

132. What's Possible with Hayden



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Sara Brewer

132. What's Possible with Hayden

You are listening to the *Overcome Pornography for Good* podcast, episode 132, What's Possible with Hayden.

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.

Sara: Hey, you guys, welcome to the podcast episode this week. This week we have Hayden on with us. And Hayden, well, Hayden, you want to say hi?

Hayden: Yep. Hey, everyone. I'm so excited to be here. Sara is someone that has done incredible work and someone that I look up to and admire. And I'm very grateful that they asked me to share my story. And I have learned a lot from other people that have shared their stories, so I would love to be that for someone else that is questioning or wants to find a way to do something that they didn't think that they could do. And I'm grateful to be here with Sara. So thank you for inviting me, Sara.

Sara: Yeah, cool. Thank you. Yeah, I'm excited to get to know you a little bit. I was just telling Hayden, well, actually, I wasn't telling you this but I was thinking it in my brain. I was like, I love that I get to do these interviews because it gives me an opportunity just to kind of like go in-depth with people and hear their stories about quitting porn.

And the goal is to just celebrate you and what you've done, and hear insights that you have. And just for you to get to be an example of what's possible. So thank you for being here, I'm really excited.

Hayden: Yeah.

Sara: Do you want to tell us a little bit about you and maybe a little bit of your story? We'll start there.

Hayden: Sure, yeah. So I live in Mesa, Arizona. I'm a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. I am married to Dylan, who is

132. What's Possible with Hayden

the best wife and cheerleader and support out there. I'm so blessed to have her in my life. We have a daughter, Tootsie, she's one.

Sara: Tootsie, is that what you said?

Hayden: Yeah.

Sara: That is cute, oh my gosh.

Hayden: Yeah. Yeah, we get mixed responses from it, but we like it. So that's all we care about. We both grew up in Mesa, we've been married almost seven years. I am a firefighter for the City of Phoenix. So in a lot of your podcasts and I think maybe some of your training portions you reference firefighters and long nights at the fire station.

So all of those podcast episodes that I had listened to before starting the program, I was able to relate to a lot. Being away from home, just the stresses of work that we do, and your program has been incredible to me as a firefighter in all the different areas of my life, which I'm excited to kind of dive into and share.

But yeah, I have a calling in our church where I get a chance to speak with different wards and with the youth and help out and this is something that is kind of on the forefront of my mind when I go and share different messages with people. Just dismantling shame and guilt and sifting between all that and the different messages that we receive from the world or from other people.

That's pretty much me, I love what I do and I've found such a great passion for what you have taught. I've been so fortunate to share with other people too.

Sara: Oh, cool. It sounds like you're doing so much good work between being a firefighter, being a father, volunteering at church. Wow, cool. I love it.

Hayden: Thank you. Yeah, there's lots of opportunities that present themselves. I think we all just have to kind of look around to find those.

132. What's Possible with Hayden

Sometimes if we get busy, we can look over some of them. So this work has helped me slow down a lot to recognize those and to take opportunities to share my story or things that you've taught me through your program.

And, yeah, I have a lot of opportunities through work, callings, and my family to share a great message. So I feel very fortunate.

Sara: Yeah. Cool, and I didn't know that you were a firefighter. You might have mentioned that. So just so that people know, we've scheduled a bunch of these interviews for this year and sent out a big message to people who are in the program and you were someone who responded and we grabbed you.

And you might have said that you're a firefighter there, but I didn't remember. So that's cool. It's fun that we get a lot of first responders and firefighters and people from different first responder positions that come in the program, so that's fun.

Okay, so tell us a little bit about your history or just whatever you want to share around your journey with pornography. Kind of this first question that says like what were the challenges for you in quitting porn?

Hayden: Yep. So my story is I grew up in an awesome family. I've got four brothers, I was raised in the church. I remember the first time, the first place, where I was, who I was with the first time I experienced porn. I was seven years old. One of the reasons I know that is because I had a lot of guilt before I was baptized when I was eight.

And I just remember when you're a little kiddo your brain is not developed, you don't know what it is, you just know you feel these crazy feelings and emotions and you don't really know what to do with it. You just know that, I'm sure it's exciting, your heart starts to beat, you have all these different ways that your body responds to it, you just don't know what to do with it.

And so I think I started to learn and experience guilt with it pretty early on. I know that I did when I was baptized. And I went to talk to my bishop and I didn't know what to say about it other than this is a weird feeling, I saw

132. What's Possible with Hayden

some crazy stuff. But that was the first time. I don't think I was addicted or had a habit from that point on.

But certainly, as I got into my early teens I had developed a habit of just dealing with stress or wanting to break away from the world and have a buffer, like you call it, which I love. And that was a habit for me early on. I think sometimes we tell ourselves that things won't be a problem for us when we get to certain points in our lives.

I think probably missionaries, they say if I get onto my mission it won't be an issue. And if I come back from a mission I'll have put two years or 18 months together where I didn't have a problem with it. And then they do and it's unfortunate.

I didn't serve a mission myself, but I got married pretty young. I got married when I was 21 and one of the things I thought was that if I got married, it wouldn't be a problem at all. My porn would just go away, having an intimate relationship with someone that you love is just going to mask it.

