

287. What's Possible with Thomas



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Sara Brewer

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You are listening to the *Overcome Pornography for Good* podcast episode 287, What's Possible with Thomas

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

Hey, you guys, welcome to the podcast episode this week. I'm so excited for this episode. This is a what's possible episode. These are episodes where we bring on people who have overcome pornography and let them share their stories.

We always get a lot of really great feedback on these episodes because it's one thing to learn about how to do it and to work through it. And it's a whole other thing to hear people who have actually done it. It really helps build that belief that we can do it too.

So I really hope you enjoy Thomas's story. He struggled with porn on and off for 40 years. It got bad a number of years ago, he decided he was ready to quit and he's going to share his story with us. He is a member of Overcome Pornography For Good, and also did six months of private coaching with Kat, who you're going to hear from today, too.

If you're interested in joining, you can come and join us at sarabrewer.com/workwithme. And there also might be some availability for private coaching. If you're interested in that, we'll have to see where we're at with spots by the time this episode is released. But even if there's not, come and join the program, you get first dibs on private coaching spots if you're in the program and you can start working through this stuff and making a lot of amazing progress there in the program.

Not everyone who joins the program wants or needs private coaching, but a lot of people decide that it's pretty beneficial to them and will end up doing it. But you definitely don't need it in order to quit viewing porn.

All right, you guys, enjoy this episode with Thomas.

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Sara: Hey, you guys. Welcome to the podcast this week. We're doing a what's possible interview, which I'm so excited about today. We have Thomas with us. Thomas, do you want to say hey?

Thomas: Hey, Sara. It's a pleasure to be here to share my story, and I hope it can resonate with folks and help others.

Sara: Yeah, we're so excited. So, so, so excited to have you here. And grateful that you're here to share your story.

We also have Kat here. Kat, do you want to say hey?

Kat: Hey, guys. I'm excited to be here too.

Sara: Kat is, if you don't remember, if you haven't heard other episodes, she is a member, or not a member, she's a coach in Overcome Pornography For Good and she worked with Thomas in the one on one aspect of the program. And so we invited her here too, to chime in if she wants or say hey, or just to be a part of the conversation because she worked with Thomas pretty closely.

So, you listened to other what's possible interviews? Is that what you were saying before this call? You said you've listened to them a few times.

Thomas: Yes, I have. And that was partly really helpful for me to listen to those as I was kind of going through listening to all the podcasts because I joined the program and then ultimately decided to do coaching with Kat. And that was really helpful to me to listen to others because this is something I've really struggled with, I guess I would say, the last few years.

But my history goes back to the 80s. And it started in high school and it was really, you know, at that point it was a lot harder, frankly, to look at porn. It was magazines or it was sometimes going to the video rental place and going behind the screen and renting the X rated movies and bringing it home.

So there was a lot of, I guess, friction in looking at porn. And so it was just something, it was novel to me. It was something that was like, partly I think

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it was the taboo of looking at it and being young and having hormones and that was kind of an outlet for me. And that continued on throughout college years, even with relationships, and into my adulthood. And it was just something I always did.

It was not something I really thought about. I frankly didn't feel shame. It was just something like, well, hey, look, it's what a lot of people do. I guess maybe the whole safety in numbers or, you know, it's just something that people did. And it didn't really bother me.

And I think the reason, ultimately, I'm here having this discussion is as I've gotten older, I've kind of re-examined what's important to me in my life. And one of the things is my faith. Now, I am not a member of the Church of Latter-Day Saints, I am Catholic. I was raised that way. I've always gone to church, but I've never been really kind of a devout follower of my faith. And that was one of the things that was kind of more important to me, to get back in touch with that.

And one of the things that, at that point, was really bothering me and I think holding me back while I recognized I am a sinner and I will always be a sinner. But this pornography use, at that point it had become an outlet for me for stress. It was a quick kind of dopamine hit. It would take the stress of work, or family, or whatever it was away from me.

And it was something that really then started to bother me because I thought, okay, I want to be this person. This person who's a devout follower, a practitioner of my faith. But then I have this pornography habit where I continue to do it. And yes, I can go and get absolution and atone for my sin, but it seemed like I was very – It added stress to me, I realized because I wanted to be this person, but I couldn't see myself letting go.

