

159. Keep It Simple – Emotions and Buffering



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Sara Brewer

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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, everyone. Welcome to today's podcast episode. We are just going to continue our series on the Keeping It Simple, how to overcome pornography for good, what skills you need to have. The objectives and goals that need to be in place for you to make the progress you want to make, quit porn, feel in control, feel like it doesn't have power over you, but you have power over it, and that you're making decisions based off of your value system and that you know how to do that.

And today we're going to talk about the emotions and buffering goals and objectives. So why I'm doing this series is to help you. If we just boil it down to these are the things you need to understand and know, you're going to be good. You're going to be good. Keeping It Simple, this was inspired because we had a client who was just overwhelmed with all the things that they think they need to know and do.

And we showed them this list of here are the goals and objectives. Here's the things you need to understand in each of these areas and you're going to be okay. And he's like, oh, that's it? Okay, we can keep it simple. We can keep it simple. And so, yeah, let's keep it simple. I am all about simplifying as much as possible. Simplifying everything. Simplifying my life. Simplifying my processes.

And this stuff is simple, that doesn't mean it's easy. That doesn't mean that there's not going to be some deep inner work involved and that this isn't a journey. It's not a quick fix, but we can keep it simple so that we stay out of the overwhelm.

So let's talk about emotions and buffering today. So these are all goals and objectives that we have written down specifically for my coaches who are working with one-on-one clients to review and go over and really make sure that they understand all of these things individually on a high level

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understanding, but then a really deep level understanding for their specific life.

So we've already talked about commitment and learn and move on. Let's talk about the emotions and buffering milestone and what you need to understand there. So the first one, it says the client understands the role of buffering in their porn habit.

So remember buffering is escaping emotion. And so we want to make sure that you understand how buffering shows up when it comes to porn. This, I know it's simple and I know y'all have probably heard me talk about this a lot, but also I know y'all have been really amazed at how that simple, simple, simple, seemingly small fact, idea, realization plays into your ability to quit porn and work through what's going on.

Oh, all I'm doing is escaping emotion. I'm escaping stress. Oh, I want to buffer. I want to escape the stress I'm feeling, that's why I want to look at porn. Oh, I'm feeling lonely. I want to escape the loneliness, that's why I want to look at porn. And then we take some of the drama out of it. Like, oh, there's something wrong with me or I just want to look at porn because I'm a gross, bad person. It's like, oh no, it's because I want to escape emotion.

And everyone has buffers and everyone has different buffers. And for whatever reason you have subconsciously, because of things that you grew up with, conditioning you grew up with, just porn is your buffer. Porn is your buffer. And that doesn't mean that it's always going to be and that doesn't mean we're always going to use it. But it doesn't have to mean anything more than, oh, that's just the way that I escape negative emotion.

Okay, the second one is that the client knows how to process emotion. Once we understand the emotions that we're buffering from, what do we do with those emotions? That's what processing emotion is. It's this process of sitting with the emotion and learning how to sit with it and feel with it and deal with it and be with it instead of pushing it away, instead of trying to run away from it, right?

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So remember there are three options, and we'll talk about this again in the urges milestone. But remember there are three options. When you feel an emotion, you have three options. You can run away from it or use willpower, right? Try to willpower out of it. Nope, I'm not going to feel angry. I'm not going to feel angry. I'm not going to feel angry, right?

You can give into it. Oh, I'm just going to explode and yell and do what this anger is telling me to do. Or you can sit with it. Allow it, process it, which is allowing it to be with you without reacting to it. And so processing emotion is just step-by-step.

We teach our clients a number of different steps. It's like, find it in your body. Where are you feeling this? So if you're escaping stress, okay, find it in my body. Where am I feeling stress? Okay, my chest, my shoulders, my neck.

Then you ask yourself, what does this feel like? Describe it with adjectives. Is it strong? Is it weak? Is it tight? Is it loose? Is it soft? Is it hard? Is it pokey? Like just whatever adjectives that you can use to describe this emotion. You give it a color. You picture it in your mind.

So what does this look like? Does this look like slime or does it look like a big hard rock in my chest? Or is it more like a cloud? Or is it, you know, what is it? And you just get really comfortable picturing. It's kind of abstract, but it works really well.

Okay, that's number two is that you know how to process the emotion, you've practiced it and you understand how to sit with emotion. The third one is that the client understands grounding techniques and when to use them and how to use them and has specific grounding techniques that work for them.

Okay, so grounding techniques, these are so helpful for when your body is offline. Now, what I mean by that is our brain, when we're triggered, when something happens, when we go into a trauma response, fight, flight, freeze, or are just pretty triggered, we go offline. There's a great YouTube video called the hand model of the brain. It's by Dr. Dan Siegel. You can go

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look that up if you want to. But just imagine your hand in a fist with your thumb tucked in.

