

93. Out of Control



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Sara Brewer

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You are listening to the *Overcome Pornography for Good* podcast episode 93, Out Of Control.

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. We are going to talk about what to do if you feel out of control. And there's just so many things to talk about around this topic. And there are two big main points here if you're someone who feels like you're out of control.

The first thing that you have to understand is you have to understand the science behind your habit, understand your specific habits. Feeling out of control comes from not understanding what is really going on. And number two, we want to talk about restructuring your identity to be someone who is in control.

So I'll talk about those more in depth as we go through these points. And this first point, understanding the science behind the habit and your specific habits in regard to that science, we've talked about this the last few episodes. And talking about this has inspired me to talk about when you feel out of control.

And so if you haven't listened to the last couple of episodes, I would. I would really recommend that you do so because one of the reasons that you tell yourself that you're out of control is, number one, you don't understand your habits and patterns.

You don't understand what's going on and so you're confused and you're like, "Oh, I just keep viewing and that must mean that there's something wrong with me. And it must mean that I'm just out of control." Or number two, those patterns, those habits are too painful to admit.

So you might feel out of control if you don't understand the habit. If you don't understand the reward system that seeks dopamine, you don't

93. Out of Control

understand how you trained your brain to want it at certain times, you don't understand that you can untrain it if you want to. You don't understand what the urge is, you are afraid of it when you don't need to be.

You feel that urge to view pornography and you're like, "Ah, I don't know what to do with this." And then you act out and then you're like, "Oh, I'm just out of control." Maybe you don't know how to lean into it and feel it, all these really great things that we've talked about in the podcast and things that we practice and practice and practice in the program.

So I'm not going to dive into all of that because I have. But that is really, really key to feeling in control, is understanding what's actually going on. It's almost like doing math, hopefully this example works.

But if you're trying to do a calculus problem and you don't know how to do it you might start telling yourself, "Oh, I'm just stupid. I'm not good at math, I guess I'm just not someone who's good at math." Right? When in reality, you just need to learn all the components, all the skills, all of the principles, the math principles in order to solve the problem. And once you learn those, you're good, right?

It's similar here, if you're telling yourself you're out of control, one thing that might be going on is that you just don't understand what's really happening. But once you can understand the science that we've talked about, once you can understand the reward system, once you can understand how you trained your brain to want porn, how you can train your brain to not want porn, once you can understand what an urge is, you can understand how to manage those urges mindfully, it gives you the knowledge that you need to start feeling in control again. Knowledge is power, especially when it comes to overcoming pornography.

Another thing that might be happening if you are telling yourself that you're out of control is that you do understand habits and patterns and you understand the science, but it's too painful to admit. And so you aren't really being honest with yourself.

93. Out of Control

An example of this, I had a client who came to a coaching call, and he said that he was driving and just really trying to stay awake. And he couldn't stay awake, couldn't stay awake, couldn't stay awake and used porn as a way for him to stay awake. But he didn't really admit that to himself. What he said he's just like, "I just am out of control. I don't know what happened. I was just sitting there and then the next moment I was looking at porn."

And this is common, right? I know many of you have felt this way. I don't know what happened, I was just sitting there and then all of the sudden I was viewing porn. And so with this specific example this client understood a lot of these things. He's worked through the program. He understands these concepts, but it was so painful for him to admit that he was using porn to stay awake, and he did have a choice.

There were so much shame, maybe some embarrassment, some denial that he wasn't able to see those patterns. He wasn't able to see what was really going on. So we talked about it, we coached through it, and he was able to see, okay, it didn't just happen. This is because I've trained my brain to view porn when I'm tired. I was having urges because I was tired, and I was using these justifications and these excuses to stay awake.

In reality there are lots of other ways to stay awake, you can pull over and you can sleep for a minute. You can drink a five hour energy. You can give someone a phone call. There are many, many options here but in his mind he wasn't even able to come up with those options. He wasn't even able to see that he was choosing porn because there's some shame there, some embarrassment, some denial. It was painful for him to admit what was really going on.

And so this might be happening for you, is you just don't want to admit what's really happening. You don't want to admit that you have urges because you're escaping this. You don't want to admit that you struggle with porn. It could be all these things. And so if this is you, if this is resonating with you, what we need to do is we need to start to bring the shame down and start to maybe neutralize the situation a little bit, okay?

93. Out of Control

So you're having urges in the car driving home really late at night, we need to neutralize it. Not make it mean that there's something wrong with you. Instead of, "Oh my gosh, really? Really? I'm having urges right now?" Ignore, ignore, ignore, push away, push away, push away, all of a sudden I'm looking at porn, right? You need to neutralize it. Try to just see it with a little bit more of a neutral lens.