Sara: Yeah. Really quickly I'm going to – I'm sorry, I just want to chime in for a second. I love that you bring up your faith. And that's such a huge important part for a lot of people when they want to quit viewing porn. And I also just want to point out, especially in my earlier episodes it was kind of

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more geared towards Latter-Day Saint culture and Latter-Day Saint people, that's just where I started.

But we're not there anymore where it's just this group of faith. In fact one of our huge – Kat, we talk about this all the time, but one of our really big values is inclusivity. And so whatever religion, whatever, you know, even no religion affiliation, whatever religious affiliation. We have lots of Catholic clients come in too. And so anyways, I just want to make sure that I say that here.

Thomas: Yeah, no. And thank you for saying that. And so I had tried some things online, some other programs. And it just wasn't working. I mean, I had some success. But then it felt to me, now kind of going through your program, I think I was using a lot of willpower. And I tried the accountability software, the blocking software. And it just felt like –

And using willpower, and I've learned this from other experiences in my life, it takes a lot of energy to use willpower to fight something. And boy is it tough. And it just wouldn't work and I got frustrated.

I listen to a lot of different podcasts and I remember I was either listening to a podcast or I was reading something and I was doing a search for a podcast. It had nothing to do with porn. I didn't know your name, but somehow your name came up in the search. And I thought, well, this is interesting.

So I decided to start, like maybe I'll just give this a listen and see what she has to say. And I think what really resonated with me, I think one of the things that I heard was that you want to get to a point where you don't need this software to block it. You want to be able to get to a point where you're just choosing not to look at it.

I'm like, wow, I want that. Yes, I do want that. And so I listened to a bunch of the podcasts. And it really started to kind of resonate with me. And so I joined the program and I started going through the modules and listening to the group calls. And it was helpful and I had more success there.

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But then, ultimately, I would just hit a stump and I would use it. But then it led to a kind of binging. And partly I was like, okay, well I know I need to go to confession, but until I go maybe I'll, I guess maybe get it out of my system and look a couple more times. And just the frustration of like this is never going to happen for me and maybe I just need to accept this.

And and then ultimately, I know from other things that I've done in my life that I respond well to accountability. And that's when I decided to reach out to get coaching. I thought you know what? Maybe I need a one on one coach and I'm going to feel more accountable.

And I will tell you, working with Kat, I've met a lot of people in my life and a lot of people had an influence on me, but she has had one of the most outsized influences on my life. I would not be here and I'll never meet her in person, I just see her on a screen. But it was like night and day once I started working with her.

In the past, you know you talk about that river, well, my river was really cold. And I would jump in and get real cold and I'd come back out on the side and I'd get warmed up. This time I was able to jump in, swim to the other side and get through it.

And it has just been like, wow. And I've had, since I started working with her, some of the most difficult urges after I joined the program. And I don't think there was any way that I would ever have been able to process those successfully without looking. But I was just able to do that.

And working with her has given me the confidence to do that. And the fact that I was able to get through both personal and professional, really stressful situations and not look, it's just such a blessing to me.

Sara: That's a big deal. Yeah, I want to dive into that and talk about that a little bit. But this is just for people who haven't heard before, so we have the program and there's group coaching, and there's modules and there's all this stuff. And then we also have private coaching as an option.

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And so a lot of people like to come in the program, make progress, and then if they need some extra help, they'll come and do private coaching. Which is what you did here with Kat. Just for anyone who might be confused here with that process.

But yeah, so I want to talk about that. So the big challenge for you with quitting porn, it sounds like, was the binge cycles. So you'd view and then you're waiting –

Thomas: It was, yes.

Sara: You're waiting for confession and you're like, oh, I'll just get it out of my system. Tell us a little bit about that and overcoming that.

Thomas: So one of the things, normally when I would go to confession I would say all my sins and give an act of contrition. I would get a blessing from the priest and get a penance to say. I had one priest, and I've never had this happen before when I was confessing my sin, including porn. He said, what's going to change this time? What are you going to do differently?

