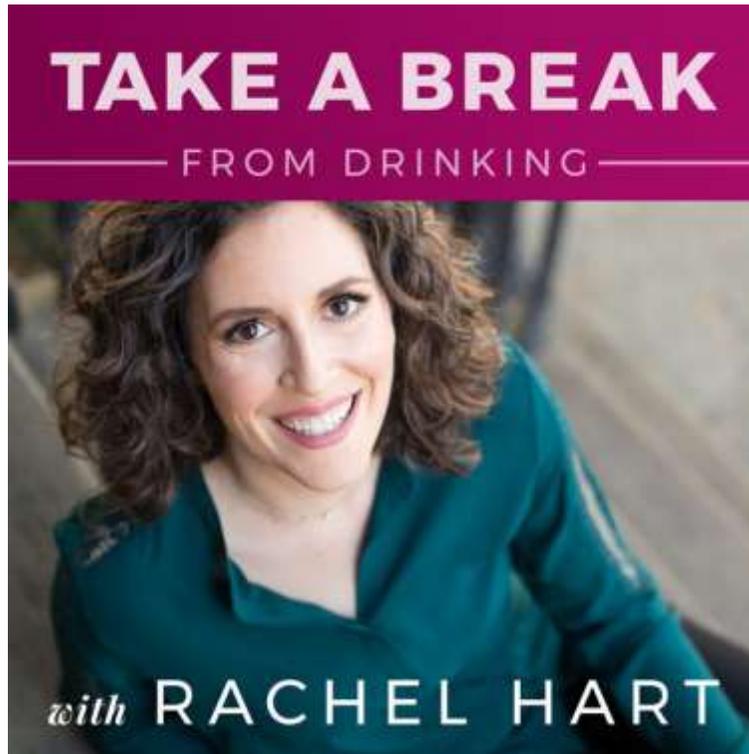


Ep #136: Setting Foolproof Resolutions



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Rachel Hart

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You are listening to the *Take A Break* podcast with Rachel Hart, episode 136.

Welcome to the *Take A Break* podcast with Rachel Hart. If you are an alcoholic or an addict, this is not the show for you, but if you are someone who has a highly functioning life, doing very well, but just drinking a bit too much and wants to take a break, then welcome to the show. Let's get started.

Well hello, everybody. I have to tell you, I am so excited because my new *Take A Break* program that I have been telling you guys about is almost here. Next week, September 3rd, the day after Labor Day, it opens up and I cannot wait.

I'm going to be taking women through a 30-day break from drinking, but like nothing you have ever experienced before. This is not crossing days off a calendar. This is not gritting your teeth. This is about learning how to transform your relationship with alcohol. That really is the key.

It's how to learn how to feel peaceful and in control when the urge to drink appears instead of feeling like your only options are to give in, or grit your teeth. I want to help you understand how the habit is working and really get to the bottom of all the times that you thought, "I don't know why I drink. I don't know why I said yes. It just happened."

I used to think that all the time; it just happened. But it never just happens. There's always information there that you can find to help you change the habit. I'm going to be teaching you about commitment and how to become a person who always trusts herself, not just around alcohol, but trust that you will follow through on all of the promises that you make to yourself.

And of course, I'm going to be teaching you guys all about the think-feel-act cycle which is what I talk to you all about on the podcast; how to take this concept and actually use it as a tool. This is how you create emotional wellbeing. And trust me, when you feel better in life, it is so much easier.

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It's like a million times easier to say no to a drink when you're feeling better. That's why the think-feel-act cycle and really mastering it is so important.

I will tell you, so many of you guys have been emailing me about it as soon as I started talking about it and you've wanted information. You wanted to know when could you join, when could you sign up. I'm so excited that you guys are excited. And I decided that I would do a little bonus for my podcast listeners because I love you guys. I loved joining you, being in your phones, being in your headphones every week, being in your car with you. I love it.

So listen, the doors don't officially open until September 3rd, but if you sign up before Labor Day, I'm going to send you a little bonus that I created just for you guys. It's called the Podcast Roadmap. And it is the 30 essential episodes from the *Take A Break* podcast that you really must listen to when you're getting started with this work.