Or even maybe not neutral, maybe neutral is hard for you, so we can switch it to curious. With a curious lens, a little bit less judgmental, that way you can see it for what it really is. And even a great way to think about this too is if we can't quite neutralize it, we can recognize that we are good and bad. That we have good parts, and we have bad parts. And it is courageous and insanely valiant, valiant to admit to yourself your weaknesses and bad habits.

We do not have to shy away from admitting where we're wrong, from admitting where we're weak, from admitting things that we don't like about ourselves. There's so, so, so much integrity in admitting to yourself your weaknesses. And so even though you might not feel quite in integrity with your actions because how you're acting isn't lining up with your value system, you can still be in integrity by admitting to yourself what's going on, okay? Instead of lying to yourself and saying it just happened.

It never just happens. It never just happens. This is something that if this is you, "I'm out of control, it just happens," this is the biggest, most important thing for you to understand, is that you notice that you are choosing porn every single time you are choosing porn.

And if I say that and you cringe and you're like, "Oh, that's painful. Don't tell me that." If you feel some resistance towards that, I'm talking to you. Okay? This part where it's too painful to admit, this is going to keep you from being able to quit porn. It's going to keep you feeling out of control, okay?

And it's valiant and there's so much integrity in admitting to yourself your weaknesses. And it's okay, it's okay to have weaknesses. It's okay. None of us were supposed to go through life without weaknesses. So start looking

93. Out of Control

at your patterns like you're a scientist, like you're a scientist observing a brand new species of monkeys.

Imagine we're in the jungle and you see a new monkey and it's like bright purple. You're like, "What? We've never seen this bright purple monkey before." And so you get a bunch of scientists out there and you guys are just observing it like, "Wow, this is so fascinating." And you're watching it very closely, very intensely, just trying to figure it out.

When you're watching these monkeys you're not like, "Ew, gross. Look at that monkey, look what it did." You're not judging it. You're not like, "Oh, what's wrong with that monkey?" No, you're just observing it like, "Wow, I wonder why it did that. I wonder what's going on with that. I want to learn everything I can about this new purple monkey."

Okay, so, "Oh, fascinating, I have urges to view every night. I must have trained my brain to want it every night. I wonder why? I wonder how this happened." Not from like, "Oh, why did this happen?" But like, "Oh, this is just so fascinating. I wonder what happens when I do this. I wonder what happens when I do this. I wonder what happens when I do this."

Or "Oh, fascinating, I trained my brain to want it whenever I wake up. So interesting. I wonder what's going on here. What happens when I do this? What happens when I do this? Oh, so fascinating, I'm feeling an urge to view porn and I'm driving home and it's late at night, I wonder why. I wonder why."

And acknowledge it and notice it and look at it, and that will give you so much more power over it instead of ignoring it, ignoring it, ignoring it, pushing it down, pushing it down, and then it explodes. And then you're like, "Oh, I'm just out of control." Right?

And like I said before, understanding all these things I've taught, the science, the dopamine, the reward system, and then there are episodes before where we talked about willpower and trying to ignore it, and how that doesn't work. Understanding all of these components will help you

93. Out of Control

recognize and realize that you are not out of control, that you are choosing porn every single time.

It doesn't ever just happen to you, you choose it. And so now let's just be curious and aware and stop lying to ourselves and show up with integrity and admit to ourselves what's really going on. That feels like a little bit of tough love. But sometimes we need that, okay?

You're not out of control. You're never out of control. You have habits and it makes so much sense why you have urges the times that you do, okay? And I talked about this in detail the few episodes before, okay? You have a brain that is working exactly as it should and you can retrain your brain to not want porn.

All right, the second thing I want to talk about, the second big point. So the first one is to stop feeling out of control is we have to understand the science behind the habit and understanding your specific habits and admitting that.

And number two is we have to look at restructuring your identity to be someone who is in control. Okay, this is huge. This part of the process is really, really, really, really important. So to introduce this topic, reframing your identity that you are in control, is you have to recognize that you get to choose how you interpret facts. You get to choose how you interpret things that happen in your life.

So there are people who view porn every Monday at 7pm. And some people choose to interpret that as I'm out of control. And some people choose to interpret that as this is just my weekly routine and this is just what I do.

So this identity, "I'm out of control," is a way that you are interpreting your porn habit. And that's not necessarily always a bad thing, okay? But I just want you to notice that this is a choice. So even if you view porn three times a day, every day, I'm out of control is a way that you are interpreting that. There are other people who wouldn't interpret it that way.

93. Out of Control

But maybe you do want to interpret it that way, I just want you to open your mind that you get to choose how you interpret things, okay? And like I said before, there isn't anything wrong with noticing that you have a problem or noticing that your actions aren't in alignment, noticing that you're acting out of control. If that really, really resonates with you, there isn't anything wrong with noticing you have problems.

So I just don't want you to think that what I'm saying is, we can lie to ourselves and not admit that there's anything wrong and like we get to choose how we think about it. And so we can just choose to think that we're fine, even though we're not, right? That's not what I'm saying.

