

276. When It's Really Difficult: Learning to Handle Discomfort



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Sara Brewer

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You are listening to the *Overcome Pornography for Good* podcast episode 276, "For When It's Really Difficult."

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 the podcast episode this week. Thanks for being here. I'm glad that you're here. Today I'm going to give you a little pump-up talk. We're going to talk about what to do when it's really difficult, right? Because quitting pornography is a process and it's hard and it's difficult and it takes effort. And so I want to give you some tools for you to use when this happens, when it's really difficult.

So let's dive into this. First, let's talk a little bit about what is difficult when it comes to quitting porn. I talked about this in-depth a few episodes ago when—what was the title? It was something about what happens when you stop viewing porn or what to look out for when you stop viewing porn. And what happens is all of those emotions that you've been avoiding. When you quit viewing porn, you have all those negative emotions boil up to the top. So what's so difficult about quitting porn is the discomfort from feeling your emotions and the discomfort from learning how to process those urges, that desire for porn.

Okay, desire is just another emotion. There's a lot of emotions we have to feel when we're quitting porn. You have to feel the loneliness, the stress, the whatever it is that you're running away from. And you have to feel the discomfort of the desire for porn that you're not answering anymore, right? That desire, that urge to go look at porn is uncomfortable. That's why you go and look at it to get rid of that discomfort.

So this isn't the discomfort of willpowering and shaming yourself, but the discomfort of feeling your emotions instead of turning to porn to get rid of those emotions. Right? So what it looks like is you stop porn, and then you

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feel antsy. You feel super antsy. Or you feel bored, okay? You stop porn and then you feel all these urges and this desire that's unanswered. You stop porn, you feel lonely. You stop porn, you feel stress.

And a common response when this starts to happen is, "Oh my gosh, this is so hard. This is so difficult. I hate this. This is too hard. I can't do this." And then instead of just the discomfort of those emotions that you're feeling, the stress, loneliness, the urges, whatever, we add all of this suffering onto that discomfort. So there's the discomfort of feeling the emotions, and then there's the suffering that comes from that narrative, "This shouldn't be so hard. This shouldn't be so difficult. Why is this so difficult?"

All right? The discomfort from all the emotions coming up when you quit porn, that is necessary. We need that. We don't need all of the suffering that comes from, "Oh, this shouldn't be so hard."

Here's the thing about quitting porn, okay? It's going to be difficult and that's a good thing. It's going to be hard, and hallelujah, it's difficult. It's supposed to be that way. It's good. This is a good thing. And that's what I want to convince you of in this podcast episode, that it's difficult and yes. It's difficult and great. It's difficult and we're going to embrace that instead of fighting it.

Here's why it's such a great thing that it's difficult. It's because the better we are at discomfort, the more amazing our lives will be. Period. Really think about this for a minute. The more difficult your life is, the better you are at handling discomfort and dealing with discomfort, the more amazing your life will be. The more amazing things you will accomplish, the more inspiring you will be.

Okay, think about this. So, in order to become really smart, maybe get into med school or law school, or be the top in your class, you have to be very good at the discomfort of boredom so that you can study. You have to be really good at feeling bored instead of trying to get rid of boredom. When

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you try to get rid of boredom, that's when you stop studying and you go scroll Instagram, right? So in order to become very smart and to study and to put in the time studying that you need to, you need to be really good at feeling bored. Just letting yourself be bored and study anyways.

All right, in order to become influential, you need to get really good at the discomfort of being embarrassed. In order to become influential, you have to put yourself out there. You have to share your ideas. You have to share what you know. You have to risk being embarrassed. The better you are at being embarrassed, the more influential you will become because you won't be trying to escape the embarrassment. When you're trying to run away from embarrassed and you're not good at feeling embarrassed, you're not going to put yourself out there for fear that you're going to feel that feeling.

If you want to make a ton of money through a business, you have to be really good at the discomfort of failure. I love Brooke Castillo. She's awesome. If you like what I talk about, you'd really love her podcast. But she always talks about how, jeez, the way that we've been taught to succeed is so wrong, especially in our school system, where it's like, get good grades, get good grades, get A's, get A's. In the real world, the way that you succeed is you get a ton of failures because the only way to really learn is to fail. So if you want to make a ton of money, especially through a business, you have to get really good at the discomfort of failure so that failure is not something that you're avoiding anymore. It's just something that happens and it's not a big deal.

If you want to get a really good raise and make your way up in a company, you have to be willing to feel the discomfort of rejection. You have to be good at feeling that discomfort of rejection. Right, we're not running away from that anymore. In order for you to get that raise, you're going to have to go ask for it.

In order to find an amazing partner, I know a lot of you want to get married, you have to get really good at feeling the discomfort again of that fear of

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rejection. To be with someone you really want to be with, you have to be good at feeling rejection, and you have to be willing to feel that rejection.

