thousands of lives. I'm your host, Sara Brewer.

Hey, you guys, welcome to the podcast episode this week. So glad you're here. I'm losing my voice a little bit and so hopefully it sticks around for this podcast episode because it's a little scratchy. And anyways, I'm trying to talk directly into the microphone so you can hear me okay.

Before we dive into our content today, the three things that will keep you stuck in porn that I want to address with you, these are things that I've seen come up recently, over, and over and over again. Things that when I do my group coaching calls every single week with everyone in the program, this is what I say to them, I say these group coaching calls are so, so valuable. In fact, a lot of people like them more than one on one and private coaching.

And me too, like I always get the most out of my group coaching calls when I am, like for myself, when I'm in group coaching calls for myself. What you learn there is you learn, number one, most people are thinking the same things you are, you're not alone. It's a really great way to decrease shame, is being in a group with a lot of people struggling with the same things.

And number two, like I said, a lot of people have these same struggles, and these same thoughts, and the same specific things that come up. And you can always apply them to you. They're always applicable to you. You always come to a call, and you get so much from it, even if you don't actually want to talk and actually be coached.

I've had so many people quit porn just from listening to the calls, not even coming, and getting coached themselves because it's just so applicable. And honestly, our brains, we're a little bit less resistant to change if we're not on the hot seat, sometimes. You know, when you're on the hot seat and

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you're the one who's being coached, and being vulnerable, and talking, it's an amazing, beautiful, super powerful thing you can do for yourself.

And sometimes your brain isn't as open to changing because you're feeling nervous or feeling a little bit more resistant because it's your brain and your thoughts. And so sometimes it's so helpful just to listen too, right? Both are helpful. Both are helpful, there's a place for both. So I want to talk about those.

Before we dive into that though, I want to share a win and take a minute and celebrate a win that you have had for yourself this week. This one is from a client in my program, he said, "I have a long standing habit of looking at porn and staying up late whenever my wife works the night shift.

I felt like I was incapable of taking care of myself without her there. This week, however, I decided to recruit that managerial part of myself that's always yelling at me to be better. I had an internal conversation with that part." So good.

So what he's saying here is he notices there's this part of him, if you think of Inside Out, if you've seen that movie, Inside Out, there's all those different parts. There's the happy part, the sad part, the angry part, the jealous, envious part. And he decided he's going to have a conversation with this part of him. So he said to this part that's always yelling at him to be better, like, "Hey, be better, be better be better."

He decides to talk to this part. And this is what he says to him, he says, "Hey, this shame isn't helping us be better. But I could use your help putting my phone away and going for a walk when I have an urge, and doing my bedtime routine on time this Friday."

He says, "Having a conversation with a part of myself might seem a little weird, but it was just the emotional processing I needed to feel like that shaming part of me was finally on my team." I love it. "So I did my stretching routine. I watched a movie with my brother in the evening, instead of being alone. And I actually went to bed on time, and I didn't look at porn.

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I felt that part of me encouraging me to just do that thing that I know is good for me. And the success was intoxicating. I cleaned my house and took a bigger role in taking care of the kids. I'm excited to process urges now. Thank you for your work making the program and helping people like me."

Yes, I love it. I feel like I need to have a whole podcast episode on this idea of speaking to yourself and speaking to these parts of yourself. And for those of you who have that part of you that is really shame-y and yelling at you to do better, we don't just have to ignore it. And what we don't want to do is shame it for shaming you, right?

You imagine this part, you don't want be like, "Shut up. You're so dumb, stop shaming me." No, we can talk to that part with love and have a conversation. Be like, "Oh, what are you trying to tell me? I see that you're trying to help me do good things, thank you. And can you help me out in this way instead?" Oh, so good.

Okay, so let's dive into these three things. Three things that keep you stuck in porn, number one is looking after you've slipped up with the excuse that's like, "Oh, I already slipped up, so I'm just going to view again. We'll start again next week and so as soon as Monday rolls around, then I'll take it seriously again. But I'll be a little bit in and out until Monday." Or whatever, right?

A lot of us do this and what this is, is this is a form of all or nothing, of this all or nothing thinking. So, many of us have been conditioned to think and act in a way that is all or nothing. So I'm either all in or I'm doing nothing. Either I'm all in in quitting porn, or I'm doing nothing and I'm just giving in to all the urges. Either I'm all in, I'm doing all the work in the program, or I'm doing nothing in the program.