And to me it was almost like God was telling me like, you need to continue this. You need to take it to the next step and get private coaching. And that's what you need Dan. And I kind of believe that was God telling me that's what I needed to do. And I realized, when I started working with Kat, one of the things that we went through, I think the first module was the commitment.

And it really, when she asked me like, hey, where are you on a scale of one to ten? I realized later I was not a ten. I was maybe a seven, I think. And look, anyone who signs up for your program, I think has some level of commitment. No one just does it on a lark. But I think maybe in the back of my mind there was this thought, well, I don't know, maybe I can just do it where it cuts back to like once a month or something like that. I was definitely not all the way in.

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When I was talking with her, I realized this is not going to work unless you're a ten. And I decided and prayed about it and like no, I'm going to be a ten. And making that and saying that and having a coach say okay, you're a ten, you're committed, that made all the difference to me.

And then after that we went through kind of the beliefs there and emotions and buffering. And I think now we're working on these new beliefs and these new identities and incorporating like, okay. And you're right about the program, it's not just for me about quitting porn. It's like I can be the man that I want to be.

This was like the last big thing, I think, in my life holding me back, I think, and making me feel like I'm a fraud in a way. Because it's like people think of me in one way but I didn't feel like I'm worthy in another. But now I feel like I can live up to that outside and inside, I feel like. This is something that I've done and I'm very proud of it. And I feel like it's made me a better husband and father and employee and everything like that.

And so it is such a good feeling because this is something that, I mean, this has been going on since high school for me and this is like close to 40 years where I've had – And again, it wasn't something that I never really had a problem with until the last few. And just all of a sudden it snapped into place. And it's been beautiful and it's been glorious to be able to do that and to feel this.

Sara: As you say that, I can feel it in my chest. Like feel the freedom.

Kat: Me too.

Sara: Kat, you too?

Kat: Me too. And I want you to know, Thomas, how proud I am of the work that you have put in, that you chose to make that commitment for yourself early on in starting work with me. And you made that come and you've done it. You've shown up for yourself and you keep doing the work.

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And the beautiful thing that I see that you keep doing is not only with pornography, but like you said, you're noticing it in all areas of your life. Like in your work life, in your home life, with your kids, with everything. And I think it's a really beautiful process that you've gone through.

Sara: Yeah.

Thomas: Yeah, and I would say too, it really has been helpful for me with the model, because I've applied it to other situations where I haven't been processing an urge but it's just been a situation in life where, okay, this is the circumstance, this is my thought. My thought around this is not really very helpful. Okay, I need to change how I'm thinking about this and get a better result.

And being able to apply that, I mean, that in and of itself has just been a huge change for me to be able to do that and to go through life with that. That just because there's a circumstance and maybe because of my past I react or think about things in a certain way, I'm not the same person that I was before.

Kat: Well, and I want to ask you this, Thomas, because I went over our notes before we started this and one of the things actually that you said, one of the comments in our very first session together was you said sustained success has been elusive to you.

Thomas: Yes.

Kat: And you kind of talked about that at first. You were like, I've tried some other things and I've been able to have some success, but never the sustained success. Tell me how you feel about that now where you're at currently.

Thomas: Honestly, it gives me – You're right, I haven't. This is the longest I've been, I think I'm going on 15 weeks now. I think only once after I first started working with you did I have a slip. And to be able to now – And I know we don't necessarily focus on time, it's just urges. But like I

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mentioned, I processed some of the most difficult urges since I've been in here.

And the fact that I've been able to go longer than I have since high school, then it gives me strength to know I can do this. I'm not going to melt if I look at porn. I won't fall apart. I can get through this. I can do something. I can work out. I can run. I can pray. Sometimes I listen to the – I've listened to Sara's episode on processing difficult urges, that's been very helpful.

There's different tools that I have to get through those. And the more that I can continue to do that, I view myself as kind of getting further and further away from the riverbank where I'm not going to jump back in, because it was cold water. I don't want to jump back in that cold water.

