

## 144. Ask a Coach: Shame vs Guilt



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Sara Brewer**

## 144. Ask a Coach: Shame vs Guilt

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.

Hi everyone, welcome to *Overcome Pornography For Good*. We are currently on a season break, and regular podcasting will resume January 1st. But we are still bringing you brand-new content every single week by sharing an Ask a Coach question and answer from me or from one of the other coaches in *Overcome Pornography For Good*.

Ask a Coach is a feature in the program, in our program *Overcome Pornography For Good*, where you can come and you can submit questions or coaching and get a personalized response from a coach on our team. This is something that when you join you get lifetime access to and you can submit as many questions as you would like.

You can submit 10 a day, 20 a day, you could come back down the road in three years and submit a question. You'll always get answers, you'll always get help and support via our portal through the Ask a Coach function in the program. So you can submit questions. If you're struggling you can ask for help. You can submit your learn and move-ons or other worksheets.

And so what we're doing right now is we are picking and choosing a few of these to answer anonymously, of course, here on the podcast until we pick back up with regular programming on January 1st. And I think you're going to love it, it's going to be so helpful and so good. And you get to hear from all the other coaches.

So before we hop in I do want to talk about a brand-new free resource that I have for you all that's perfect to announce during this podcast break. It is called the Podcast Roadmap. What this is, is it's a roadmap of all of the key podcast episodes. With around 150 episodes, that can feel really overwhelming if you're new to the podcast. So what we did is we created a roadmap.

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Here's 12 of the most important episodes to listen to. You can listen to them in order or not, but we have those listed out for you and linked for you and you can sign up for that and get that in your inbox for free at [sarabrewer.com/podcastroadmap](http://sarabrewer.com/podcastroadmap). No spaces, no dashes, Podcast Roadmap.

I really hope that you guys will go and take advantage of this. Even if you've been a longtime listener and you're using this podcast break to maybe catch up on episodes, go and download the Podcast Roadmap to re-listen to those most important episodes.

We also have our free masterclass that's always available if you want just the quick and easy version of how do I quit porn, that's [sarabrewer.com/masterclass](http://sarabrewer.com/masterclass). It's just an hour long, it'll walk you through the process. It keeps it short and simple.

And then, of course, we always have our program open. So you can come and join and work with us. You can start getting answers to your Ask a Coach questions, you can come and get coaching. Remember, it's a lifetime access, so we've got the modules and all of the work for you to do in the program, the milestones to complete.

And then you have lifetime access to coaching calls. We have multiple coaching calls every single week. We have specialized marriage calls, relationship calls, support calls. We have regular coaching calls, which are the ones that I do. We have calls on each individual milestone. Anyways, there's so much in there. I won't go into all of those details here, but you can see all the details of the program, [sarabrewer.com/workwithme](http://sarabrewer.com/workwithme).

All right, you guys, enjoy these Ask a Coach Q&As.

Jessica: Hey, everyone, this is Jessica Farmer from Overcome Pornography For Good. I'm here today with our Ask a Coach question. This came in, it was emailed to us through the Ask a Coach feature in the program. And he says, "I watched porn after being clean for six months. I feel a bit disappointed and shameful on one hand, but also feel guilty for not feeling guilty enough. Do you have thoughts on what it looks like for me

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to come back from this? I'm still learning to process urges, but feel like I've come a long way since joining this program."

This is a really, really great question. First of all, that's huge. That's so exciting that you were able to go for six months with processing urges and weren't really having a lot of issues. Also, it's totally normal to kind of have some of these ups and downs where you feel like everything is going really well and then all of a sudden things change and maybe you slip up. So that's totally fine, it's part of the learning process.

But he asked a really good question here. He says I feel disappointed and shameful on one hand, but I also feel guilty for not feeling guilty enough. So one of the questions that if you're in this situation, one of the questions it's really good to ask yourself is, okay, what is guilty enough, right? Sometimes we have this big idea of what we think is good enough.

Like, if I could feel guilty enough, then what? What's the goal? Like, maybe I wouldn't feel uncomfortable anymore. If I just felt guilty enough, then I wouldn't feel bad, or it kind of becomes like a self-punishing thing, right? Like, I should feel really guilty, I should feel really bad. And then somehow it'll make what I did feel okay or feel like there's some kind of resolution.

So what you want to do is kind of ask yourself that question. Are there certain markers that are coming up in your mind about like, okay, what does it mean to be guilty enough? What is your brain trying to tell you you need to do in order to feel that sense of resolution?