There's nothing wrong with noticing that you have a problem. There's nothing wrong with noticing that you're acting out of control. But taking it on as an identity, that's something we really need to look at. I'm just someone who's out of control, stating it like it can't be changed, stating it like it's part of your identity.

We do this with all sorts of things. I'm just not a morning person. I'm just not physically active. Whatever. We use our identity against us often. It doesn't have to be I'm just someone who's out of control. It can be, right now I'm struggling and I'm acting out of control. Can you see the difference? Can you feel the difference?

One is it's just who I am. The second is it's an action that I'm doing. Same with morning person, I'm just not a morning person. Versus I've been waking up every morning at 9am. Okay, one is an identity, it's just who I am. The other is just what I'm doing. When we take it as an identity, we create that identity, and we create this mindset of not being able to change from it.

So I want you to be really gracious with yourself if this is an identity that you have around pornography. If when you're thinking about you and you with porn and you're like, "I'm just out of control. I'm just someone who's out of control and I'm just out of control." This comes from conditioning and there's a lot of conditioning around porn that many of you have experienced that has created this identity.

93. Out of Control

I'm addicted. When you're addicted, you're out of control and you can't change it and once addicted, always addicted. I'm powerless to this. I'm acting out on this and I'm powerless to this. So be kind to yourself, but notice it and notice that it's not an identity that you have to believe. It's not an identity that you have to take on.

This is actually something that we talked about in my, one of my inclusion classes when I was getting my degree. There's people first language, instead of saying that's a disabled person it's more politically correct and kinder and more accurate to say that's a person who has a disability.

So we're not making their disability their identity, that's a disabled person, we're saying that's a person who has a disability. So instead of I am out of control, I'm an out of control person when it comes to porn, I'm someone who's struggling with porn right now. Because really think, think about what this identity is doing for you.

Our identities create what we do. It's so, so important to notice what we identify as, because what we think of ourselves is how we show up in the world. Having this identity of someone who's out of control creates powerlessness, it creates just giving into urges. You live out of that identity, you live as a person who's out of control. And so you have to be willing to rewrite that identity and rewrite that belief about yourself.

How we do this is, number one, we notice. We recognize that belief we have, we recognize that identity we have. Number two, you have to be willing to be wrong about it. So just willing to be wrong. Like maybe I'm wrong that this isn't an identity. Maybe I'm wrong that I'm out of control. Maybe I'm really not. How could that be true? How could that be true? Be willing to be wrong.

And then number three, practicing a new identity. So even just little shifts to, like I understand what's happening in my brain. I'm not out of control, I understand what's happening. And if you need help understanding what's happening, bring it to coaching calls if you're in the program, let us come

93. Out of Control

and help you with this. Little shifts from I'm out of control to I'm working on trusting myself more, I'm working on getting more control.

Can you even feel the difference between that one? I'm just out of control to I'm working on gaining more control. And then once you start practicing those beliefs, you're going to find evidence for everywhere. You're going to be like, "Actually, I'm not really an out of control person. See, I get my work done on time, I'm able to do that. Oh, I didn't view porn that one night when I wanted to."

You'll find lots of evidence, evidence, evidence, evidence to support this new identity that you want to create that you're not out of control, that you're someone who is in control. This takes practice and this takes time, but it's worth every single effort.

For those of you who are in the program, we have a whole milestone on this where you can take this belief, "I'm out of control," and you can take it through the whole milestone, all the exercises, bring it to coaching calls, and step by step by step change this belief, change this identity that you have. I can't tell you how important it is.

I have clients who will learn all the skills and be really great at processing urges and not look at porn for a long time and then slip up. And as we're talking through it, recognizing that the reason that they're slipping up, they're saying to me like, I didn't even really want to look, I didn't even have a desire. But what's going on is they still have this identity that they're someone who struggles with porn, or they still have this identity that they're out of control.

And so they looked at it simply because that's their identity and we do what we take on as our identities. This is true with anything, if you want to go to the gym every day, you have to develop the identity of someone who is comfortable at the gym, of someone who likes the gym, of someone who goes to the gym.

Okay, and for those of you who want to come and join the program and dive in and do the work and get all the help and all of the support that you

93. Out of Control

can ever need, you can come and join us, sarabrewer.com/workwithme. I'm looking forward to seeing you there. You get lifetime access to everything. So once you join, it truly is your porn habit is as good as done. We will work with you until you fully quit.

Okay, you 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 class, How To Overcome Pornography For Good Without Using Willpower. We talk about how to stop giving into urges without pure willpower or relying on phone filters so that you can actually stop wanting pornography.

We talk about how to stop giving up after a few weeks or months. And spoiler alert, the answer isn't have more willpower. And then lastly, we talk about how to make a life without porn easily sustainable and permanent.

If you're trying to quit porn, this class is a game changer. So you can go and sign up at Sarabrewer.com/masterclass and it is totally free.