

285. The Cost of Inaction



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Sara Brewer

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You are listening to the *Overcome Pornography for Good* podcast, “The Cost of Inaction.”

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

Hey everyone, welcome to today's podcast. We've got another new podcast for you all today. I hope that you have enjoyed that series so far, the "Befriend Your Sexuality" series. It's been really fun for me to explain quitting porn in this way. The podcast has been my first iteration of speaking it with these concepts, and so one thing that I do love about the podcast is it just feels a little bit lower stakes.

If I'm teaching this in a live class that people are coming to that we have a scheduled time for, I feel like it has to be polished and I have a little bit more specific bullet points. If I'm doing a YouTube video—I haven't done a lot of YouTube videos, but YouTube is in the works; we'll start doing that here pretty soon—but video feels a little higher stakes. I have to make sure that the camera looks nice and I have to make sure I look nice on camera. I have to make sure my makeup is done, all these things.

Podcasting—I love podcasting because I'm just sitting here on the floor of my bedroom in my sweats, just recording and talking to you all. And I've loved it. I've done it for—how many years has the podcast been out now? Five years? Has it been that many years? It just feels home, feels like I'm talking to just the people that I love and it's just lower stakes, and I get to share all my thoughts and ideas.

And if you know me in real life, you know that I always have things to say. I always have thoughts and ideas, and you can get me on a rant and I'll just talk and talk and talk. And especially if it's anything around porn, anything around self-development, anything around abusive systems, all the things. I just have thoughts. And it feels like I constantly have—my brain doesn't turn off. It just there's constantly things going on, which, by the way, I've made this my whole personality this last year and I haven't even said anything about it on the podcast.

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But it's come to my attention this last year, I learned about high-functioning ADHD in women and what that looks like. And when I learned about that, my mind was blown. I felt like I was in—my whole life made sense learning about high-performing ADHD. So I'm not diagnosed yet, but I'm considering going in maybe working with a specialist around it, because they talk about these different experiences of what it's like to have high-performance ADHD. I'm like, "Oh my gosh, that makes so much sense to me."

It's this idea, too, of having so many tabs going on in your brain all the time. And it's the same on my laptop, on my desktop. I'm someone who has a million tabs open all the time. But it's like that in my brain. I'm always reading four books at a time or listening to multiple things at a time. I can't stay on one thing. I'm really good at the building, building, building phase, but the maintaining phase is so hard for me. So even in my business, yes, I can do all of the things, but I always have to hire it out because otherwise, it won't get done. The maintenance work of the day-to-day stuff, it won't get done unless I hire support or help.

And then I learned about what it looks like, too, for women, especially moms. And so I really struggled after having my two kids. I had a lot of postpartum depression and anxiety. It was so hard for me, but I learned that if you have ADHD, it can really affect that. And I've heard of and met different moms in the area who, they went on anxiety medication or these different things. It was helpful but not really, but the ADHD medication was what was game-changing for them, especially after having kids or after the postpartum or during the postpartum phase.

Anyways, and it makes so much sense, too, because after I had my kids and my daughter, too, especially, that's when I started building this and this business and it took off and it just really kind of blew up right after having kids. But I always felt terrible because I felt I couldn't function in normal day-to-day life, getting the laundry done or any of this stuff.

So it was so weird and confusing to me because I could lock in and I could build this business that ended up reaching a lot of people, but I couldn't do day-to-day functioning things. And so that's also a sign. It's just so great to

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continue to learn about yourself. Whether or not you put a label on it, but just continuing to learn about yourself to realize everyone functions a little bit differently. Everyone has a little bit different brains. And maybe there's nothing wrong with me. Maybe I just have a brain that has ADHD tendencies or a brain that has ADHD.

So realizing this last year, it was such a shame decreaser for me, because then I could stop looking at all of these things as evidence that, "Oh yeah, there's something wrong with me." Which, as much as I do this work, and the shame is way less than it used to be, holy cow. But as a human, it still shows up. And I'm not able to do all these things that this other person can do. Oh, maybe it's not because there's something wrong with me. Maybe it's just because I have a brain that works a little bit differently.

