

## 282. The Number One Thing Required to Befriend Your Sexuality (Part 2 of 3)



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Sara Brewer**

## 282. The Number One Thing Required to Befriend Your Sexuality (Part 2 of 3)

You are listening to the *Overcome Pornography for Good* podcast, "The Number One Thing Required to Befriend Your Sexuality, Part 2 of 3."

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

Hey everyone, welcome to today's episode. I'm just thrilled to be here with you with another brand new episode. We're doing a three-part series on befriending your sexuality. Last episode, we talked about some pretty important concepts. We talked about, you know, why quitting porn doesn't work for most people is because they're trying to treat it like quitting smoking. Where if you're quitting smoking, you try to go 30 days, 60 days without smoking and then the urges will go away and eventually you won't want to smoke, but it's not the same thing with porn because sex is a biological urge.

It's a part of being a human. You're born with it and then it comes online during puberty and it's here to stay. And so it's not going to go away like smoking or like alcohol. We can't treat it the same. Instead, we need to treat it like binge eating or disordered eating. So if someone's struggling with binge eating, we don't tell them, "Hey, we got to get rid of your hunger urges. We got to get rid of your desire to eat." We need to heal their relationship with food, heal their relationship with themselves, look at what it's doing for them, what they're getting out of it, all of this, and then the binge eating goes away.

And we also talked about how, no, I'm not saying that you need porn like you need food, but what I am saying is that you need to learn to work with your sexuality instead of against it. And that your sexuality is inherently good. What if, just what if your sexuality, your sexual self is inherently good? And it's the conditioning that we have around it, the shame and fear conditioning that distorts it and makes it problematic.

Most of us were never even like given the option to have a good relationship with our sexuality. So, of course, thinking about all the things

## 282. The Number One Thing Required to Befriend Your Sexuality (Part 2 of 3)

we learned about it, or, you know, even if you didn't learn really harsh shame conditioning around sexuality like I did and I know like a lot of you did, but maybe it was just like side-eyed. It just wasn't ever talked about and it was just something that existed. You were still never shown how to actually have a relationship with it. So, of course, it's been a bad experience.

We talked about what does your relationship with your sexuality look like if it was a relationship with a real person. And when we look at it from that lens, it makes sense why we've had such a hard time with it. But if we continue to work against it, to fight against it, to ignore it, to try to not have a relationship with it, we're going to keep fighting with it for the rest of our lives.

And so the very voices that claim to help you be in control of it, to overcome it, are actually creating the problem. So for freedom, we have to learn to work with it, not against it. This is why nothing has worked and nothing will work until you learn to work with it instead of against it.

If you haven't listened to that episode, I highly recommend you go back and you dive in. But today we're going to talk about the number one thing you have to do in order to befriend it. How do we befriend it? What do we have to do to work with it? And I know that there might be still some, you know, like, "Oh, but wait, what do you mean? What if my sexuality isn't good? Like, you don't know me. I don't want to open Pandora's box. Isn't sexuality bad?" We talked about that a little bit in the last one. Or isn't it dangerous and doesn't it hurt people? Right? We talked about that in the last episode. We're going to talk about it a little bit more today, and then we're going to also dive into that in the third episode. So I'm hoping that all of these concepts just kind of snowball together to create this really beautiful understanding of what's possible and what you need to do next.

So, what's the number one thing we have to do in order to befriend our sexuality, in order to learn to work with it instead of against it, is we have to change our internal operating system. What do I mean by that? I want you

## 282. The Number One Thing Required to Befriend Your Sexuality (Part 2 of 3)

to think of your phone, of your iPhone or whatever phone you have, Samsung, whatever. It has an internal operating system. Your phone's operating system is what drives everything and makes all the apps work and makes everything go. And so when you need a phone update, right, when your phone stops working and if things are slow, what people will typically tell you is, "Hey, go and look and see if there's an update that you need to download."

Once you update this operating system, then everything starts working correctly. But if you're trying to download and use apps on an outdated operating system that isn't working, it doesn't matter what apps you download, nothing's going to work.

So right now, you are operating from a shame-based operating system. And so it's kind of like a filter. It's like everything that you're experiencing and going through is being filtered through a shame-based operating system, and that is outputting negative results, specifically when it comes to pornography and the results you're getting around in your life around pornography and in a lot of other ways.

