

## 301. Masturbation: Myths, Shame, and What the Research Says



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Sara Brewer**

## 301. Masturbation: Myths, Shame, and What the Research Says

You are listening to the *Overcome Pornography for Good* podcast episode 301, Masturbation.

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

Hey everyone, I'm excited about this topic. This is another snippet from our healthy sexuality class in the program. Man, this one is just going to speak for itself and there is so much goodness in here.

All right, let's talk about masturbation. This is going to be a really, really great one and a long one and a big one. So buckle up. Again, you get to choose how to think about this or use this. I will always reaffirm this. You are the authority in your life. I'm going to give the research. I'm going to give the information. I'm going to give the modalities that we find are the most useful, and you got to choose what to do with that.

We are always here for you. We don't have goals for you or specific outcomes that we want for you other than just healing, decreased shame, and more increased control in your life. Okay? So my goal here is to give you tools to think about this in a healthy way. You deserve the research. I'm going to help push you out of black-and-white thinking around masturbation. I'm going to talk about when masturbation might be harmful, but more than that, we're going to talk about the myths around masturbation and the misconceptions around it.

And then again, religiously, you get to think about this in whatever way you want. I will have another class here on spiritual, personal spiritual authority, how to develop that. If you want to reconcile some of this, if it feels different than maybe like what you have heard in the past from religious leaders. And if you want to figure out a way how to mesh those together, we'll talk about how to do that in this class. You know, really to use all of this to increase your connection with God and to increase your relationship with God and to make things better for you and better for your relationship with

## 301. Masturbation: Myths, Shame, and What the Research Says

God, better for your life and just like more loving and wholesome and beautiful and more spiritual. Okay?

So that's going to be another class. This is the research. This is our approach around this. This is some tools for you to think about this in a way that can be really empowering. And religiously, you can think about however you want. And we can work through some of that, how to make sure that you are having the relationship with God that you want in the other class, developing personal spiritual authority.

Okay. So masturbation, masturbation and porn often go hand in hand. And yes, there is a pun intended there. Oh, so dumb. I don't make jokes every now and then. What am I even doing? There's so much opportunity for that. Not always, right? You know, and I say this because sometimes when I talk about masturbation, people are like, like porn and masturbation are like, you know that, right? Like porn masturbation are going to be the same thing. I'm like, yes, of course. But you know, so they often go hand in hand, not always.

And so what we're looking at here is, is your shame around the porn use, is it distress because you're using porn or is it distress because you masturbated or is it both? And so we're going to hit on that distress because of masturbation here.

All right. Let's talk about some of the myths around masturbation. And I think listening to the porn panic class before this one is going to be really helpful because we dive into a lot of these and they apply here. Okay. Here's some of the myths about masturbation that you might have heard.

It lowers your sex drive with your spouse. Now, remember, there's nuances here and watching that porn panic porn myth is going to help a lot. Masturbation alone isn't going to do that. Now, if you're experiencing lower sex drive with your spouse, there's a lot of stuff that could be happening and masturbation could be a result of that. It could be relationship issues, it

### **301. Masturbation: Myths, Shame, and What the Research Says**

could be sex issues, it could be sexual intimacy, emotional intimacy, and then masturbation is maybe like more of an escape from all of that.

But masturbation alone, it's not going to lower your sex drive with your spouse. And there's a lot of studies on that too, that people don't always just masturbate because they aren't getting sex or because they don't want sex. People masturbate still even when those things are going really well.

Masturbation is only for sexually dissatisfied people. There you go. That's what I'm saying. Masturbation causes blindness. That's not true. Overuse can cause damage to genitals. That's not true unless you are like harming it, like physically harming yourself. But just masturbating is not going to harm your genitals.

Masturbation causes erectile dysfunction. That's not true. It causes hairy palms. That's not true. Impotence, not true. It turns people gay. I hope that we've gotten past that one, but I remember hearing that. I remember hearing that growing up. And so that's not true at all.