And so I'm going to lean into the strengths of my brain, which is all the information coming in and me being able to go and talk about it and share it on a podcast and build rather than focusing on the ways that I'm not good enough. So, what a beautiful thing it is to continue learning about ourselves and continue learning how to love ourselves in all these different ways.

So let's dive into today's topic. I want to talk about the cost of inaction. What does it cost to not take action towards the things that you really want in your heart, soul? So there's lots of examples of this. I'm sure you've experienced this in your life where you want to change something, but you're not really doing it. And I want to, as I talk about this, I also want to be careful not to bring any shame into this.

You might feel a little shame, you might feel a little guilt as we talk about this topic because it can bring up feelings of inadequacy. But I want us to approach it just we're scientists. So as I'm talking about us wanting to change something but not changing it, imagine your life on a screen and you're watching it as a scientist who isn't judging whether or not you're good enough, a scientist who's just looking and saying, "Wow, that's interesting. Wow, that's interesting." Just observing behavior, okay? So let's try to do that the best we can as I talk about this.

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Maybe you have or maybe you can think of people that you know in your life who have wanted something to be different. Maybe your health, maybe your work, maybe porn, right? Maybe porn. And there's the desire to change it, but there's the lack of action to make the changes.

Sometimes the excuses look like, "Well, I'll do it when I'm less busy. As soon as I get this thing figured out, I'll do it. When I retire, I'll do this." I hear this sometimes with clients who it took them a while to dive in and do the deep healing work around porn. "Well, once I get married, I'll do it." Or, "I need to feel better before I dive in and actually do the work."

And why do we do this? The reason that we do this is because there's a part of our brain that loves safety and predictability. There's a part of us that loves the idea of changing and growing and doing these different things or doing things differently. And then there's a really strong part of us that's, "No, don't change. Change is risky. Change isn't stable." And so with our brains and our bodies, it feels like there's these two parts that we're constantly trying to manage: the part that wants to feel safe and then the part that wants to grow.

But there is a true cost of inaction and the cost of inaction is not just that you stay where you are. Maybe you hear sometimes—and sometimes I say this too—what's the worst that could happen if you decide not to go all in or what's the worst that could happen if you decide not to change? It's that you end up exactly where you are right now. And I think that's a really powerful way to think about it. Really think about that for a minute.

You know, maybe some of you are thinking, "Well, what if it doesn't work? What if I'm not able to quit porn? What if I go through this process and I don't quit porn?" Well, the worst that could happen is that you end up exactly where you are right now. So when we think about it that way, it's like, "Oh, wow."

If this is already the worst scenario of what I'm afraid of doing, why wouldn't I go for it? Because what's the best that could happen is I could find

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freedom from porn. I could feel so much better in my life. I could drop this heaviness and find freedom, find real, true freedom in my life.

And so let's make sure to not fail ahead of time. I could do a whole podcast episode on this, this idea of failing ahead of time. A lot of us sometimes we don't commit to anything because we're afraid of failing, but all that does is it guarantees the failure. It guarantees the failure right now. "I'm not going to go all in because what if it doesn't work?" Well, that's where you're at right now. So you're failing ahead of time. You're failing before you even try.

So yes to all of that, but the cost of inaction is not just that you stay where you are, because that's not really the reality. The cost of inaction is that it gets worse over time and that it compounds over time.

So think about health, for example. The cost of inaction of working towards your health is not that you stay the same healthy that you are right now. It's that the bad health habits compound over time and that creates worse effects, as time goes on.

I want to pull us out if there's any shame here. I want to pull us out of that for a minute. We're looking at this as scientists observing human behavior, not with judgment. And with the reminder that it's never, ever, ever too late to make the changes that you want. And yes, even though stuff compounds over time, it gets worse and worse and worse over time. As soon as you make changes, it can get better really quickly.

So even if it, you know, it's been 20, 30, 40 years of bad habits, as soon as you start, you know, deciding to get the professional help and make the deep inner change, what's awesome about it is it can get better way faster. It can be just even a couple of months. And then you know, you give yourself a few years and you don't need 40 years to change this. You just need commitment going forward and it can change really, really quickly. So that is one of the great things about growth.