But really quickly before you go thinking, "Oh, there she goes again, talking about shame," because those of you who have listened to the podcast forever, you know this has always been my thing is to talk about how shame is making everything worse. But before you go thinking, oh, there she goes talking about shame, I'm not talking about shame as an emotion here. Yes, shame is an emotion. Yes, right, like when we feel shame, it causes us to hide and avoid, which causes us to use more pornography typically or to disconnect from other people, disconnect from ourselves, disconnect from our spiritual practices.

And so, no, I'm not just talking about shame as an emotion. I'm talking about shame as an internal operating system. And what is it? It's this internal operating system where everything is running off of this base programming that there is something wrong with me and there's something wrong with my sexuality. Right? Shame is, there is something wrong with

## 282. The Number One Thing Required to Befriend Your Sexuality (Part 2 of 3)

me. Guilt is, I did something wrong. I'm going to talk about that more here in just a minute.

So what happened is growing up, we got all of these messages around sex and porn and ourselves and our worthiness and what it means to be a worthy person. And we got all of this shame and fear messaging, like this part is bad, this part will ruin your life. This part is unclean. It's dirty, it's unworthy. It's shameful. And all of these external messages, they become internal messages. I want you, it's almost like a bad virus.

Right? So this virus externally, bad, unworthy, shameful, something wrong with me, something wrong with me becomes internal, becomes an internal operating system. So I am sexual, therefore I am bad. Parts of me are bad. There is something inherently wrong with me and my sexuality. And then you start to see everything through that lens, right? Like where can I find more evidence that I'm not living up to my potential? Where can I find more evidence that I'm not doing things right?

And this shame-based operating system, it's kind of like, you know, a fish swimming in water. Does a fish know that he's swimming in water? I don't know. And the only reason that you know or that we're starting to get some awareness around it is because it's starting to poison you because the water is starting to make you sick, because you're seeing now after years and years and years and years and years of working through this that, oh, it's actually not working. I actually don't feel any better. It might not be getting better. And truly, this shame-based operating system, it does, it starts to poison you from the inside out because it's affected so much of your life.

How I also want to talk about this is I want to really make so clear that it's not your fault. I haven't made this that clear in the past, as we've talked about shame. It's almost been like, "Oh, shame is this emotion that you're feeling and it's making everything worse, and so let's get rid of shame," which is true, but it's missing the piece of like, you being stuck in shame is

## 282. The Number One Thing Required to Befriend Your Sexuality (Part 2 of 3)

not your fault. You having a shame-based operating system is not your fault. It's a result of the environments that we grew up in.

Again, a fish swimming in poisoned water, is it the fish's water that it's being poisoned? No. It's the environment that it grew up in. It's the environment that it's swimming in. Also, I love the example of like termite-rotted wood. Is it a tree's fault if it gets infected with termite-rotted wood? No, it's not. It's a result of the environment that it's in. And this is global too.

I'm sure there are people who have like a less strong shame-based internal operating system. Maybe there's even groups of people who really don't have one, but I think globally, it's like one of the things that as a human race we're healing from collectively is shame-based operating systems. It's like somewhere along the line of our evolution, shame started to really take hold of a lot of people, and we've been spreading it, spreading it, spreading it. And now we're all working on healing it together.

Because it is. It is poison. And so I want you to think of it too. It's like this shame-based operating system, it is always keeping you striving for worthiness, but never actually getting it. It's like a horse with a carrot. Have you seen, you know what I mean? Like the little stick with the carrot out in front of the horse, and the horse is just going and going and going and going and trying to get the carrot and trying to get the carrot and trying to get the carrot, but it never actually gets it.

And so that's also what's so sneaky about these shame-based operating systems is they show you the carrot. They say, "Hey, you want to be good enough? Hey, you want to be a really good person? Hey, you want to be worthy? Hey, you want to be present? Hey, you want to be worthy for the life that you really want to live with your spouse and your kids, and like be a good leader and be all of these things. Here it is. Keep striving and you'll get there," but you never get there.

And it's exhausting. And this shame-based operating system, it's why you yell at your spouse after a stressful day, because it wasn't just stress. It was

## 282. The Number One Thing Required to Befriend Your Sexuality (Part 2 of 3)

like you feeling like you're never going to catch up or be enough. I mean, I've done that. Absolutely. It's like I'm stressed and I act out towards my spouse when I'm stressed, but really the stress is just like an internal feeling of like not enoughness, not enoughness.

