

263. The Beliefs That Keep You Stuck and How to Unlearn Them with Hunter



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Sara Brewer

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You are listening to the *Overcome Pornography for Good* podcast episode 263.

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.

Hunter: Hello, and welcome everybody to the podcast episode this week. I'm Hunter Garrett, one of the coaches here at the Center, and I'm so excited you are joining me today.

Today I really want to talk about something that runs quietly in every single person's life, something that often hides underneath every single habit, every single action, every single behavior that we do, okay? And it's not discipline, it's not motivation, it's not even pornography itself. It's all about what you believe. Okay, what are you telling yourself every single day? Whether that's overcoming pornography or not, right? What are you telling yourself every day, and is it helping you become the person you want to be?

You know, deep down, a lot of people have certain beliefs around certain behaviors or certain actions that are something like, I'll always struggle, or I'm not strong enough, or this is just who I am. And every single decision, every emotion, and every action begins to orbit around that thought. The more often you tell yourself that thing, of whether that's you're always going to struggle, or you're never going to overcome this for good, it's going to begin to take root. And if it starts to take root, that's when it shifts from a thought that you have to a belief.

Now, a limiting belief is something that feels true but keeps you small, fearful, or stuck, okay? So I want you to think about a belief like an operation system on your phone, right? Like the main frame on your phone. Now, you obviously don't see it running, but your phone depends on that, right? It depends on the mainframe in your phone. Now, if the mainframe or

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the operating system is outdated or corrupted, no amount of apps are going to fix the problem.

Now, it's kind of funny that I bring this up because when I was younger, I had a little iPod, and when we were on long road trips, I didn't have a place to plug my iPod in, and so it would die super fast. And so when I'd get to about five to 10% left in my phone, or my iPod, I would download, I'm not even kidding, I would download apps that would try to save its battery or, in my hopes, get battery back for some reason. And obviously that doesn't work, right? I would download an app that was like Battery Saver, and then I would download it, and then with all the battery it took to download the app, my iPod would die. Right? It's kind of funny.

Now, with that being said, there are apps that you can install that can help. Related to pornography, right, there's accountability apps that you can download, there's filters that you can potentially put on your phone if that's something that resonates with you. You can promise yourself that you're going to continue to do better. But if the core belief underneath that behavior, that action is still, quote, I'm not good enough or I can't change, every single tool eventually is going to crash, and your phone's going to die.

Recovery isn't about downloading better apps, it's about updating that mainframe, updating that software, or plugging your phone in instead of trying to just like scramble to download an app that's going to help your battery life.

Now, like I said before, there are so many thoughts that turn into beliefs that everybody kind of experiences. I'm not good enough, I can't trust myself, people leave when I mess up, I'm too broken to change. And once that belief is planted, your mind begins to search for evidence to support that belief. You make one mistake, and your brain goes, oh my goodness, look, I told you. You just proved to me that belief that you've been telling yourself is true. But the truth is, that's not evidence, that's just repetition that you've been conditioned to have. And so the hope here is that there is

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a way to shift that belief, shift that behavior to something that really does help you.

Now, pornography often becomes a symptom to a behavior, not the source, okay? For many people here at the Center, porn isn't just about lust; it's about relief as well, right? A lot of times, it's trying to escape or to buffer from a certain emotion. Now, they're trying to relieve loneliness, relief from shame, relief from the belief that quote, I'm not good enough. When you believe that you're unworthy, pornography offers a momentary escape. As you guys know, a fantasy world where you can believe and feel desirable, accepted, and wanted, okay?

And when it's over, the belief rushes back even stronger, and saying to yourself, see, you did it again, you can't really change. I told you so, I told you so, you told yourself. And that cycle of a belief, the behavior, the shame, and the belief being reinforced is a constant cycle that's very tricky to break without the right tools. And obviously, today we're going to be talking about those tools. But you can't just break that cycle by just fighting the behavior. Okay, you have to challenge the belief underneath.

Now, if you guys have seen the *Inside Out 2*, you learn that Riley, she has this belief system, and she's building this belief system when she's getting older, right? And all these emotions tie into this belief system, right? And at the end of the movie, I'm not going to spoil it too much. You guys should see it by now.

But basically there's a part where all the emotions are trying to pull this belief off of this like belief stem thing that they have in the middle of, in Riley's head, I guess. And it's so rooted. It's so, so rooted, and then all of these beliefs and all these thoughts start to kind of rattle off in the room. And it's because she's told herself these things for so long, okay? So you have to challenge that and get to the core of that instead of just trying to avoid and fight the behavior itself.

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I guess the next question is, how do you do that? Right? How do you challenge a limiting belief? How do you unlearn what your brain has believed for years? Now I'm going to walk you guys through a couple steps, and you know, these steps can be really, really helpful, okay?

Now, the first step is this: awareness. Okay, you have to catch this voice when it starts to come up, okay? Start noticing the sentences that are showing up when certain emotions come up or when there's an event that you're having to go to or if there's a circumstance that you're in, notice those voices, okay? And when there's a slip-up that happens, or if there's a slip-up that happens, write down how you feel, okay? And write down the thoughts that are driving those feelings, okay? You might hear thoughts like, I'm disgusting, I'll never get this right. I'm never going to overcome pornography for good. If people really knew me, they'd walk away and they'd avoid me.

Naming these things, naming these beliefs, bring them out of the dark. And once it's written down, it loses some of its power, honestly. Being able to write down, okay, this is the thoughts that I'm telling myself, it loses its power just by writing them down.