And so it's just really helpful. And I think the more that I get success doing it, I just get used to living life without doing this. This is not something, and it's something that I think, at least for me too, and maybe societally we're pretty soft as a culture. I mean, we don't like any discomfort anywhere.

And to me porn was a dopamine hit. Some people it's porn, others it's drinking, drugs, sweets, smoking, whatever it is. I'm now able just to sit and feel things. And I know when I was younger I went through some things and I think I pushed those feelings away. I just was like, "Oh, I'm not going to feel those. I'm going to put them aside." And I think that kind of was always with me.

But just now to be able to sit and process an urge like, okay, this is stressful. I'm just going to breathe and pray and feel it. It will go away. It's not going to destroy me. Sometimes I need to work through the model again and get through that. And that, to me, to be able to go through life like that with ups and downs, and to be able to just feel it without having to numb myself is wonderful.

And one of the other things is I look at how much time I've wasted looking at porn or just trying to escape and all the good things I can do. I can read. I can exercise more. I can meditate. I can pray. There's so much more positive that I can pull into my life when I'm not doing this. And I would

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rather look at – I listened to something, they talked about happiness versus pleasure. And pleasure is cheap, it's that cheap dopamine hit.

And I would rather get something that truly makes me happy. Find some hobbies that I enjoy or do something that really leads to happiness, not just for a cheap dopamine hit. Because I know I was processing one urge and I remember thinking, okay, I can give in. I can do this. And maybe I'll feel good, but I know 30 seconds afterward I'm going to feel like crap because I gave in. And I didn't push through it. And I will have disappointed myself. And frankly, Kat, probably in my mind I would have disappointed you. And that has helped me keep going and being strong.

Kat: No, you can't disappoint Kat. No.

Thomas: I know, but that's the way I think. And that was part of the reason why I wanted to do the one on one coaching because to me I've got this accountability to someone. And I just respond well to that. Not everyone would, but that was something for me.

Sara: Yeah, I want to go back to the part where you spoke about commitment, where you decided I really am a ten. Because that is not something that I – I don't think we talked about that enough. And I think it's very underrated because yeah, you're right, people will join the program. And absolutely, there's some commitment there. But to really say, okay, I'm done. That's a whole new level.

Why do you think you weren't at the ten until Kat started asking you about that?

Thomas: I think, again, in my mind, I think maybe I wouldn't have – I can go back and look at it now, but I think in my mind I was thinking well, maybe I just cut back. And I can just do it like once a month or every six weeks and that's not bad. So I don't think I was fully committed to it.

And I can't say, there was no dramatic event that happened or anything like that. But I got just tired of going back in the bingeing and feeling like crap. I just had enough. And maybe it took me a lot longer to get to that point than

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other people would, but it was like I just needed to say enough. And I need to surrender and I need to just commit. This is what I want.

I don't want to be doing this. I don't want to be this kind of a man anymore. And I just said, okay, I'm all in. I want to be 100% committed. And I did feel that once I said that, then I could do it. Because then I would believe that I could do it because I said I'm going to do it and I promised that I would. And I was able to hold myself, with Kat's help, to that promise.

And I think really that was the big thing for me where that light went off. Like, okay, you're committed to doing this. You're going to do this. You're going to make this happen.

Sara: Yeah, I think so much of it is just like a firm decision with the right tools. Because I know a lot of my clients in the past, they have made that firm decision but they haven't had the tools to actually do it. And so it becomes really distressing.

But once you do have those tools, it's amazing what a firm commitment can do. And sometimes when I'm coaching on the group calls there are people, you know, we're talking and I'm like, you don't need any more tools. What you need is to decide if you're really committed to doing this or not. And that can take some coaching. There's some stuff underneath it that might keep you from feeling that.

But anyways, I think that's really important to bring up and I love that you bring that up for us.

Kat: I think it's so good to just be aware of where we are because sometimes we don't even ask ourselves. We feel like we're committed, but we don't really even know where we're at on this commitment. And asking that question, I think, helped Thomas to see like, oh, I'm actually only at a seven. I thought I was kind of all in but I'm really kind of teetering here. Maybe there's something I can do to tweak that to get myself to a more firm commitment.