And of course, in order to quit pornography, you have to be very good at feeling that discomfort of the urges and feeling the discomfort of the desires. And you have to get really good at feeling all the discomfort from those emotions that you keep wanting to run away from. All right, do you see? Do you see that everything that you want is on the other side of an uncomfortable emotion? Everything.

And so quitting porn is this amazing opportunity to practice this skill so that you can create an amazing life. I know a lot of you still see this porn habit as this terrible thing and there's something wrong with me for having this and I just wish this wasn't in my life anymore.

I want to invite you to switch that narrative in your head and instead see this as an amazing opportunity that will put you far ahead in life. Because through this and learning how to quit this, you are going to learn how to feel discomfort on a level that not a lot of people know how to feel it. And with that skill of feeling discomfort, being okay with it, you will create so much goodness in your life.

Instead of this porn habit being something that's holding you back, not anymore. We're not thinking of it like that anymore. This porn habit is something that's propelling you, propelling you into who you want to be and propelling you into this amazing life because of the skills it's teaching you, mainly this skill of feeling really uncomfortable, feeling a lot of discomfort.

I want you to think about all the successful people that you know. What makes people successful and great is that they are all really great at feeling discomfort.

So I'll give you a few examples. Tony Robbins. Tony Robbins, if you don't know who he is, he's a motivational speaker. He's very, very successful, makes billions of dollars, has helped so many people. It's a really inspiring guy. His whole thing is being uncomfortable and being uncomfortable on

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purpose and using that as a way to continue to do amazing things in his life.

So, for example, I heard him say recently that every single morning he gets into an ice bath. So he wakes up and the first thing he does is he gets into an ice bath. And the purpose of this is to train his mind like, "When I say go, we go," and to train his mind to be less concerned about discomfort and more concerned on following through with himself. It's just a mind exercise and the more he does this, the more able he is to feel uncomfortable and to take action anyway, the more amazing things he does in his life. Like he sees how important this is and he, you know, doesn't have any habits he's trying to quit, and so what he's done is he's continued to take this practice and instead jump into an ice bath every morning. Isn't that amazing? Slash kind of crazy. I love it.

Sara Blakely, she is also very, very successful. She is the founder of Spanx and has made a lot of money, helped a lot of people, and done a lot of good in the world, and is very influential. And her thing is getting really good at feeling embarrassed. So she knew that the only thing that would keep her from success would be her unwillingness to feel embarrassed.

And so what she did is she practiced feeling embarrassed. She knew that the better she was at feeling embarrassed, the more success she would have because she would put herself out there more, and she wouldn't be afraid.

Honestly, the only thing that is bad about feeling embarrassed is just how it feels in your body. So she just practiced feeling embarrassed, got really good at feeling it in her body, and her Instagram account is really fun to follow because she posts embarrassing, funny things on it all the time, and it doesn't affect her like it affects a lot of us because she's practiced it. That's what has made her so successful, is her ability to feel the discomfort of embarrassment.

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This is the same with David Goggins. I just learned about him. I don't know a ton about him, but I watched this amazing YouTube video on him. He's an ultramarathon runner. He talked in this video about sitting on the couch one day, eating a bunch of donuts, and watching the Marine Seals on TV, and he kept thinking and visualizing, "Man, like, what would it be like to be one of them? What if I could do that with my life?" And then he decided one day, he just decided, "Okay, I am done seeking purpose in comfort." You hear that? "I am done seeking purpose and joy and fulfillment in comfort." What he discovered is that everything meaningful, everything meaningful comes from discomfort.

Once he had that mindset shift where he wasn't just trying to feel comfortable, that's not what he was seeking for throughout his day was seeking for comfort, but instead he was seeking, "How can I get really good at being uncomfortable?" That's when he did amazing things. He like lost 150 pounds or something and became this crazy ultramarathon runner who inspires a lot of people and does amazing things with his body. But you see the similarities between all of these successful people is their willingness to feel discomfort and their practice of feeling discomfort, getting really good at that. And that is the opportunity that you have here.

So when you're like, "Hey, this is really difficult. Quitting porn is really uncomfortable and really difficult," good. Good. Hallelujah, it is. What an amazing opportunity for you. So, new goal. I want you to have a new goal. Instead of the goal to quit porn, I want you to completely get rid of that goal. We're not going to, the goal, the main focus here isn't going to be to quit porn. The main focus is to become a master at feeling uncomfortable. A master at feeling uncomfortable. And I promise quitting porn will be a byproduct of that.

Okay, so I want to give you two tips for becoming very good at feeling discomfort. Number one, let's adopt a "nothing has gone wrong" mindset. This isn't, "Oh, life is so hard. Oh, I just hate this. Oh, this is difficult. This is so difficult. I hate it." Right? This is joyful hard and joyful difficult and joyful growth.

