303. The Limiting Beliefs Keeping You Stuck in Porn



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

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You are listening to the *Overcome Pornography for Good* podcast episode 303.

Welcome to the O*vercome Pornography for Good* podcast. I'm your host, Sara Brewer.

Hey, you guys, welcome to the podcast episode this week. I'm so glad you're here. I am excited to talk to you today about limiting beliefs. And specifically, I want to share the elephant story that goes along with limiting beliefs. You might have heard this before, but we're going to apply it to porn. It's called the elephant rope.

And the story goes like this, it says a gentleman was walking through an elephant camp and he spotted that the elephants weren't being kept in cages or held by the use of chains. All that was holding them back from escaping the camp was a small piece of rope tied to one of their legs. As the man gazed upon the elephants, he was completely confused as to why the elephants didn't just use their strength to break the rope and escape the camp. They could easily have done so, but instead they didn't try to at all.

Curious and wanting to know the answer, he asked a trainer nearby why the elephants were just standing there and never tried to escape. The trainer replied, "When they're very young and much smaller, we use the same rope to tie them. And at that age, it's enough to hold them. As they grow up, they're conditioned to believe they cannot break away. They believe the rope can still hold them, so they never try to break free."

The only reason that the elephants weren't breaking free and escaping from the camp was that over time they adopted the belief that it just wasn't possible. Interesting, right? I love that story; it's such a great visual for us.

It reminds me of the quote, "You can have anything you want if you give up the belief that you can't have it." It was Dr. Robert Anthony who first said that. You can have anything you want if you're willing to give up the belief that you can't have it. Self-sabotage happens when we have these limiting beliefs.

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Self-sabotage is the elephant saying he can't break free because he's tied up, when he could easily snap the rope if he allowed himself to. But his beliefs are keeping him from breaking free. This is true with pornography, but it's also true with, jeez, anything.

I can't tell you how many amazing people I met this last week who have done really incredible things with their lives. Paraplegics who learned to walk. My friend who's 50 years old and won Ms. Georgia, the Ms. Georgia pageant. 50 years old as a Black woman, where before her limiting beliefs were that's only for white people, and I'm too old to do that. So many people who do amazing things once they drop their limiting beliefs.

And this is true, of course, with pornography. So I want you to think what were you conditioned to think about sex and pornography, maybe even from a young age? Things that you were told. What are those beliefs that are keeping you tied down now? Maybe you were taught that you're addicted, and you can't change.

Now, a little rant on that. I have done many podcast episodes on this, so make sure to go and listen to those. But I did just post about it again on my Instagram, I post about it occasionally. I just said, not all porn use equals addiction. And I had my friend TJ Counseling; I need to get him on the podcast episode sometime.

He said, “Addiction recovery often doesn't work because most people who go to them aren't actually addicted. The addiction model works great for actual addictions, but not so well for habits. It's like trying to treat a cold with chemo.” And I loved it so much, I highlighted that, because that's true.

Many of us were told that we're addicted to porn, but really we might not be. And the addiction model isn’t working for you and that's why this podcast works so well, and I get so many messages from you saying that it's changing your life, because you haven't really been addicted; you've had a habit. And we need to look at those things so differently.

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And so again, go listen, those podcast episodes if you want more. One of them is called Am I Addicted, and I talked about how specifically you can know for yourself, when to use that label, when not to use that label. But maybe that's a limiting belief that is keeping you tied down.

And just think of that visual, the massive elephant with so much potential, who's held down by this tiny rope. Because when he was little, he couldn't break free from the rope. But now that he's bigger, he can. But he's still refusing to try and to break free because he's holding on to that belief. Because he's choosing to believe that that rope is really big enough to hold him there. Right? You're addicted and can't change; what if that was one of those ropes?

What are some other thoughts and beliefs that you were conditioned to think about sex and porn that's keeping you stuck? Maybe this is something you have to struggle with forever. And so that's not true. We know that's not true because there are many people who quit viewing porn. And so if they can quit, you can too.

And we know that our brains can change. We know that our brains aren't just stuck, how they are, right? All the science, all the evidence shows that you can quit viewing porn and that brains change, and people change, and it's not something you have to struggle with forever. But that might be a belief that's keeping you stuck.

Maybe another belief is men can't control their sexual desires. I mean, that's kind of a big one that the whole world, the whole message from the world is, right? When you watch TV and listen to music, that's the message, it's oh, you have a thought, and you act on it. Right? Men can't control their sexual desires.

Maybe its sexual feelings are dangerous and should be avoided at all costs. And that's keeping you in this willpower, react, resist cycle. And in the shame spirals, and in the shame cycles. And that rope that's really keeping you there is this belief that there's something wrong with you and you're dirty, and you're gross, and you never should have been here in the

first place. And you're stuck on this tiny rope. This tiny rope is holding you down because you believe that you're not good enough.

Or maybe another belief that's holding you back is that you need sexual stimulation, and you have to have pornography. When the truth is, is that that's not true either.

And so as we start to recognize these little ropes that we're allowing to tie us down, the question we have to ask ourselves is are we willing to break those ropes? Are you willing to be wrong about these beliefs?

This is step one to changing your limiting beliefs, is just noticing them. And then step number two is being willing to be wrong about them. Taking a look at that rope and be like, maybe I'm wrong, that this was strong enough to hold me here.

