

133. Spirituality: Loved, Held, Guided and Never Alone



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Sara Brewer

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You are listening to the *Overcome Pornography for Good* podcast episode 133, Spirituality: Loved, Held, Guided and Never Alone.

Welcome to the *Overcome Pornography For Good* podcast where we take a research-based, trauma informed and results focused approach to quitting porn. This approach has been revolutionary and changed thousands and thousands of lives. I'm your host, Sara Brewer.

Hey, you guys, welcome to today's podcast episode. So glad to have you here. We're doing another little talk on spirituality. One of the reasons that I have wanted to talk about this a little bit more than maybe I have in the past is because I am planning an ecclesiastical leader training in September. And it's going to be a great, great, great training for any ecclesiastical leaders, bishops, pastors, whatever your status position in your church congregation might be.

There are so many spiritual leaders who come across trying to counsel, help and work with people who are trying to quit porn in their congregations. And right, like, what do I even have to say? There's so much to say. These ecclesiastical leaders, they have so much power to do so much good in these situations, and so much harm. There's so much religious trauma that I see and spiritual trauma that I see in clients that I work with.

And so, so, so much of the damage around pornography is from things that they might have heard past religious leaders say and even people who aren't necessarily trying to be harmful. There's just maybe a little bit of a lack of education in a lot of these spheres. And I say that with a lot of love in my heart because my dad was a YSA Bishop for a while and I really, really do appreciate all of the people who are trying to help congregations.

And a lot of, at least like in the faith community that I grew up in, a lot of people don't have specific trainings. They're just trying to do the best they can and trying to love and serve and help people. And so I say this with a lot of love in my heart, and that is another reason that I'm doing this ecclesiastical training. I want to give leaders specific tools on what to do to

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help their people who are struggling with porn. Exactly specific things to do, not just principles for them to learn.

We're going to talk about all the principles because they need to understand this, but tools, what can you say? What can you do? When is it time to refer out? When do you need to bring in conjunctive support with a therapist, et cetera, et cetera.

One of the things my dad said that I won't ever forget when he was an ecclesiastical leader, you know, that bishop. We were just chatting, he was asking me about my work, how my work was going. We were talking about all the things and he said, "Yeah, we can do a lot of harm sitting in that bishop's chair, and it makes me really nervous. And I wish I knew more. We can do a lot of harm there."

And just like you can maybe do a lot of harm there without understanding, you can also do so, so, so, so much good. When people are going to their spiritual and religious authorities, jeez, you have a lot of power in those situations. And so I want to help you. And I know I'm not talking just to ecclesiastical leaders, but any who are here listening, I want to help you understand and really use all of that for good. And I know most of you are doing a terrific job and I just want to give you some more tools.

So anyways, that's why we're talking a little bit more about spirituality. And let's see, this is going to be at the end of September. So we're still a little while out before this class. So you'll hear me talk about it a lot more as we get closer to it and I'll give you the link to send to your leaders. It's going to be really affordable like \$25, maybe \$50 at the most to come and get tons of amazing training on this.

So anyways, I do want to talk a little bit more about spirituality today. Let's see, before we dive in, just thank you so much for the reviews y'all are leaving me. It really, really, really helps the podcast, helps me get my work out there. You guys know that I don't do ads and I don't have sponsors.

And I could if I wanted to, but it's not something that I go out and try to have right now. It's just not something that I'm interested in doing and I want to

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have my focus be in my program and helping people in my program and pushing people to my program, not like an income stream with ads right now.

And so the reviews that you all offer and leave me really help me get my message out to people who want it. It helps me keep continuing doing this awesome thing that I love and sharing this podcast. And I just want to share a review that I got last Thursday.

It says, “Over the last 10 years I’ve done a lot of self-help books, I’ve done a ton of therapy, gone to multiple ARP programs and spoken to countless bishops and church leaders. I always felt like each thing had something very good to offer, which I’ve applied and has helped me find some success in quitting porn. But they all seem to have something missing.

Sara seems to have taken all the truths from every source, filtered out all the misinformation each source has, added in her own expertise and made the perfect philosophy for following. I’m very thankful to have been introduced to this podcast.”