Everyone always asks me, okay, you have so many episodes, where should I begin? And the Podcast Roadmap is going to tell you exactly where to begin and the exact order to listen to the episodes in for it to really, really sink in.

So, if you're interested in signing up, if you're interested in getting the Podcast Roadmap – and you'll get it as soon as you sign up so you can start listening now, you can start laying the groundwork now. And if you are interested in working with me starting September 3rd, then make sure you visit rachelhart.com/earlybird.

So, all of this got me thinking – I've been doing all this thought about September and this program, I really should do an episode for you guys about resolutions. I've never done that before. And let me tell you, it's so important to really understand how to set good resolutions because most people set them the wrong way and then they backfire. I did this for a really long time.

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So here's the thing – and I'm going to walk you through each of these pieces today – there are really only three reasons why you are falling short on any resolution that you set. That can be resolutions around drinking. It can be resolutions around food, or spending money, or working out, or your relationship.

There's really only three reasons. You have to understand them. You have to know how to spot them. And then you have to plan to do something different.

So the first one is setting a resolution from a place of panic. I'm going to talk to you about that more, but just for now, understand that that's what most people do in January. "Oh my god, the holidays are over, I gained 15 pounds, another year has gone by and I've been sitting on the sidelines of my life. I haven't done anything. I've got to change everything."

That's what happens for so many people. January comes and you panic, "This year has to be different." But setting resolutions from a place of panic or a place of fear, it's always going to backfire.

The second reason why your resolutions are not working is because you are trying to change the what without understanding the why. So what that looks like is, "Okay, I'm going to stop drinking or I'm going to go to the gym or I'm going to save money or I'm going to eat right." All your focus is on what you are going to do or not do, and none of your focus is on why you are doing or not doing these things in the first place.

And let me tell you, if you don't understand why you are doing something, you're never going to be able to change it. You are always just going to be battling with willpower. And then the third reason why your resolutions are failing is because you don't have a system to deal with failure.

You have this all or nothing mentality. So it's not surprising, when you understand that you're often setting resolutions from a place of fear and panic, that you haven't built in systems or plans to handle a failure or

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handle setbacks. Because when you are in fear and panic mode, failure is just unacceptable.

So what happens? I did this over and over. I would set a resolution and maybe it would last a week or two weeks. Maybe it would even last a month. But as soon as I had a bad day, as soon as I didn't show up the way I wanted to, everything went out of the window because I had no system. I had no process for actually using failure to learn from it. I just used failure as a way to beat myself up.

So these are really the three reasons why you're falling short on resolutions. And I really want to go through them one by one with you because if you can change this, let me tell you, you will be unstoppable when you set goals for yourself.

Okay, the very first one, setting a resolution from a place of panic or fear – panic and fear is what most people try to use to motivate themselves for a change. And I think part of this mentality comes from the cultural narrative that we have about needing to hit rock bottom in order to finally change.

Someone actually said to me recently, she said, “I can't find a compelling reason to change the habit of drinking because my drinking isn't that bad. I mean, I don't like it. I'm not happy with it, but it's not causing huge problems in my life so it's really difficult to find a compelling reason.”

And you know, it's so crazy when you really listen to what is being said there. But you know what, I used to be in the exact same shoes. I used to believe that it would be easier to change if things would only get worse. I truly thought that.

I remember really thinking to myself, “Rachel, maybe you're not able to change your drinking because things have not gotten bad enough.” Isn't that a terrible message that we give to people? It's such a useless self-defeating thought. Because what are you going to do, go out and drink a lot more and hope that things get really bad? Or go out and eat a ton more and hope that you'll gain enough weight, that will stop you from eating, or

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spend really recklessly and hope that creditors knocking on your door will help you clean up your act?

It's so crazy when you think about it. But of course, we think this way because this narrative of rock bottom is something that is so ingrained in our society. But the thing is, once you understand the think-feel-act cycle, you start to understand what is truly creating change and what truly makes change possible.

And it's always the same reason; because you believe that change is possible and you believe that it's worth the discomfort. That's it. Change is not possible because things got really bad. Change does not happen because you're in dire straits.