And what happens, it's called flipping your lid. When you flip your lid or when you go offline, it's like those four fingers come up. And what's running the show here is your amygdala or that part of your brain that works when it's flipped. And so that's why you might feel out of control. That's why you might feel like you have a choice or you just did things and you can't think yourself back into being in control.

And so when you're in that state, we want to use what we call grounding techniques. So these are offline tools when your brain is offline, right? When it's online, it can think, it can process, it can plan, it can make conscious decisions. When it's offline it's really difficult to do that. So instead of trying to think ourselves back online, we want to use grounding techniques and body techniques.

So that's going to be maybe exercise, potent and novel movement, like punches, punches, punches. It could be tapping. If any of you have done tapping, you can look that up on YouTube. You can Google tapping for anxiety, it's really great. There are things like maybe swimming, being in water, cold showers, cold plunges are amazing for this. Or even just a bowl of ice, just sticking your face in a bowl of ice is amazing for this.

It can be laying in the grass and orienting yourself and grounding yourself. There are so many different techniques for this. And maybe I'll do a whole podcast episode on this, but this is one that's really important to understand as you're processing through emotion, what is grounding? How do I do it? What specific ones work for me? Do I know when I'm offline and when my body needs body work, instead of just trying to think my way into something different?

So an example of this would be if your lid is flipped with anger, instead of trying to talk yourself down out of the anger, you want to remove yourself and do some grounding things. Whether that's punching a punching bag

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and just getting all that energy out. Whether that's taking a cold shower or cold plunge or screaming into a pillow.

One that I did a number of years ago that worked for me really well when I was having a bunch of big trauma responses coming up, I felt like I couldn't breathe, I was shaky, I was having panic attacks, all these things. It was a really crazy time in life for me. But what worked for me was going into the forest and blasting music and punching and dancing while running this trail.

I looked ridiculous, but that's why I ran in the forest, so that no one would see me. And it worked. It worked more than anything else to help me at least feel grounded enough to be able to go on with my day. Potent and novel movement is really, really important here. What that means is unique and strong movement.

So something that your body doesn't do every day that breaks up the normal stuff that you're doing, right? So running and punching. Punching in the air while I'm running, I don't usually do that. Or even just jabs. Whatever potent and novel, unique and different movement and strong movement is really good with helping break up some of those trauma responses or just like lid flipped moments.

The next bullet point here is that the client knows their top emotions that they buffer from. And so you can even just ask yourself right now, like what are the top three emotions that I feel most often in my life? And then what are the top three emotions that I seem to buffer with porn from?

That way when you're checking in with your body, you can be like, oh, there's that anxiety. There's that stress that I feel, remembering, oh yeah, when I'm trying to get rid of this and escape this, that's what I typically go to porn. And so I'm just going to remind my body that it's okay, that we can feel this and that we're going to work through this in a different way than porn.

It's also really important to understand that buffering does not solve what's going on. And so your brain is brilliant and it's trying to help you and there's a reason it's going to porn, it's because it wants to get rid of the emotion,

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whatever that is. Stress, we're just going to keep using stress for the example. Now, it's really important to understand, yes, it's doing its best to help you and it's misguided.

That brain is misguided by thinking that the porn is actually going to solve it. It doesn't. If you use porn to buffer from stress, you go and view porn to escape the stress, at the end not only are you still stressed because you didn't address why you're stressed in the first place, whether that be work, family, whatever that is, you're still stressed.

And then you probably have a bunch of other emotions on top of it because of the porn use, because you acted in a way that was outside of your value system and all the things that are going on there. So it creates a lot of more negative emotion typically. And so that's why we really want to learn, A, how to process emotion, but B, how to ground so that we can receive some relief from this emotion in a healthy, healthy way.

The next point is that the client understands the shame cycle. If you can understand the shame cycle and stop the shame cycle when it pops up, you're going to be leagues ahead. So remember the shame cycle, you view porn, you think there's something wrong with you or something along those lines, thinking some thoughts, having some type of conditioning come up that says there's something wrong with you, feel shame.

And then what do you do? Like how are you used to handling negative emotion? Buffering with porn. And shame is one of those lowest vibrating emotions. It sucks. It's one of the worst to feel. And so what are you going to do to escape the shame? Probably view more porn and then the cycle starts again. View porn, think and have beliefs that come up that make you feel shame, feel shame, view more porn to escape the shame and over and over and over and over again, right?

You absolutely view more porn when you're feeling shame. And those of you who have followed me and been with me for a while, you know that's my biggest thing that I've hit on since the beginning. And it makes sense,

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right? You're like, I already suck. I'm already the worst. I might as well just view porn again.