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And I think that that's helpful for everybody, to just ask that question of themselves. Like, where am I right now on that scale? Am I a ten or am I not?

Sara: Yeah, so good. And if I'm not, no shame, but let's just look at it. Let's be curious.

Kat: Yeah, good to know. Good to know where you're at so that you can tweak it if you want to, so that we can find ways to move ourselves up on that scale.

Sara: Totally. Love it.

Kat: Yeah.

Sara: So the commitment was a huge part for you, Thomas. The urges you said you processed through some of the most difficult urges you've ever had while you were working Kat.

Thomas: Yes.

Sara: You want to tell us about that?

Thomas: Yeah, so just I had some really stressful both family and personal things. And partly for me, usually when I'm at my most vulnerable it's a combination of stress and usually poor sleep. And that's, for me, kind of the bad toxic brew, so to speak. And I had both of those.

But I was able to, again, I listened to your processing a difficult urge, which was at the time very helpful. I did some deep breathing. I went for a long walk. I did some praying. And ultimately I know one time I just worked through the model when I was having one of the urges. And I said look, okay, the circumstance is, okay, maybe I have this thought and I can get some relief by looking at porn. But what's going to happen afterwards?

I know how I'm going to feel. I'm not going to feel any better, I'm going to feel terrible. And then I'm going to be now, potentially going back into a binge situation, because that's what my track record is and I have no

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reason to think it wouldn't be any different. I just said, it's not worth it to me. I'm going to go for a walk and I'll see how I feel when I come back. And it passed when I was walking.

So to me, that's really the big thing when I have these urges. And sometimes it's externally driven, it's usually some sort of external thing going on and I worry about it. And sometimes it's, again, partly it's some of these new beliefs that I have of reacting the same way. Well, I'm not the same person that I was when I started this program. And so I don't need to react even in the same way I was when I was younger.

I'm a different person and I can get through some of these difficult things because of these beliefs I now believe. I am practicing my faith more devoutly, that's what it is. And that's important to me. And that draws a strength on when I didn't feel that before. And you can say, well, maybe it is, you were. But that's not how I felt and that's not what I believe that I am now.

And I believe that one of the things, the identity words that I've chosen with Kat was serenity. And how would a serene person react to this? Well, they wouldn't get upset, okay? They would look at it, they would see like, okay, what is the circumstance? Why am I thinking there's a problem or why do I need to be worried? And you analyze it. Many times it's like, oh, yeah, that's really not a problem. I'm just maybe worried about how people will perceive me. And I don't need to be worried about that. Frankly, I don't care at this point.

I'm comfortable with who I am. I've got family and friends who love me. And I've got plenty of people who support me. So I don't need to be worried about what everyone might think of me in a certain situation. I think some of that stems from how I was when I was younger. But I'm not that same person anymore. And that's where I'm getting more comfortable with this identity.

And when I believe that, then it's easier to kind of get through that and say, okay, that's not the person I am. I'm not someone who worries all the time,

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and stresses about things. I'm a calm person and I need to react that way. So when I say that to myself and I work through that, it helps me internalize that and do that. And that's been very powerful as well going forward to have that as a new part of my identity.

Sara: Yeah, serenity. I love that. I love that word. And talk about, right, and you mentioned this earlier, this is about so much more than not looking at porn.

Thomas: Yes.

Sara: This is about really living into this person that we want to be, which was a huge part of that commitment for you, right?

Thomas: Yes.

Sara: If you wouldn't have had that vision, you wouldn't have been here. You wouldn't have gotten there.

Thomas: No, I wouldn't. And I'd still be floundering, but I'm not. And I'm here and I'm on this podcast. And I'm blessed to be here.

Sara: Yeah, so cool. I just want to celebrate you. Celebrate, celebrate, celebrate the work you've done, the progress you've made, the breakthroughs you've made, it's just so awesome.

Kat: So awesome. And I think the identity works for you, it's been the biggest change in your life overall, right? Like the ways that you're thinking of yourself and how you're choosing to describe who you are and who you're becoming and who you –

And not even just becoming. Like, these I am statements like, this is who I am now. I think that was really instrumental in helping you get through those strong urges. What does a serene person do? They go for a walk. They decide to pray. They do those things that you had decided to do, because that was who you are, you as a serene person, right?