And then you can kind of challenge that because usually our brain totally runs amok, right? It will kind of come up with all of these things that maybe we should do, or it might just kind of not really even have any idea what you're supposed to do, but it might just be kind of saying, okay, you just have to do all sorts of things in order to feel better, in order to find that resolution.

And so you want to get really, really specific. Like, okay, brain, you want me to do all these things, what should I do? Give me a list of all the things I can do. And generally, there really isn't a list. So then you're just kind of left with

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this uncomfortable feeling that there hasn't been this resolution. You've watched porn, which your mind is interpreting as this big, terrible thing. You've done this thing and you need to come up with some way to resolve it.

This is where in the program we have these learn and move-ons or a learn and move on worksheet where you kind of go through all of what happened, what your brain was thinking, what thoughts were going through your head, what kind of justifications. We talk about where you might be feeling shame and how to challenge that. And ultimately, what can we learn from this experience?

Because anytime there's a slip-up, it's not that something has gone wrong. It's just all part of the learning process. You can take every time something comes up, anytime there's a slip-up you can take that situation, you can take that circumstance and use it as a means to move on, to learn and then keep moving forward.

This isn't a setback. It's not like every time you slip up you're going back to step one. That's not it at all. You've come so far, you've learned so much and now you know so much better how to deal with a slip-up than you did six months ago, right?

So sometimes we have this idea of like, oh, I fell off the wagon, right? And I want to challenge that thought. Like what's the wagon? Where is this wagon that we're talking about? We're not being left behind, you're exactly where you're supposed to be. You are in charge of this learning and healing process, and it can happen at the exact speed that you need it to.

There's no artificial thing that's driving you forward, like this wagon, right? You're not falling off the wagon, it's all part of the process. So I want to just encourage you that this is another step in the journey and that you are doing exactly what you're supposed to be doing. You're exactly where you're supposed to be. And that this can be a situation where you can learn.

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You can learn so much from these, and we give you all the tools to do that in the program. So you're exactly where you're supposed to be, you have everything that you need to in order to succeed. So let's learn and just keep moving on.

Okay, the other thing that I wanted to highlight with this question that he brings up is this idea of guilt, right? Guilt versus shame. He talks about feeling guilt and shameful thoughts. And you really want to kind of get in the habit of differentiating between the two, right?

Shame is going to be anything that's saying like, I'm not good enough. I'm not doing good enough. I should have done something different. I should have handled this better. I'm a terrible person for doing this, for slipping up after six months. What's wrong with me, right? All of those are shame thoughts. It's very internalized. It's very pointed toward you and your character, right? Shame is going to attack all of that.

Guilt, on the other hand, is a really productive emotion. It's an uncomfortable emotion, for sure. But it's productive. Guilt is saying, okay, I did something wrong. I did something that's not in line with my values. It's not in line with the person that I want to be. So how do I move forward?

Guilt is like an indicator light in your car, right? Like when something is going wrong with the engine, that engine light pops up. And you know, okay, something's going wrong, I need to check it out. I need to go take it to the mechanic, right? You know it's that indicator light for, okay, something's not quite right here.

And the same thing is true with guilt, right? You can have that feeling like, oh, okay, I did something that wasn't quite in line with the person I want to be. I wonder what that means? And then you can kind of question like, okay, what was going on when this happened? What emotions was I feeling? You can start asking yourself questions from a place of curiosity.

Whereas shame, if you're stuck in some of those shame thoughts, it's going to keep you stuck there, right? You can't be curious when you're stuck in shame. So you can't be in that place of learning and moving on. So you

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want to kind of differentiate some of those. And if you see that you're coming up with shame, those shame thoughts, those inward character attacking kind of thoughts, you want to challenge those.

And you challenge those by responding with compassion, right? How can I respond to those ideas, to those thoughts with compassion? How can I challenge those with compassion? And then once you've moved through that, then you're left with those feelings of guilt, which will lead to curiosity, which is going to lead to growth.

So be sure and kind of get really, really good at figuring out the difference between those two. And when you lean into the guilt and the curiosity, it's going to be productive. It's going to help move you through this experience, not get stuck in it. If you're feeling stuck, there's going to be shame thoughts there.

And that's what we help our clients with all the time is how to really target, like zero in on what those shame thoughts are and how to challenge them in a really loving and compassionate and productive way.

All right, thank you guys for being here and we'll see you next week.

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](http://Sarabrewer.com/masterclass), and it is totally free.