I had someone in my class last week ask, "Well, how long could it take me to change? Because I've been struggling with porn for 40 years. Is it going to take me years to figure this out?" And I said, "No." I have clients

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who—it's the same thing—they've struggled for 40, 50 years, and then they learned some of these skills and change happens in a couple of months. Not that you're going to be perfect in a couple of months, but like real, real change can happen very, very quickly.

So let me go back to the compounding idea. So with pornography, the cost of staying the same with porn, the cost of not getting support with your porn habit, the cost of continuing to sweep this under the rug and pretend that it's not that big of a deal or it doesn't deserve attention yet, the cost of that compounds over the years as well, the effects that it has on your trust with yourself and your relationship with yourself.

Think of grooves. The longer it goes, the deeper the grooves get. The more times you walk on a path, the more prominent the path becomes. The longer you do a habit, the more ingrained the habit becomes. The effect that has on your relationships over years. Then it stops becoming a one-off thing where you're able to repair, but it's something that continues happening over and over and over and over again.

This is why some people wake up in their marriages. It's been 20 years and their spouse is ready to leave them. And they're like, "What?" They just feel it's out of the blue. "What do you mean?" It wasn't out of the blue. It was 20 years of these little things that they had asked you to change, but you didn't take seriously.

I hear this from women a lot where it's been years and years of them asking their partner to maybe step up and be a little bit more of an equal partner in the home to help with more of the chores around home or with the emotional or mental labor around home. And they say, "Yeah," but they don't really do it.

Or partners who, again, maybe there's been the pornography struggle for a long time and underneath the surface of the pornography stuff is like the partner not feeling valued, the partner not feeling wanted, not feeling like intimacy or connection or the sense of betrayal. And the compounding effect of that over time is really devastating to a relationship.

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I mean, it's easy to see, let's say with alcohol, if you have an alcohol habit that feels harmful to you, the cost of not changing isn't that you stay the same. It's that the effects that alcohol has on your body over years and years and years, or of smoking, the same thing, over years and years and years and years. So the cost of inaction is high, is high, is great, especially when we look at the compounding nature of the inaction.

And the reason that we don't change is because it's difficult, right? So change isn't just easy, especially if you're doing some of the work around pornography, you've got to go in there and look at the wounds underneath, and that can be a little bit painful. But I'm going to remind you, I use this example of the River of Misery versus the Pond of Misery. So to change, you have to jump in the River of Misery. The currency of change is discomfort. The currency of growth is discomfort. You give your discomfort and then you change. And so the River of Misery is the idea you got to jump in the River of Misery for a little bit. Sounds super fun, doesn't it?

But it depends on your attitude towards it as well. The reason I call it the River of Misery is because if we can just call it for what it is and say, "Yeah, this is going to be hard and uncomfortable," but what's the alternative? The alternative to jumping in the River of Misery, you're struggling with porn, you want to get the help, you want to change. You know to do that, you've got to jump in the River of Misery. What's the alternative? The alternative is the Pond of Misery.

So, in this porn habit that you want to change, the only options are jumping in the River of Misery to change or staying stagnant in the Pond of Misery. The Pond of Misery is like, I'm thinking of a murky, gross pond that you're just sitting in. It's stagnant. At least in the River of Misery, it's fresh water. It feels more alive. There's fish in it. There's movement, there's change. In the Pond of Misery, it's gross. And stagnant water, who knows the bacteria in there? That's going to harm you a lot longer, long-term, than just getting through the River of Misery.

But to get through the River of Misery, you've got to gird up your loins, take a deep breath, jump in, and then it's way safer and more helpful if you have

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someone helping you through that. A lot of you start trying to go through the River of Misery, but you don't have the support that you need and so you end up back because you couldn't get through. The River of Misery is a lot easier if you have someone helping you and if you have a boat along the way that lets you sit in it when you're tired, take a rest.

The great thing about the compounding effect of inaction is not just that the compounding effect works when you're not taking action. So think of a snowball that's getting bigger and bigger and bigger, the more it rolls down the hill. And that's what happens when we don't take action again. It's not just that you stay where you are, but it's just that things get worse and worse and worse and worse. But it works the opposite way.