Yeah, thank you so, so, so much for sharing that. I appreciate that. And I mean, it’s not perfect by all means, but we really work hard to make sure that we’re sharing and teaching and coaching the very best way that will help you get the very, very best results, which so many of you are seeing as you’re listening to all these great What’s Possible interviews.

I still have more What’s Possible interviews to share. We did a bunch at the beginning of this year and we’ve still got more. We’ve got lots more. I love sharing those and I love doing those.

So, okay, spirituality. I want to talk about this idea that I heard from Lisa Miller. So Lisa Miller is a clinical psychologist, a professor, researcher and a scholar in spirituality and in psychology. And at Columbia University she has this great program called the Spiritual Mind Body Institute. So she’s the director of the Spirituality Mind Body Institute. And I have not read or listened to a lot of her stuff yet, but I was just introduced to her through an interview on a podcast that I heard.

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She wrote the book called *The Spiritual Child*, and it's science around spirituality and parenting and how to help children develop the spirituality that the research shows is so, so, so, so good for kids. And she does it in such a beautiful way that is not religion specific. She really differentiates between religion and spirituality and it's a very inclusive approach, even if you identify as atheist, right? You can still have spirituality.

Spirituality is available to you as an atheist, whether or not you believe in a God or an afterlife or whatever. There's spirituality that you experience and that is just a part of every human experience. And we can still learn how to use that and really help and benefit our life. So there was one thing that I loved that she said and I wanted to focus on this.

She talked about spirituality in this definition that I love. She said, "It is perceiving being loved, held, guided and never alone. And this is in every person's capacity to perceive." And she differentiated here, she didn't say believe, she said I'm not talking about it's in every person's capacity to believe this, but it's in every person's capacity to perceive this feeling of being loved, held, guided and never alone.

And I heard that sentence and my heart was like, yes, this. This is everything good about spirituality. And this, whatever spiritual practice it is that we're engaging in, and many of you who are listening are Christians, whatever that is, the most benefit and where we really want to hold on to all of this is because of this perception of being loved, held, guided and never alone.

So for some of you that's your relationship with God. I feel God and because I feel God I know that I am loved, held, guided and never alone. For some of you, that's your relationship with the universe or with spirit or whatever force there is out there that we can feel in our hearts. Developing this perception of being loved, held, guided and never alone, believing in that, trusting in that, there's so much data and research, according to Lisa Miller's research, that shows how beneficial that is for children and for just being a human in general.

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And it makes sense. It makes sense why that is so beneficial. Because if you're going through life and you know that you're loved, held, guided and never alone, you're going to show up a lot more than if you're not experiencing that, right?

And the model will make sense with that, right? Circumstance, thought, feeling, action, result. If you're feeling in the feeling line: loved, held, guided, never alone, your actions are going to show up, you're going to show up in a way that's a lot more hopeful and that helps you take action to create the change that you want to in your life and in the world.

There is a difference between head knowing and heart knowing. And this is something that I, let's see who introduced me to this idea? Thomas McConkie maybe. Anyways, I am a very head person and it's served me so, so, so well. But it's also gotten me really stuck. And especially when I have experienced different types of trauma, you can get really, really stuck in your head.

So there's head knowing, there's heart knowing and there's body knowing. So our head knows things, it's our ability to rationalize and think through things. Our body knows things, and so this is what I work on with clients a lot. Your body, its responses to things, it's usually trying to tell you something. In an episode I'm going to do later this month we're really going to dive into this. It's going to be really great.

But your body knows things. How your body is feeling, trauma responses that your body is having, dysregulation that your body is experiencing. So, for example, if you show up somewhere and you get really jittery and anxious and almost panicky whenever you show up at this certain place, maybe it's like a parent's house or like an old stomping ground of yours or whatever. It's your body trying to tell you something.

It's trying to tell you maybe that you don't feel safe, that you don't feel trusted, whatever that might be, okay? So your body has a knowing and then your heart has a knowing. And these are all three different things that we can start to develop and really get to know. Like, okay, am I listening to

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my head? Am I listening to my body? Am I listening to my heart? What is my head telling me? What is my body telling me? What is my heart telling me?