It creates penis shrinkage or curvature. That's not true. It creates infertility. That's not true. Mental weakness and dopamine depletion. That's not true. We're going to talk about that in a little bit more in depth here in just a second. It can be addictive. Sometimes I get comments, you know, that really fancy words like, it lights up the Delta Fos in the nucleus accumbens. But again, go watch that porn panic video if you haven't yet, where we really dive into all of that.

If you've watched that video, you're going to know exactly what I'm talking about here. But no, that's not true. And we debunk that myth in that porn panic and porn myths video. It makes me unable to perform with someone I like. That's not true. Yeah, you might experience that and there are some really valid concerns there and struggles there and distress there, but it's not caused by the masturbation. Again, we kind of talk about that in that porn panics, porn myths.

## 301. Masturbation: Myths, Shame, and What the Research Says

A lot of these relate. They're very similar, but right there can be a lot of other things going on. It can be sexual distress. It could be nervousness. It could be anxiety. It could be a whole bunch of other things, but there is no data. No, that's just a myth that masturbating will cause that. It won't.

Okay, so dopamine depletion. Let's talk about dopamine depletion. Dopamine depletion may be a real thing in real research, but when adding masturbation to our search, all that pops up were Reddit threads and pop culture articles. So from what we see now, there is no empirical evidence that masturbation creates dopamine depletion.

Now, dopamine fasting, it's kind of a fad term right now, you might have heard. And so doing that dopamine fasting or cutting back from masturbation or other things that bring pleasure, bring sugar, it could be sugar, it could be whatever it is you wanna fast from. That can be a great thing. Let's just make a few things clear in order to avoid maladaptive behavior. Maladaptive behavior is going to be any behavior that keeps you from being able to live a mostly normal life and it gets in the way of living a good life. Okay?

So just a couple of things. Dopamine is not like heroin or cocaine. You can't get addicted to it. Some spaces where you're hearing these terms, dopamine fasting and dopamine depletion, they give off this idea that dopamine is something you can get addicted to if you have too much of it and that's just not true.

This really great article about this from Harvard Medical School called "Dopamine Fasting: Misunderstanding Science Spawns a Maladaptive Fad." I recommend reading this if it's something that you want to dive a little bit more into. It's a pretty short article, but it's helpful. So if you've heard dopamine fasting, just understanding that it is a fad phrase for taking a time out of short-term pleasures for mental rejuvenation. And this isn't anything new.

## **301. Masturbation: Myths, Shame, and What the Research Says**

It's been done for centuries. And dopamine fasting is just kind of our new way of talking about taking a break from things in order to better our mental, emotional well-being. And it can be a great practice if it doesn't create harmful behavior, like maybe taking it too literally, looking at it in some of these ways that we just mentioned that you can get addicted, that dopamine is like heroin or cocaine and it's not the same, or if it's creating distress.

So for example, there's a difference, right? There's a difference between taking a break from sugar, cutting sugar out of your life for a couple of months, days, and it turning into panic and fear around sugar, and eventually potentially leading to an eating disorder. So there's a difference.

And so we want to make sure that if we are doing some dopamine fasting or taking a break from these types of activities, it's helping us and it's not turning into harmful behavior, creating a lot of distress. Now we talk about over desire. You've heard me talk about that. It's just a term we use for urges that feel compulsive because your brain loves that dopamine and it's reminding you where to get it, how to get it, how you can get more of it. And so how you can bring down that over desire is through mindfulness and emotional regulation.

Fasting, this term dopamine fasting, might simply be a technique to reduce stress and engage in mindfulness-based practices. We've just got to be careful to not take it too far or take it too literally. Again, just being careful not to interpret this in a way that creates more harmful behavior like all or nothing mindsets, shame, unnecessary fear and panic. And we're going to talk about this more throughout the class.