And so I have a podcast episode on this if you want to dive more, if you're really feeling inspired by this idea. It's called "The Compound Effect." I don't know. You could search in the podcast page and just look up the word "compound" or "compounding," but it works in the opposite direction as well. So the snowball also will get bigger and bigger and bigger and bigger in the direction that you want to go. So we have to approach growth, and we have to approach healing from this porn habit, finding freedom from porn, this way as well, where it gets better and better and better with every little tiny step.

You don't have to be perfect right away. You don't have to have it all figured out right away. I think this is why a lot of people hesitate to change or hesitate to get the help that they need to change because there's a lot of pressure they've got to be perfect right away. That's not how this works.

My heart, my heart for those of you who have gone through programs or had maybe religious leaders or other accountability things where it's, "Okay, now you got to be perfect. Okay, you confessed this thing, now never, ever do it again." Oh my gosh, no wonder you want to stay in the pond of misery because that's not even realistic, honestly. So we have to approach this differently. We have to realize that it's the compounding tiny, small actions over time that create a really beautiful result.

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So I always encourage my clients to think in years and not months. Think of what you want to accomplish in years instead of months. I have used this and it has benefited my life so much. This is Tony Robbins' thing. He says, "We often overestimate what we can do in a couple of months and underestimate what we can do in a couple years or in a decade."

So true with porn. We overestimate, in this amount of months, I will be here. It's sometimes an overestimation and a little bit unrealistic versus in a couple of years, I will be here. And you underestimate what you can do in a couple of years. So think bigger and then think longer. And then use the compounding principle to take those small actions day over day, week over week.

It's not about perfection. I'm going to use a couple examples here. I talked about this, for anyone who's a client, I did a class last week on—is a sneak peek into my "Befriending Your Sexuality" cohort that's starting in a week. So go and listen to that if you're a client because I would love to have you come and join me in this new cohort we're going to be starting in July. It'd be so fun to work with you a little bit more in a group where we'll be meeting every single week.

Anyone's welcome to, you don't have to be a client to come and do this, but I talked about some of this in—I'm going to give an example here that I mentioned in that class. But I just want to remind you to go and watch that replay if you haven't yet. If you're not a client and you want a sneak peek into it, email us and we'll send you—we have a couple of links of videos you can watch that will give you information on this cohort I'm starting in a week, support@sarabrewer.com.

But anyways, I was going to give an example of health and fitness. Let's talk health and fitness. I have seen really great success. I'm just not someone who can be perfect every single day or every single week. I'm really not. And anytime that I try to expect myself to work out five times a week, I always fail miserably. And so what I've learned and what has worked so well for me is consistency three days a week. And I'm consistent—I'm not perfect. It's like 80% perfect, not even perfect, like 80%

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consistent, 75 to 80%. Over time, that has had such amazing results for me and in the results that I wanted, but I've had to extend my timeline a little bit. But it's so easy. It's now a lifestyle. And then I also mentioned really offer yourself grace and we've got to give ourselves time as well.

So it's a whole journey. When I joined one program, this one program taught me how to eat the way that I want to eat, how to get enough protein in, how to eat in a way that fuels my body and that feels really good to my body. And even though this program at the time had all of this information on workout and stuff, I didn't really dive into that. All I got from this one program was how to eat, and that was perfect. And it was one piece of the puzzle.

And then the next piece of the puzzle was I had to learn how to lift weights. And with that, I ended up hiring an in-person coach because I needed someone to show me and help me with my form, and it felt too overwhelming to do and to try to figure out on my own. And so then I figured out that thing in that specific program.

And then I joined something else and figured out these different cycles and this other different piece of the puzzle. And so this is what I always recommend to people as well. Anytime you're starting to change something, you just need to figure out one piece at a time, one piece of the puzzle at a time. Don't try to figure it all out at once, or it's overwhelming, and then you're going to give up.

I really do think of it like a puzzle. It's like you have all the pieces there, but if you're putting together a puzzle, you don't want to try to put together the 1,000-piece puzzle in one sitting. You're going to do this little section and this color, and then you're going to find all the red ones and do all the red ones. And then you're going to do this section, and then you're going to do this section. It's the same thing. We can approach it like that instead of, "I have to do this all at once or else everything's going to be ruined." You're setting yourself up for failure.