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For example, think about going to the gym and think about pumping weights at the gym. Right? If you're pumping weights, you're not like, "This is the worst. I hate my life so much. Oh, this is so hard." "Ugh." No, you're pumping weights and you're like, "Feel the burn. This hurts so good." Right? "This is uncomfortable and it's good. Look at how strong this is making me," not pumping weights and "Oh, I hate this so much." Right, you will pump so much more from a place of, "Yes, this burns, and this hurts, and this is so good."

This David Goggins character, right? He talked about in this YouTube video I watched of him, he said, "I didn't feel victory when I did this amazing thing. I didn't feel victory with the result. I felt victory every single time I made it to the gym or I made it on my run." You see the difference here? It's not like we're waiting to feel good until we have the result. It's like we're feeling good and we're feeling victory and we're feeling this sense of pride and accomplishment every single time we show up and we feel that discomfort.

It can look like for you when you quit porn and it's really difficult and you're feeling all of the emotions come up. "Look at me. I'm feeling so lonely. This is so good. This is hard. There's a lot of stuff coming up. I didn't know all of this was there, but I'm going to feel this. Nothing's gone wrong." Right, the same mindset you would have if you were pumping weights at the gym. This hurts, but this is so good. That's tip number one: this "nothing has gone wrong" mindset.

Tip number two is to get really good at processing your emotions. All right, you guys, this is a game-changer. This is a new way of handling discomfort, so it's not just, you know, resist, resist, resist, resist. I'm feeling all this discomfort and I don't know what to do with it. This is a new way of handling discomfort that makes it very doable and very practical. This is something that we practice in my program all the time. I had a client who messaged me and he said, "This is all changing my life, but especially this skill of learning how to process my emotions. Especially this skill of learning how to process my emotions has been life-changing."

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So what this means and what this looks like, this is similar to how I've talked about processing your urges, right? We're not pushing our urges away. We're not willpowering through them. We're not trying to make them go away. Instead, we're allowing them into our body. We're noticing them and we're feeling them and we're letting them be there. And when we do that, we realize that they're really not that big of a deal.

So, what this looks like, four-ish years ago, I was really trying to follow through with my calendar, and I had all these things I wanted to do. Maybe you can relate with this. Like you have all of these dreams and ideals of what you want to do with your life and who you want to become. Right? The problem isn't that you're not thinking big enough; the problem is that you don't know how to follow through with all of those dreams and all of those goals.

That was me. I wanted to do all of these things, but it's like every time I looked at my schedule, I just wouldn't follow through with it. I couldn't get myself to actually do the things I wanted to be doing.

And then I realized and I had this big light bulb moment where it was like, "Oh my gosh, the only thing that's keeping me from living my dream life and doing all these things that I want to do is that I'm not willing to feel this emotion, this emotion of resistance." So on my calendar, I would have "workout." As soon as that came, this resistance would bubble up, and I would feel, you know that tightness, it just feels kind of tight and you're like, "Nope, not going to. Don't want to." Right? That was what was preventing me from following through with my calendar.

And instead of trying to make that go away, I just learned how to feel it. So I would notice that resistance bubble up, don't want to work out, be like, "Okay." Breathe into this. Stop, breathe into this. Where is it? It feels tight. I'm just going to let it be there. That's fine. I can feel this resistance. Instead of just like, "Oh, there's that resistance. I don't know what to do. Let's go scroll Instagram and turn on Netflix." Okay?

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So what it looks like, it looks like dropping into your body, finding it, noticing it, and breathing into it. Just feeling it and letting it be there. Then you notice, "Oh, hey, this resistance isn't that big of a deal. I can feel this and I can go work out anyways. I can work out with this feeling that's like, I don't want to." But that feeling isn't a big deal.

I can't tell you how life-changing this was, that epiphany of, "Okay, instead of getting rid of all the negative emotion, I'm just going to feel this emotion and do it anyways." And it's a lot easier. Listen, you guys, it's a lot easier to feel that emotion, to let it be there, to process it, than it is to resist it and push it away and then have the consequences of not following through with yourself.

All right, you guys, remember, discomfort is good. If it's difficult, this is a good thing. The goal here is not to quit porn, but the goal is to get really good at feeling discomfort. If you can feel discomfort, you can sit with that discomfort for as long as you need to and not look at the pornography. All right, the better we are at discomfort, the more amazing our lives will be. The easiest way to practice discomfort is to change our mindset so that we think that nothing has gone wrong when we accept this discomfort. And number two, to learn to process and sit with your emotions.

All right, you guys, I'll talk to you next 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." Lastly, we talk about how to make a life without porn easily sustainable and permanent. If you're trying to quit porn, this class is a game changer.

You can go and sign up at SaraBrewer.com/masterclass, and it is totally free.