And spirituality, at least for me, is really a big practice of my heart. And what is my heart telling me? So I can go up in my brain. And I can try to rationalize and think through all the things and that's great and that serves me so well. I'm going to use that. And then I can go to my body and I can say, where do I feel safe with spirituality? Where do I not feel safe with spirituality? What is my body telling me here?

And then I can go to my heart. Okay, what is my heart telling me about spirituality? What is my heart telling me about the universe? And what is my heart telling me about God? And when I go to my heart, the things that I feel, and why I loved this so much is because this is that center of my heart, when I am experiencing spiritual experiences it is that feeling of being loved, held, guided and never alone.

Times when I feel loved, held, guided and never alone, usually, when I'm out in nature. When I'm out in nature, I'm just quiet. And I'm just going to quiet my head for a little bit. And I know it's telling me all these things and I know there's all the doubts and all the fears and all the anxieties. Going into my heart in nature, in the stillness of nature, there I feel loved, held, guided and never alone.

When I'm really present with my kids and I'm just looking at their faces and thinking like, wow, look at these perfect humans that exist. I feel loved, held, guided, and never alone. When I do my journaling practice, which is typically just writing. Have I talked about this on the podcast? I've talked about it on my social media a little bit, my favorite journaling practice?

Well, let me give you a little background. So a few years ago I had experienced – Have I talked about this before? If I'm repeating myself, please excuse me. If I have shared it before, I'm just supposed to share it again today. So a few years ago I had hit a period in life where I had

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experienced a lot of success and I was really, really happy with where I was and mind-blown a little bit at the success that I had created.

And we were able to go and spend a month in Hawaii as a family. And I remember that I was the most miserable that I've ever been during that time period. I was just in excruciating pain and very, very miserable. And there were a number of things going on that were creating that. There was some trauma I had to work through, but there was also this big aspect of, I've hit these huge goals and I'm not happier. What is the point of anything?

And I got really depressed. I've heard people actually talk about this, who have hit goals before, had big successes where they're like, that's sometimes when you get depressed because you hit those and you're like, oh, my life looks exactly the same. What is this? And so I had to go through this learning period. I had gained these success skills, I had skills to be successful, but I didn't have skills to be happy, and they are different skills.

So really hear me here. So the more your success skills is not the less happy you are. Because sometimes you'll hear people say that, right? Like, I don't want to be successful because I want to be happy. No, they're completely different things. So the more successful you are, it's not, the less happy you are. The more successful you are, the more successful you are. And if you want to be happy, you have to also build happiness skills.

And so I had built some really great success skills and I hadn't quite built my happiness skills. And I had to do a number of things. Like I mentioned, I had to heal a lot of trauma. I had to heal a bunch of trauma, do a bunch of bodywork. It was one of the biggest growth periods of my life. I still feel like I'm in that growth period but I learned so much. And I've been able to use so much of this in my practice and helping my clients and the bodywork.

Oh my gosh, you guys can feel how powerful it is when we're doing coaching around it, for those of you who are in the program, right? So I had to learn those skills. But then the biggest thing that helped me with my happiness level is after the trauma healing, the biggest thing was gratitude.

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And that sounds so I know, I know, I know, that sounds so simple. And it sounds so like, just be grateful. No, but genuine gratitude. And this isn't just like, oh, I'm grateful for water. I'm grateful for the sun. I'm grateful for my family. No, this is like getting into that state of your body where you're feeling just insane amounts of gratitude. And it's dropping into your heart, and this is a big part of my heart practice.

So this is why I'm bringing this up, because I'm going into my heart to feel that loved, held, guided and never alone and that gratitude as I practiced this every day, journaled every single day, it's really improved my capacity to go into my heart. And so what I would do is I would pull out my journal and just think, okay, what moments today were just beautiful?

And I would think, oh, remember when my toddler crawled onto me and fell asleep on my chest? And I would just feel that and I would just imagine that. And just think, are you kidding me? Like that is beautiful to have this time. I even want to cry thinking about right now. To have this tiny, little toddler who's perfect just come and fall asleep on my chest.