Yes, you can definitely find people, you may know people, who swear up and down that the reason that they changed is because they hit rock bottom, because things got so bad. But the reason that anyone ever changes, the reason that anyone ever takes an action is simply because they had a thought and a feeling that led to a different action. That's it.

And if you're still not convinced, just think about the people out there who, right now, right in this very moment are actually in pretty dire straits, who are still drinking or they keep eating or they're still spending money that they don't have. What about them? Does it need to get worse for them too?

No, the reason why they haven't changed is simply because of a thought that they're having. Rock bottom is a myth. It's not circumstances in your life that compel you to change. It's thoughts that you have. And guess what; you can always choose to think a thought. You can always choose to think on purpose something different. It's just that we don't realize that we can.

We don't realize that we can actually choose different thoughts. We don't understand anything about the think-feel-act cycle. So we look around at our life and think, "I guess I haven't changed because things haven't gotten bad enough."

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Taking a different action only ever happens because you have a different thought and a different feeling. You can decide right now that nothing is more important in your life than reigning in your two glasses of wine habit every night because it's stealing the most important resources that you have; time and your mental energy. You can decide that right now if you want to.

You can decide that even though you aren't waking up hungover, there's nothing more important than learning how to change your desire and learning how to manage your emotional wellbeing without a drink. You don't need to wait until you get to some mythical worse place in order to change.

Because here's the thing – for those of you who have ever thought that or for those of you who have set resolutions from a place of panic and fear, if panic and fear were such great motivators, then why haven't your resolutions worked? How many times have you woken up and told yourself, oh my god, I'm never going to do that again? How many times have you started the new year telling yourself, I cannot have a repeat of what happened last year, this year has to be different?

And how many times did that initial panic and fear dissipate? It just kind of went away, it didn't last. And without panic and fear driving you, then what happened?

I will tell you, there is this quote that I love that I think really sums it up so perfectly that, "Pain pushes until vision pulls." Sure, pain and panic and fear, it can push you a little bit. But the only way to keep going is to have a vision that you are working towards.

And when you are setting resolutions from panic and fear, you're just squarely living in the place of pain. Now, you might say, "Well I do have a vision, Rachel. I have a vision of not being in this pain. I have a vision of having a better life." But let me just ask you this; when you are setting a resolution from a place of fear or a place of panic, is the vision inspiring or

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exciting? Or is your vision sounding a little bit more like, “Oh my god, if I don’t do something, something really bad is going to happen?”

That’s not a vision that is going to pull you. That’s something that is actually going to scare you. And that’s what I mean by setting resolutions from a place of fear and panic and why it doesn’t work. You can’t just be running away from something, you have to be running towards something.

I was always running away from drinking too much, but I also didn’t often find myself running towards not drinking because when I thought about that, I had all of this negative thought and all of this baggage about how it was not going to be something particularly enjoyable. I certainly didn’t understand that it could be a launch pad for the rest of my life.

I thought I was just going to be physically healthy but emotionally kind of suffer, I had no idea how wrong I was. And it wasn’t until I realized, hey, you know what, I can approach this differently. I can really understand what is driving the habit. I can really understand the problems that alcohol is helping me solve. And not only that, I can do all of this in service of becoming a version of myself where I can feel proud of myself no matter what.

And I’m not just talking about being perfect – I mean a version of myself that can feel proud of who I was, no matter what I did. That was actually something that I wanted to run towards. So that piece is really important. Please, please, please do not set resolutions from a place of fear and panic.

The second piece is trying to change what you are doing without understanding why you are doing it. I was doing a webinar recently and someone said, “Do I have to understand why I’m drinking? Can’t I just take a break and focus on saying no?”

And it’s such a good question because I know that some of you out there are thinking the exact same thing; do I really have to understand why? Let’s just change what I’m doing. Let’s just make it so I don’t polish off a bottle at

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night. Let's just make it so I don't have six drinks when I meant to only have two drinks. Let's just focus on what I'm doing. Why do I have to get into the why?

