

296. Shame-Free Commitment (Pillar One of Quitting Porn)



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

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You are listening to the *Overcome Pornography for Good* podcast episode 296, Pillar One: Shame-Free Commitment.

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

Hey everyone. Before we dive into today's podcast episode, I wanted to let you know that we have a new self-study course available. We just put this out there last week.

I've had a number of you who have really wanted to come in and do the work, but you've needed something a little bit more affordable. And so, if that's you, we've got it. We're finally ready to go. It's taken months for us to get it, but here we are. We're ready.

It's a self-study course, so you go through it on your own. And we're also offering you three months of coaching for free because I love coaching, and coaching is just the best. And it's really what I believe helps you take it to the next level and really apply everything that you're learning.

If you want more information, if you want to join, if you've been looking for something just like this, you can get the link at sarabrewer.com/podcastresources.

You'll see a link that says self-study course. Go ahead and click on that at sarabrewer.com/podcastresources.

All right, you guys. Enjoy today's episode. For the next four episodes, we're going to be doing a replay of the four main pillars to overcome pornography. I hope you enjoy today's. Have a great rest of your week, and we'll talk soon. Bye-bye.

Hey, you guys, welcome to the podcast episode this week, I am so glad you're here. So before we dive into our topic today, I just want to share a review that I got, which you guys know I share these because I love to celebrate you. And I just love to show my appreciation for you leaving me

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these reviews because they really, really help the podcast grow, and I just really am so, so grateful for it.

So the review says, "I've struggled with porn for a long time, and I've looked for help from countless people, programs, tools, you name it. It baffles me that I've never heard porn talked about like this. It's so new and fresh and so insanely encouraging. It's handed the power back to me where I felt I had very little."

Yeah, thank you. Thank you so much for sharing that and leaving that. And yeah, great job. I'm really proud of you for taking that power back and allowing yourself to think about this in a different way that will help you to change it and will help you to feel more of that power in your life. Great work.

So today I want to talk about pillar one of the four pillars that you need to quit porn. I'm going to spend the next couple of episodes, the next four episodes talking about these pillars that you have to have in order to quit porn.

So pillar one, the first one, we're going to talk about, number one, shame-free commitment. In order to quit porn you have to have commitment, but not just the commitment, it needs to be shame-free commitment. Many of you have commitment, but you're missing the shame-free part of it, which makes it difficult to maintain and keep up. So let's dive into this.

So first, there is that level of commitment that needs to be there in order to quit porn. And sometimes people say that they're committed to quitting porn, but really, they're not. And that's okay. But I want us to make sure we're being really honest with ourselves and not lying about our commitment level. And recognize that if that commitment isn't there, we're not going to be able to do it. And let's be really truthful with whether or not we're committed.

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So let me just clarify some things because having commitment doesn't mean that we have to be excited about it all the time. Motivation is not commitment. Motivation is, "Yay, I'm so excited!" Maybe you're going to an event, "I'm so excited to go to this event, this is going to be so fun." Commitment, on the other hand, is, "I don't really know if I want to, but I said I would, so I'm going to."

So in order to be committed, you don't have to be excited, and you don't have to be really pumped about quitting. It's this mindset, like I don't really want to, but I'm committed to it anyways. Or at least in this moment I'm not super excited about doing it, but I said I would anyways.

Commitment also does not equal perfection. This is where we get in trouble sometimes too, is we think, "Oh, I'm not really committed because I'm not really doing it perfectly. I'm not always following through with what I say I'm going to do." But the thing about commitment is it doesn't equal perfection.

So for example, I am really committed to having a healthy body. And with that, especially if I'm at the beginning of my health journey, I can't do everything at once. Recently, I think I've talked about this a little bit on the podcast. But for the past four or five months, I've been working with a health coach who I really love, just helping me create healthy habits and get stronger.

And when we first started working together, she had me start with all the basics. She had me start with making sure I'm getting my steps in each day and that I'm drinking enough water and just kind of tracking my calories and I know what my intake is. She didn't have me start by working out five times a week, and eating X amount of calories, and making sure that I'm doing all the things; we started with the basics.

And then I went into a cut for a few months, and then I stopped the cut. And then a couple months later- really, guys, it was a couple months later, like three or four months later- that I was finally able to get myself into a consistent workout routine that I really enjoyed because I was just taking

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time getting all this other stuff figured out. And I really needed that foundation, and I needed to take the time to get into this place where now I feel like I'm in a good pattern and have good habits.

