259. How to Finally Be Free from Porn

Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Sara Brewer

259. How to Finally Be Free from Porn

You are listening to the *Overcome Pornography for Good* podcast, *How to Finally Be Free from Porn*.

Welcome to the O*vercome 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 everyone, welcome to today's episode. Today I'm going to share some bits and pieces, maybe a little summary. I won't be able to go into as much depth as I did a couple or a week ago, so I'm going to share pieces of this last free live class that we did. It was incredible. We had so many people there. We had over 1300 people registered and a good 4 or 500 show up. So if you are one of those people who showed up, thank you. It was so awesome. I had the best time. I love doing those classes. They're just a blast for me.

If you missed it, dang it, you'll have to come to our next one. Maybe there's a way I can find out how to get the replay to you all. I'll need to look into that. If after listening to this episode, you're like, I want it, I want it, I want it, I want it, reach out to us, and we'll see what we can do for you or what resources we can send your way that are similar. But this class was all about How to Finally Be Free from Porn. And so I just want to share a couple of the main principles we taught there. First thing is, we want to talk about what is true freedom from porn.

Now, the reality is that so many of us have been using band-aid solutions when it comes to this problem of unwanted pornography use. We've been told things like, "Oh, just be stronger. Just stop. Use filters. Sexual thoughts are bad and dangerous, and so replace it with something else. When you think about porn, just think about a beautiful stream, a beautiful gurgling stream. Just think about that instead." Right?

Or be stronger, push away your thoughts. If you mess up, you have to start over. Real men don't view porn. How many of us have heard that one? I think that's so toxic. Real men don't view porn. It's just, it's shamey. I

understand the motivation behind it, but it's shamey and doesn't work. Anyways, all of these are band-aid solutions that don't work long-term. And in fact, they cause more shame, more repression, more fear and stress, which therefore equals more porn use.

And so instead, what we need to do, and I dove into this in this free class, all the ways that we do this, but instead, we need to not use band-aid solutions and instead solve the root issues and focus on true freedom. What I'll talk about in this episode is what is true freedom. And then we'll cover briefly the six things that we need to do to obtain true freedom, or the six things we need to master.

And this has worked for thousands of clients. And just when we're doing this class, I'm just showing you story after story after story after story of someone who this worked when they were 65 years old, when it worked when they were 25 years old, when it worked, you know, all in between, that struggled for 50 years, for 20 years, for whatever that is, for whatever background, whether you're Christian or not Christian.

I had someone in the class say, "I love this, but I'm a little bit hesitant because the first, like, because of the podcast, there was a lot of God talk and I don't resonate with Christianity." And so I had to, I'm so glad that this individual said that because then I could clarify that this, it's not a faith-specific program, and where maybe my first 50 episodes or so, I was speaking more to that religious audience. I really changed that about 50 episodes in, where now we're making it much more broader, much more inclusive.

We're not teaching any specific theology here. You can bring your theology, your belief system, whatever that is, and apply it, and it'll work. And we have coaches from all backgrounds. So we have coaches who are religious and coaches who aren't religious. And so, anyways, just throwing that out there in case there's anyone else who would benefit from hearing that.

And you know, our program really doesn't prescribe to sexual purity themes that a lot of, and if you've followed me for a while and listened to the

episodes and podcast, you know this, but we don't prescribe to those sexual purity themes that a lot of maybe more like a very Christian-focused program is going to use or, you know, we actually do a lot of work around healing sexual shame and healing from sexual purity. And I would even call it sexual purity trauma, which is a whole episode on its own.

And so again, yeah, you can bring whatever works for you in that space, bring it. We can work with you. And we do with clients of all backgrounds. Christian, Muslim, Jewish, non-religious, spiritual, but not religious, right? All the things, we do it with all things.

So what is true freedom? What is true freedom? True freedom is not—when I first say "freedom from porn," I know so many of you are thinking, "Oh, what freedom from porn is knowing that I'll never ever view again. It's waking up and having this deep knowing that I'll never view pornography again. And I don't even want it. And whenever I think about it, it just doesn't even excite me at all."

I want us to consider redefining this definition, and maybe there's a better, healthier, more true, more beautiful way of thinking of this. So true freedom is not this all-or-nothing thinking. I know for a fact that I'll never ever view again. True freedom is not no urges. I know I'll never ever be tempted again. I won't even want it. True freedom is not perfection from this moment or from any moment in the future forward.

In fact, measuring success by this idea that I know I'll never ever view porn again is exactly what will keep you in this constant vigilance and distress where this becomes a struggle for 40, 50, 60 years.