This is also why you have goals and aspirations, but you can't seem to reach them because the underlying energy is I have to do this to prove myself, which leads to sprints and then depression and then sprints and then depression and not a lot of consistency or right, always striving to do the next thing like the next big race or the next big accomplishment to feel enough. And you get there and you have a little bit of a high and then a month later, you're back to where you were and then you need something else to work towards to feel good enough.

It's also why you aren't present because you're numbing that constant hum of, "I'm not enough. I'm not enough." So I know a lot of you when you come into the program, there's a couple of things that most of you say, it's like, "I want to quit this, and I want to overcome this so I can be worthy, and I want to quit this and overcome this so I can be present with the people that I love." And it's that shame-based operating system that is going to keep us from being present and constantly numbing to that. It's again, if it's a shame-based operating system, it's like a it's a program that's running of like never enough.

For some of us, it's more subtle than others. And some of us have done a lot of work on this and feel amazing. And maybe the next step is to heal the shame-based operating system around sex and sexuality so that we can learn how to partner with it and befriend it instead of always trying to be better than it or overcome it.

This shame-based operating system is why porn is still a problem, why you aren't sure if you'll ever be good enough. And if you have to just settle for a life of striving instead of a life of peace. Maybe you're someone who constantly doubts yourself and your contribution to the world, like you're getting older and you're wondering, "Did I do enough with my life? Or am I

## 282. The Number One Thing Required to Befriend Your Sexuality (Part 2 of 3)

good enough? Or am I, is my contribution big enough?" And so then you try to numb that and push that away because you're not sure what to do with it. What do you do with these big questions?

And truly, it's not just about feelings either, because when you have a shame-based operating system, you show up in the world differently. This piece is also why I'm so passionate about it because, I mean, yeah, I care about your feelings and I want everyone to feel good, and I want everyone to be happy, but when it comes to the actual effect that you're having in the world, a shame-based operating system is always going to lead to more negative actions in the world.

So whether that's something, even if it's just like you're disconnected from your family, you're disconnected from your kids. I mean, I think we all know people who aren't as emotionally connected as we would love to be with them and it's because internally they're working through a shame-based operating system, they're probably not even aware of it. It keeps them from being able to be intimate with the people that they love.

And like we talked about last time, shame-based operating systems, like a separation from our goodness, our wholeness, our worthiness, is what creates dangerous behavior, is what creates those scary things that we don't want to be and that we don't want to put out into the world. You show up differently when you have a shame-based operating system. You're not as bold, you're not as open-hearted, you're not as confident, you're not as connected.

And the research shows this extensively. There's so much research around this that shame doesn't reduce bad behavior. It makes it worse. And so specifically, let's see, there's a study around compulsive porn use. In 2009, there were 177 men who were in treatment for compulsive porn use. And what they found is that the men with the highest levels of shame had the highest compulsive use. This is something that I've been teaching for years. And so again, if you if you listen to me, this isn't new.

## 282. The Number One Thing Required to Befriend Your Sexuality (Part 2 of 3)

But I do just want to remind you the research really backs this up. In 2015, the same study was found on college men. And do you know 15 years of research now points to compulsive sexual behavior as a stress and trauma response, which is, you know, everything we talk about here and what we're talking about today.

So this operating system, the shame-based operating system, this fish swimming in water that everything's being filtered through, if you don't heal it, change it, and update it, nothing will really change. Doing the work to befriend your sexuality won't stick. It just becomes another one of those self-improvement projects that you fail at. It's not because you can't befriend your sexuality or because you're not doing it right, it's because it's like you're trying to install a new app on a corrupt operating system.

So this is so much deeper than strategies, here's strategies on how to befriend your sexuality or here's strategies on how to find freedom and more control with your compulsive pornography use. It's we have to, we have to update our operating system out of a shame-based operating system. Well, we update it into a worthy operating system.

I already mentioned this, but, you know, what most of my clients when they're coming through the program, and you guys are having your meetings with Hunter right when you get into the program, what we find is that most of you, the biggest like yearnings, the desires, is that you want to be worthy of the life that you want to live. You want to be worthy for your spouse or worthy in a spiritual sense, worthy and present.

And so a worthy-based operating system is very different than a shame-based operating system. A shame-based operating system looks at your porn use and says, "There is something wrong with me." A worthy-based operating system looks at it and says, "There's something going on for me, and I deserve to understand it. I deserve understanding and to be fully known."