And when you go through the program, you just start to understand that porn isn't really about sex, it's just a way of numbing your mind or taking you away from the things that we don't want to deal with to buffer with the stresses of life or tough events or just kind of winters in our life. And so that was tough.

I remember my wife, whether it was before we got married or soon after, she told me that she didn't think that porn was a trial. She didn't think it was something that she could deal with if her spouse did it. So I was like, holy cow. Okay, now I've really got to make sure this doesn't come up.

Yeah, so my wife is amazing. And she's amazing for so many reasons. I think back in the day, maybe 10 or 15 years ago, in the church I think it was popular for the young women to list out all these character traits and things they wanted in husbands. And I don't know if you ever experienced anything like that, but in our area they would say, you know, a returned missionary.

132. What's Possible with Hayden

And I basically didn't fit any of those things already. And so I was like, if I can take care of this issue and problem that I've had, this would be my one hope to have a great marriage.

Sara: I have to say, it's funny you bring that up because we just moved and so we're going through old boxes of stuff. And we found the list that I wrote of everything that I need my husband to be growing up. It even said stuff like Eagle Scout.

Hayden: Yeah. There's all of these check boxes that we're expected to have, yeah.

Sara: Oh yeah.

Hayden: And it's all for good reason too, but what happens if you're not one of those things? It doesn't mean you're any less or anything.

Sara: Yeah. It was a little bit of a shallow list, to be honest.

Hayden: Very shallow, very surface level.

Sara: My husband had it in his old scriptures because he served a mission, we both did. And he had it in his old scriptures because we dated in high school and he had carried it with him. And we saw it and I felt so bad. I'm like, do you want to keep this? He's like, no, rip up, throw away.

Hayden: Yeah. Yeah, it's tough. There's these expectations that the church has for us, there's the expectations that parents have for us, there's expectations that we have for ourselves. I learned that there were expectations I had from a spouse and it can feel like a lot sometimes. And so especially when someone like myself really pretty much missed every checkbox on the list of what the church asked and stuff like that.

But I've learned and I've gone through the repentance process. I've come a long way. And as a result of that, I've gotten to know Jesus Christ really well. But yeah, so sure enough, we were married I think probably three months and I had my first slip up. I thought it was just a crazy thing that wasn't going to turn into anything so I didn't bring it up, didn't talk about it.

132. What's Possible with Hayden

It went on a little bit longer, and I started to develop a habit again. In the meantime I was trying to get on with the fire department. So I finally got hired with the fire department in 2017. And when I got the call to hire, at the time I thought being a firefighter was the best thing in the world. And I still think it's an amazing job, but I thought that it would mask and overcome a lot of my shortcomings having that title.

And so I felt that the appropriate time to tell my wife about my habit was, I think it was the night before they had all the families come down to the fire department and get to meet each other, kind of be welcomed into the brotherhood and sisterhood of the fire culture. And so I felt that now I was worthy to be able to tell this to her and let her in on what I struggled with.

It really hurt her. It did a lot of damage and it's something that was extremely difficult for me to watch her as she grieved and watch her as she felt betrayed. But that was kind of the start of coming out and starting the path of getting better.

And initially she was pretty shocked, pretty upset, felt betrayed. We started going to a therapist for marriage counseling. And I still see him regularly just with things that we deal with in the fire department and just other life challenges. But we established a relationship with him pretty early on.

So we were going together and I was kind of there to deal with my porn habit. And she was there for, I didn't know the name of it at the time, but she was basically there for betrayal trauma and started her own healing process, working going through that.

So the cycle repeated itself after that several times of starting and stopping and making promises to myself and to her that it would get better. But that's all it was, it was a cycle, kind of in and out.

I found your podcast probably two years ago. So I've listened to it pretty much every week for about two years.

Sara: That's probably near the beginning of when I started it.

132. What's Possible with Hayden

Hayden: Yeah, you were brand new. There weren't too many episodes there at that time. But I found that podcast, I had tried different things in the past, there was another program that I subscribed to that had great information, but I think a lot of it kind of masks what the root of the problem is.

So I had listened to your podcast for a while, loved it. I had built up so much encouragement for myself to take your program. A lot of it came from other people and their testimonials and the work that they had done. So I believed that it was possible. I believed that it could be done. I had seen other people that had gone through it and overcome it. And they were strengthened to be stronger than that. So, finally, I kind of built up the courage to –

I think it has to get to a point where it's almost so bad for some people, this is certainly my case. I had to just be so tired and done with it and so sick of repeating the cycle and not being able to follow through with commitments that I'd made myself. And by this point my wife had really done a great job, she had been able to disassociate that with her.

And in my marriage she went through some body image issue stuff after I had initially told her. So she had done a lot of work and improved to where she knew it wasn't about her, you know, me wanting more than her. It was just a buffer.

But I had gotten to the point last year where I was just, I don't want to say rock bottom because I still had an amazing life. I was just at rock bottom with the tolerance that I had for this. I was done. So at age 27 I went to my mom, who I never really talked to about porn, and I just laid it all on her. I was like, Mom, this is a habit I've had for a long time. It was around my birthday time, so I was trying to butter her up.

