

79. Clarifying Confusion About Buffering



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

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You are listening to the *Overcome Pornography for Good* podcast episode 79, clarifying confusion about buffering.

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. I'm so glad that you are here. I want to give a quick shout out to all of you who have left me a review on the podcast recently. Thank you so, so much for doing that.

That is one of the best things that you can do to support me, is leaving a review and a rating. I think you can do it on Spotify now, but mostly where I see them is Apple Podcasts. If you listen and if you haven't given me a rating or review yet, I would love it if you would do that, it takes just a minute.

And I do want to just give a shout out and read one of these very quickly. This one is called shame free. And I don't think I've read this one on the podcast yet, but if I have you just get to hear it twice.

It says, "I was feeling quite helpless about myself and my marriage because of my pornography habit. The concept of shame wasn't necessarily new to me, but listening to this podcast has allowed me to see that shame was controlling so many other aspects of my life that had nothing to do with pornography. Once I realized this, I was able to dramatically improve my life and my marriage. This podcast has been a godsend."

Yeah, thank you so much for sharing that with us and leaving that review, and I just really appreciate it. And yeah, isn't it wild what shame will do to our lives? It is just crazy how much it can affect us and really hurt our lives. So anyways, good job, proud of you, really excited for you being able to make those changes in your life and seeing that shame.

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And let's keep working on it for those of you who are struggling with it. There's a there's a lot of healing that can be done around shame. And that's what I hope to start initiating in this podcast, is to start initiating that healing.

I do want to talk about buffering today. And I want to clarify some confusion that I've seen around buffering. And I coached on this a couple of times this last week and I thought it was worth talking about in the podcast episode.

So buffering, if you remember, buffering is activities that we use to escape negative emotions. So you feel negative emotion and you buffer. You feel stressed and you eat candy to get rid of the stress. You feel lonely and you view porn to get rid of feeling lonely. Or you feel shame or whatever, like it can be anything. It can even just be restless, I feel restless and so I get on Instagram to avoid feeling restless.

And so people seem to understand this, they see, yes, I am viewing porn because I am escaping negative emotion. But where we sometimes get confused is now that we see that, what do we do with that? So they're like, okay, I understand I view porn when I have these negative emotions. So how can I escape and get rid of these negative emotions? How can I avoid these negative emotions so that I'm not viewing porn?

Okay, did you catch it? Did you catch where we're going wrong here? And if not, that's okay, I'm going to talk about it this whole episode. Where we go wrong here is that part, so how can I avoid these big negative emotions so that I don't go to porn? And so now instead of avoiding porn, we're trying to avoid emotions and that's not really working either.

The way to quit porn isn't to avoid the big negative emotions or to make the big negative emotions go away or to start feeling happier or start to feeling more neutral. It's to get very good at feeling big negative emotions. And for some of you that might be confusing. You might be like, but it's when I'm feeling it that I go to porn. And it's not. It's not, it's when you're resisting it, when you don't want to feel it that you go to porn. Okay?

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So the reason you go to porn isn't because you're feeling stressed. The reason you go to porn is because you don't want to feel stressed. The reason you go to porn isn't because you're feeling bored. The reason you go to porn is because you don't want to feel bored and you're trying to get rid of feeling bored. And so the way we quit porn is we feel those emotions instead of trying to avoid them or trying to not feel them.

So for example, one of the clients I was coaching this week was talking about separating from their spouse, and how difficult it was and how he was very nervous going through this that he was going to slip back up and fall into a lot of porn use. And so his question for me was, how can I feel more neutral about this separation from my spouse so that I don't slip up with porn?

Because he's getting it, he's getting buffering a little bit. He's like, okay, I see that I go and view porn when I feel bad. So how can I feel more neutral? How can I not feel so bad, so I don't look at porn? And what I said to him, I said that's the wrong question. The question should be, how can I feel all of these emotions so that I don't look at porn? Because the reason you look at porn is because you're trying to avoid those emotions, not because of the emotions.

And so my answer too here was, really do you want to feel neutral about this? You're asking me, how can I feel more neutral about this separation from my spouse? I was like, do you want to feel neutral about this? How do you want to feel about separating from your spouse? And he said, well, honestly, I want to feel sad, and grief, and sorrow, and it's just really hard. And this is really sad for me, I don't want to separate from her. I don't want this to be what's happening.

And I said, yeah. Yeah, you aren't someone who wants to feel neutral about this. The person that you want to be isn't a person who feels neutral, or happy, or fine, just fine with separating from their spouse. You want to feel the sadness, and the grief, and then regret, and the sorrow.

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And you can go through this sadness, and grief, and regret, and sorrow, you can go through all those emotions without looking at porn. Because you don't view porn because of the sadness, grief, regret, and sorrow. You view porn because you want to get rid of those emotions and you want to escape those emotions.

So the question needs to become not, how can I dull these emotions so I don't view porn, but how can I increase my capacity, and my emotional capacity to feel these emotions? And the thing is, is that especially men have been so conditioned to not feel emotions and to not be emotional. Right? And we're getting better at it, but there's still a lot of work to do.

Those main messages that men get is, oh, don't cry, you're fine. Don't be emotional, you're okay. Right? Kind of push down, push down, push away, push away. And this, this is why people struggle with alcoholism, people struggle with pornography, with all sorts of things, is because we're pushing, pushing, pushing emotions away.

Because instead of trying to feel emotions in a healthy way, they're shaming themselves for feeling emotion and trying to escape it. When they're separating from their spouse they're like, oh, I should just buck up and be strong here. Instead of, I'm allowed to be really sad and really upset.