Now, after that, you're going to pick one of these thoughts, okay? The next thing is you're going to question it. Okay, let's say the thought is, I'm never going to overcome pornography for good. You can ask yourself, is this true? Is this thought, is this belief that I'm telling myself right now, a roadblock or a stepping stone in my journey to overcoming pornography for good? Could there be another way to view or to see this belief as what it really is? And then you can also ask yourself the question, you know, who taught me to believe this? Was it myself? Was it a primary programmer that was in my youth, something like that?

And our beliefs are often inherited, honestly, you know, between parents, culture, religion, friends, past experiences. Asking yourself this question, where did it come from? Where did this belief come from? It helps you

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realize it isn't really who you are. It's just something that you've learned in the past, right? And there's a way to unlearn these beliefs.

Now, the next thing is you have to gather new evidence, okay? Your brain is like a lawyer, okay? It's been collecting proof for years that limiting beliefs are true. Okay, it's been collecting proof every single time that there's a behavior that happens. Your brain is saying, I told you so, I told you so, I told you so.

Now, it's time to start building the opposite case, right? We have one case on one side of the courtroom. Now, let's try to build the other side. Write down moments of encouragement, self-control, honesty, growth. However small it is, these little things can contradict that old story and really begin to prove to yourself that's not who you are. Now, over time, that new evidence is going to begin to rewire your brain to expect a different outcome.

Now, the next thing is to reframe it, okay? You have to reframe this old belief that you were having, especially if it answers the question of, Is it a roadblock or a stepping stone? And the answer is it's a roadblock. If it's a roadblock, this reframing work can be so helpful. The belief of I'm broken, okay? If that's the belief you have and you're telling yourself that for years, you can say, I'm healing, right? In the process of, I'm healing right now, I'm learning.

Or another one, I'll always struggle, could be shifted into, I'm learning to live free. I'm learning the tools to overcome pornography for good. Or the next one, you know, I'm not enough. Okay? I'm growing into enoughness. Notice that all of these thoughts have an opposite, and all of these opposites are an action. Okay, I'm healing. I'm learning. I'm growing to become enough.

Now, saying these things often, even if you don't fully believe it right now, can grow by repetition, and eventually it's going to uproot the old belief, and it's going to plant a new belief. Okay? Now obviously it's easier said than done, but with consistency, hard work, and energy, and the support here at the Center with all the coaches, we're here to help you work through that.

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The last step, step five, is act as if, okay? Now, your brain believes what your behavior confirms, okay? So act from that new belief even before it feels real, okay? My mom always says, you know, fake it 'til you make it, right? And you know, I think I've touched on this in another podcast episode in the past where, you know, I love that idea of faking it till you make it, right? But instead of faking it, let's just practice. Let's practice and then make it.

So if you're telling yourself I'm capable of change, show up to those coaching calls, show up to the podcast, show up for yourself, journal on those tough days. Practice these things, and you will make it, okay? You will confirm these beliefs that you're telling yourself, okay? These new beliefs. Each small action that you have becomes proof of a new story. Really, ultimately. If I'm boiling it down to anything, that's it. Each small action that you take will become proof of your new story.

Now, ultimately, you can't hate yourself into a new belief, okay? You can't tell yourself and shame yourself to then believe a certain thing. Okay? It just doesn't work like that. You can only love yourself into one. Okay? Now the goal isn't to fight your mind, but to understand it. Every single limiting belief was formed by protection, okay? Every belief that you have, there's a reason why, at that moment, you had that belief, and you began to tell yourself that, okay? And a lot of times it's a sense of protection, trying to keep yourself safe. Your brain's trying to say, hey, you know what, I'm going to keep you safe.

So instead of pushing that belief away and saying, oh, I'm just going to avoid it, I'm going to avoid it, what if we could just say to ourselves, thank you for trying to protect me, but I don't need that story anymore. That belief doesn't have any place in my journey anymore. Thank you, and I'm okay now.

This shift from judgment to compassion and love is what really allows healing to take root and what can ultimately allow that belief to get planted, just like in the end of *Inside Out 2*.

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Now, here at the Center for Overcoming, obviously, we help people heal the root of the problem, okay? Instead of cutting off the branches of the tree. Now, the deepest roots aren't your habits; it's your belief. If you tend to that shame, your behaviors are going to continue to grow from shame. But if you plant hope, compassion, love, and truth, that same exact behavior is going to stem from freedom and growth.

So today, whether that's actually the day this got released, or whenever you listen to this, take five minutes and ask yourself these things: What story am I ready to stop believing? What belief am I telling myself that doesn't have a place in my heart anymore? I want you to choose that, write it down, give it a voice, speak it out loud.

Like I said earlier, even writing it down and saying it out loud takes away the power. And build your day around this belief of saying, okay, this is where I am. This has no place in my heart anymore. Let's work on this. How can I revise this belief to become a stepping stone? Because when you change your beliefs, your behaviors are going to follow. It's not the other way around. You can't change your behavior and expect a new belief, okay? You have to change your beliefs first, and you will then follow your behavior.

When your behavior changes, you create a new life, which is a beautiful statement to think about. When your behavior changes, you create a new life. But the only way a behavior will change is if you shift your beliefs first.

I'm so grateful for you guys. Thank you so, so, so much for listening today. I've been so excited to release this podcast episode, so I'm so glad that I was finally able to get this going. I strongly believe that your beliefs can change your entire trajectory of your journey, okay? So pick one, start there, start small, and I hope nothing but the best for you guys. Have a fantastic week, and we'll talk soon. 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

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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.