One more thing, the evidence does not show that you can get addicted to masturbation. It's not something like dopamine, isn't something that you can become addicted to. Masturbation, there's little to no evidence that it's creating stuff in your brain that's creating addiction the same way that heroin or cocaine or these hardcore drugs are. So let's keep going.

## 301. Masturbation: Myths, Shame, and What the Research Says

Let's get into the research about masturbation. So there is no evidence for negative health effects of masturbation. There is no evidence for negative health effects of masturbation. We're not talking depth about this. Here's what the research says. This is from Chasioti and Binnie, their 2023 study.

Again, let me just reiterate in case this is maybe the first one you're listening to, but we have all of these studies linked. They're all from really reputable sources. We hired out a lot of this with a researcher specialist to make sure we were getting up to date, good, honest, true research. You can find all of these and dive into them more. Some of them you might have to, like they're in specific journals that maybe you have to pay a couple bucks to access because they're in these journals, but most of them should be very available.

That's in the document below, or if you go to the website, [centerforovercomingpornography.com/research](https://centerforovercomingpornography.com/research), we're just on the top page. You'll see a research page on the homepage. That's where you can get all of these sources. Chasioti and Binnie, 2023, treating problematic pornography use by promoting abstinence from masturbation and or porn may make the problem worse.

If you've been in the program, if you've heard me talk, this isn't going to be a surprise to you. And it's fun to see the research also back this up. We talk about this a lot. And men who engage in online support forms for masturbation abstinence may be inundated with greater toxic masculinity messages, which other research says that makes pornography problems worse. Okay. Treating porn, problematic porn, by promoting abstinence may make problem worse.

Let's keep going. Let's see what else there is. So this is from that same study, just a few more things that I thought would be really fascinating for you to see. Reboot, especially NoFap, promotes abstinence from masturbation and pornography to treat pornography addiction, an unrecognized diagnosis. We talked about that in the DSM-5 that I see 11. We talked about all of that in the previous video, Porn Panic.

## 301. Masturbation: Myths, Shame, and What the Research Says

While the intention of Reboot NoFap is to decrease distress, qualitative studies have consistently suggested that reboots paradoxically cause more distress. So we're doing the research right now, and then I'm gonna talk about this more in depth, okay, and why that might be. So stick with me.

The distress appears to occur in response to number 1, the abstinence goal, which recast common sexual behaviors as personal failures. That's something we really work on in the program is learn and move on, right? Not getting into this failure mindset. Anytime you slip up, it's just a way for you to move forward. It's not a failure. And 2, problematic and inaccurate reboot slash nofap forum messaging regarding sexuality and addiction. That's what we're doing a lot in this milestone is trying to combat that problematic and just untrue messaging that you get about pornography. Okay?

More engagement in no-fap online forums was associated with worse symptoms of erectile dysfunction, depression, anxiety, and more sex negativity. Just interesting, right? And then let's look at this study by Zimmer and Imhoff in 2020. So what they're looking at is why do people still believe that masturbation is harmful, especially when there's so much, there's like a huge lack of evidence and you don't have to go very far to see this and to see all the studies that masturbation is actually like health-wise, it's not hurting you at all.

So they say, despite this lack of evidence, abstinence from masturbation is still recommended on forums, boards by religious leaders, really just by non-health and sex professionals as a strategy to improve one's sexual self-regulation without any evidence that it actually works. Why? Why? It's often because of misinformation, right? It's hard to know what's true. It's hard to know what's not true. Misinformation going around, also things changing, right? Stigmas from past years, older generational stigmas around it, a lack of trust in science and research. So if you just genuinely don't trust research, that's a reason, and a lack of education on healthy sexuality, these are all some reasons.