I was like this course is amazing. You need to listen to some of these podcast interviews before you say yes, but I don't have the money to do it right now. But could you, I guess in a way sponsor me or buy this program for me? And she, I think like any good parent, was just so happy and

132. What's Possible with Hayden

accepting of me. And just so willing to help and so eager to help me on my journey.

So she said, okay, well, I think it's important that you put some money in too because it'll be more valuable to you if you do that. And I totally agreed. So I put some in, she put some in and I bought the program and it started off. So the program has been amazing.

Sara: Sorry, I want to just make a –

Hayden: Go ahead, I threw a lot out at you.

Sara: I'm just going to interrupt you, so that's just what I'm going to do. But I am obsessed with that. And just that principle of you just get to a point where you're just willing to do whatever it takes, even talking to your mom as a grown adult, to go and do that. And for other people it can be just that first step of talking to their spouse about it. It can be using some money that they've had set aside for something else.

It just gets to a point where you're just willing and ready to do whatever it takes. That's why you're here on the podcast, Hayden, that's why you're here talking about it, is because you were willing to do whatever it took. Not everyone does that.

Hayden: Yeah, no, and I understand that because I was that person for a long time where there was a part of me that wasn't willing to let go of it yet completely. And you'll know, if you're listening to this podcast you'll know when the time is right. You'll know when you've just completely had enough and you're willing to surrender, whether it be pride or feeling like you're going to be either humiliated or looked at differently or whatever is holding you back, you'll know when that is gone.

And you'll either take the plunge to ask a friend or a family member, or just go and purchase the program. And when you do, I mean, get ready because that's the first day of the rest of your life and you're going to be so grateful that you did.

132. What's Possible with Hayden

So going into that, I'll just say that Sara talks about the river of misery. So I started the program and I'm grateful that she talked about that before I did it because it's not a perfect path once you start. You don't start the program and then you never look at porn again. It wasn't a perfect path for me, certainly.

Sara: Yeah.

Hayden: So there were two instances where I had gone back and viewed. But the difference at that time was I had done it, but I wasn't filling myself with guilt and shame, I wasn't subscribing to all of the messages in my mind that I had in the past of how could you do this? And then start labeling yourself all these different things. There wasn't any of that. So it was more just like, hey, this is a step in the process, it's not supposed to be perfect.

But what was so reassuring to me is that I had now learned and developed the tools and skills to either, one, have a slip up and then do the think and move on and work through that. Or just have the confidence to know that when I'm most vulnerable or susceptible, whatever time of week it is, whether I was at work or those times that were really difficult for me, I knew that I could go to those times without feeling like there had to be some sort of a slip up. I could take my tools there with me and that was such a huge relief.

And I don't think that porn will ever lose its effect or its strength on you, I think that there's always going to be different ways of how it is developed or made easily accessible or triggers your brain in different ways, which different dopamine releases are quicker, I don't know.

I just know that it's always going to be getting stronger and it's never going to get taken away. But what will happen in this program, and it's happened for me, is that you get to become stronger than it. You get to be in those tough moments, those moments that are really challenging for each of us individually, and you get to have the tools to say, no, I'm stronger than this and I'm going to put my tools to use and it's going to be great.

132. What's Possible with Hayden

Sara: Yeah, that's awesome. I love that. And that's so true, isn't it? I'm even thinking like with AI and all of the technology advancements that we're going to see. It's going to get easier, it's going to get better, there's going to be a lot of opportunity for porn. But that doesn't matter. It doesn't matter, you don't have to be afraid of what porn is going to look like in the future because you know that you're going to be stronger than it, you've got the tools that you need.

Hayden: Totally. Yeah, yep. And you will read through this system that you've put together –

Sara: Let me just say a few things about the things that you said just in case people haven't heard about those. So you mentioned the river of misery.

The river of misery, I think I have a podcast episode on it. If not, I need to do another one. But it's just this idea that once you are ready to go, you have to swim through the river of misery and it's not just easy and it's pretty miserable. And you go into it expecting this, knowing that you're going to get out on the other side, but you've got to go through that river.

And then the second thing you mentioned was learn and move on. So this process of you being able to have a slip-up and instead of being like, well crap, what am I going to do? I'm the worst, et cetera, et cetera. You can go through and clearly, it's like looking at data. And so this is what happened, this is what I was feeling, right?

You answer all the questions, you do that process, that learn and move on process, and it teaches you to get better. So that's what you're referring to there that I just want to clarify. So go ahead. Was there something else you're going to say?

Hayden: So with the river of misery, I don't know. I was speaking with my therapist today before I came in. I go once a month and just catch up on things and make sure that nothing's getting swept under the rug with work or anything else in life. So we talked about that a little bit.

132. What's Possible with Hayden

When you're doing something really good, something that's true, something that is pushing you forward as an eternal being or just as a person that can help other people. I think there – I'm trying to make this very applicable to everyone of all faiths and different views. But in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, we call it the adversary or Satan.

When you're doing really good things, there's going to be a pushback. There's going to be things that want to draw you away or slow you down. There's external forces out there that are going to try to hold you back from doing a great thing. So I think in a way, that's probably what the river of misery is a little bit.

