

281. What I Got Wrong About Quitting Porn (Part 1 of 3)



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Sara Brewer

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You are listening to the *Overcome Pornography for Good* podcast "What I Got Wrong About Quitting Porn, Part 1 of 3."

Welcome to the *Overcome Pornography For Good* podcast. I'm your host, Sara Brewer.

Hey, everyone. Welcome, welcome back. We have a brand new episode for you today. I'm so excited. For the past little while, we've been replaying some of our best episodes, and it's great and fun, but it's been a minute since I've recorded a brand new episode. And it's also been a minute since I've been this excited about recording a new episode and about talking to you all again.

I'll share a little bit of, man, what's been going on for me the last year or so. But to be honest, I kind of lost my fire there for a little bit. And so, we were just letting the things that worked work. And I've got this incredible team. I've got my incredible coaches. We've got our program. We've been working with all of y'all in there and it's been fun. But personally, I lost my fire where I used to be really excited and have so many things I wanted to say and just, right, like I had a million podcast episode ideas. And something happened where it like really fizzled.

And even more than like fizzling, I think the reason for it fizzling is things just started to feel a little bit off for me. Like I have been doing all of this growing and learning and like the past few years have been really intense for me in regards to the things that I'm learning and growing into. And I had to do all of this internally, but it was like the podcast and the business, it wasn't quite growing alongside with me. And it couldn't because I had to do all of this internally before I bring the business up with me.

And so it's okay, nothing's gone wrong, but it's taken a while to get to the point where I feel like I now can integrate all of this growing that I've been doing and bring it into the business where now I feel just, I haven't even gotten into what I want to talk about or told you all the cool exciting things yet, but it's finally gotten to this place where I'm just, oh my gosh, I feel

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better than I ever have here about what we're doing. I know the changes that we're making and the things I'm going to be talking to you about in this series are going to just make your lives so much better, make the process so much more effective, so much more freedom, so much more hope. Man, I'm just really pumped about it.

Along the way, I have made some mistakes. And one of the mistakes, and this isn't the one that I was actually going to talk about in the episode, but we're going to talk about it. One of the mistakes that I made, especially, business mistakes, is working with a team that wasn't really aligned on my vision. And so I really want to talk about this because I know some of you have been maybe a little bit affected by it.

But a year ago, I was sitting with, I was like, how do I continue to help all these people who are reaching out to us? I don't have time or energy to be taking calls or to be doing a lot of webinars. And so I partnered with someone who specializes in taking calls for people who were interested in the program. That was their whole thing. They're like, we'll get them on the calendar, we'll take the calls for them, and then we'll help them make the decision if they want to come into the program or not.

Now, it ended up being way too aggressive. The process and their framework and how they think of things, it didn't align with how I've been doing business, and it ended up being much too aggressive and just like, oh, like icky. Like I, just learning as we go, and that was kind of a bummer mistake is some of you experiencing a little bit of like aggressive, icky sales calls. So we changed directions at the end of last year. We did that for a couple of months, three or four months, before I realized how off it was to how we really wanted to approach things.

What my vibe is, what my vibe was, at the beginning, what it always has been is I just, I want everything to be built off of trust. And me trying to communicate that with this team, it got lost in translation. But we're back. I want it to be all built on trust, not pressure, but just total, like if you want to work with us, here's what we have. If you're ready to get professional

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support and you want it to be with us, here. I trust my clients to make the best decision for them. And I want to build trust and I want to give even if you decide you don't want to come and work with us and be a paying client, that's okay.

My philosophy is always give people 10 times more than what they invest, and that even includes your free time. So give you 10 times more than what you're investing even in your free time. And so we're back to that.

So I've made some bad business decisions, but I've also made some really good business decisions, especially the last six months with this team that I now have that is just my dream team, truly. About a year ago, a year and a half ago, that was the one thing that I was like, focused on, is like, I want to feel so supported in this. It's like the business had, there's so many of you. We have like over two million downloads and we get thousands and thousands of leads a month and it's just overwhelming. I am like, I don't even know, like everything's getting lost. And so it was my thing. I'm like, I want to create a team that just everyone feels so supportive.