And what I always encourage is that we work on getting rid of this all or nothing thinking. It doesn't work, right? I'm going to quit porn cold turkey, or I'm not going to quit porn, right? And especially when, you know, with program work, doing a little bit, doing 1% is much better than being either all or nothing.

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And so the truth is, if you're looking after you've slipped up and said, "Okay, well, I'll try again on Monday," or "I'll try again, tomorrow," whatever, that is putting yourself back and that's harming your success much more than you realize.

Of course I encourage you, yeah, we're going to get back on track and we're going to try again. But if you're using that as an excuse to be like, "Oh, well, we'll try again next week," instead of trying again right now, that's keeping you stuck. The truth is, is that we don't want to track progress by your days without porn, we want to track progress by the number of urges that you successfully process.

And guess what? That means it doesn't matter if you already viewed porn that day, you can still be making progress. Even if you viewed porn five minutes ago, it can still be a successful, progressive day. If you're processing urges, it doesn't matter if you view porn that day. So the all or nothing comes in when you're like, "Oh, I already viewed porn today, so we'll try again tomorrow. I'm just going to finish viewing and listen to these urges and react to all these urges for the rest of the day."

That is also a bit of bingeing behavior and that comes from this all or nothing thinking. And the truth is, is that those times that you look at porn are important. The more we view porn, the more we want to view porn.

And so I want you to imagine when you do this, it's like you're climbing up a mountain and you're like, "Oh, I'm tired. I need a break." And then you start walking back downhill. Right? No, if you need a break, that's fine. But let's just stop and rest, let's not go back downhill.

Or it's like if you slip up and you stumble on the path a little bit, you're not like, "Well, I'm just going to stumble back down." No, you're going to stop, rest, and then you're going to keep going when you're ready. We don't want to start walking backwards.

And if you do, like if you've done that, no need to beat ourselves up for that, you can still keep going up the mountain. You can still make it but it's going to take a lot longer if every time you stumble, you walk backwards for a little

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bit. Like let's just stumble, be okay with the stumble. Take a rest for a minute and then keep going when we're ready.

This looking after you've slipped up, it comes typically from this mindset that's like, "Oh, my days without porn is what's most important." But that's not true. What's most important, what creates the most progress in quitting porn is the number of urges processed.

Now, I've talked about that a lot on the podcast, so if this is one of your first ones and you haven't heard me talk about that, go and listen to the first three episodes and it'll describe that. Remember, Pavlov's dogs, how Pavlov trained his dogs to stop salivating at the sound of the bell was he made them process a bunch of urges. So that is how we count success here.

Okay, number two, the second thing that will keep you stuck in porn is trying to think your way out of an urge. Many of you listen to my podcast, come in the program and you learn this beauty of thought work, and the power of thought work, and the power of your thoughts. You learn that thoughts create your feelings and so one of the reasons you've been stuck in porn, you haven't been able to quit porn is because you've had crappy thoughts.

Okay, you can't quit porn if you have crappy thoughts. So many of us just let our brains run wild. It's like letting a toddler run around with a knife, or a toddler run around with a Sharpie. That's dangerous, we don't want to do that. And when we're not used to looking at our brain, and letting our brains just think whatever is thrown at them and believe whatever is thrown at them, it's a dangerous place to be.

And so you learn the power of your thoughts, and you learn the power of thought work, and you learn the power of thinking thoughts that are good, and helpful, and useful. And you learn how to change your beliefs. And it's exciting, and it's invigorating, and it's so empowering.

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But when it comes to urges, you cannot think your way out of an urge. You can think your way into processing an urge and staying committed, but you can't think your way out of feeling an urge.

What this looks like is my clients will say, "Okay, well, I noticed this urge and I started telling myself, okay, it's okay, you can do this, let's go on a run. Okay, it's okay, we're not going to think about this right now. We're going to think about other things. We're going to think about how much we love our life and how excited we are to quit porn. And we're going to try to think our way out of this urge."

Now, those are all great things to think. Yes, let's have our brain go there, let's our brain go there. But if the purpose behind those thoughts is to make the urge go away, what that really is, is willpower. And again, if you've heard me talk at all, if you've come to any of my free classes, you know willpower is keeping you stuck.

