304. Failure Tolerance:
Why Being Willing to Fail Helps You Quit Porn



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

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You are listening to the *Overcome Pornography for Good* podcast episode 304, Failure Tolerance.

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 am so glad, so excited that you are here today. Before we hop into our topic I want to give a little shout-out to one of you, my listeners, who have left me a review recently.

It says, "I have been listening to this podcast for a month now and it truly has changed my life. I have developed a whole new perspective that has taken away the shame and has led to almost a month of being porn-free. I never thought I could do this. I've tried for over a decade and had no success. I now believe there is life without pornography." I love, love that. I'm so inspired by that review and by your story. Thank you for sharing that with us. Thank you.

If you are feeling like you would like to leave a review for me, I would super appreciate it. I don't do any sponsors or anything for my podcast; I just do it all for free. And my purpose in doing podcasts is to give people what they need to quit viewing porn. And to give you all this new information and to really just blow your minds, and to really help you have transformations.

And so it helps me out and I really love seeing it. And it's also a moment for you to celebrate yourself when you leave me a review. So thank you. And, again, if you want to do that, you can do that just by scrolling to the bottom of the podcast on Apple Podcasts; it's super easy.

Okay, so let's hop into the topic today, which is failure tolerance. This is something I learned from my coach, Brooke Castillo. She is incredible and she's taught me so much. And this specific principle is really cool and really important, so let's dive into it.

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Failure tolerance- what does that mean? What failure tolerance is, is just this idea that the higher your failure tolerance, the higher your ability, your tolerance for failure is, the quicker and the bigger that you will succeed. Okay, let me just reiterate that. The higher your tolerance is for failure, the better you fail, the more willing that you are to fail, the quicker and the bigger you will succeed.

And the quote that comes to mind when I think of this is the Thomas Edison quote. He says, “I didn’t fail 10,000 times. I figured out 10,000 ways to not build a light bulb.” What a powerful perspective that is.

The idea of failure tolerance is that your success is literally built on your ability to fail and your willingness to fail. And there is story after story of this. What you’ll find as you study successful people and learn about successful people is that this isn’t the exception to the rule, this is the rule, is that you fail a lot and then you become successful.

Think about J.K. Rowling; she was rejected 12 times by 12 different publishers until someone took her and decided to publish her books. Can you imagine if her failure tolerance was low, and she was only able to fail a couple times without being able to move forward? We wouldn’t have Harry Potter; what a world that would be.

Bill Gates: his first company totally crumbled. So Microsoft was not his first company. His first company crumbled, and the product didn’t work, and it sucked, and he lost a ton of money. But think about if he didn’t have tolerance for failure, if is he wasn’t able to handle that he wouldn’t have gotten back up and tried again. He’d be like, “Well, the business thing didn’t work, what’s next?” He wouldn’t have become Bill Gates.

And this isn’t really what they teach us in school or anywhere. It’s not what we’re taught growing up anywhere is that you have to fail to succeed. We are taught to avoid failure. We’re taught that failure is what keeps us from succeeding. And this is one of the worst lies that we’ve ever been told.

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Seriously, this is one of the worst lies we've ever been told, and I'm going to work really hard to teach my kids differently.

And in fact, it's the exact opposite. So we're taught that failure is what keeps us from succeeding, but it's the opposite. Not failing will keep you exactly where you are. Not failing, not being willing to fail, not having tolerance for failure will keep you from succeeding. In order to succeed, you have to increase your tolerance for failure. And it's okay if you don't have a lot of it right now; this is something that we learn.

Just like you increase your tolerance to hear crying when you become a parent. Before you're a parent, some crying might drive you nuts. And then you become a parent, and your tolerance for listening to crying increases pretty quickly. You get very tolerant of some whining and crying. And that's why when you're on an airplane and if someone is not very tolerant of your kids making noise, they probably don't have kids, or they probably haven't had kids for a while.

So increasing your tolerance for failure is something that you can learn. And it's something that you can practice and get really good at. An example is door-to-door salesmen. I have a lot of friends and cousins and family members and even people in my program who do that summer sale stuff. Which I think is awesome; they go, and they help people get security systems or pest control.

And the first time you do that, I imagine you're knocking on doors, and you're getting doors slammed in your face, and you're getting rude people. And those first couple days, those first couple of weeks are really difficult. You're not really used to all the rejection; you're not used to the doors being shut in your face.