And doing it with a lot of compassion, right? Like these elephants, yeah, it was strong enough when I was young. I was taught this when I was young, this had an impact on me when I was younger, but I'm not young anymore. I'm big. I'm older, I'm stronger. And am I willing to be wrong that this rope can really hold me here?

Am I willing to try to break free from this? Because I can sit here, and I can tell you, and I can give you all these counterarguments for all these thoughts. But if you're not willing to change those thoughts, if in your mind you're like, “Yeah, but I'm the exception. Yeah, Sara, people can quit porn, but I'm the exception.” If you're not willing to be wrong about it, you're never going to change.

Oh, I saw the best quote. I saw the best quote on Instagram, and I saved it, and I'm making it my background. It is so good. It says, “A perpetual question: am I really stuck? Or am I like a bird smashing myself into the same glass door over and over when the whole sky is waiting behind me?” So good. I'm going to read that again. And as I read it, just feel the deliciousness of these words, and allow yourself to really feel these, okay?

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“A perpetual question: am I really stuck? Or am I like a bird smashing myself into the same glass door over and over, when the whole sky is waiting behind me?” The truth is, is that you can have anything you want if you're willing to give up the belief that you can't have it. And this is the work. This is the really big work of changing your life.

Yeah, there's all the actions and there's all this stuff we have to do. You have to learn to process your urges, you have to learn mindfulness, you have to learn and move on. You have to do all these things, right? But if we're not changing, our beliefs behind the scenes are never going to change long term. And the actions come so naturally to us once we start to change our beliefs.

So how do we do this? If we're smashing into the same glass door over and over again, how do we stop smashing into those beliefs? So like I said, right, first we want to just be willing to be wrong. Second, we want to practice new beliefs over and over and over again.

So here's the thing about your beliefs right now, these limiting beliefs you have, something I have to struggle with forever, men can't control their sexual desires, whatever it is, I can't quit porn. Whatever that is, the only reason that's such a strong belief, is because you've thought it over and over and over and over again.

That is literally all a belief is, is something that you’ve thought over and over and over and over and over again, or you've been told over and over and over and over again. So it becomes this thought that you think over and over and over and over again.

That's why you have these neural pathways in your brain that are really fused together. It's because you've thought it many, many, many, many times. So in order to create a new belief, you have to practice thinking something different over and over and over and over again.

You know, we can't always go from, like, “I can't quit porn, it's not possible,” to “I totally can. I really believe in myself.” That's kind of a big jump. So even if you can just go one step further, and just practice one better feeling

thought until that becomes your new reality. So maybe it is, maybe it's possible that I can really quit porn for good. Maybe it's possible, maybe it's possible, and you start to feel belief.

And so now instead of immediately going to it's not possible, you're immediately going to maybe it's possible. And then you can move even a step further: maybe it's possible for me. I can see how I could do this. I believe that I can change. I believe that humans can change. I believe that brains are malleable. I believe that I have everything that I need to change this. And you practice those new beliefs over and over and over and over again.

You can do this however you want to. You can make them your phone screensaver, so you're looking at them all the time. You can take five minutes each morning and read through these new beliefs and feel the new beliefs, okay? This is the other thing I want to talk about because we don't want to just say them to ourselves, but we want to practice feeling. Feeling the emotion.

And this is where the power comes in, right? This is why I say we don't want to say something that isn't believable to us because we want to be able to feel our new beliefs. So you practice feeling. Feel what it would feel like to break free. Practice feeling what it would be like and what it would feel like to be free of a porn habit.

Go there in your mind. Pretend in your mind, okay, down the road I'm someone who doesn't struggle with porn, what am I feeling? What are my emotions? What do I feel about my life? How do I feel? What emotion do I feel? And bring up those emotions in your body.

You can bring up those emotions with new thoughts, with visualization, with trying out new beliefs. But feel that feeling over and over and over again. Practice that feeling over and over and over again. Practice those new beliefs over and over and over again.

It's like doing reps at the gym, right? You go and you do bicep curls and you do them enough and your biceps get really, really strong. Same thing

with beliefs; you have to do your reps. You have to practice, you have to be willing to be wrong, and be willing to practice, and be willing to see the world in a different way. And you'll build that muscle, you'll build that new belief, it'll become really strong.

Okay, you guys, there's so much hope. There's so much hope for you with quitting porn. And this is about so much more than quitting pornography. This is about you healing that relationship with yourself so that you can go and do anything that you want to.

Quitting porn is just the beginning. And then you heal that relationship with yourself. You have the confidence in yourself, you trust yourself, you know how to accomplish difficult things. You go and you take these skills, and you use them for whatever it is you want your life.

Think bigger. Think bigger than just quitting porn. This is about creating your ideal, beautiful life. And all these skills are going to teach you how to do it, you're just applying it to porn right now. Okay?

So if you want to take this to the next step, if you want to take this further, if you want individual coaching around this, if you want to get access to my whole milestone system and get all of the practices and really apply all this work, come and join us in Overcome Pornography For Good, sarabrewer.com/workwithme.

The program is where we take all of this that we're learning in the podcast and take it to the next level. It's where true transformation happens, so we'd love to have you there. Come and join us if you're ready.

If you're feeling that call to do it, bet on yourself, trust in yourself. It'll be that first step in healing that relationship with yourself is investing in yourself. Oh my gosh, it's such a powerful thing. Okay, you guys have a great week, and we'll talk to you next week. Bye bye.

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