And it's the same with pornography. You can be committed and not be perfect at it. Commitment doesn't mean quitting cold turkey. A lot of you guys think this when it comes to porn. In my program, we have our six milestones that you need to work through in order to quit pornography.

And what sometimes my clients do is they come in and they try to do all six milestones at once. And I always tell them, slow down, get the basics under you. Learn how to process your emotions. Learn how to start watching your brain. Learn how to observe your thoughts. Learn how to change your thoughts and beliefs. And quitting porn will come after you learn how to do this.

And so I encourage them just do one, maybe two milestones at a time. But just focus here one at a time, we're just going to build up these basics. And then it'll be so much easier to quit porn once you understand all these basics.

It's a lot different than other programs that come in and they just say, "Okay, we're going to track your days without quitting porn. And if you slip up on day 29, sorry, you have to start over." No, we don't do that at all. I think that is a really inefficient way to quit porn. Instead, we're focused on these six milestones, these six big skills that you learn, and you build up that allow you to fix the root of your porn habit, and allow you to learn how to quit pornography.

Okay, so commitment doesn't equal perfection. Which also means commitment doesn't mean that you never slip up. You can be fully committed to quitting porn and sometimes slip up. Again, another example, if we're trying to quit alcohol, let's say I'm trying to quit drinking. It doesn't mean that I'm not committed if there's a night here or there that I slipped up and didn't follow through with my plan to not drink.

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What happens here is sometimes our all-or-nothing thinking gets in the way and we have a slip-up. And then our commitment goes out the window, we think, “Oh man, I slipped up, I'm not good enough. I'm not even going to worry about it. I'm not going to be committed anymore.”

I see this all the time, all the time. It's probably one of the biggest things, the biggest hurdles we need to get through. I think I did a whole podcast episode on this all-or-nothing thinking. And if not, I mean, even if I did do a whole podcast episode it would be really good for me to address again, maybe in a different light, said a different way.

Because this comes up all the time, this all-or-nothing thinking. And thinking I have to be done in X amount of months. And if it's been three months and I haven't quit, well then, it's not working, I'm not working, I'm never going to be able to do this. Or I'm going to quit, I'm going to be totally done. And if I slip up, then I have to start all over. That's just not how it works.

So let's be really aware and really careful that this all-or-nothing thinking doesn't get in the way of our commitment to quit porn. You can be fully committed to quitting porn and make mistakes. Just like I can be fully committed to having a healthy, strong body and miss a workout here and there.

That doesn't mean that we're not going to get to the point where we're totally done with porn. It doesn't mean we're going to justify looking at pornography. But it means as we're in the process of learning how to quit, we allow ourselves some grace because we're human. Because we're not perfect.

I love that as a mantra, like I'm a human and it's hard to be perfect as a human. And that's okay. And we're going to talk about that more as we get into the shame-free part.

I really want you to be honest with yourself when we're thinking about commitment to quit porn. Are you really committed to quitting? Or this might

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be some of you, are you committed to continue the facade or continue the actions that look like you're trying to quit? Do you see the difference there?

And again, as we're thinking about this and questioning this, I want you to be really curious with yourself and try to drop any judgment that might come up. Okay. But there is a difference between being fully committed to quitting and committed to always trying to quit. Do you see the difference?

This might be you if you're constantly attending programs and meetings without putting in the work behind the scenes. If you're half-assing it, only doing some of the work here or there. If you're complaining that it doesn't work, after you haven't really put in the work to quit. If you use a lot of language like, "Okay, well I'll try. I'm doing my best, I'm trying to quit." When you kind of know deep down you're not really trying.

That really is the idea here, are you really committed, or deep down in your heart do you know that when it comes down to it, you're not really committed to quitting, you're committed to constantly be doing the outer actions that make it look like you're trying to quit? See the difference?

There's a difference between this and saying, "No, I am going to quit. And it's okay if it takes time. It's okay if it isn't immediate, but this is something that I'm determined to make happen for myself. And you put in the work behind the scenes, and you take the responsibility on your shoulders to quit.

You don't put the responsibility on someone else, on a therapist or on a coach. You don't put the responsibility on your spouse, because if my spouse would just give me more, then I wouldn't need porn. No, no, no, no, no. No. I don't know what else to say besides, no. And we just need to do a whole podcast episode on that.