But the why is everything. That's how the think-feel-act cycle works. The action of drinking never happens in a void; there's always a thought and a feeling fueling it, even if right now it feels a little bit like, "I don't know why, it just happened." It never just happens. You just don't have awareness. You don't have consciousness around the habit yet. And that's something that you can gain.

So many of you just want to focus on changing actions. And that's with everything in life, not just with drinking. And what it ends up looking like when you set resolutions from this place of just focusing on what you are doing than why you are doing it, it looks like you're a drill sergeant with yourself, "Don't drink, don't drink, don't drink, don't drink, don't eat, don't eat, don't eat, don't spend, don't spend."

That's all it looks like and it's exhausting because you never actually get to the root cause of why you are doing the thing in the first place. And when you are exhausted and when you don't understand what's happening, eventually you give in and then you blame yourself for being weak and being undisciplined and you start a little shame spiral.

But the reason why you gave in is not because there is something fundamentally wrong with you. The reason why you gave in is simply because you still don't understand the why. You still don't have that piece of information. That's the piece of information that is so crucial and so often overlooked.

You have to understand why it is you are doing whatever you don't want to do, whether it's drinking or overeating or overspending if you want to change it. Otherwise, your resolution is just an exercise in willpower. And trust me, eventually you will get tired because you cannot grit your teeth forever.

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You can however learn how to change your desire so that you don't need to grit your teeth forever. You can learn the root cause of why you are showing up the way you are with alcohol or with food or with money, whatever it is. But you can't do that without understanding the why. So that piece is so key.

And the final piece that I want to talk to you about when it comes to resolutions, your resolutions aren't working right now because you don't have a system in place to deal with failure.

I want you to think of every resolution that you have ever set. When you write it down, what was your plan for when you didn't succeed? What was your plan for when you had a setback or when you didn't do the thing that you said you weren't going to do?

Now, I know a lot of you are thinking right now, wait, what? Because that's what I thought. Like, why on earth would you set a resolution and then also have a plan for failure? Aren't you just supposed to only follow your resolution?

This is what kept me stuck for the longest time. I always believed that the only option was to be perfect and that failure wasn't acceptable. I couldn't create any space for it because I thought creating space for failure was actually setting me up for disaster, when in fact, creating space for failure, having a system in place for how you're going to handle a setback is what sets you up for success. It's the opposite than what we think.

So what would I do? I would set a resolution, I would have no plan for what would happen when I didn't follow it, and then eventually, my willpower – because that's all I was using, I wasn't focused on the why, I was just focused on the what – eventually my willpower just wasn't strong enough. And I would give in and then, guess what, I had nothing there to catch me.

I had no failsafe and so I just did what I always did, which was beat myself up and go into a shame spiral and not want to look and just feel terrible.

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And my brain would revert to this thought; I knew you couldn't do it, I knew you were going to fail. And I would believe it.

The thing is, if you don't have a system or a plan in place to deal with failure, deal with setbacks, then your resolution is never going to succeed, period. Because without a system or a plan, what you're simply doing is setting a resolution that says, "I must be perfect always." And that, my friend, is not how you reach a goal.

You reach a goal by taking action over and over and over again even when it doesn't work. You have to actually learn and grow from your failures. If you can do that, then you truly are unstoppable because suddenly then, you're not so afraid of failure anymore because you recognize that it's always an opportunity to grow and to learn about the habit in a deeper way. It doesn't have to be the moment where you just beat yourself up.

You have to really understand, I cannot stress this enough, that these three things will get in the way of any resolution. If you're setting them from fear and panic, if you're focusing on what you are doing rather than why you are doing it and if you are not spending time to anticipate a system or a plan for how you're going to handle the moment when you have a setback, without these three things, your resolutions will not succeed.

So what you need then is a vision of the future that isn't just about leaving behind what isn't working right now, but something that is actually motivating, so you're not just coming from this place of fear and panic, fear and panic. You need to spend mental energy figuring out the why, why are you drinking, why are you saying yes to your urges, why do you wake up in the morning with the morning with the best of intentions that then go out the window when five o'clock rolls around.

There is always a think-feel-act cycle waiting to be found. The answer is not, "Oh because I lack discipline," or, "Oh I've just always been that way." No, there's just always a thought that you can find, that you can uncover, that will explain it to you.