Maybe there's some withdrawal to it as well, like an aspect of the brain as well, I don't know. But you for sure get to feel that. And I think that's just one of the steps that you have to go through. It's a rite of passage of getting to the point that you want to get to in your life of living a life without porn. It's just one of the steps, so just don't beat yourself up if you're starting the program and you have a slip-up. It's just what's necessary.

So I like to say fail fast and just get it over with and move on.

Sara: So good. Fail fast, fail hard and your success is going to be built on failures. It's easy for us to see that maybe with work or business or other stuff, but that can be true with porn too. Fail fast, fail hard, learn from them and let's go.

Hayden: Yeah. Yeah, for some reason porn is just a little bit different than everything else it seems like. It's a little tougher, it's a little more shameful, a little bit more hidden. But if you can just expose it for what it is, which is just a buffer, it's just an escape from reality, you don't look at it like that anymore. You just look at it as a part of life and I'm just moving forward.

Sara: Yeah, really good. Really good, I love it. Okay, so is there anything else you want to say? Like how has this work changed you?

Hayden: Yeah, I think that for sure through sports and just being regimented in certain areas of our life, whether it be fitness or diet, things

132. What's Possible with Hayden

that I'm really good at, things that are just not a challenge to me that are pretty easy. Sometimes the things that we are good at, we get the really regimented in.

And so my porn habit drove me nuts because it was something that I couldn't get regimented. I couldn't just decide, like waking up at 4am and going to the gym, I couldn't just decide to do it. It's like I didn't have control over it and it drove me nuts.

So Covid was especially difficult because there were so many things that were out of our control, there were only a few things that I could have a huge impact over. And I was how much I worked, so I drowned myself at work during Covid. I was working a bunch of extra shifts, I worked a side job at the time.

And so it was usually between 80 and 120 hours a week is how much I'd work. Working out, going to the gym, eating clean, those were a few of the things that I still could control when it seemed like so many things were being taken away from us, or at least the choice that we had over them.

And this, I think, kind of made it worse, my habit because I was like, okay, well now I've got even more control over what I can do. And now this one area of my life is still lingering and I still can't get a grip on it. And it drove me crazy. And it just made it worse without having gone through the process yet.

And I think in a lot of ways we can sometimes become impatient with other people. If someone is really good at a diet and someone else struggles with that, I think that sometimes we're short with them. And the things that we aren't able to control, they can come out and be manifested in ways of being short with people when they're trying to do something good.

And so that kind of hardened me during Covid. I had kind of lost patience with some people, I had an intolerance for not going to the gym. I had like this David Goggins mindset, in his book I had really embodied a lot of it and I think it did probably more damage than good, but I just know that –

132. What's Possible with Hayden

Sara: Pretty all or nothing?

Hayden: Yeah, totally. All in, it's black or white, we either did or didn't. And that just added more shame to my porn habit.

Sara: It reminds me of Koji. Have you heard me – I don't think I've done an interview with him yet, but I've talked about him, I think. So he was like an Ultra marathon or Ironman. He did all the Ironmans.

Hayden: Yeah.

Sara: And he couldn't quit porn and it's the same thing, it drove him nuts. He's like, how can I be doing this with my body and still feel out of control with porn?

Hayden: Yeah, I had the exact same feelings. Yep. So going through the process and having a handle on it, I don't ever want to say that I've overcome it all the way, but I have a confidence now to be able to go about life knowing I have the tools, knowing that I have been strengthened to be stronger than it. So that's what I'll say about where I'm at.

And so now being there, it's really allowed me to ease up on certain areas of my life that were so regimented. When we had our daughter I really beat myself up because we were up all night with her, especially when she was a newborn. So I was hitting the snooze button, not going to the gym. The things that I had control of, I started to not have control over those. We were just eating whatever we could to get by and to survive with a newborn, and it was rough. So then I gave myself a lot of grace with that then.

But another thing that I had an issue with before was just self-sabotage. Sometimes you would go through a cycle in your life where things are really good, porn doesn't seem to have any effect on you, things are just easy and they're moving along and you almost feel like it needs to be brought back.

132. What's Possible with Hayden

I would self-sabotage, either like this feels too good or I would tell myself that porn allows me to be humble. With porn it'll keep me down at a certain level to where I'm still relatable to people. It'll keep me to where I don't fly too high or whatever analogy it is. And it's just a complete lie.

You can still look back and appreciate that person that struggled through it, that you used to be, and you can have compassion for that person. I think, overcoming it or getting to the point where you have the tools allows you to have compassion toward people that are going through it or are wanting to take the first steps. So that's a complete lie.

And there's a lot of lies out there. Things that we subscribe to, just different messaging that tries to throw us off our track.

Sara: Yeah, I love that you bring that up. And it's fascinating, because that came up for me last week when I was teaching a class. There was a person there and he said he hadn't viewed porn in two years and then he slipped up and viewed porn once. And I was kind of like, why are you here? Not in a bad way.

And he was like and I'm good, it was just a tiny little slip-up. I'm like, why are you still calling yourself someone who struggles with porn when you haven't for two years? And he kind of said the same thing. He was like, well, I don't want to think that I'm better than anyone else. And I want to be able to relate with and help people.