And I like journaled on it and I thought I did all the work that I teach you guys in the program on that. Like, how am I going to create this? The belief stuff. And I didn't get it right the first time, but now I have it right. And I realized that the other day, because I was like flipping through old journals, and I saw how much I was journaling on, like, what is this dream team that I want to create? And I realized, oh my gosh, I have it. I have it now. That's awesome.

So anyways, business shifts, new team, and then I was still feeling a little bit unsettled, even with this new team. It was still kind of like, you know what? Like something in my body, it's just like, oh, like it just, whenever I see my social media, I cringe. You know, and other people seeing it wouldn't, wouldn't cringe, but it was like me. I just was trying to figure out why is this so hard for me to show up for when it used to be so easy.

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And then about three weeks ago, three or four weeks ago, I was having kind of a heartfelt conversation with Lauren, who's one of my team members about it, and it all just clicked and it all, it's like everything, there's a term people call it like a download, like I got a download. It was just like everything came in and I knew what needed to change and I knew how I wanted to talk about this and what I wanted to do to be able to help you all even better and feel really, really good about what we're doing.

And let me just clarify, too, like everything has been working really lovely in the program. And so the vibe for the last year was like, like let, let's let what's working work really well, and it does. And so my programs have been the program been doing awesome. The program works great. Clients getting really incredible results.

But it was just like a me thing. It was like, there's something more that I want to offer, but I don't know how to offer it, or I don't really know exactly what that is. And then it all just came in. And so that's the place that I'm approaching you all in the podcast today, is I'm so excited to introduce to you some of these new frameworks and teachings that are really going to take things to the next level for you if you've been feeling stuck.

If you have been feeling like you're stuck, still stuck in that like not viewing porn and then giving in and then not viewing porn and then giving in. Or maybe you are feeling a lot better and feeling a lot more in control, but it's still burdening you. And it's like the vibe is now, I know I'm not going to be perfect, but I'll always strive for perfection, and I just like I have to settle with this knowing that, it's not great. That maybe I can offer myself, like maybe you've been listening to the podcast for a while, and maybe you're like, oh, maybe I can offer myself some more compassion, but I'm still feeling stuck.

And if you're brand new, welcome. Thanks for listening to my whole spiel, even if you don't even have been with me. Like, so happy to have you if you're brand new and you are stuck in that porn cycle of working hard to quit or trying to quit, giving it effort, and then always going back to it over

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and over and over again. It's like streaks. You can have streaks and then you relapse and then you have shame. And then you gather up your strength again to try again eventually, and then streaks and then relapse and then shame. There's a way out of it. A lot of people are told this is something they just have to struggle with forever and it's not. And so these new frameworks, I'm just thrilled to bring them to you. So, let's dive into it.

So what I got wrong about quitting porn. My first couple episodes of the podcast, you will hear me talking about Pavlov's dogs. And I think I even used the phrase or the words in there, at least at the beginning, like six years ago, at the very beginning, I would use the words, never ever want it again. Like, you can get to the point where you don't even want porn again. That was wrong. And to be fair, I haven't talked about it in that way for a while. But I also haven't called it out as clearly as I am now. I haven't been as bold about it as I should have been.

So most people try to quit viewing porn like quitting smoking. If we're going to quit smoking, let's go 30 days without smoking, and once we go 30 days, 60 days, 90 days, eventually the urges for smoking go away. It's the same with maybe alcohol or drugs, right? If I can go 60 days without weed, then I won't want weed anymore. The urges will eventually dissipate.

This is not how it works with porn. Why? Because sex is a biological urge. So what's different between smoking and porn is that, right, smoking, you're not born with an urge to smoke or a desire to smoke. When you turn 12 or whenever puberty hits, your sexuality comes online and sex and sexual urges are a biological urge. They will never go away. They are here to stay.

And so what we need to do instead of treating this like smoking, like quitting smoking, we have to treat this like binge eating or other eating disorder type behavior. Right, if you're having problematic experiences with food, like binge eating or that are that is feeling distressing to you or problematic for you, what you don't do, you don't tell someone who's struggling with binge eating, we have to get rid of your urges to eat or we have to overcome your urges to eat. What we do instead is we look deeper,

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we understand why you're doing it, what it's doing for you, and you heal your relationship with yourself and with food and then the binge eating stops.