## 282. The Number One Thing Required to Befriend Your Sexuality (Part 2 of 3)

Okay, do you hear the difference? I'm going to explain this in an example here, but let me just say this again. Shame-based operating system, there's something wrong with me. Worthy-based operating system, there's something going on for me, and I deserve to understand it and heal from it. A worthy-based operating system isn't, "Hey, let's just feel really good about doing bad things." That's not what I'm saying at all.

It's not now we're filtering everything through rose-colored glasses, and any actions that we take, we just feel good about them. Which this is a good time to bring up guilt versus shame. So there's a difference between guilt and shame. Guilt is, I did something wrong, and it like, "Oh, yeah, that doesn't feel good. That doesn't align with my values. That hurts someone. I did something wrong." Shame is, there's something wrong with me.

So we love guilt. I'm so grateful for guilt until it turns into shame. I'm grateful for guilt until I hold on to it and it starts becoming toxic. Guilt is just like a little ding and it like tells me there's something to look at. And it takes a while to be able to understand both because a lot of you might think, "Oh, that is guilt telling me something," but really there's a lot of shame attached to it. And so it's worth, I guess what I'll just say about it right now is it's really worth working with a coach or someone else to help you understand and tease those out because again, like I said, a lot of you think that your shame is just guilt. It's, but it's like shame sneakily dressed up trying to convince you that it's helpful when it's really not.

Or your guilt is coming on and saying something, and you're just believing it. So you also don't have to, so guilt is also something where it's showing us beliefs that we have that we can take a look at, but we also don't just have to believe everything it's saying.

For example, if I feel guilt about going out with my friends at night instead of putting the kids to bed, that just shows me that there's a belief that says, "Good moms aren't allowed to go out at night." And is that a belief I want to keep, or is that hurting me? That's where I would want to tease that out a little bit and make sure that it aligns with what I feel is good and true.

## 282. The Number One Thing Required to Befriend Your Sexuality (Part 2 of 3)

So this isn't feel good about doing bad things. I love this example of a fire alarm. When a fire alarm is going off, you don't just turn off the fire alarm. You go and you find the fire and you put the fire out. So a lot of people think that their porn use is the fire. And so we have to go put out the fire. We have to stop the porn use, and the fire goes out. But it's not. The porn use is the fire alarm.

The problematic, compulsive, or distressing porn use is the fire alarm. It's saying, "Hey, something's going on underneath the surface here. Hey, there's a fire we need to go put out." But if you're just focusing only on the porn use and turning off the smoke detector, the fire alarm, it's going to keep going off because the fire isn't actually put out. So what is the fire?

The fire could be something like constant stress and worry that you're underperforming and so porn becomes an escape from that. You know, that you can escape that worry of underperformance by watching pornography. Or it could be that you're really discontent and bored in your life. And so porn becomes that thing that's exciting that helps you manage that discontent and bored feeling.

Now, but if we go and just turn off the fire alarm, oh, there's the porn use, turn it off. But the fire underneath of being discontent and bored in your life is still raging, the fire alarm is going to eventually come back on because we haven't really addressed what's going on. It could be a relationship drifting, regret or resentment around your relationship. It could be all these things. It's very unique to you. And so what we have to do is we have to learn to work with your sexuality instead of against it to find the fires and work through the problematic behavior.

Now, if you have a shame-based operating system, you're not putting out the fire with water, you're putting out the fire with gas. And, you know, when you add gas to a flame, what happens? It roars higher, it gets bigger, it gets worse. Right? So let's say the fire is this relationship resentment and regret and you notice that, you see it, and you're like, "Ooh, that's ugly. Ooh,

## 282. The Number One Thing Required to Befriend Your Sexuality (Part 2 of 3)

there's something wrong with me for feeling that. Ooh, that's shameful." It's just adding gas, making it bigger, making it worse.

So even if you know I'm going to porn because I'm stressed, if you haven't healed the shame-based operating system, which is what we're diving into now, if you haven't healed that, you might have the awareness of it, but not the tools or the skills or the water or the help to put out the fire. Sometimes this fire is too big and it's done so much damage that you need some extra help and putting it out yourself is too overwhelming and too big of a project. That's when you enlist in help with coaches or therapists or other people that you trust.

This is also why, you know, sometimes coaching or therapy doesn't quite work. And so some of you have said, "Well, I've tried this self-compassion thing." And we're actually going to dive into it a little bit more next episode on, you know, if you've tried the self-compassion thing and it's not working, why that is.

But what I'll just say about it now is that awareness of it isn't enough. You really do need the tools to be able to put it out with fire instead of gas. And when our baseline operating system is shame, you know, it's showing up in ways that we're not even really aware of all the time. Again, a fish swimming in water. So we need someone who has the skills to help us see that so that we can stop adding gas and instead really, really actually heal it and put it out.