And then after a while it's not that big of a deal. You keep going and you get really good at it. And the more willing that you are to have doors slammed in your face and have rude people, the more you will find people who really do want your product and really who do want your service. But you have to

be willing, and you have to have this tolerance for rejection and for failure in order to find the people who want what you have to offer.

Walt Disney- did you guys know this about Walt Disney? I just learned this. He was fired from a newspaper because he lacked creativity. Can you believe that? My jaw dropped when I read that. Walt Disney was fired because he lacked creativity. And then he went, and he started a company, I think an animation company, and it failed, and he was broke. And he went back to Hollywood, and he was laughed at, and he was kind of a joke.

And then he created Disney, all the Disney movies and the animations that got a lot of success, and Disneyland, and Disney World and all these things, right? But I think that's so fascinating, right? He was fired because he lacked creativity. So even Walt Disney, it's not like he was born with his ability to be Walt Disney; he had to learn it. And he had to have some tolerance for failure.

Can you imagine if after he was fired he was like, “Well, I'm just not a creative person. It's just not something I have. Let’s move on to the next thing.” But no, that's what he really wanted to do, he really wanted to be that. He really wanted to have successful animations. And we’re so blessed that his failure tolerance was high. Think of a world without Disney, without animation.

Milton Hershey, so the guy who started the Hershey Chocolate Company, he started three candy companies before Hershey's. Three, not one, but three. So it's not like he just knew how to make candy and was born with this gift of business. No, his tolerance for failure was just really high. He was willing to fail and willing to fail in business and willing to fail in candy making enough that he was able to get really successful with it.

Like I said, this is a theme that you're going to find over and over and over and over again as you start listening to really successful people. They're not just born with it, they don't just know how to do it. They're just really willing to fail. They have a really high failure tolerance.

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My husband loves the podcast How I Built This, and so I listen to those occasionally with him. And it's mostly people with really big, successful companies or who have started really big, successful things in the world; they come on and share their story. And every single story is filled with failure. Every single one.

So how does this apply to pornography? Your tolerance for failure in this area will determine whether or not you learn the skills that you really need to quit porn for good. You have to have a high tolerance for failure to learn what you need to quit porn for good.

Because here's what happens: if you don't have this, you make a commitment, you're like, “Okay, I'm going to quit viewing porn.” And then you slip up. And then when you slip up, you fall into despair, and you stop trying. Or you do really well for three months or six months, and then you slip up, and then you fall into despair, and you quit trying, and you're like, “See, can't do it. See, it's not going to happen. See, it's too hard.”

Or maybe you don't quit-quit, and you're like, I'm never going to try again. But you fail and then you get so discouraged, and you binge for days or weeks, it takes you a long time to claw your way out of this discouragement.

And when you don't have this failure tolerance, you don't learn from those mistakes, and you try the same thing the next time. So you finally claw your way out, right? Maybe you quit porn for three months, you slip up, you claw your way out. Or you quit porn and a couple weeks later, you slip up, and then you claw your way out. And then you're like, okay, we're going to do the exact same thing.

And then you're in this cycle of quit porn, you're probably using willpower, right? You're probably doing all these things we've talked about. And you're not learning from it, you're just doing exactly the same thing, and then you slip up again and then you fall into a hole, and then you dig yourself out. And it's just like over and over and over and over again.

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And the reason you do this is because you're making failure mean that there's something wrong with you, instead of failure just being a part of the process and a part of learning what you need to do and learning how to get better at quitting porn.

I will tell you guys, it takes a lot longer, a lot longer to quit porn if you have to dig yourself out of a hole every single time that you slip up instead of just standing back up and getting back on the horse. And I see this over and over and over again with people that I coach.

My clients who make the most and the quickest success don't make their failures mean anything more than, oh, I had a slip-up. They don't make it mean all the doom and gloom and discouragement. Because there are two things that we can do when we're coaching and we're spending time trying to work through things.

We can spend that time digging ourselves out of holes. And there will be some of that; that's inevitable. Especially at the beginning when you're learning how to overcome shame. And we're learning how to change the way we think about ourselves. And we're learning how to stop the self-loathing. We have to do some of that.

But the quicker you can learn that, we can start to shift our coaching from getting out of holes and digging ourselves out of holes, and shift our coaching into looking at, okay, well, what happened? What went wrong? What are we missing here? And then getting better.