It's very easy to get into that shame cycle. So we want to recognize that and stop that, which brings us to the next point, which is that the client is aware of their specific stories that cause shame.

Now, shame doesn't just come out of nowhere. It comes from stories and it comes from beliefs and it comes from conditioning. So I have to be really careful here because, yes, the shame is created by the conditioning and the brain stuff that's going on with you. And that means that you can change that and you can totally heal and get rid of the shame stories, at least the really destructive ones, right?

We're always going to have a little bit of shame and that's healthy and good as part of being humans. It's Brené Brown who says only psychopaths don't feel shame. So the goal isn't to never, ever, ever feel shame, but it's to not get stuck in those shame spirals and those shame traps.

And so understanding those specific stories that cause shame, understanding the specific conditioning that maybe you received as a kid or as a young adult that caused shame. If you can understand that, you can start to rewrite it, which we're going to get into when we talk about the beliefs and identity milestone.

Okay. The next point is that the client understands the power of emotions in creating their desired actions and results, right? So we talked about understanding that porn is a buffer, understanding what to do with those emotions so that you aren't buffering from them, understanding shame, and now understanding how to use emotion to help you.

So the client understands how to use emotion to create actions and results. Not only can you learn how to process through a negative emotion, but you can learn how to generate any kind of emotion that you want to help you reach your goals. So our emotions are like fuel. If you think of us putting fuel in our bodies, emotions are a part of that fuel. And you need good fuel to continue to create and to create the life you want.

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So, for example, imagine running a marathon and the only fuel you have in your body is Coke Zero and popcorn. You're not going to be able to run a marathon off of Coke Zero and popcorn as your fuel. Now, if you're running a marathon and your fuel is carbs, fats, protein, electrolytes, all the good things, you're going to be able to run a lot further than if you're just using Coke Zero and popcorn, right?

So it's the same with emotion. Imagine trying to quit porn when the main emotions you're feeling are distress, shame, discouragement, overwhelm. You're not going to be able to get very far. So what we want to do is learn how to generate emotion that's going to give us the fuel that we need. And you can learn how to do that. So instead, our main emotions are going to be commitment, belief, assurance, certainty, and hope.

Imagine if you knew that you were going to quit porn, if you had assurance and certainty, how you would show up. If you had hope, how you would show up. If you have commitment and you're like, even when I don't want to do this, I'm doing it because I'm so committed, right? Imagine those emotions driving your actions. It's going to be so much more powerful. And this applies to anything, right?

Imagine studying for a test and the main emotions you're feeling are stressed and not good enough, versus studying for a test and the main emotions you're feeling are capable and smart. You're going to show up so differently. And so what you can do is you truly can learn how to create any emotion that you want to.

Emotions don't just happen out of nowhere, we create them. And so you can learn how to create those emotions to help you get the desired actions and results that you want.

And then lastly, the client intentionally chooses what emotions they want to operate from. It's like thinking on purpose. Now, we're not just thinking out of our conditioning and thinking out of what we've been thinking our whole lives and just thinking whatever comes up. We're thinking on purpose and

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we're thinking things on purpose to generate specific emotion. It's more calculated. It's more powerful and it's not just left up to default anymore.

Okay, I hope that this was helpful and just keeping it simple. We're keeping it simple. Those are the things you need to understand, the role of buffering, how to process emotion, the shame cycle, and then how to create emotion so that you can get what you want and so that you can fuel your body to have what it wants. So powerful.

All right, you guys, thank you for being here. Again, I'm just going to offer the invitation for anyone who's feeling called to it, anyone who's feeling that feeling in your body and you're just feeling called to come and join us and to work through all of this with some help, with me and my coaches, with someone kind of holding your hand and helping you do this, come and join us. We're happy to have you anytime, sarabrewer.com/workwithme.

We're changing the name of the website and kind of rebranding right now to be The Center for Overcoming Pornography, so you might see the rebrand when you put in sarabrewer.com, but if you put in sarabrewer.com it'll still redirect to The Center for Overcoming Pornography.

And then we also have one-on-one opportunities that are available. And so I'm not quite sure exactly when this episode is going to be released because I'm recording it beforehand, but keep your eye on your email. So if you're a part of the email list, you'll know when we're doing one-on-one coaching and when spots for that open up.

They open up about once a quarter. So that'll be like the end of February or March for this first quarter. But you can always come and snag one of those spots, if there are any spots open, and really dive in with this one-on-one with a coach for six to 12 months. That's such a powerful freaking experience. Life-changing, game-changing.

All right, you guys, keep it simple. Keep it simple. Have a great week. We'll talk to you later. 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.