And so we talked about that and we did some work on that, like can you still do that? And how can you actually do that better if you allow yourself to move past this?

Hayden: Totally, yeah, it's a lie. It's a complete lie. You don't have to subscribe to that. You can still be relatable and have compassion towards people that are struggling with it. You're not going to just forget who you were when you struggled with it. You're not just going to have to move on from that and not have the experiences.

132. What's Possible with Hayden

You're not going to forget that, it'll be right there, I promise. And you can use those to help other people. So yeah, just completely get rid of that. And this helps with that, the program does.

Sara: Yeah, we flush out all the self-sabotage.

Hayden: Yeah.

Sara: We'll get those out of you.

Hayden: It's different for everyone. There's certain ones that each person clings on to more or for different reasons or because of different experiences that they've had. Yeah, you get to get rid of the junk and just have truth in your life.

Sara: So good. I love it. Okay, so what have been, and we've already talked about this, but if there's anything else you want to add here. What have been those overall significant transformations, breakthroughs and results that you've experienced?

Hayden: So I haven't done the self-coaching, but I have frequently gone and seen my therapist who's helped me a ton with porn and kind of taught similar truths alongside of you. He's not one of your people, but he's helped me a lot with that, too.

So one of the breakthroughs that I've had was a perspective that he offered to me a couple of months ago, and that was that he said, okay, so you've got this one year old daughter now, who you love completely and just think she's amazing. And I understand that their little minds are curious and they want to get into everything and most of the time that results in a mess or something broken or out of place. So I've really just embraced that and been patient with it.

But he said, what if she went up and she pulled like a vase off the counter and she broke it and she started to cry? He said, would you go over to her and just start yelling at her? And, you know, how could you break the vase? This was your mom's, you could have hurt yourself.

132. What's Possible with Hayden

He's like, no, you wouldn't do that to her. You'd go over and you'd pick her up and you'd be kind to her. If she had any scrapes, you'd kiss them and wrap them up and you'd tell her it's okay and vases aren't that important. It's not a big deal.

So he said, can you do the same thing to yourself when you look at porn? He said, can you go through that process and then come back and pick yourself up? Can you encourage yourself? Can you be kind to yourself? Are you able to love yourself and just say in the eyes of God you're just a little child, you're curious. You're at a point now where you know better and you feel bad about it.

But can you just look at this through the lens that our Heavenly Father has us and just say, I'm not mad at you, I want you to get better. I want you to learn eventually at some point. For some people it takes 20 years, but I want you to get to the point where you can overcome this and be stronger than this. I'm not mad at you. I'm not going to scold you and yell at you and put you in timeout.

He said you can do the same thing for yourself. And that brought me to another point, which was in your program you have an activity where you write a letter to yourself. You write a letter to your future self and you write a letter to your past self.

So writing a letter to my past self was very powerful. It was just a fantastic viewpoint and perspective to have someone that was trying to get better. Some of the things I put in there were, this was to my seven year old self. Like, hey buddy. Hey, what happened today? What did you see? Do you want to talk about it? What feelings did you have? Do you feel like you want to keep it a secret?

I got all these questions for my seven year old self that was so confused and felt ashamed immediately. And I would just offer words of encouragement to my seven year old self. Which essentially what you're doing is you're giving those encouragement and insights to yourself right now, which is such a huge tool. And you can be kind yourself and move on

132. What's Possible with Hayden

and just not beat yourself up the way that most of us handle shame associated with that.

Sara: Yeah, that's beautiful. I love, love, love that. It's like I think the hurt people do like a lot of inner child work, really healing that inner child. And I'm glad you brought up your seven year old self, because I was going to ask you about that. I was going to say, well, what would you say? What would you say to that little seven year old? Oh my gosh, how healing is that?

Hayden: It was amazing. Yeah. I'm sure a lot of us when we first saw porn, I think we were scared, didn't want to tell her parents. There was just a weird feeling about it that became the pattern of the rest of our lives until we've taken the steps that you've laid out.

Sara: And there's a lot of, I mean, when you're seven it's just you're probably experiencing sexuality for the very first time. And that can be a really big, what's the word I'm looking for? It can just push you into sexual shame for the rest of your life. If we're not really helped through that experience, that's just going to happen because we're humans with a human body. So that's really healing. I love that you shared that. Thank you.

Hayden: Yeah, that was a major breakthrough and having that perspective. I wouldn't say you should have the perspective of my mom when I was 17 because I'm sure she probably would have thrown something at me for doing something like that. So have the perspective of a little brand new, perfect baby, of a parent who loves that brand new baby. I'm sure you love your kids when they're 17, but I think you also maybe have a shorter fuse with them.

So be kind. Be kind to that little baby. My therapist also just added into that, he said, you love Tootsie so much, you love that she's into everything, that she's adventurous and wants to learn and touch and see. So you love her that much. Now imagine that our Heavenly Father loves you way more than you can even comprehend.

132. What's Possible with Hayden

So he's going to be all those things that you are to Tootsie even better and with more compassion, more love and patience than you have with Tootsie. And so that really just kind of releases some of the pressure that we have with ourselves if we look at it from different perspectives. And it's like, man, we beat ourselves up so much and it's just not necessary.