Now, what I'm not saying, let me clarify this. What I'm not saying, I'm not saying that you need porn because you don't. But what I am saying is that we have to learn to work with our sexuality, with our sexual urges, because they're a biological urge and they're never going away, instead of working against it or just trying to overcome it.

I can go on a whole like rant about the binge eating thing because what I have seen, and I've made this connection a couple of times on social media, but what I have really seen and this, like when this clicked for me, it just like made so much sense and was also so fascinating. But I saw this pretty quickly after working with a lot of clients is that a lot of people who are trying to quit porn, especially if you have like very strong views and opinions about masturbation.

It's like their relationship with pornography really mirrored that of disordered eating or binge eating. Right, with the disordered eating, oh, there's something wrong with me for wanting that. That's gross, that's bad, I'm dirty, ew, I shouldn't eat. I shouldn't eat that. Resist, resist. Then that leads me to, and then bingeing or binge eating, typically alone, don't want anyone to see you, and then falling into the shame and doing it over and over again, getting stuck in this loop. And it's very, very similar with sex and sexuality that I've seen.

And so again, let me clarify what I'm not, I'm not saying that you need porn, but I'm saying that we have to change how we are addressing this. We cannot address this like quitting smoking. Otherwise, you're going to be stuck in that loop forever. And that's what, when you hear of people who are like, yes, this is something I've struggled with for my whole life, and they're still in this pattern, it's because they are still trying to work to fight their sexuality or overcome it instead of learning how to work with it.

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When you learn how to work with it, it's like the same thing with food. Right, your food becomes nourishing; it becomes something beautiful in your life. It becomes something that helps you get energy to create all the things that you want to create. It's not this thing that's creating harm in your life. It's adding to your life. And it's the same thing. That's what I'm hoping to convince you of or sell you on in this episode, is that it's the same thing with our sexuality and with our relationship with our sexuality.

So your sexuality is not inherently bad. It is inherently good. Your sexuality, yours, is inherently good. It is passionate. It is intimate. It creates life. It has the capacity to create safety, to create belonging, to create connections in ways that other things can't. It's like a vibrant energy, too. It's just like pure life vibrancy. It has this great capacity for good. In fact, it is one of the most beautiful and powerful pieces of ourselves.

And so when it comes online, when we never are given the chance or taught how to have a relationship with it and when we're taught instead to push away sexual thoughts and don't give into them, that sexual urges are something to overcome, to be a warrior against sexual feelings, to be on alert and afraid of sexuality so it doesn't overcome you or that your sexuality is dangerous and so we have to control it to keep other people safe. Anything that teaches we have to control this instead of work with this and teaches you shame and that it's bad instead of teaching you the goodness of it, it will backfire and that those teachings are actually creating the problematic behavior with sexuality. Those teachings are claiming to protect you and to fix it, but it actually creates it.

Like, think about a pet dog that is just this sweet, beautiful little puppy, but then you cage it, you ignore it, you shame it, you don't give it food. What happens to it? It becomes ravenous, it becomes dangerous, and that's when the problems happen is when we shame it and exile it.

So I want you to think of your sexuality like a person that you're in a relationship with. So again, kind of back to this binge eating idea, it's a part of you that's never going away. Like hunger is never going away. Your

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sexuality is never going away. So you're in a relationship with it. It exists. It's like having a relationship with a family member that they're always going to be your family except for this, your sexuality, you can't cut it off. You can cut off family, but your sexuality, you can't. And not only that, but they're always living with you. It's always in your body, no matter what.

And so when you tell someone that you're in a relationship with that they are bad, that they need to be controlled, suppressed, ignored, pushed away, that there's something that you will always have to fight with, that you're caging them, that you're exiling, like how is someone going to respond when they're being treated that way? They will always fight back. And if you cage, shackle, neglect someone, they're going to become ravenous, angry, tired, depressed, deprived, and they're going to be doing anything that they can to get your attention. That's what creates problematic behavior with sexuality.

It's like a core villain story. You know, someone born with a lot of power but is shamed and shackled and pushed away. Right, they become the villain because of how they were treated. And so this is why nothing has worked and nothing will work when it comes to quitting porn. All these things that you've tried.