Using willpower does not work. And so trying to think your way out of an urge is never going to work. Like I said, you can think your way into being committed to processing your urge and to feeling your urge, but you can't think your way out of the urge. And again, if this is one of your first episodes hearing me talk, make sure you go listen to my free class, it's sarabrewer.com/freemasterclass, it explains a lot of these concepts that are more basic. The things I'm sharing today are a little more advanced for people who already understand all those basics.

Okay, but that's number two, is you can't think your way out of an urge. Instead, you just have to feel it. You have to let yourself be uncomfortable with the urge. I coached someone on this last week. They didn't realize it, but they were trying not to feel the discomfort of the urge. They were trying just to think their way out of feeling the discomfort of the urge. It's never going to work. You have to feel the discomfort of the urge. And it sucks and it's not fun, but it's super empowering and it's the only way to get through.

So use your thoughts to be committed to feeling the discomfort. Don't use your thoughts to make discomfort less or to make it less uncomfortable. It's

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not going to work, right? Our mantra is, this is difficult and that's good. This is uncomfortable and that's good. Discomfort is good here, I can handle it. I can handle the feeling of this urge. The only way to quit porn is going through the urges.

Remember, I think in the podcast episode, I've talked about that book my kids love, "We're going on a bear hunt. We're going to catch a big one. What a beautiful day. We're not scared. Oh no, a river, we can't go over it. We can't go under it. Oh no, we've got to go through it. That's this idea in the whole book is you have to go through the things, you can't go over it, you can't go under it, you can't go around it, you have to go through it."

And so anytime you're using thoughts to try to go over it, or under it, or around it, and not really go through the urge, you're doing it wrong. We have to go through it. You have to go through that river of misery, through that discomfort. And, you guys, the way I've taught you how to do it makes it so much easier. So much easier than it ever has been for you.

So going through it might not be as miserable as you think it is. It's a lot more effort and energy to try to go around it, or under it, or over it than just to hike up your bootstraps and go through it. So, okay, that's number two.

Number three, the third thing that will keep you stuck viewing porn is using your past to define your future. I've heard many of you say, "Well, it's been 20 years, I can't quit porn. I'm here, I've joined the program, I'm trying. I'm doing the work but, honestly, it's been 20 years. I've been struggling with this for 20 years." And what I want to say every time someone says that to me, is it doesn't freaking matter. Okay?

I love you and it doesn't matter. It literally does not matter how long you've been viewing porn. Your past does not determine your future. And we learned that very clearly in that interview I had with Quinn, right? He struggled with porn for 50 years, but he never made that mean, "I have to struggle for the next 50 years." No, he was able to quit and quit pretty easily once he got in the right mind frame, mindset and learned these skills.

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Your past means nothing about your future. I want you to think about it this way, this is a little like woo woo-y but I like thinking about it this way. So your past exists in your brain. Think about that, right now in this moment, all you have that is real intangible is the present. You do not have your past, your past exists in memories. Okay? All we have right now is the present.

And this is true, right? Think about an old Christmas, you and your siblings will remember that Christmas differently. One sibling might be like, "That was the best Christmas ever." And another sibling might be like, "No, don't you remember? Mom and dad were fighting, that was the worst Christmas ever." What our past is, is literally our thoughts in this moment. Okay? Our past is just our thoughts and that's why people have different ideas of past events. It's not objective, it's subjective. It's how we think about things.

And our future is just our thoughts too. Our future exists in our brain. And we don't have it right in this moment, just like we don't have our past right in this moment. And so our future exists in our brain too. And so our future can be just as real as our past, because they're both just thoughts. Okay?

Are you with me? Your future can be just as real to you right now as your past is, you just get to choose which one you want to live from and which one you want to make decisions from. They're both thoughts. Your future is just thoughts, your past is just thoughts. And so you get to decide which one you're going to believe in and which one you're going to make decisions from, and which ones you're going to live from right now.

So it doesn't matter if the past 20 years you've been struggling with porn, for the next 20 years you can be completely free from it. You just have to decide that you're going to live from that future place instead.

And you know, for those of you who say, "Well, I've never done it before, I've never quit porn before. What makes me think I can do that in the future?" I always think that's the funniest, in the most loving way. I think it's the funniest excuse that we have for not doing things, right?

People are like, "Well, I want to run a marathon, but I've never done it before. So I don't know." It's like, of course you haven't done it before, that's

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kind of the point. That's kind of the point. That's not a logical reason for you not to do it right now. Of course you haven't done it before.