Sara: Yeah. And now, anyways, that's beautiful, and I don't think it's ever going to go away. It's Brene Brown who says, shame, we're just always going to have it because we're humans and that's okay. But now we know not to believe everything it's saying to us and now we know how to start healing that when it does come up.

Hayden: Right.

Sara: Okay, so tell us how have your relationships, your life and your impact – You've said a little bit of this already but we're just going to dive into it. How has that all grown as a result of the work you've done?

Hayden: I'll first start with my marriage. That has just been a huge transformation in my marriage and the way that we communicate with each other. My wife is an absolute all star and embodies the characteristics that I hope every wife out there has, of patience, of acceptance, of someone that is quick to forgive, someone that just over time just recognized that porn was just a buffer like you teach, it's just a way to escape. She has that understanding now.

She's someone that, more than I want to, is like, you need to share this with people, you need to get out there and tell your story. And so she's my biggest cheerleader and she's an incredible support to me. And so, unfortunately, like with ourselves, things had to get to a point with us where it was pretty bad initially when I had told her about porn.

It was necessary for there to be hurt for us to get to the point that we're at now where we are patient with each other and encourage each other, our understanding of each other's shortcomings and don't hold it against each other. So that has healed a ton, and with a lot of help from your program too.

132. What's Possible with Hayden

Sara: In a way, it's almost been a catalyst to create that. And it's not the only way to create that. I don't mean to be insensitive to people who might be going through that, but this is what my friend Lindsey Poelman who shares their story as a couple, she's like it's made us so much stronger together and it's like deepened our bonds.

Sometimes, and I don't think the church does this as much, but when I was growing up it was like everything will be ruined in your marriage if you're viewing porn. Everything will be ruined.

Hayden: Yeah.

Sara: And what I'm hearing from you and what I've heard from other people is it's actually made you guys a lot stronger and required you to go through your own river of miseries yourselves. But we're on the other side and it's really beautiful.

Hayden: Yeah, if you're a newlywed and you don't have a porn habit, I wouldn't say go out and look at porn so that you can have this type of relationship.

Sara: Yeah.

Hayden: You're going to have things that come up that give you the opportunity to love each other in a way that you never thought was possible, that's just going to happen naturally. But this just happened to be my way and my wife's way of developing that relationship. If it's not a problem, don't make it a problem. You'll find plenty of other things that you need to work on in your own life.

Sara: Yeah, but if it's there it's not like you've ruined everything.

Hayden: Absolutely not. No. No, and maybe your wife thinks initially that everything is ruined. I think my wife probably had thoughts and feelings like that when I first told her. That this is something that she just couldn't overcome, that we were too far gone. After being married for six months we were completely lost and there's no hope. And it's just not the case.

132. What's Possible with Hayden

Spouses, they have plenty of work to do on their own going through betrayal trauma and healing. But yeah, no, you're in the right place. If you feel bad about it and it is a concern to you, I think you're right on the right track. So just start your journey. And if it takes you having to get a little bit worse off or worse feelings about it, then get to that point. But if you're ready to start, start. Don't wait as long as I have. So that's been my relationship with Dylan.

Also I've had, obviously, my mom. Holy cow, I never imagined going to her as an adult with my own family and saying this is a problem I've had since I was a little kid, can you help me? So, wow, just being able to talk to her openly about it.

And how this relates to other challenges that we all have, whether it be in health, finance, there's just relationships, different areas of your life you can use these tools. If you have a tendency toward anger or a short fuse, you can apply these same principles to it as well. So my dad is also in on this too, so we're all on the same page and it's just out there for everybody.

So I've had opportunities in the area that we live in, I've been asked to go back and coach football at my high school that I went to. And because of my schedule, I haven't. I wish I could commit more time, but I've only been able to go down and I guess I call it like a character coach. I go like once a week and talk to the older group and then the freshman group.

Sara: Nice.

Hayden: And the first thing I talked about was guilt and shame. What is guilt? What is shame? And so we started talking about making commitments and applying it in football. So we started out with just like, what's one small commitment that you can make this week? Whether it be one thing you're going to do to be better at football, one thing you're going to do to help around your house, one thing you're going to do to be better as a student. And I started giving them different ideas.

So we made some commitments, all of them made different commitments. Some of them did them, some of them didn't. So then the next time I went, I

132. What's Possible with Hayden

said, okay, did anyone not fulfill their commitment? Whether it was waking up and not hitting the snooze? Was it drinking a gallon and a half of water? Whatever you said you were going to do. If you didn't do that, what does that mean about?

And I guess I shouldn't have been shocked, but it kind of tugged on my heart a little bit because they said a lot of the things that I used to tell myself when I wouldn't quit porn. They were saying if I didn't wake up on time, it meant I'm lazy, I'm undisciplined, I am all these different things. And I was like, all right, just keep bringing it. What else does it mean? I'm a disappointment.