This is why counting days doesn't work, why willpower, using willpower, why the addiction based frameworks don't work, why just trying to pray it away doesn't work or distracting yourself, trying to ignore it by learning to whittle wood, I don't know, like distracting yourself with a hobby or the accountability groups or the no fap or maybe even therapy or coaching that's focused on fixing this bad thing instead of learning how to be in relationship with it.

And even the hypersexuality that we've all experienced or maybe seen with others like the locker room talk, where there's a high obsession or like a disregard for other people, and it's just like people are just objects. That is a result of not learning how to be in relationship with this piece of you. Someone's sexuality who is, you know, really hypersexual, or again, they're

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being disrespectful. They're not in a powerful, intimate relationship with this piece of themselves. They're operating from shame just as much as someone who is maybe doing it more in secret or like having the issues with it in private.

But when we can stop fighting it and instead learn how to work with it, everything changes. Then your sexuality becomes your partner and your friend and what you might even realize, like you might even feel grief for how you have exiled and pushed this piece of you away because of fear and because of shame, because you haven't been taught, you had no idea on how to even have a relationship with it. But what if, just what if your sexuality is one of the most beautiful relationships that you can have in this lifetime? And what if, just what if, it could also be the source of some of the greatest good that you could create in your life? Your sexuality is inherently good, and it's the things that taught us that it was bad that has created the problematic behavior around it.

Now I know a lot of you are thinking, but wait, like, but sexuality actually hurts people. What do you mean? Like it is bad. It hurts people. I've seen it hurt people. And what I would say to you is, oh my gosh, like I hear you. Yes. The statistics are really staggering for sexual abuse. It's like one in four girls and one in six boys. I know people and this is actually connected to a lot of the personal work that I've done over the years is around this. And I know that you know people who have been affected by it. You look at it and you see how violence with sexuality is so rampant, and it like makes you sick because you see it everywhere. I mean, even just the Epstein files, I don't even like saying that on the podcast because I don't even want to bring that energy here.

But yeah, like the violence and the statistics, it's staggering and it's also why I'm so passionate about this, because what's the alternative to working with your sexuality? I really want you to think about this. If sexuality is something that is always there, what's the alternative to learning how to work with it? It's pushing it away.

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I'm going to bring this to our beach ball example that you might have heard me talk about before, but what happens when you hold a beach ball underwater? When you hold a beach ball underwater, it pops up and it pops up and who knows where it's going if it's hitting someone in the face over here or, you know, if it's going on the other side of the pool. You know, the pushing it down is what creates the explosion and you don't have control once it's out there.

But when you just hold the beach ball calmly and you learn how to just be with it, you're not like, oh, this beach ball, I need to make it go away, hold it down, hold it under the water, make it go away. If you're just holding it there, that's when you have control over it. That's when you're able to decide if I want to pass it over here, that's when you're deciding if I want to hold it and just keep it by myself.

So it's the same thing with sex and sexual urges. When we hold and push and I know you've experienced this, it's like, no, no, no, I'm not going to view, I'm not going to do it. And then it's just like all of a sudden you're viewing porn, you're like, how did that happen? It's the same thing with any emotions, any pieces of us that we're trying to suppress and push down, that's when it backfires. The men who hurt people aren't men with healthy sexuality, with healthy relationships with their sexuality. They're men whose sexuality was caged, shamed, distorted, and weaponized.

And so yes, sexual violence is real and rampant. And that's why I'm so passionate about teaching it this way, because the only option that we have is to learn how to work with it and learn how to be in relationship with it. The alternative, it's like we have two options. It's learn how to work with it and be with it or the alternative is suppress it, which will lead to the cage shamed, distorted, weaponized experiences with it that creates harm in the world.

There's so much more to say and in the third episode of this series, we're going to dive even more into that, like if you feel like, yeah, but what if my

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sexuality is just bad? What do you mean? How do I work with this? So much more good stuff around this.

But the key thing from this episode is that we have to befriend our sexuality. We have to learn how to work with it. And anything that has taught you otherwise or any strategies that you're trying that are working against it instead of working with it are backfiring and you're always going to be stuck in that loop until we get out of that and instead learn how to befriend it and work with it.