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And finally, you need a system for how you're going to handle failure, for how you're going to handle setbacks, so you can actually learn and move forward from them. If you have these three components, you truly will be unstoppable.

So listen, I think September is the perfect time to do this. You've already got that kind of back to school mindset where the brain just feels like, yeah this is a moment for a fresh start because we spent so many years having September actually be a fresh start. It actually was a new school year for us.

The pressure is off because the whole world isn't talking about new year's resolutions and how to become a new you. Because it's September, we're just talking about back to school. Plus, you have this great set time period. You're not starting January 1st and then looking at the entire year. You're just focusing on the last quarter.

Now, I think this piece is really important because most people actually spend the last quarter of the year, instead of working on resolutions, they actually spend the last quarter of the year letting themselves go. So it either happens because you have all these excuses like, "Well I already blew the first three quarters of the year, so I might as well just wait for the next one to start, then I'll be good," right? How many times did I believe that?

Or people will say, "Oh, but the holidays are coming up and it's going to be too difficult and there will be too many parties and it's just not a good time." So we believe this idea that it has to be the perfect time, the good time, in order for me to succeed, which of course is a lie. So what do we do? We believe these excuses and then we end up spending the last months of the year telling ourselves, "Oh, it doesn't matter," and indulging, and promising, "I'm going to be better next year."

So the new year comes around and what have you been doing? You've been actually spending the last quarter of the year working against yourself. When you start working on resolutions in September, it sets such a strong foundation for the upcoming year. Now only that, when the new

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year comes, when everyone else is recovering from the holiday hangover, you'll actually be miles ahead. You'll actually have results that you can show because you have done the work to start having more positive thought patterns.

You've done the work to uncover the why. You've done the work to really create a vision that feels motivating and not just something you're running from. That's why I love to think of September as a new, and frankly kind of better January.

So, here's the deal; I want you guys to set resolutions where you will succeed. So please, please, please pay attention to these three areas. And if you're a woman and you want to press pause on your drinking in September so that you can give your mind and body a break from booze and you want to join me, you want to have me on your side while you do it, I hope that you will join me in the *Take A Break* program.

I promise, taking a break really can be the most powerful way to reset your relationship with alcohol. And it's okay if you aren't sure right now what you want that relationship to look like in the future. It's okay if you're like, "I don't know if I never want to drink again, or maybe I do, I just want to only drink on special occasions and not make it a nightly habit, or I do but I don't want it to ever be something that I'm using to numb myself from negative emotions."

It's okay if you don't know. Taking a break and doing this deeper level work will actually help you figure it out because the point is, when you take a break, when you do the work to really understand the why and to really understand your urges differently and the habit differently and the commitment differently, then you can actually move forward and start making conscious decisions about how you want alcohol in your life and feel good about those decisions, rather than feeling like your brain is just operating on autopilot. That's how I felt for so long. It didn't feel conscious. It felt like I was just on autopilot. And that was something I definitely didn't want.

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So, if you sign up before Labor Day, you're going to get the Podcast Roadmap sent right to your inbox and you'll have those 30 essential episodes of the podcast to listen to. And then we'll get started on September 3rd. All you have to do is head over to rachelhart.com/earlybird.

But regardless, why not set a resolution around drinking this September, whether you join me or not. Because here's what I can promise – you're not going to wake up one day and discover that the habit has magically transformed on its own. That's not going to happen for drinking. It's not going to happen for anything in your life.

You have to lay the groundwork. You have to decide that you want to move towards transformation. You have to start taking those steps. So set a resolution and do it in a way that will serve you. If you pay attention to these three areas, it really can change everything.

Alright, everybody, I'm so excited for this program. I'm so excited for you to join me and to share with you guys the Podcast Roadmap. And I'm so excited for you guys all to have a fabulous, fabulous September. Alright, everybody, I will see you next week.

Thanks for listening to this episode of *Take A Break from Drinking*. If you like what was offered in today's show and want more, please come over to www.rachelhart.com where you can sign up for weekly updates to learn more about the tools that will help you take a break.