And again, what if there's something even better? What if there's something even better and more powerful than striving for "never again?" So, instead of true freedom from porn is knowing I'll never ever view again, true freedom from porn is that porn has no more power over me.

Can you feel the difference there? Porn has no more power over me. Porn doesn't control my daily actions. Porn doesn't decide my future. Porn

doesn't dictate my relationships. Porn doesn't control how I feel about myself. I have control, not porn.

Okay, and do you see the difference there? Can you feel the difference? True freedom is, I know I'll never view again, versus true freedom as porn has no more power over me. And just like, just take a minute and like breathe into that and feel how they feel different in your body.

Feel into your body when I say, true freedom is I'll never view again. Okay, my body feels kind of tense and tight when I say that. It feels a little anxious. Versus true freedom means porn has no more power over me. That one feels resonant. It feels grounded. It feels delicious is how I would describe that sensation. It almost feels delicious in my body when I say that.

Because the reality is I'll have clients who haven't viewed porn in six months or a year or whatever, and they'll still come to me and say, "I'm so anxious because what if I slip up?" And this used to be a common thread when I was first doing client interviews is I would say to them, I would say, "So how does it feel to overcome porn for good?" And they'd say, "Well, I guess I don't really know. Like, how do you ever know if you ever truly have overcome pornography for good?"

And that's when I was like, "Oh man, we need a new definition." Because these are clients who had seen so much success, so much growth, like truly changed from the inside out, understand how to process their emotions, not the shame, eating them alive. And so this is really when I'm like, oh, we got to change this to instead of overcoming this—and I've done episodes on this similar topic before—but change from freedom as "I know I'll never view again" to freedom as "porn has no more power over me."

So can you know for certain that you'll never ever view porn again? No, and I dive into depth on this in the episode called "Dead Person Goals versus Living Person Goals," if you want to dive more into this. It's really helpful. But can you become someone that porn has no more power over? Yes, this feels attainable. And one of the examples that I used here in the class, and

hopefully this resonates is part of what we're doing is, and this is one of the six steps that I'll talk about, but part of what we're doing is not just outer work, changing our actions, we're truly changing our beliefs from the inside out and we're changing what we believe about ourselves, we're changing who we are at a fundamental level.

Sorry, let me rephrase that because I do not, we're not changing who we are at a fundamental level. We're discarding and healing beliefs that are hiding us from ourselves. We're discarding beliefs that are keeping us from being our truest and best selves. That's a much better way to say that.

So we're healing negative belief patterns. We're changing those negative belief patterns that are keeping us from becoming who we want to be, and we're now looking at identity work.

So this is the example that I used. There's a difference between someone who runs a marathon and someone who is an athlete. Both people might run a marathon, but someone who is just someone who runs a marathon, they accomplish this amazing goal. They run the marathon, and then they go back to old patterns, old habits. It's like a one-and-done thing.

Which, by the way, no problems with that. If that's you, that's great. Still much more than I've ever done. I've never run anything close to a marathon. But someone who trains for a marathon and also changes their identity as they're training to become an athlete, right, that's so different. Someone who just runs a marathon versus someone who's an athlete. It's like that becomes a whole identity thing. Afterwards, they're still training in ways that their body loves. They're still athletic.

Athletic becomes a way that they describe themselves. It becomes who they are at a deeper level. And again, someone who is an athlete, if they miss a week of training, does that mean they're not an athlete anymore? No. It just means they missed a week or a month of training, and they're getting right back on the horse, and here they are, an athlete.

And it can be the exact same thing with you and porn, and I hope this offers you so much freedom as you hear this right now, as I say this. It doesn't

matter if you slip up in the future. One slip-up is not powerful enough to now become your whole identity and a whole struggle, and this big thing.

Right, if you are doing the inner work to change your identity or to restructure your identity and your beliefs about yourself, one slip-up in the future, a couple slip-ups in the future, whatever that is, doesn't have to be a big thing unless we make it a big thing.

Jeez, I could talk about this for hours. Maybe this is just what I'll talk about in this episode. Maybe because it's so important. It's probably important for me to continue speaking on. It's almost like the heavy all-or-nothing mindset is not very healthy. It keeps us stuck in patterns. It makes the slip-ups bigger than they really need to be if we've done the healing behind it.

Now, if you haven't done the healing underneath this, and let's we'll talk about that in a minute, but these six big healing things, if we haven't done that healing, then yeah, they kind of are a big thing because of all the things under the surface that are going to create binging behaviors that are going to create more intense distress around it.