## 301. Masturbation: Myths, Shame, and What the Research Says

Here, let's talk about when masturbation can be harmful. Okay? It can be harmful when it's interrupting daily life. So if you are not participating in daily life activities, if it's interfering with relationships, again, right, we're thinking of an iceberg. So we've got the masturbation at the top of the iceberg, what's underneath the iceberg, if it's escaping relationships, if it's to avoid relationships, if it's to avoid being vulnerable, all those things we talked about in the porn panic stuff, if it's interfering with relationships, it can be harmful.

And of course, if you're doing illegal things like public masturbation or stalking, anything non-consensual, anything including minors, which, you know, I hate that I even have to say, but right, minors can never ever consent to sexual adults with acts ever, ever, ever, ever. So that's when it could be harmful. It's legal things interfering relationships or interrupting daily life.

The truth is is that masturbation is a completely normal part of healthy development. It's a developmentally healthy thing. And for many people, it's a normal and healthy practice, and it does not contribute to bad relationships, to out-of-control behaviors, or to immoral actions. Also, as seen in the research, treating problematic porn use by using abstinence from masturbation often makes the problem worse.

And so I'm really pushing us. I'm really pushing us to get out of black and white here and it might be uncomfortable for some of you. Again, there is a spectrum of how comfortable people are with sexuality, and you get to be wherever you want to on the spectrum. You know, really comfortable with sex and talking about sex or really uncomfortable with sex or talking about sex. Really comfortable with masturbation, really uncomfortable with masturbation. And it's okay for you to be wherever you want. And it's also okay for someone else to be on that spectrum.

I just want to remind us that a key principle here that I just wish could, like, infuse into all of you is that no one can tell you what to do with your body, unless, of course, you're hurting other people. But with you and your body,

## **301. Masturbation: Myths, Shame, and What the Research Says**

it's yours. And no one can tell you what to do with your body and your sexuality. It's yours. You get to make decisions about it. You are wise enough and you know yourself well enough to make good decisions.

And it's a practice in trust and trusting our highest selves and trusting ourselves to make the best decision for us and looking at all of this information instead of feeling threatened by it, looking at it and saying, okay, here's what the data is telling us. Here's my personal experience with this. Here's some professional's experiences with this. Now with all of that information, what do I want to do? And I got to decide what to do and no one can tell me. Okay?

And we support you, whatever you decide to do. So why is there so much angst around masturbation? It kind of comes down to emotional worries and theological worries. So let's chat about these a little bit. Here's some theological worries that come up for people. It's a sin. Masturbating is a sin. It is not living a pure life. God is not happy with this. It is dirty. It is offensive to God. Having thoughts about other people, sexual thoughts, is impure. It's self-centered. It mocks the power of creating life. There could be potential scrupulosity tendencies here too where things feel really black and white or just like the teachings around it were so intense that you're terrified of it.

So if you want to explore this and potentially reconcile it with your own theological beliefs. We're going to talk about it in the class, Developing Personal Spiritual Authority. And that's not a class, like, how do we justify this? That's not the purpose at all. The purpose is, Okay, what do I want for my relationship with God? Am I sure I'm going to explore my beliefs and my thoughts around this? Is it really getting me closer to God or is it bringing me further from God? Is it really helping me live a God-filled life or is it distracting me? So it's just stuff that we get to explore and you get to decide for yourself.

Here's some journal introspection on this. Again, we're not a religious-based organization and we can coach in. A lot of my coaches are so good at this and are religious and some are and some aren't. And

## 301. Masturbation: Myths, Shame, and What the Research Says

they're just really great at helping you work through this on your own. But here's some journal and introspection questions as you're grappling with maybe some of the theological worries. We're like, okay, we look at the research, there's nothing wrong from a research standpoint, and trying to just avoid it and be totally abstinent from it. Research shows this actually has more negative effects than positive effects of doing that. Okay, here's my theological worries. Let's look at these.

Let's consider these. Is it possible to see this in a way that is even better for my relationship with myself and with God. Let's think about our using sexuality for good class. And are we using our sexual nature to be in distress, to be worried, to hate ourselves, to hate our bodies, to just beat ourselves up, to find ways for God to be mad at us? Or is there a way for me to look at this in a better way that can help my life and ultimately help my relationship with God?