So here's the thing, you guys, viewing pornography is completely neutral. If we think about viewing porn, it is neutral. It is not good or bad until you have a thought about it. And we know that this is true because a lot of people have different thoughts about viewing pornography, right?

Some people view porn, and they're like, “Oh, great. That was fun. Let's move on.” Some people view porn, and they're like, “Oh my gosh, what is wrong with me?” And some people view porn, and they're like, “Oh, okay, I viewed porn, period. Nothing.”

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It doesn't mean anything until you have a thought about it afterwards. We have this event, view porn, and then what we think about it creates this positive or negative response. And what we think about it also will create what we do next.

So if you view porn and then you think, “Oh, see, I'm never going to do it. See, this sucks. See, I'm just the worst. I’m never going to figure this out. This is too hard.” That's not going to create momentum; that's not going to create very good energy for you to get up and try again and learn and be able to quit pornography. That's a very low failure tolerance state of being.

The higher your tolerance is for failure, the quicker that you will quit porn. The quicker that you will move forward and the quicker you will learn. It's when you get into this self-loathing and self-defeating behavior and your tolerance for failure, you're not willing to fail, you're not willing to mess up, you're not willing to not be perfect, that's when it takes forever.

Especially when you're here and you have the tools. Especially when you're doing the correct things, and learning the correct things, and getting coached, and you have all of the right exercises and all of the things to help you learn the right skills. When you have all that, it can be a fairly quick process, like we learned from Quinn a couple weeks ago when we interviewed him, right?

It can be fairly quick unless your tolerance for failure is low. Like I said, I see this with my clients all the time. My clients who are not willing to slip up, are not willing to give themselves grace, and to mess up do not make progress as quickly as my clients who are very graceful towards themselves in slip-ups and very willing to slip up in the name of learning and getting better in quitting porn.

And it makes sense, right? Of course, it makes sense. But we just haven't thought about it in this arena of quitting porn. No one's taught us this with quitting porn. With quitting porn it's just like, nope, no room for error. And

what I'm telling you is that mindset- nope, no room for error is keeping you from quitting and keeping you stuck. Absolutely. Absolutely. Absolutely.

And there is a difference between failures that move you forward and failures that don't move you forward. And in next week's episode, I'm going to specifically talk about those. I'm going to talk about the different types of failures that we experience and how to optimize our failures so that they push us forward.

Because the failure I'm talking about here isn't the failure that's like, “Oh, well, Sara said I'm going to fail. So I don't know, I just really want to look at it and I don't really care. And I'm supposed to fail anyway, so I'm just going to go look at it.” That's a very different kind of failure than what I'm talking about here.

So I'm going to dive into that next week. There's a specific type of failure that we're shooting for here that will help you quit pornography. But for now, I want you to marinate in this concept of failure tolerance. And ask yourself, how willing am I to slip up and to fail in my journey of quitting porn? And you might feel some resistance there. And if that's you, I want you to start to explore that a little bit. Where's that resistance coming from? What am I making failure mean?

You might be making failure mean that it is not driving you forward. That whenever you fail, whenever you slip up, whenever you have a mess up, it's pushing you backwards, it's not helping you make progress. And if that's the case, are you willing to change that belief about failure?

What if failure and being willing to not be perfect here is exactly what you needed to get out? Because like I said, I'm going to repeat myself a little bit. Like I said, this is fairly simple and fairly easy. And it's just skills you need to learn. And it can be a pretty quick process if you're willing to learn it. And you learn it quicker when you're willing to fail, just like anything.

Just like basketball, right? Imagine if you're trying to get really good at free throws. And every time you miss a free throw, you, like, fall on the ground,

and you're like, “Oh, I suck so much.” And you go sit on the bench and you're like, “I'm just done.” And then you finally get up enough courage and you’re like, “Okay, I'm gonna go try free throws again.” You make a few, and then you mess up, and then you go sit on the bench.

No, but if you slip up and you just keep going, you get really, really good. You get really, really skillful at this skill of making free throws. And that's the same thing with pornography. When we're learning skills, emotional skills to quit being pornography, we've got to practice. And that might mean failing. That's going to mean not being perfect at it. Okay? All right.

So next week we're going to talk about specifically what types of failures it is that we're looking for and how to optimize our failures so that they push us forward. Have a great week, 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.