Or, yeah, I do want that raise, I do want that promotion. But I mean, I've never done anything like that before. Of course you haven't. Of course you haven't, you just haven't gotten to that point in your life.

Like think about a baby, a baby learning how to walk, what if they were like, "Well, I want to learn how to walk. But, I mean, I've never really taken more than three steps at a time." You'd look at that baby and you'd be like, "Who cares? You can learn. That's the point. Of course, you've never learned how to walk yet you're a baby."

You can say that to yourself, "Of course you've never quit porn before, but now you're going to." Of course you didn't quit porn in your past, you didn't have these tools. Now you do. You didn't have the program, now you do.

And your brain still might go there for a little bit. You're going to have to train your brain to stop using your past to define your future. And instead, using your future, your thoughts about your future, what you want to define your future. It'll take a little bit of time, and effort, and training to do that. But what I want you to start doing is when you notice your brain going there, don't indulge it.

As soon as you notice it, and you will because you've listened to this podcast episode, and I'm calling it out. When it happens, you're going to notice it, stop indulging it. Just notice that, oh yeah, there's that part of my brain that wants to use my past to define my future.

And instead, we're going to go and remember that guess what, my future is not defined by my past. Just like when I was a little kid, the fact that I was able to complete second grade didn't mean that I was only going to be able to do second grade for the rest of my life. And remind yourself there are so many things that I've done, and learned, and accomplished that I wasn't able to do before. So of course I can do this with porn.

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This idea of equal airtime, so we want to give at least equal airtime to what you want in your future instead of what you don't want in your future. So your brain, instead of always thinking about what you don't want in life, dude, stop indulging that part and give equal airtime at least to what you do want in life.

Why are we spending so much time thinking about what we don't want? Why are we spending so much time thinking about, "Oh, well, I'm going to be struggling with porn for the next 20 years, or for the rest of my life." We've got to take that Sharpie away from the toddler brain, that knife away from the toddler brain. And be a little strict with it and say, "Okay, and maybe my past means nothing about my future."

It's easy to do this when we're little kids, somewhere around early adulthood, we stop doing it. But it's a skill you can practice and get really, really, really good at. I mean, I think about me and my life, and I've done thought work for a long time and coaching for a long time, it's changed my life.

I'm at a point where I use my future and what I want in my future to define what I do today, instead of using my past and what I've done in the past to define what I do today. It's really simple, and a complete game changer.

Okay, you guys, I'm starting to cough a lot, so we better finish this episode. And that is all I had for you today. Let me recap. Those three things that will keep you stuck in porn is number one, looking after you've slipped up and using your slip up as an excuse to look for the rest of the day. It's this all or nothing thinking. Number two, trying to think your way out of an urge instead of just going through the urge and feeling the discomfort of the urge. And number three, using your past to define your future.

Now listen, I am so excited to announce to you guys that I'm going to be doing another amazing workshop. It's either going to be free or extremely cheap, like \$19 or something, I haven't decided. And it's going to be a workshop, it'll be a Thursday night and a Monday night. And this workshop is going to be, well I haven't decided the title yet either. It's either going to

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be how to overcome your most difficult urge or a weekend without pornography.

And it's going to be a workshop where we sit down together and do some of this work together. And then the follow-up call will be you sharing your success, you sharing your wins, or sharing what didn't work and getting specific help with me from that.

There will be live calls, we'll sit down and do the work together. It'll give you tools to have some really great wins with stuff that's slipping you up. Okay, so don't miss it. If you're trying to quit porn, this is not an event to miss. And I'll get more details about it next week and you'll see it in my emails.

If you're not signed up for my emails, make sure you get signed up. You can do that on my website sarabrewer.com. And I'll give you more details about it in coming weeks. But just want to tease that out a little bit, get you excited about that. It's going to be awesome.

Okay, guys, have a great week. We'll talk to you next week. Bye bye.

I want to invite you to come and listen to my free training called How to Quit Viewing Pornography Even if You've Tried in the Past. If you like the podcast, you will love this free training. We talk about, number one, how to not rely on willpower or phone filters so that you can actually stop wanting pornography.

Number two, how to guarantee that you won't fail no matter how many times you've tried in the past. And number three, how to feel good about yourself while becoming someone who doesn't struggle with pornography. You can access this training at sarabrewer.com/masterclass.