And then we're also conditioned to be afraid of emotion. If I am sad, if I am upset, I'm going to do something stupid. If I'm angry, I'm going to do something stupid. No, it's not the emotions that make us do things that we regret. It's usually repressing and trying to avoid those emotions that cause us to do things that we regret, like the beach ball example that I use all the time.

When you hold a beach ball underwater, what happens? It pops up. When you're trying to resist being angry, no, no, no, no, I'm not going to be angry. That's when you explode. But when you can learn to feel those emotions, you can allow them to go through your body in a healthy way.

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I was talking to another client this week who was very analytical. And this is common and kind of typical, where we're all in our brain and we want to figure out exactly why we're viewing porn and very analytical and with our thoughts a lot. And something that I teach often in the program is we need to go into our body. We need to go into our body. I know you want to be up in your head, but let's go into your body.

He was taught that he had an addiction to dopamine and was always just trying to figure out how to just not look, how to go without the dopamine. And this approach, how do I not have dopamine? How can I just not look? How can I get rid of this addiction to dopamine? This approach is very willpower-y, is just trying to have stronger will. And this doesn't work, like you've learned if you've listened to this podcast quite a bit.

And if you haven't checked out my free class, How To Quit Viewing Porn Without Willpower, you've got to go check that out. You can find it at sarabrewer.com/masterclass. Totally free, you just put in your email and then I send you a link to the class.

But what I talked to him about is that the question shouldn't be why am I viewing porn? How can I get myself to stop viewing porn? The question should be why am I escaping these emotions? What feelings am I escaping? What sensations can't I feel? Why do I feel like I need to escape this?

That can be emotions like stress, boredom, loneliness, shame, or even just sensations in your body like urges. The thing about emotions, and an urge is an emotion too, is that they are just vibrations in your body. They're uncomfortable, but they're not overpowering and they're not anything that you can't handle.

I really want you to hear me there, emotions are not overpowering and they're not anything that you can't handle. Now, if you're used to resisting your emotions, you might be afraid of emotions and you might think that they're overpowering and difficult because emotions become overpowering and difficult when we try to resist them.

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But when you relax into them and when you process them, you recognize that they never were that powerful after all. They are just vibrations in your body. Tightness, heaviness, sharpness, sometimes maybe your throat feels like it's constricting, right?

But these are just sensations, your throat isn't actually constricting, it's not actually closing up. There's not actually something protruding out of your chest that's sharp. They are uncomfortable sensations, but they aren't overpowering, and they aren't dangerous.

And I'll talk more about how to learn how to do that here in a minute. But again, I just want to revisit this idea that the key to getting anything that you want, including quitting porn, is being willing to feel emotion. And truly, this concept completely changed my life. The only reason that you view porn, at least the unwanted porn use, right? The only reason you have unwanted porn use is because you don't want to feel emotions in your body.

You don't want to feel urges. You don't want to feel desire. You don't want to feel stress. You don't want to feel shame. You don't want to feel lonely. You don't want to feel worthless. That is why you view porn, because you don't want to feel those feelings.

So if you can instead be willing to feel those feelings, you won't look at porn because you won't be trying to escape those feelings. The only reason that you don't start that business or go for that dream job is because of what you're afraid to feel. You don't go for it because you're afraid to feel failure. You're afraid to feel regret. You're afraid to feel embarrassed.

It's the same thing with anything, right? The only reason you don't ask that person out is because of your fear of feeling. You don't want to feel failure, you don't want to feel regret, you don't want to feel embarrassed, you don't want to feel lonely. And so increasing your capacity to feel emotions will change everything for you.

If you are willing to feel anything, if you're willing to feel failure, to feel embarrassed, to feel regret, to feel stress, to feel lonely, to feel those feelings, you will be able to accomplish anything you want, truly. Because

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you get what you want by learning, growing, being willing to fail, and trying again. But the only reason we don't do that, the only reason you don't learn and grow and fail and try again is because you don't like the emotion that pops up when you do that.

But if you can be like, oh yeah, here's that feeling of regret, this is what it feels like in my body. This vibration is kind of uncomfortable, but I'm also willing to feel it. Here's that emotion of being embarrassed. This is what it feels like in my body. This is uncomfortable, but I'm willing to feel this. I don't need it to go away.

Here's that emotion of stress, of grief, of sadness, of whatever it is that's coming up. This is what it feels like in my body. I can relax into this. And it doesn't feel great, but I'm also willing to feel it. It feels better than trying to escape it with porn. Right?

And I've talked about this in the podcast before, I think there's an episode called how to feel your feelings that would be useful for you to dive into this a little bit more. But if you really want to practice, if you really want to master this, I want to invite you to come and join us in Overcome Pornography For Good. This is one of those big foundational skills that you will learn and practice and master. I have exercises that walk you through this and lots of videos and instruction.

For those of you who are already in it, it's the emotions and buffering milestone. And then there's tons of opportunity for coaching and individual help to guide you through this. Again, the question shouldn't be how do I stop looking at porn? Or how do I stop feeling so crappy? The question should be how do I increase my capacity to feel emotion and discomfort in my body?

And what you learn is that it's a lot easier than you've been making it. The reason it's been so difficult is because you're avoiding it and resisting it. But as soon as you allow it, as soon as you tell yourself I'm feeling stressed and it's okay, I'm feeling lonely and this is okay, and I'm feeling grief and that's okay, it becomes so much easier than I'm feeling grief and I shouldn't

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be. I'm feeling loneliness and I need to get rid of it. I'm feeling stressed, what's wrong with me?

All right, you guys. Have a great week, and 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.