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Okay, so the cost of inaction is great because it compounds over time. And every year you go without making the changes you want to make, the more strain it has on your life and on your relationships, especially with pornography. You deserve healing now. You deserve to feel good now. And you deserve support and help now.

For those of you that think, "Well, maybe I can do it by myself," but you have been trying to do it by yourself and haven't seen success, I just want to share something that my client Ben shared with us. He shared this in episode 215, if you want to go listen to his story. He said, "I did that for 30 years, 30 years of me trying to figure it out, and then years listening to your free stuff. But when I finally committed and got professional support, it only took me three months, and I feel so much better."

That's what I'm saying, too. 30 years, and then it's amazing when you really get the help that will actually help you, the change can happen really quickly. He said, "At first, I felt guilty. I'm not going to take that money from my family, especially when we could use it on a vacation. But the reality is they don't want another vacation. They want their dad. They want their dad to be authentic and full of love and showing up. Don't talk yourself out of it. If this is something that's keeping you from showing up fully for your life and your family, don't wait."

So if you are feeling that pull, if you're like, "It's time," if you're realizing and understanding that you don't want this to continue to compound and get worse, but you want to give yourself the support that you deserve, I want to invite you to come and work with me for 12 weeks in my 12-week cohort around overcoming pornography for good and healing your relationship with your sexuality.

The reason that I'm talking about it a lot on this episode is because this is the only time I'm going to be doing this live for 12 weeks with a group of people. I haven't done this before and I'm so excited about it. But if you have been wanting to get support, it really, really, really is the best time because I'm going to be taking you through it for 12 weeks, so you'll get a lot of time with me.

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Anytime that you come and join the program, it's going to be fantastic. You'll still get access to me and other coaches. But this particular time is really special because it is going to be live with me for 12 weeks. So if you've been holding off and waiting for the right time, this really is a phenomenal opportunity to dive in. Let's go. We got three months together. You're going to be so amazed at what you can accomplish in three months with me, a three-month sprint.

One of the best things you can do for yourself is invest in yourself and in your healing. Sometimes it's really easy to invest in things. One thing I notice is it's easy to spend a couple thousand dollars on a new couch or on a vacation or on a new motorcycle or ATV, right? But when it comes to investing in a program, sometimes it can feel a little harder. And why is that? It's because this transformation, it touches shame, it touches identity, it touches whether or not you believe that you can really do it. But that's also why it's so important.

Ask yourself what would make the biggest difference in my life: having this new couch or really being able to trust myself again and to feel free from this, for many of us, lifelong porn habit? My gosh, of course, there's nothing more valuable than having freedom from that.

And so do I trust Sara to help me get there? I hope the answer's yes. And do I trust myself? If I don't trust myself, that's okay because guess what? That's the work. The whole work is learning how to rebuild and trust yourself again. And so all you have to do is you have to be willing to commit and start rebuilding. It doesn't have to be perfect yet. Because sometimes people will avoid joining because they're like, "Well, I don't trust myself to follow through." And what I want to say to them is, "That's the whole point. That's why you join. That's why you come in and do the work and you let us help you so that you can trust yourself again." You don't wait until you trust yourself. That's what we're doing. That's the whole point. That's the whole work.

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And just a reminder, too, transformations happen after making a brave decision and feeling a little bit of discomfort. So if you're feeling the pull and it's a little uncomfortable, nothing's wrong. That's exactly it.

And then for anyone who joined the program in the past, so this the program's been going for six years. Maybe you joined at the beginning or recently, but it's been a couple of years since you've dove in and done the work and you are feeling called and pulled to recommit and to come and join, would love to have you. It's an awesome opportunity to work with me in a 12-week container to work on this together.

So, can't wait. It's going to be a blast. You can sign up by going to centerforovercoming.com/join. If you're a past client, we have a client discount, so email us support@sarabrewer.com.

Alright, you guys, have a great week. We'll talk to you later. Bye-bye.

Thanks for listening to the *Overcome Pornography for Good* podcast. If you're ready to take your next steps, visit centerforovercoming.com. We'll talk to you next week.