And so I also don't want to invalidate if you have a slip-up and it's really difficult and it's really hard. Yeah, it really might be. We have to make sure we do these six healing things. And then after we've done that, after we've done that work, you have become someone who porn does not have power over you.

And so again, like an athlete, if they miss a week of training, that doesn't mean anything. It's just, oh, we've done all this healing, the roots are good, the roots are solid. The under-the-surface stuff is healed, and so it's not as big of a deal as it was when it wasn't healed, when there was all this stuff under the surface that we hadn't looked at.

So porn has no more power over me. That's the goal. And you can create that, right? You can create that. feels so much more attainable than knowing for sure I'll never ever view porn again.

259. How to Finally Be Free from Porn

All right. So the six things, and this is where I really went into depth on the class, and probably, I probably talked too much about all six of these things in the class, honestly. It was like a firehose of information. And some of the feedback that I got from some of my employees was like, "That was a little bit too much information." I'm like, oh, I hope it wasn't overwhelming. And so I'm just going to talk about it very simply.

But the six things, so we're calling this the Embodied Freedom Framework. This has worked for thousands of clients. This has worked, you know, it's just gotten better and better over the years as we've been working through it with clients. It's what our whole program is based around are these six things, this Embodied Freedom Framework. So, first thing we need to do is learn how to mindfully manage urges. Get out of willpower. Stop using willpower.

This concept is life-changing for people when they learn how to do this. There's this pendulum so many people go back and forth on between, No, no, no, I'm not going to view. I can't view. Push away, push away, willpower, willpower, to give in. And like imagine a pendulum swinging back and forth, back and forth. That's what it's like. No, no, no, no. Ugh, okay, give in. No, no, no, no. Okay, give in.

We have to learn to how to get out of that. And it's simple but extremely game-changing. It's all about mindfulness and how to sit with an urge instead of push it away and sit with it instead of react to it. So that's the first thing we need to do.

Second thing we need to do is learn how to stop buffering and learn emotional regulation tools. So for so many of us, unwanted pornography use is an escape from emotion, can be an escape from stress. And this isn't going to be like every single urge or every single time you view porn isn't going to be this way, but for so many people, this is why it's a problem.

The reason that porn is a problem is because you're using it to escape and avoid some difficult emotions and difficult things, and it's creating chaos in

your life. And so that's the second thing we need to do is we need to learn how to stop buffering.

Buffering is a word that I use for actions that we take to escape negative emotions. So I'm stressed, and I eat chocolate. Overeating can be a buffer. Overshopping can be a buffer, over video gaming, porn, drinking, you know, all these things, whatever we're using to escape negative emotion is a buffer. So learn how to stop doing that.

The third one is we have to master this learn and move on process, where we are learning from every individual slip-up and gather it, using it to gather data, using slip-ups to gather data and learn how to move forward, versus a slip-up just being something that sends us into more spirals.

So an example of this would be if you're solving a math problem and it's a very difficult math problem, and let's say you mess up, it's not like you need to start all the way over with this math problem. You just kind of learn from what worked, learn from what didn't work, and then keep going and keep playing with it.

Or if you're putting together a puzzle and you mismatch a piece, that doesn't mean you start over the puzzle. It just means, oh, we know, now we know that piece doesn't work.

It's like Thomas Edison when he said, what's the story about the light bulb? Something where he said, I didn't fail 100 times. I learned 100 ways to not make a light bulb or something like that, right? The idea is he needed those 100 fails in order to figure it out. It was just a part of the process. And so we're going to view becoming free from porn in the same way.

Every single failure is actually just data that can inform the next decision. And like how freeing to look at it that way. So we have a whole process on how to do that, a whole worksheet on how to do that. It's something that you'll work with the coaches on. If you're in our program, you'll you work on that with the coaches in depth.

259. How to Finally Be Free from Porn

The fourth thing that you have to master is the belief and identity work. And we already touched on this a for a bit, so I won't go into this. But this is where you're truly, again, changing those belief patterns to become someone who doesn't struggle with porn. You're not just quitting porn, you're actually becoming someone who doesn't struggle with it.

This is game-changing, and so many clients love, love, love this piece. It's really fun and really empowering when you start to notice how your beliefs can change. We're not just stuck with the beliefs that we have about ourselves. So many of us have beliefs, and we just think that they're fact.