So I would write that down. And then I would think and then remember the sun, when the sun came out and what that felt like on my neck and on my face? And I would just breathe into that. The sun. Wow, the warmth, the comfort. And I would write that down. So I'm not just like, oh, I'm grateful for this, grateful for this, grateful for this. But I'm feeling deeply into every single one of these moments.

And I could just feel fill, fill, fill pages and pages and pages with this. I've also recently been doing a meditation practice that I was taught by one of my mentors. Her name is Kathy and I freaking adore her and she calls it like a heart-centered meditation. And what she taught me to do, and what we do, and what I want us all to do is you breathe, you get grounded, you center yourself, you go into your heart and you imagine someone that you just love unconditionally and that unconditionally loves you.

That could be a pet, like a childhood pet. You see that little dog and it's just, it's so excited to see you and you're so excited to see him and you're just

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filled with unconditional love. It could be your tiny children, right? When those kids are just little and they just are so happy to see you and they just love you unconditionally. It could be a grandparent, whatever that is.

So you get there, you go there and you spend time in that feeling just imagining and feeling that unconditional love. You breathe into it, you love them, you give them hugs, and then you kind of imagine them just coming back into you going away. And then you sink even deeper into your heart and you feel peace and stillness. And so that's another beautiful practice that I've really developed to get into this heart center of feeling loved, held, guided, and never alone.

Scripture, it can be scripture, right? Bible verses or other scripture verses, that you're like, when I read this, I can feel that in my heart, that I am loved, held, guided and never alone. It can be sacred spaces. That sacred space can be the wilderness, right, like it is for me. It can be the forest, it can be temples, it can be churches, where you go there, and in those sacred spaces you can drop into that heart space and feel loved, held, guided and never alone.

Developing this will allow you, oh my gosh, so much goodness and so much groundedness as you learn the head skills and as you learn the body skills that I'm teaching you. You learn the head skills, all the CBT techniques and the thought techniques, right, all the things that are changing your lives, all the body techniques, the mindfulness, the working through trauma, all that it's going to change your life.

And then this last piece, this heart piece, and as I'm talking I'm realizing that I want to do a little bit more trainings on this in the program. And I want to maybe even talk about a little bit more in the podcast. But as we can ground to this heart center where we can feel and practice and develop this part of us that is loved, held, guided and never alone.

And remember too, this is what Lisa Miller, all of her research says is the science behind this is that this is something that is innate within us, that is our birthright to experience. No matter what religion, no matter what

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specific wording, language it is that you have around it. This is something that every single person has the capacity to perceive.

Not just to believe, but to perceive, like to actually feel an experience is loved, held, guided and never alone. And sometimes it takes, you know, you have healing journeys to go through to get there. You've got to heal some trauma, especially those of you who have experienced religious trauma, there's some healing to do here.

And I really want to be careful that as I'm talking about this, you're not hearing me say, oh, all religion and everything religion teaches is good. And that I'm not like saying that. I'm not. I'm saying the spirituality aspect offers us this grounding, this support and this piece of the puzzle that's going to allow you to really make so much progress as you're learning the head stuff and the body stuff.

But this feeling to drop into that heart and feel loved, held, guided and never alone is just so beautiful and grounding and a really important part of the process. And you can quit porn without it. You can quit porn without it, but it's going to allow you to do it in a lot more grounded, sweet way, right?

And you guys have seen and heard from a lot of these What's Possible interviews people talking about this aspect of spirituality that's helped them, and like I said, I'm just going to repeat this phrase again one more time, being loved, held, guided and never alone. So please take a moment after this podcast, practice some of these things we've talked about. Dropping into your heart, doing that journaling exercise. And ask yourself, ask your inner wisdom, your inner knowing how can I practice feeling loved, held, guided and never alone?

What spiritual practices do I need to do more of in my specific religion or if I'm not religious, whatever that is, what practices do I need to do more of that are going to create this result for me of feeling loved, held, guided and never alone? All right, you guys, have a great week. We'll talk to you next week, bye bye.

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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.