You need to take the responsibility for yourself and ask yourself, am I really committed to making this happen? No matter what happens outside of me, no matter what anyone else does, am I going to quit this? And if this is you,

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if you're struggling with that commitment, this is totally okay. All right. Remember, we're just being curious. We're not shaming ourselves.

Because here's the thing, if you're having a hard time being committed, what might be happening for you is there might be some limiting beliefs going on. Especially if you're not really committed to porn, but you know that you want to be committed to porn and there's that part of you that wants to quit, but you're not really actually committed.

It's because there might be some limiting beliefs going on. So limiting beliefs are just beliefs that you have about yourself, about the world, about porn, about sex, et cetera, that keep you from quitting.

So for example, I was recently listening to a couples counseling podcast by one of my favorite people in the whole world. And in this podcast, there was a couple on who the husband had struggled with pornography, and affairs, and other intimacy betrayal stuff.

And after talking to this couple, the therapist who's hosting the podcast explained to this person who's struggling with the porn and the affairs, said to him, "You're not really committed to quitting this. You're staying here because you are afraid of the vulnerability in your marriage. You're afraid of your spouse leaving, and because of that you're self-sabotaging. You're making your sex life independent of your spouse. And that way, you don't have to create that connection, create that vulnerability, or rely on your partner to fulfill you in this way."

So that limiting belief this person had was, I might get left and so I don't want to be vulnerable and dependent on my spouse in this way. I don't want to create this partnership relationship with this person because I'm afraid of being left. And these limiting beliefs, there are countless limiting beliefs that I could think of. And this is something that you will really want to take the time to discover for yourself and figure out what those are for you.

Here are some examples: I'm just not strong enough or good enough to quit porn. I'm just not strong or good enough to quit porn, and as long as

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you really believe that about yourself, you will never ever create the result of quitting the porn. If you believe you're not strong or good enough to quit porn, you won't be strong or good enough to quit porn.

Another limiting belief is I need pornography, if I don't get this sexual stimulation anywhere else, I need porn. These are just beliefs about sex and pornography that aren't true.

I talked about this in a recent podcast episode, I think overindulgence, just the different conditionings that we get around sex. And unfortunately, a lot of those conditionings that we get about sex aren't true and really harmful to society and harmful to us. But those beliefs are limiting beliefs that will keep you from quitting porn.

Another one is I don't deserve to quit. I am a bad person, and I don't deserve the chance to quit. Maybe I don't have the time or the energy to quit. These are all limiting beliefs about yourself, about the world, about sex, about pornography that will keep you from quitting porn.

This is something that we dive into, like deep, deep dive into in my program. We spend a ton of time coaching and working through these limiting beliefs. There's a whole milestone and videos and trainings around how to change these beliefs. But the first thing that you need to do is really figure out what those are and really spend some time being aware.

And we also coach on this too, you can come to the call, and I will help you pretty quickly discover these limiting beliefs. A great way for you to figure out any limiting beliefs that you might have around quitting porn is for you to answer this question, write this down, and journal on this because this will give you a lot of insight. I want to quit porn, but... Fill in the blank. I really want to quit pornography, but... Fill in the blank.

The answer to that will show you your limiting beliefs. The answer to that will show you directly what is keeping you from being fully committed to quitting porn. I want to quit porn, but... Fill in the blank.

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So we've covered being committed. And now let's talk about how to create this shame-free commitment. Because we don't want to just be committed, we want to have shame-free commitment. If we don't have the shame-free part of it, our commitment pretty quickly turns into apathy. When we slip up or when we mess up, we fall into shame. Shame is exhausting and then it turns into apathy, and we stop caring.

And honestly, the no-shame part should be a pillar of its own. It should probably be a pillar of its own, but I combined the shame-free aspect with commitment because I only gave myself four episodes to talk about all these pillars and it fits in really well here. But fostering this sense of, I can quit porn without shaming myself while I'm doing it, is going to be game-changing for you.

So how do we foster this shame-free commitment? I want you to ask yourself, why do I want to quit porn? Take a minute and really think about that, what are the reasons I'm trying to quit porn? Now, if your answer is something along the lines of so I'll finally be good enough because I won't be enough if I don't. So I can finally be the husband that my wife deserves. So I can finally live up to what I should be. So I can feel good about my life. I want to quit porn so I can feel good about my life and about myself.