Do we know what the theology says or are we hearing interpretations of the theology? Sometimes we think we know what the theology says and in reality, it's not that black and white. Or some people think this and some people think this. And there's different leaders who have different perspectives within the theology. And so, are we sure that we know what it says?

And am I recognizing, for people who use the Bible says, That's just really interesting to me. Am I recognizing that we pick and choose what we take literally from the Bible? So if the Bible says something about masturbating, which I don't think it does specifically, am I recognizing that we also pick and choose what we take literally from the Bible. The Bible also says, don't eat animals with fins and scales. And are we doing that as well?

Do I know my specific religion stance on this or has it changed? An example here for anyone who's LDS, this is really fascinating, this article, this study from 2005, it's called Mormonism and Masturbation. This is before the wording was changed. So Mormonism wasn't offensive back then. So I don't want you to think that this is like an anti-Mormon study.

## 301. Masturbation: Myths, Shame, and What the Research Says

It's not, right? This was in 2005 when that was the word that we used. So the summary here is it's just like a fascinating account of the history of masturbation and Mormonism. And although it's probably worth reading, and it's entirely the main takeaway is that the LDS script about masturbation has evolved over time and seems very secularly influenced due to conservative and moral terror. So I would just encourage you to read that too.

And I bring that up because it can be helpful here. Do I know my specific religion stance on this? And have I looked into it? And have I recognized that maybe it's changed? We also did a deep dive for LDS followers. We did a deep dive of this on my Instagram that you can go and look. That had some really awesome insights from a lot of people who have studied this in depth.

So some more questions for journaling. Are different leaders in my religion saying different things, right? Like if I go to this bishop, are they going to say something? And this bishop, they say something different. And if I go to this pastor, are they going to say something different than this pastor? If that's the case, this is a sign where it's your own personal spiritual authority that you get to make this decision for you. Pure, clean life, right? So no, God doesn't like it because he wants me to live a pure, clean life. How am I interpreting pure and clean? And am I interpreting this in a way that's helping me or am I interpreting this in a way that's creating more problems for me and actually keeping me from God.

We'll talk about this in depth in that Developing Spiritual Authority class, but looking at the result line of the model, what's the result that God wants from us? What is the result of a godly life? And so instead of getting really black and white on specific things, can we look at the result more than really black and white thinking?

An example of this that I loved that I had a follower share with me once, they said they had a counselor who told them, you know, there was a lot of distress around this person masturbating as an 18, 19-year-old kid, very,

## 301. Masturbation: Myths, Shame, and What the Research Says

very normal activity. But there was so much distress, I keep masturbating, I don't know what's wrong with me. And the counselor helped them see, if we're going to look at this as a sin, let's look at it as a sin like how swearing is a sin. And yeah, swearing isn't the best thing to do, but we're also not in a ton of distress when we do swear.

The huge distress is a result of sexual shame, And maybe we don't need to see it like that because maybe it's not that. We can see it as a sin in other ways. There's other ways to interpret this in a way that can serve you and serve your life instead of interpreting it in a way where you just always feel like crap and you can never feel good or worthy or good enough, which isn't what God wants. It's not what God wants.

This process of reconciling religion with sexuality, this is something really big to think about in journal on. Like, is God at odds with my sexual body? And is it possible that God isn't at odds with it? Could there be misunderstandings on my part? I really love Jennifer Finlayson-Fyfe for this topic. If any of you want to dive into that and want to hear someone talk about that more in depth, I would recommend her. And like I said, there's going to be some more help with this in that developing spiritual authority class.

