

Ep #154: Tapping Your Potential



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Rachel Hart

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You are listening to the *Take A Break* podcast with Rachel Hart, episode 154.

Welcome to the *Take A Break* podcast with Rachel Hart. If you're 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.

Hello everybody. It is almost a new year, a new decade, and I thought, what better time to talk about tapping into your potential. I'm going to talk to you all about it on this episode of the podcast, but I want you to know, if you're serious about doing this work, if you're serious about tapping into your own potential, which trust me, you are definitely underestimating and you have definitely not even come close to meeting, then I want you to sign up for the Take A Break program in January.

The 2020 start begins on Monday, January 6th and taking a break from drinking, using the skills that I teach on this podcast, really mastering them, that is the path to unlocking your potential. You get to create a happier, healthier you, but you also get to create a new future for yourself that right now, you probably can't even envision. That's what's so exciting about it.

So if you're interested, head on over to rachelhart.com/january and you can sign up to start Take A Break with me on January 6th, that's on Monday. Okay so, let's talk about potential. What is it? Why don't we have more of it? What's blocking us?

I have been thinking about this so much in my own life, especially as this decade is coming to a close. I was actually at a Christmas party last weekend and I saw someone that I kind of knew in college but not very

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well, and I hadn't really seen him in about 20 years. And we were just catching up with one another and talking about what we had done over the past couple decades and I started talking about myself and this work and the fact that I wrote a book and I started my own business.

And I told him about this podcast and the work that I do with women, and I will tell you, I had almost like an out of body experience as I was doing it. There was a part of me that was telling him all about my life right now, and there was a part of me that was like, wow, can you hear yourself? Can you believe that you did this? You, Rachel, were capable of creating this?

And PS, thank god that you did not listen to your brain back in 2010 about what you thought your potential was. Because my brain would have told you that I didn't have very much. It would have told you that I had wasted so much time in my life and that I had missed out on so many opportunities and back then, I really saw potential as something that could be lost. Something that you could have and then you could lose it, and I had lost it.

I had all this kind of so-called evidence to back me up. I told myself I wasn't smart enough, I wasn't as smart as my sister, I didn't study hard enough in school, I didn't do as well as I could have on my SAT so I didn't get into a better ranked college.

And then I wasted my time in college because I was drinking too much, and then I wasted time in my 20s because I was drinking too much, and I didn't go after the jobs and the degrees that I was supposed to so I didn't have the right titles and I wasn't far enough along in my career.

I mean, it's so funny to say all of this out loud now because I remember believing all of this so much. If someone had told me that it wasn't true, I would have looked at them like you're crazy, you don't know me, you don't know anything about me. I know me. It's true. But now as I'm telling this to all of you guys, I see, oh god, you were so wrong.

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It feels even funny kind of uttering those sentences because now I can look back and just be like, wow Rachel, you had no idea. Because of course, I believed like so many people that my potential was partially baked into my DNA. So I told myself, yeah well, some people are born with a lot of potential and some aren't.

I also thought that my potential showed up in my résumé. I thought that my potential was all about well, let's just list all my accomplishments on a piece of paper and put my name at the top. That's my potential. You can just read about it right there.

So I really viewed potential almost like an object. Either you have it or you don't have it. But potential is not something that you have or you don't have. It's not an object that you can pick up or put down or misplace. Potential is an option. Potential is the option of choosing how you see yourself, how you see the world around you, how you view your past and the story that you tell about it, and the story that you tell about everything that has happened to you and everything that will happen to you in the future.

When I say potential is an option, what I really mean is potential is just a thought. It's how you choose to think about your life, how you choose to think about yourself, your past, your future, all of it. You can think, "I had a miserable childhood, I didn't work hard enough in school, I wasted my time in college, I've never measured up to my peers."

You can choose to think all of those thoughts but here's what I can promise you, those thoughts will kill your potential. They will kill your potential because that is how the think-feel-act cycle works. The actions that you take in the world, what you do or don't do isn't just create out of the clear blue sky.

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What you do or don't do, the actions that you take are the result of your thoughts and your feelings. And so you have to pay very close attention to what you think about yourself and what you think about your past and your future and the world around you. And no one can remove your potential because no one can control your thoughts. No one can control the sentences that you choose to think in your mind. You are the only one that gets to do that.

Now, some of you will say, "Yeah, but I don't know how to, Rachel. I don't know how to think differently about myself." And this is why it's so important to start to do this work. It is one thing to listen to me on the podcast and think, oh, this makes a lot of sense, I like these ideas. It is another thing to take this work and put it into practice.

That is why I talk about the work that I do with women in the Take A Break program like going to the gym. It's like a workout for your mind. It is a workout to think new thoughts and to think thoughts that your brain wants to immediately contradict or say that's not true, that's not who I am, I can't think that, I've always thought about myself or my life or my past or my future in this way. I can't think about it in this new way.

It's like lifting up heavy weights. But even if you're struggling right now to figure out how to do this, to figure out how to think differently about yourself, it's still only ever possible for you. You're always the one who gets to decide what you want to believe about yourself and what you want to believe about what you're capable of, what is possible for you, regardless of what anyone ever tells you.

And the reason why it's so important is because when you tell yourself things like I didn't work hard enough, I wasted my time, I never measure up, you end up feeling hopeless and defeated and ashamed, and then guess what. You hide. You don't take action. You tell yourself, "I'm not

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even going to bother because I'm sure I'm not going to do well." You play small.