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Thomas: Yes, you're right. Yes, and I kind of come back to that. How would that person react? I'm that person now, so how should I react, okay? And the more I continue to do it, the more it just becomes part of who I am now. And it's just someone who's out there who doesn't choose to look at pornography. And I don't have to have a value judgment about it anymore. It's just something I just don't do.

Sara: Yeah, really good. It makes me want to make sure I have a word, one word. What does this person do? It used to be like I had a sticky note on my computer, it was dignity. So like, especially around my business when I was especially new and kind of nervous. Okay, how do I show up with dignity? Dignity for myself and with my clients. That used to be my big word.

But now I'm feeling like I need to get another one because that's really powerful to always be able to go back to something like that.

Thomas: Yes, it is.

Sara: Okay, so tell us how you have your relations – And you've touched on this a little bit, but I'm curious if anything else comes up. But how have your relationships, your life, and your impact all grown as a result of your work here quitting porn?

Thomas: I feel like I'm a better man. And this is like the person that my parents raised me to be. And I think where that shows up is just as a husband and a father. Spending more quality time with my wife and my children. Realizing that I need to be focused on them, I don't need to be bringing external worries about things into my home. I just need to focus on them, spend time with them. Even at work, I just have more calm, I'm focused.

One of the other things I'm working on is, again, this identity of a serene person. I have my phone turned off. When I'm working on something, I'm working on it. I don't have email dings going off or text notifications, because that adds stress, honestly, to me. You just get distracted and that, to me, is like you just become this frantic harried person.

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And so just to be more intentional about how I'm spending my time, both at work, what I'm doing, and even at home, whether it's reading or watching a show, just being focused kind of at one thing at a time. And so showing up as that serene person in a variety of roles for my life, I think it's really added depth to my relationships and it's made me feel more comfortable and be proud of who I am in those various roles.

Sara: Yeah, awesome. I love it. And then I have one more question for you. But before I ask it, is there anything that comes to mind that maybe you missed that you want to share?

Thomas: Sure. I think one of the things that I probably didn't touch on earlier, was the shame aspect. I think one of the things when I realized, like, hey, I want to stop doing this, I became aware of some of the things, that potentially porn is exploitative. And part of it was, and this was something I worked on with Kat, is I felt a lot of shame and disgust. Like, oh, I can't believe I'm doing this, looking at it.

And I realized talking with her, that didn't help me in this. And because then ultimately, I feel worse about myself. And that's going to lead me to binge more. So I needed to have this view of like, hey, look, porn is there. It's just not something I'm going to choose to do. It's there. If other people want to do it, I don't need to have value judgments about them. It's just something that is a choice for me not to use that and do that.

And I think that was helpful for me to get rid of that shame and that guilt of doing something really bad. And not only is it sinful, but it's potentially leading to harm to others. And it was just getting off of that, I think was really helpful to me as well.

Sara: Yeah, how did you do that with your faith? Because this is a challenge I see a lot of people come up with. They have their faith, they have their religion, they have their morals that they hold on to there. But they're also seeing the shame is really harming them and not helping them quit. How did you – What's the word I'm looking for, Kat?

Kat: Manage? Maneuver?

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Sara: How did you manage both of those?

Thomas: So I was able to – And look, I will always be a sinner. I mean, I will, whether I ever look at porn again. I don't plan to, but there are always things that I'm not perfect at. I will have to go and confess. So I can go to confession and seek absolution for what I did there.

And I think what I need to do is, I can't change the world, but I can change what I do. And I can just say, look, it's not a choice for me. I don't have to give value judgments to others who look at porn. I just say, look, I'm choosing not to do it. It's not part of, one, my faith. It's just not something I'm even going to choose anymore to do.

And look at it that way. And just be more kind of agnostic about that. That was one thing, I think, early on with Kat that was really helpful for me to do that and just get away from that shame. Because it ultimately just wasn't helping me. It wasn't helpful to me.