So, back to this worthy-based operating system, instead of there's something wrong with me, there's something going on for me and I deserve compassion and I deserve to be known and I deserve to get the help for what I need. A worthy-based operating system also looks like this, each part is worthy. The book, *No Bad Parts* comes to mind. Each part is worthy, and each part deserves to be known, to be looked at, to be respected, to be loved.

## 282. The Number One Thing Required to Befriend Your Sexuality (Part 2 of 3)

Our culture, I mean, you get messages from when you're very, very young what it means to be, I'm going to speak specifically to men right here. What it means to be a good enough man. And these parts of you are manly enough, but these parts of you aren't manly enough, and they must be shamed. So a worthy-based operating system is looking at all of that and allowing each part to be known and each part to be respected.

Okay? A phone's operating system controls what the output is. And so a worthy operating system isn't going to produce excuses. So again, back to, you might be, you know, worried that a worthy-based operating system is just going to help you feel good about doing bad things. It's not. A worthy operating system won't produce excuses. And if it is, if it is producing excuses, shame is still driving it. It's like sneaky shame. A lot of justification of, you know, an attitude of not caring about your effect on other people if you're hurting other people or using your actions in a harmful way. That's not a worthy-based operating system. That's a shame-based operating system. Worthy operating system produces good people, good men, and good actions and it puts you back in control.

Now, the answer here isn't just believe that you're worthy. Just tell yourself you're worthy and believe it deeper. I'm going to talk about that more in the next episode. In the next episode, we're also going to dive deeper into the, okay, but what if my sexuality isn't good? What if it's dangerous or broken or just too far gone? We're going to dive more into that. And I'm going to spend time talking about, you know, once we learn how to do this, how to befriend our sexuality, how to partner with it, how to work with it, and, you know, to give it a seat at the table instead of our sexuality being almost like something either to just throw food to placate it or something to like always be better than or in control of.

We want to learn to partner with it, to give it a seat at the table like an honorable member of our internal family that we work with and we respect. When we do that, what's possible? Because I know like deep down, what's driving you to even listen to this podcast is like, "I just want to live a good life. I just want to be worthy. I just want to be honorable. I just want to do

## 282. The Number One Thing Required to Befriend Your Sexuality (Part 2 of 3)

good." So how can partnering with your sexuality actually increase your capacity to do that?

Truly, this is a whole extra step that we're going in this series that we haven't gone to in the podcast before. And so, you know, instead of listening to this podcast, right, you might have started listening to this so that I can get rid of this thing so that I can be a good person. It's like, what if this same energy that you've been fighting is the exact energy that makes you a better husband or wife or a more present father or mother or a person who actually shows up or a person who adds so much good value into your communities? What's possible when that's working with you instead of against you?

So that's what we're talking about next. In the meantime, I am doing a live class. Come to it. Come to it. Please. You can get details below, [centerforovercoming.com/liveclass](http://centerforovercoming.com/liveclass). But this is a brand new class that I'm doing. It's called "Everything You Were Taught About Quitting Porn Has Kept You Trapped: Here's Why and Here's What to Do Instead." I'll be there to answer any of your questions live.

I'll also be talking about my brand new program. It's called "Overcome Pornography for Good, Befriend Your Sexuality." That's at the end though. So even if you decide you don't want to come and work with me in a paid program, still come because you'll get a ton of value out of it. I really value and respect your time and I'm excited to teach all of this in a class format. But for those of you who want to come work with me live, I'll be talking about that. Anyways, the new program, it's called Overcome Pornography for Good, Befriend Your Sexuality. And it's a live container where we'll work together every week for 12 weeks.

I haven't been this excited about something in years. This really feels like the next evolution of all of this internal work that I've done over the years and a culmination of the 1,900 clients that we've worked with in the program and the years and years and years of doing this work, this feels

## 282. The Number One Thing Required to Befriend Your Sexuality (Part 2 of 3)

like the next evolution of that. And you, my podcast listeners, specifically, I would love, love to have you come and work with you in that container.

But come to the free class. So again, [centerforovercoming.com/liveclass](http://centerforovercoming.com/liveclass). It's going to be a blast. And make sure to tune in next week where we dive into these concepts even further. Sending you all so much love and we'll talk 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](http://SaraBrewer.com/masterclass), and it is totally free.