And I was just like, it really hurt my heart because that was the way I used to talk to myself. And I know that these kids are talking to themselves the same way. So at the end of it, or I guess before I started to build them back up I was like, what if we just cut the drama, like you teach. Just get rid of all of these little side notes of dialogue that we add to these things that we do? What if we just got rid of it?

If you didn't wake up on time, you didn't wake up on time and that's all it is. And just leave it at that. And you guys can try better the next day or the next week. And so I'm just trying to get them all to believe that they can have a relationship with themselves that is productive and patient and loving, whether it be through football or a class or doing schoolwork or whatever their own personal deep, dark struggles are, like porn has been to me.

And so I've kind of been just building them back up and encouraging them. I'm just trying to pull back the layers of just this junk that clouds our minds and this messaging that's out there. So that's been one way I've been able to have relationships. I've loved going and teaching them.

Like I mentioned, it has been a huge blessing. I've always wanted to – I don't know, I've never wanted to public speak, I don't like public speaking. But I've wanted to share just messages of encouragement and doing hard things, and this has given me a great platform to do it. And I've used a lot of

132. What's Possible with Hayden

the things that you've taught me to help kind of reconstruct the way that they think and treat themselves.

So I'm excited to see how they do. I don't really care too much about how they do in football, but I just want to see them develop into good young men.

Sara: Yeah, I love that.

Hayden: Yep. So another thing is, like I mentioned, I have a church calling where I have the chance to go speak in different wards. So the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints is huge, a ward of often three to 500 people. So then there's a state which is usually about six or seven wards.

So I get to go speak to the different wards with more of an emphasis with the youth. So I've had chances to go speak with the youth. And not necessarily open up about struggling with porn, but just giving them little bits of truth, things that I've learned from you along the way of who you really are, what your eternal existence is, who you are in the eyes of our Heavenly Father.

And I can relate to a lot of them. Or I don't know, maybe not a lot of them. But I basically just told them I wasn't that person that checked all the boxes of Eagle Scout. I barely, you know, thank goodness for my mom, graduated seminary, but didn't serve a mission and I didn't do a bunch of stuff. So I think some of them can relate to that.

And I could just tell them that there's a lot more things that are eternally more important and for your own progression. And I just enjoy speaking to them and speaking in different wards too.

At work it's kind of given me different opportunities. So there's not too many members of the church in the fire department in Phoenix. It's given me chances to just kind of call out when people say different things about themselves.

132. What's Possible with Hayden

You just start to understand some of the different thoughts that come out when people start to speak about themselves and their relationship they have with themselves. And you can kind of call it out sometimes and be like, do you really think that? And you can kind of start to plant little seeds of truth of just because you haven't worked out in a couple of weeks doesn't mean you're terrible or a slob or out of shape. Just start again. You don't have to wait till Monday, just start right now.

So it's given me different chances just to spread truth at work too.

Sara: So cool. Can you imagine if we did that? Every time we hear someone talk negatively about themselves if we just said, do you really think that? I don't know if that's appropriate to say to every single person, but that would be – Maybe it's appropriate. That would be powerful.

Hayden: Right. Yeah. And so I'm not a therapist, but I think if you were to ask that, you'd need to be ready for some people to just unload some stuff onto you. I've had that happen a few times. And just if anything, I guess you could just love them through it and just tell them things that you know that are true.

But going through this, and it's kind of like I've got myself that struggled with porn next to me now and I can just go back and ask him questions and I can kind of pick from his brain still. And I can use those things at work and ask questions like that or just kind of help. Rewiring of the brain that's necessary for us to overcome some of these habits that we've gotten into. And that's just been a great help for me. My relationships have all improved.

Sara: Oh, good. I'm so, so happy for you. Anything you want to say about what you think is possible for you now as a result of quitting porn? And any other insights that you think might be helpful for our listeners who want to quit?

Hayden: So the question about what is possible, I want to read this part that I wrote down. A lot of this I've just done off the top of my head, but this part I wrote down because I want to read it the right way. So I just want to

132. What's Possible with Hayden

offer you this perspective so that listeners can decide for themselves what is possible.

Imagine waking up tomorrow morning with a clear conscience. Imagine waking up and being able to start your day with the tools that make it possible to go out into the world and being able to use them to process thoughts and feelings that come into your body that would normally collapse your will and end in you taking time away from something that's meaningful to go look at porn.

Imagine feeling mental and emotional clarity when it comes to making small and big decisions. Think of what your big dreams and desires are, and imagine being able to pursue them and feeling completely worthy of any success, achievement, goal or other accolade that is in your future. And being able to stand there to soak it all in without guilt or any other limiting thought tugging at you to remind you of your identity as someone who struggles with porn.

Imagine not thinking, "If I can only have this one thing, porn, taken away from me how different my life would be if this wasn't following me around." I know what's possible for me now when I experience this every day. I promise that what you think is possible can be the same for you too.

Sara: Let's just sit with that for a minute because that is powerful. Yeah, I just recorded a podcast and in it I said, what we want – If you hear that, if you hear what Hayden just read and there's a part of you that's like, "Oh, I want that," that's possible for you because God doesn't give us desires without a way to accomplish them. He just doesn't mess with us like that.

Hayden: Yeah, I totally believe that. And these things, any of the imagines that I've written down were things that I've struggled with or didn't think were possible that have been really important to me. And I didn't know if I could do any of them.