Sara: Yeah, really good. We've talked about that a lot in the podcast, you know, neutralizing it and how to neutralize it. And I like how you say keeping the judgment off of it, it helps it. Which is such a paradox to what we might think will actually help us. But I'm assuming too, that probably helped a lot with the binge stuff that was really hard for you.

Thomas: Yes, it did. And so like once I did it and I'm like, okay, I feel guilty, I feel shame. Well, what's the thing that suits me when I feel like that? Well porn. So I just kind of go back to it. And then it was just some of this resignation, well maybe this is just who I am and I just can't do this.

And then I would feel worse because that means I can't really have this vision of myself becoming more devout in my faith, that's not going to come true because I'm looking. I realized later, it's like, well, no wonder I wasn't getting anywhere, because that's how I was feeling inside.

And so to be able to look at it differently and really kind of process, you know, go through the model and just run it through a different model. That really, I think, was a big unlocking move to me to help get to where I could

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now get the commitment to the ten out of ten. And then work on these new beliefs and identities.

Sara: Yeah, really good. So good. I love that the model was so powerful for you, because it's so powerful for me too.

Kat: Yes.

Sara: Great.

Kat: Yeah, I was just going to say, I think that, Thomas, for you, one of the things that I've just seen over and over and over as we've coached, is how you just have gotten more and more intentional. You used that word like intentional in how you're choosing to think. Intentional in your beliefs and in your identity of who you are. Intentional of how you're going to process those urges and what you're going to do when they come up.

And I think that that's been like a really beautiful guiding light for you to be like, I'm going to choose this. I'm going to be intentional and I'm going to make sure that that's how I go forward. That's how I'm going to do this, is with intention. I'm not just going to let the porn happen to me anymore. I'm not just going to let my beliefs about who I am just happen to me any more. I'm going to choose those. I'm going to be intentional about what those are.

Thomas: Yes, I think that's right. It's like I realize now, I'm back in control. I don't have this involuntary urge, well, okay, I'm stressed. Okay, what do I do? Well, I look at porn. Well, no, I don't anymore. I'm back in control. And to be now, okay, I'm going to choose how I'm going to spend my time and react to something. And that feels very powerful and empowering to me to be able to do that. And that has just been such a good feeling.

Sara: So good. I love it.

Kat: Me too.

Sara: I love it. Okay, so thinking about yourself a couple years ago, or someone who's in a similar position with you, has kind of struggled on and

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off with porn, it's gotten bad. They want to quit. What would you say to them? What advice would you have for someone like that?

Thomas: Stick with it because at some point it will – It clicked for me. It took me a long time, really, to find the click. And when it did, it came real fast. It just kind of fell into place. And so it's not something where it's, well, hey, if you struggled for five years, you're going to have five years of recovery. That may be the case, but it doesn't have to be that way. It can come in really quickly.

And I would say, again, for me, like we talked about the commitment, I think I probably would suggest to people make sure your commitment is really dialed in. Because I think, at least to me, that was the biggest thing, is like once I realized I'm at a ten. I'm doing this. And to me that was a big, big help.

Sara: Yeah, so good. It reminds me Quinn said something similar when I interviewed him. He said he'd struggled for 50 years and said something just clicked and then it was easy. And you know, not easy, easy as in the sense like it's all rainbows and butterflies. Like you said, you still had that river of misery that was freezing cold for you. Miserable but a lot easier than it was.

And it doesn't mean just because you've struggled with it for 10 years, you don't have 10 years of recovery. I love that you say that because a lot of people have that misconception.

Thomas: Yes, that's right. And I think hopefully that can give some comfort to folks out there who might be struggling. But this program and working with Kat has just been a godsend to me and I'm so blessed I came across it.

Sara: Oh, well, thank you. And thank you so much for sharing your story. So good, so helpful. Like I said, we're not usually up here bragging about quitting porn. People brag about running marathons and all the other hard stuff they do. But we need to hear stories of people who quit porn so

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people can start to believe that they can do it too. So thank you for coming and sharing today.

Thomas: You're welcome.

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.