“I'm not smart.” That's a fact. Whereas that's actually a story that we were taught from someone somewhere along our lines. And of course you believe it, and it's not your fault for believing it, and so much love to that piece of you that was told you're not smart. But like what if, just what if we could change that belief about yourself? What if, just what if you could truly, truly change that, not like lying to yourself or pretending that it's not true, but how do we change our beliefs about ourself, these beliefs of I'm not good enough, I'm not smart enough, people don't like me, I'm lazy, all of these beliefs that we have about ourselves, what do we do about them?

Because the truth is, so many people will try to change their actions without looking at the beliefs that they have about themselves. This is why so many people fail, is because they're focused on their actions versus their actual internal world and their actual internal voice. And so this process really isn't about doing more, and this is so freeing. It's not about doing more or working harder. It's about doing inner work, inner work. What are my beliefs about myself? What do I think about myself? What are my thoughts?

The fifth thing we have to do is we have to heal shame because shame—everyone, say it with me—shame creates more unwanted porn use. And if this is one of your first episodes that you're listening to from me, you might not know that, but shame does. And so people who are unintentionally, sometimes intentionally, harming you by using shame as a motivator.

259. How to Finally Be Free from Porn

"Real men don't view porn." "Let me tell you how awful and terrible porn is for the world, and that will convince you to quit." "There's something wrong with you if you view porn." That's making it worse, so much worse. This is why so many people continue this struggle is because of shame, because of shame. And I will die on that hill. I will die on that hill.

It's what, it's the first thing that I really started getting kind of loud about when I started focusing in on helping people who want to quit viewing porn was the shame, the shame, the shame, the shame, and it's what resonated the most with people was when I would talk about the shame. And when you start to see the shame cycle, it just clicks, and you're like, "Oh my gosh, Sara's not just helping me heal shame because it sucks and it feels awful, but because it's actually one of the steps to gain freedom." Like, I have to heal shame to have freedom from this.

And then lastly, is the healthy sexuality. I mentioned this and talked about this at the beginning of the episode as well, but we don't want to just squash this sexual piece of us that we're never going to be able to do that. We are sexual beings, and so many people struggling with porn, in your minds, the only way to get rid of it is to squash this sexual nature. We don't want to do that.

Instead, we're going to learn to befriend, befriend our sexuality, make friends of it, where instead of this being something we need to fight for the rest of our lives, this is actually my buddy. This is a piece of me. I've integrated this. I've learned how to express this in fun ways that also fit my value system. I've learned how to decrease my sexual shame, to decrease my panic around sexual material. I've learned to decrease my shame of masturbation. That's a big one. And if me saying that freaks you out a little bit, that's okay.

I have a whole episode on this that might be helpful to you. And we're never going to push you further than you want to go. And also, you always know better than we do for what is the best for your life. And so that's one of our main coaching principles, is that the client is the hero and the client

has all of the wisdom inside of them. We're just helping you uncover your wisdom, and you always know best for you.

But we really want to work on integrating and decreasing sexual shame because that's where true freedom lies as well. You're never going to be free if you're always fighting something, right? If you're always on the lookout and in fight mode to protect, you're never truly going to be free. And so instead of that, we need to learn to integrate, make peace with, and love this piece of us. So that is the sixth step is healthy sexuality.

So again, that embodied freedom framework, urges, emotions and buffering, learn and move on, beliefs and identity, shame and healthy sexuality. If you'd like to come and work with us in depth on this year, we would love to have you. We have the most incredible team, the most incredible program. And we have lots of options now, whereas we used to have just one main option for working with us. We have a bunch of different options now, so you can go get more information on centerforovercoming.com/workwithme.

All right, you guys, so good to be here. I hope to see some of you in the program. If you've been listening for a while and you're feeling the call to come and join us, we'd love to have you. If you're feeling like it's finally time to dive in and create this freedom, create this freedom, this, can you imagine just, you know, six months from now, three months from now.

I have so many clients who are like, "I listened to all of your free stuff for years." This was my client, Ben, I think, who said this in one of the episodes, "I listened to all your free stuff for years, but once I finally took the step to actually get help and join the program, it took me three months."

So if you're ready, let's not waste any more time. We've got you. We'll help you. You don't have to do it alone anymore. And again, you can come and see all the options for working with us at centerforovercoming.com/workwithme.

All right, you guys, have a great rest of your week. Love you all so much, and we'll talk soon. Bye.

259. How to Finally Be Free from Porn

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 in to 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." 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.

You can go and sign up at SaraBrewer.com/masterclass, and it is totally free.