If your reason behind the commitment is kind of shame-y, do you feel how that's a little bit shame-y, and the energy around it is like I'm not good enough, I need to quit so I can be good enough. That is not shame-free commitment. We can be committed from a place of wholeness and worthiness, not from a place of so I can finally prove that I'm good enough.

Now listen, absolutely quit for your spouse, for your wife or your husband. Use them as a reason to quit but watch where the focus is. So if it's so that I'll finally be enough for them, or because they deserve better, can you feel the energy behind that? It's like, really low. It's really low; it's really shame-y. So instead, try on like because that's who I want to be. Because I am the kind of person who's committed to quitting for their spouse, because that's who I want to be.

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Do you feel the difference in energy behind those two reasons? It's like because my wife deserves better, or my husband deserves better, or my spouse deserves better, and because that's who I am because I am the person who quits this for their spouse.

Quit because it's a part of your value system, but not because if you don't, you're a scumbag. Or not because if you don't, you're not good enough. But because you want to be the kind of person who tries to live from their inner values.

And do you see how when we change our motivation to be less shame-y and more like because that's who I want to be, can you feel how that's encouraging, how that's hopeful? How it's I already am worthy because I do this for my spouse. I already am worthy because I'm committed to this for my value system. I already am worthy, period, and now I'm going to go quit porn.

This is so important. This is so important, you guys, because I want you to really think about where is the energy coming from behind my reason to quit porn? What is this energy? And if the energy is shame, remember, your feelings drive your actions. So that feeling, that energy that you're feeling is what you're going to be taking action from.

And shame does not drive very useful actions. Shame usually has us avoid, to hide, and to fall into shame spirals, right? So you don't want shame to be the driver emotion here. Instead, create commitment around a driver emotion that's going to be a lot more useful, like worthiness and pride and dignity.

Dignity, you guys, my sticky note, I'm holding it up to the camera right now. This sticky note that just says the word dignity on it has been here on my computer for years, since I started really working with people who want to quit porn.

And at first it started as a word for me. It was like, this is the word I always want to be thinking of and that I want to create for myself. I want to create a

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lot of dignity for myself, because I had some reservations about helping people quit porn. And I had some fears about what people would think about me as a girl helping people who want to quit porn and as someone who is younger, not a lot older. And so dignity, I was always trying to create that for me. And as I created it for me, I helped create it for my clients, and I helped create it through my podcast.

Dignity, you guys, quit porn out of a place of dignity and worthiness, not out of a place of I'm not good enough and I need to quit so I can finally be good enough. What is a reason that makes you feel that worthiness and that dignity? Maybe something like I want to quit because I am the kind of person who does hard things like quitting porn.

Because I am the kind of person who wants to stop buffering with porn. I'm the kind of person who wants to do the hard work to live without running away from emotion. Because I am worth it. Because I imagine a life where this isn't something I'm struggling with. And I'm worth it, I'm worth shooting for that life because this is what I was born to do. I was born to come here and learn and grow. I was born to go through difficult things, I was born to overcome this.

Shame can be really sneaky and show up in your commitment. So watch out for it. So always ask yourself, and this goes back to all the tools I'm trying to teach you guys, just being aware. What is the energy in your body that you're operating out of? What is the emotion that is driving my actions right now? And be aware if shame sneaks back in.

And listen too, you guys, there are some of you who need to come and join Overcome Pornography For Good. And you know who you are, you have that feeling, that pull towards the program. You're kind of making progress, but you're struggling. You've started to have epiphanies by listening to the podcast, but you need help implementing it more. And you can feel it in your body, this desire to do more, this desire to join, and this desire to fully commit.

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Here's the thing about joining the program, you guys: it is like a big sign to yourself, and a big sign to God, a big sign to the universe that says, "Okay, I'm ready. I'm ready to finally be done with this." It's a big sign that you're committed. And not just that you're committed to quitting porn, but you joining is a big sign, and you saying I'm committed to doing it this way.

I'm committed to doing it without the shame. I'm committed to doing it by getting to the root of this problem instead of just using Band-Aid solutions. I am committed to learning how to mindfully manage my urges instead of just pushing them away. I'm ready, I'm ready to do it this shame-free, long-term way.

All right, you guys, have a great week. I love you all so much, we'll talk to you next week.

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.