And some of these have already manifested and come true. Some of these things are on the waiting list. Some of them that are in the works right now, happening soon. But all of these things I've personally had struggles with

132. What's Possible with Hayden

each of them in not believing in. So I just promise you that if any of these strike a chord with you, that this work will allow you to be able to fulfill that.

Sara: Yeah, beautiful. Thank you. Well, I'm hearing you talk a lot about getting rid of guilt and shame and self-loathing and high pressure and high expectations. I'm also hearing you talk a lot about buffering and learning how to manage those emotions when they come up.

Hayden: Yeah, when you describe those things, you described them in a way that just clung right onto me and I was able to understand and use. But it's very well laid out, very easy for me to follow along and has been able to bless my life immensely.

Sara: Yeah, it's pretty life changing, even just being able to feel your feelings.

Hayden: Yeah. Wow, I feel like we can talk for another hour or so on feeling feelings, which is not a manly thing to do. Especially firemen, we don't feel feelings. We're tough and we just go and we help people whether it's a car accident, a drowning, a fire. Whatever it is we just go and we shut it off, that has never served me. And so it's just led to more problems.

So learn how to feel a feeling, chase it around in your body. What does it feel like? Where is it? Is there a color to it? Can you describe it? I mean, you go in depth into this process, but it's something that can become very automatic, it's not so regimented.

When you're learning these tools, they're very regimented and deliberate, but they can really become second nature to you as you use them over and over. And it's not so much like, okay, holy cow, I'm triggered. Get all my tools out, I've got to look at all of them.

Initially, it might be like that, but it gets to the point where you can just pick a tool that you need at the right time that fits the moment, that is applicable, that is there to help you. And it's been amazing to be able to do that. So it's a very seamless way to live your life.

132. What's Possible with Hayden

Sara: Very cool. Oh, that's going to be so powerful for you to keep teaching all the people that you're talking to, especially those teenagers and those youth. Man, if they knew how to feel their feelings.

Okay, last thing, any last things you want to say or any last insights for listeners?

Hayden: One more thing I just wrote down, I just said that experiences like this feel amazing. Coming out and talking on a podcast feels amazing. These are the experiences where you're in the light and it's just like porn has no power over you in instances like this. That being said, there will be days that are pretty tough.

You talk about a 50% positive, 50% negative experience of the world. That's just the idea that one day can be amazing, one day can be terrible. I hope for all of us it's maybe skewed a little bit more toward positive. I think it is probably for most of us. But those days will come, it's not a question.

And I just want to add, I just wrote in parenthesis, and by the way, I can promise you that when you learn these tools and choose to become someone who doesn't use pornography, these percentages do get skewed in the direction of positivity.

So I believe your experiences will be more positive than negative. But you just use it as a mental tool.

Sara: Yeah.

Hayden: So even after going through this program and learning the tools and systems that will give you success, you will have those 50% negative days or moments or weeks where the conditions perfectly set you up to be lured back in. I have had those days. And acknowledging that those days will come is a huge relief to be able to accept and move toward, especially having what this program has to offer in those tough moments.

And you don't have to just feel like it's about time or it's due for a slip-up, it's just a cycle that I fall back into. You can break the cycle and it doesn't

132. What's Possible with Hayden

have to be like that. You can go into life and about your day with these tools and be confident and live a life that isn't brought down by pornography.

Sara: Yeah, I love that. And I've been thinking I need to do like a whole episode on this idea of almost rewriting what we think getting there is, right? Getting there isn't, all right, we're happy all the time and we feel on top of the world all the time. And we never have any difficult moments or we never even have any urges, right?

I don't know, I want to sit on this and think a little bit more. But getting there is trusting yourself, being okay with the 50/50 of life and knowing that you're always going to, even if you slip up you're going to get back on the horse and act out of integrity and it's not going to control your life anymore. You're not going to be worried about it anymore all the time. You're not going to feel out of control when you feel those urges.

You're just going to practice and practice and practice. It's not controlling you anymore.

Hayden: Yeah, I think sometimes we think that these big trials, there's a finish line. And if you want to, I don't believe that there is, but if you want to believe there's a finish line, the finish line looks like someone that's equipped with tools to just be able to go and live your life and not have to worry that porn is just going to crush you.

It's like, no, the finish line looks like you've gone through tough, that you accept that there's going to be 50/50, that your relationships have improved, that you're open about it. And to me that's what the finish line looks like, being someone that uses those tools when they are needed. And I think sharing truth to others when you're feeling good or worn down, I guess, and you want to shine a little bit of light on what people are going through as well.

Sara: Yeah, so good. I love it. Hayden, thank you so much for being on today. I so appreciate it.

132. What's Possible with Hayden

Hayden: You got it. Thank you so much for the work that you do. And I'm excited for any other people that want to jump in. I'd love to answer your questions and help any of them, people that I know that maybe I don't know that would have questions and want to just start living a better life today. So thank you for everything.

Sara: Yeah, you're welcome. And thanks, you guys, for listening. Hayden, thanks for being on. We'll talk to you guys later. Have a great 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 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. 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.