Some other emotional worries might be, I'll feel bad. It will replace my spouse. It's a sign of my lack of control. So let's chat about these for a minute. I want you to remember that masturbation or pornography, it doesn't create shame. So if we look at the model, the circumstance is going to be porn or masturbation, C-T-F-A-R. The feeling is shame, right? The feeling does not come from the circumstance. The feeling comes from your thoughts and your beliefs.

One person can masturbate and feel shame. Another person can masturbate and not feel shame. Why is that? It's not because the masturbation creates shame. It's because the thoughts and the beliefs and the stories and maybe the traumas that you have that create shame, so

## **301. Masturbation: Myths, Shame, and What the Research Says**

that T-line. And then what are the actions from shame? Binge, shame spirals, self-loathing behaviors.

Shame isn't going to bring us any good results. Masturbation or porn doesn't create shame, the beliefs around it do. And so we can use those beliefs to justify, we can use those beliefs to feel shame, or we can use those beliefs for something in the middle to help us really live the life that we want to live, to feel more in control, but also to not feel in total distress because we masturbated.

Now, my protector and my advocate and my almost infuriated energy comes out when I hear stories around masturbation like this. When I hear stories about teenagers who are being shamed for this completely normal experience, that is not okay. When I hear about people who are stuck in so much angst and they can't even move on and they can't get out of bed or they just feel like crap about themselves because they've masturbated, right? That's not okay. Teaching people to feel that way is not okay.

When I hear stories about, and I hear a lot of stories about this from followers, from people who follow my work, kids who experience masturbation at a young age as a completely normal, healthy developmental thing, like really truly exploring your bodies or finding that there's like pleasure down there, that's a completely normal thing. But then they don't know what it is, they just know that it feels good. And they learn from church or parents that it's a sin.

But not that it's just a sin, it's a sexual sin, which is the worst kind of sin. And then just, oh, the complete distress that they shouldn't be feeling as kids around something that is a very normal developmental thing. Or when I hear stories about teenagers who think they're never going to be able to have a good life because they viewed porn and masturbated.

Like, my heart breaks. I'm like, that's wrong. We cannot be teaching kids that. That's the energy that I hear around this. And none of this is okay. This extreme distress around masturbation can lead to sexual trauma. The

## **301. Masturbation: Myths, Shame, and What the Research Says**

shame around masturbation is learned and it's very, very unhealthy. And so I don't want to be wishy-washy on the effects that this shame has. I want to be really clear that it's not okay and it leads to a lot of issues.

And in an effort to not be wishy-washy, I'm going to talk about what I've learned from Megan Von Fricken, who's an LCSW, about the similarities between people and deep sexual shame culture and those who have experienced sexual assault trauma. And I want to be clear, I'm not saying that sexual assault trauma is the exact same as sexual shame trauma, but I do want to show some parallels here. I want to show how damaging this deep sexual shame can be. And if you've experienced it, you know. If you've experienced it and you felt it and then you've become aware of it, you know how damaging it is.

So I'm going to name some similarities between sexual assault trauma and deep sexual shame trauma that people experience. Most people don't experience all of these, but rather will experience a couple very intensely. This isn't an exhaustive list, but here's some similarities. Internalized shame, damaged self-worth, fear and anxiety related to sexual activity, low desire or low sex drive, difficulties with intimacy, compulsive sexual behavior. I mean, this is a pattern that I see.

This is a lot of people who are struggling with porn and their adults typically grew up with very deep sexual shame. Disassociation or emotional numbness during sexual experiences, body dysmorphia, pelvic floor dysfunction or erectile dysfunction, somatic symptoms such as headaches, chronic pain, digestive issues, hypervigilance- like I said, not an exhaustive list, but these are similarities that we see in people who have experienced sexual shame, trauma, really deep conditioning, and sexual assault trauma. It's a big deal. It's not something to be wishy-washy about.

And this is a huge reason that I do what I do is I want to heal this. I want to help you heal this. You deserve to be healed from this. And part of this is going to be taking this a step further and kind of pushing you out of the black-and-white thinking around masturbation, okay?