You know, it's kind of goes back to that tiger story that I've shared in the podcast before that I'll share again here really quick. I want you to imagine that you're growing up in a village, and in this village, you're told you're going to get a tiger at 12 years old, but this tiger is scary, and the neighbor's tiger killed his family, and you got to be really careful that you control your tiger. And sorry, there's nothing we can do about it. It's just here to stay. And you're like, oh no, okay.

And then you turn 12, and your tiger comes, and you're scared, you're terrified. You're ashamed of it. You're like, oh, no, this is bad, this is gross. And so you put it in a cage like everyone else, and this tiger becomes hungry and angry and upset and it starts tearing down the cage. And so you have to go and rebuild the cage every single day. And you're like waking up in cold sweats in the middle of the night, hoping your tiger didn't get out and eat someone in the village and you're hoping that everything's going to be okay. It's exhausting day after day, rebuilding this fence and making sure that it's okay.

And then a man comes into your village and you see that he's just has his pet tiger hanging out with him. It's just like walking alongside him. And they're playing together, and he's laying on the tiger while he naps, and it's just like his buddy, and you're you're surprised. You say, oh my gosh, how did you do this? How is your tiger not dangerous? And he said, well, I just had to become its friend. And I just had to learn how to work with it. And I had to train it. It's my buddy now. And it was hard at first, but we built trust

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and now we're companions. And so you realize that you can do that yourself as well and you go and you, at first it's scary, at first it's hard, at first there's not trust there. You get bit a little bit, but eventually you do train this tiger to become your friend. It's this idea here.

What I don't love about that analogy is, first off, your sexuality is not inherently dangerous like a tiger is. A tiger could wake up and eat you, but your sexuality is not inherently dangerous. And the second thing that I don't love about that example is it talks about your sexuality is something separate from you or like the tiger is something separate from you. And your sexuality isn't. It's also a piece of you. And it has much deeper capacity to not just be a tame pet, it can actually become a really powerful and beautiful part of you that helps you create a lot of goodness in this world and in this life.

So we're going to talk about what that looks like in following episodes. Next episode, we're going to talk about the one key thing that we have to do in order to befriend your sexuality.

All right, you guys, also, I am launching a new program around this whole idea. It's called Overcome Pornography for Good, Befriend Your Sexuality. That starts in about a month. It's a whole live program, so I'm going to be working with you all live for 12 weeks. But leading up to that, I have a couple of classes where I'm going to talk about the process in depth.

So really, really, really what I'd love for you to do if you're hearing this and you're like, oh, I want to learn more, I would love for you to come to that free class. I have two of them coming up this month. This is going to be a live class. I'll be there to answer any questions that you have. So even if you're like listening to this episode and you're like, I have questions, I want to know more, come and meet me.

Again, I have not been this fired up or excited about something in years. It's so good, and it's so game-changing, and what I love about it, right, is we're taking it a step further. It's not just, here's how to manage these urges and

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how to like live with these urges and process them. It's like, how do I befriend this piece of me? How do I almost reclaim this piece of me?

For a lot of us, these parts were exiled before we even had a choice because of the things that we were taught about sexuality growing up or the examples given to us. It's like we didn't even have a choice and so there's this whole piece of us that's just been exiled. What if we befriended it, brought it back, returned it to love, and, oh my gosh, what a beautiful life we could create with that, and how free can we be with that?

So if you have questions about that, just come to this live class, learn the whole process. You can sign up at centerforovercoming.com/liveclass. No spaces or dashes, centerforovercoming.com/liveclass.

And then tune in for next week, where we're going to talk about that number one thing that has to be done in order to really befriend your sexuality.

All right, you guys, it's time to stop treating this like quitting smoking and it's time to start treating this like binge eating. Your sexuality, your sexual urges, they're never going to go away.

So if you still have questions, that's great. Make sure to keep tuning in because we're going to we have a lot more to cover in the next two episodes. I hope this resonated or, you know, at least piqued your curiosity.

And then yeah, come to the live class. Can't wait to see you there. Can't wait to talk to you there. That's one of my favorite things to do is to show up and talk to you all there and we're going to cover like the whole process in depth. If you can't come live, you can listen to the replay, but that's where I'd love to connect with you next. All right, you guys, have a great rest of your day and we'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

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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.