## **301. Masturbation: Myths, Shame, and What the Research Says**

Fearing masturbation is a direct result of sexual shame. I want us to be really careful about how we talk about lack of self-control. I want to quit masturbating because it's a sign of me not having self-control. So maybe, maybe that's what's going on. But like if the belief behind masturbation is that it's always bad and I should never do it, it's probably not a self-control issue. It's a sexual shame issue.

Now hear me out. I wouldn't call eating a treat a few times a week, lack of self-control. If I have a brownie a couple of times a week, I wouldn't call that lack of self-control. In fact, with appetites and a lot of dietitians, people who are intuitive eating and helping people recover from eating disorders, they'll tell you this. The more you just let yourself eat what it wants when it wants in moderation, the more control you have. Now, if I eat a whole cake, if I'm binging a whole cake and maybe throwing it up afterwards or just eating it until I'm sick, that's a problem. That's when it's not good. And that's where it becomes an issue with porn and masturbation too, right?

I want us to maybe consider thinking about it in this way as well. Recovered binge eaters or people with eating disorders will tell you that giving themselves the permission to have and not restrict is what allowed them to finally be in control. Could this, maybe just maybe, could this be the case with masturbation? Even if you decide ultimately that you don't want masturbation as a regular practice, could this be the case?

I want to share a comment. I got this comment on the community board where someone had said something because I had talked about masturbation in a coaching call and they're like, I don't know how I feel about this. Can you guys help me? I think that masturbation is just a hard no. And this person commented this and I really appreciated it and wanted to share it, but I didn't get their permission, so I cut off their name. I didn't reach out to them, so I'm just going to share this.

It says, I think that this is something people have to figure out for themselves. Personally, I agree with you that masturbation is not a part of my own acceptable sexual behavior. There was a long time, not long ago,

## **301. Masturbation: Myths, Shame, and What the Research Says**

however, that being given permission to masturbate helped me feel less shame about that part of my sexual habits until I could reconcile with my beliefs about porn, masturbation, and sexuality. At the end of the day, the most important thing is the work you do on your personal journey and how you personally feel about certain behaviors.

This is something that I hear often and I hear a lot of is sometimes giving yourself permission to masturbate can help you heal a lot quicker than just trying to stay abstinent. And I hope that some of this has maybe given you a new way to think about it because the goal truly, the goal truly is let's get you out of distress and let's get you into control. Let's get you out of shame and trauma behaviors and let's get you into liberation and freedom and where you feel in control and you feel so good about yourself and you feel so good about your life. You are the authority of your life. You get to choose what to do with your body.

My experience working with thousands of clients is that it's much better to work through the distress around masturbation than it is to cut out masturbation. We work through the distress, you learn to give yourself permission without shame, we heal some of that sexual shame trauma, and then you decide what you want to do. That's my recommendation to all of you is that we work through the distress, you learn to give yourself permission without the shame, and then you get to decide. Because from that place, you're going to be a lot more empowered. From that place, you're not going to be just acting on impulse and acting on fear and acting on shame.

And then you get to decide from a place of total empowerment. Again, we want to keep in mind this concept of using sexuality for good, and that using it for bad does not mean not masturbating. It means using sexuality, even using masturbation for good. Here's some examples of where using masturbation for good might be a really good helpful thing.

This energy of self-acceptance, right? Maybe it just helps you get into self-acceptance and loving this part of you that has been demonized for a

## 301. Masturbation: Myths, Shame, and What the Research Says

long time, loving this part of you that people have taught you is bad. Maybe it's not bad, maybe it's mine, and maybe I can just accept myself and love the sexual part of me. That can be a really great way to use it, integrating the sexual part of you, learning to love and integrate it instead of it being a necessary evil.

To connect with your partner, especially if you're apart, right? If you and your partner are spending long times like periods apart from each other and you want to masturbate together while you're on opposite sides of the world, that's beautiful. That's great. That's using sexuality for good. It can help with your sexual values, right? If you don't want to have sex before marriage, but you're also with this person all the time and you love them so much and you're starting to feel all these sexual feelings, but you don't want to have sex before marriage, like masturbation can be used as a tool to help you reach that goal, kind of help for a release of sexuality.

You'll hear a lot of sex therapists also recommend to women who don't know the pleasure parts of their body. They don't know how to orgasm. They don't know these things. And so masturbation as a way to learn about your body, especially for women is like highly recommended and like a really beautiful thing using it for good because once they learn how to do that, then they can do it with their partners and then they can have a better sexual relationship in their marriage.

A key principle here is I want us to use guilt as information and not an answer. So guilt is a signal that there's something to look at, but it doesn't necessarily mean that the thing you're feeling guilty about is automatically bad. Here's an example. I mean, you can probably think of a number of things that you have felt guilty about in your life that you're like, I shouldn't feel guilty about that. Right?

But I think about my mom who would feel intensely guilty for going out with her friends. And the reason for that is because there is conditioning behind it that good moms don't do things for themselves. Now, the reality is if she would go out with her friends, she would be more fulfilled, she would be

## 301. Masturbation: Myths, Shame, and What the Research Says

happy, she would have great adult friendships. It would be a good thing for her life, it would be a good thing for her kid's life, it would be a good thing overall.

And so the guilt is some information. It's telling you what you're believing about something and it's telling you what some thoughts are and some values are. And so you use that as information and then you get to decide if you want to keep it or not. And then yeah, you can say, okay, yep, this isn't something I want to do. I actually don't want to go out with my friends because I do think that in order for me to be a good mom, I shouldn't do anything for myself. Or you can say, oh, like that's really interesting.

I wonder where that conditioning came from. Oh, it probably came from my own mom who did that. Oh, I didn't like, there are things I didn't like about my own mom who, you know, and this is all hypothetical just so you know, I'm not talking about my mom here, but like, oh, like I didn't like, I wish my mom would have gone out with her friends. I wish she wouldn't have felt guilty about that.

And so you can use it as information and not just as an answer. And it can be the same thing with masturbation. And you get to decide whatever that information guilt is telling you, you get to choose what to do with that. I won't tell you what to do with that. No one should tell you what to do with that. You get to decide that's where your own spiritual, personal autonomy comes into hand, okay?

I'll bring up too people with scrupulosity symptoms. Me, raise my hand. You feel guilt a lot. And so it's really, really important to use guilt as information and not as an immediate answer. Look at the guilt, look at what it's telling you, decide if you wanna keep it or decide if you don't wanna keep it.

Same with food, right? People who are recovering from eating disorders, oh, I ate a piece of cake, I feel guilty. Now, I don't have to make that mean that I shouldn't have eaten the cake. Instead of that guilt being an answer for what I should and shouldn't have done, I'm going to use that as

## 301. Masturbation: Myths, Shame, and What the Research Says

information. Oh, that's that part of me that's telling me that it's bad for me to eat sugar because I'm going to get fat. And because if I'm fat, I'm not worthy. I'm not good enough. Right?

Oh, okay. Now that I see that information, I think I might just let this guilt go. Like, thank you guilt for showing me that, and you can go now, and I still feel okay about eating this piece of cake. Okay?

All right, this is a lot to sit on, so allow this to marinate, do the worksheet that's below, bring this to coaching. We've got your back no matter what your choices are, your choices. So if you're a very hard no, and you know where I said earlier, I said my recommendation is that you learn to get rid of the distress around masturbation and then you decide what to do. But if you're like a hard no and you're like, I will not consider giving myself shame free permission here. That doesn't feel good to me. I don't want to do it. No, we'll support you with that. And we're not going to push you in that direction.

All right, you guys bring this to coaching and we'll also see you in the next video.

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