Those thoughts will kill your potential. They will kill what it is possible for you to create in this world. Because you need instead to have thoughts like, "Maybe my past was perfect. Maybe I haven't even scratched the surface yet. Maybe it's not too late. Maybe I have everything that I need in order to succeed. Maybe I can fail and it can mean nothing about who I am or my worthiness."

Notice how different those thoughts are. Notice how they can start to shift you away from the negative emotions that keep you stuck. And I'll tell you this, potential matters so, so much when you're stuck in the habit of drinking. For starters, the habit of drinking sucks up so much of your potential. I see it almost like vacuuming your potential up.

Because drinking takes up so much mental space, and mental space is the very place where you create your potential with your mind, with the thoughts that you choose to think. Now, all of us, we all have a limited capacity to think during the day. That limit is created by time. We all have 24 hours. It doesn't matter who you are.

You can fill up that time with anything you want to think about, but most of us don't choose what we want to think about on purpose. We just let our brain go on autopilot. And when you let your brain do that, it will just return to the thoughts that it is very good at thinking.

It will just return to all the thoughts that you have decided are true about yourself. That's just who I am, I've always been this way, I was born like this. That's what your brain will return to because that's what always will be easiest, even though you put those thoughts in the think-feel-act cycle and you'll see that you're going to create a lot of negative emotion. Emotion that

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doesn't have you actually reaching your potential, but they're easy to think and that's what that lower brain cares about.

When you're stuck in the habit of drinking, not only is it crowding up the limited mental space that you have, it's crowding it up with thoughts about the habit and thoughts about drinking. I have journals and journals filled with just pages about all the thoughts I had about my drinking and the habit.

And I will tell you that the majority of what I wrote down, the majority of my thoughts were pretty unhelpful because they sounded a lot like, "What's wrong with me? Why can't I figure this out? Why can't I drink like everyone else?" All of these are dead end questions. You've heard me talk about dead end questions on the podcast before. A question that starts with a negative premise. There's no positive way to answer these questions.

So drinking doesn't just take up mental space, it also sucks up time. Think about how much time you have wasted coming home from work, heading to the fridge, grabbing a bottle of wine, plopping yourself down on the couch and then kind of zoning out for the rest of the night while you just eat and drink and watch. Think about how much time you have wasted getting drunk, drinking too much.

We all say that time is one of our most valuable, most precious things because you can't get more of it. Yet I know I was wasting so much of it. If I wasn't zoned out on my couch after work with a bottle of wine and a bag of chips, I was out on the weekends in the evenings getting drunk with my friends.

Sometimes so much that I couldn't even remember what I spent my time doing. And then the next day, what was I doing? Well, if I was just during the week, I was probably waking up feeling kind of groggy, like I could have

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been in bed for a couple more hours and dragging myself through the process of getting ready to go to work.

If it was on the weekends, it was probably a little worse. I was probably spending a good chunk of my day lying in bed hungover. So you end up wasting time on the front end of drinking and on the backend of drinking. And yet, time is the container for us to think our thoughts and what you think about creates your potential. So how you spend your time matters a lot.

Now, I was spending a lot of my time, especially when I didn't feel great the next day, with thoughts like, "Oh god Rachel, you're such a screw up. Why did you drink so much? I'm so embarrassed with myself. I can't believe I did that. I can't believe I said that. What's wrong with me?" I was sucking up my own potential. I had no idea.

With the thoughts that I was choosing to think, and I say choosing because I was choosing to just let my brain run on autopilot. I was choosing in a sense not to question any of these thoughts because I believed they're just true. And then wasting so much time, either through the act of drinking or the act of recovering from drinking.

Potential is really made up of your thoughts and the habit of drinking, but not just drinking, the habit of anything that's getting in the way of the life that you want to lead, maybe it's overeating or overspending, maybe it's just scrolling through your phone all the time, these habits suck up so much of your mental energy and waste so much of your time.

I was so wrong about what my potential was back in 2010, not because I didn't have access to a crystal ball, not because I couldn't see into the future, but because my thoughts were so negative. And thank god I didn't listen. Thank god I opened myself up to questioning what I thought about myself and what I thought about my life.

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Thank god I learned about the think-feel-act cycle and I started practicing new thoughts. That's what opened up my potential. The decision to start thinking in a new way. And so that's what I want you to think about for yourself. What is your potential? What's your story about how much potential you do or don't have?

Maybe you say I never had any, or I had a lot, but then I squandered it. Or you're telling yourself it's too late, I passed the time where my potential was useful. What's the story that you're telling right now? And here's the thing; what's the story that you're telling yourself about your potential over the next 10 years?

What have you determined is and isn't possible for you? How willing are you to prove yourself wrong and to be wrong? I will tell you, it sounds easier than it is, the willingness to be wrong about what you think, not just about yourself but about your world and your past and your future because it requires letting go of all the thoughts right now that you hold so true about yourself and that right now are making up your identity.

But if you want to tap into your potential, you have to have everything up for grabs. I had to consider that I was someone who could figure out her drinking. I had to start to consider that I was someone who could change her desire and that it wasn't set in stone. I had to let go of the thought that I had an addictive personality. I used to tell myself that all the time as the explanation for why I drank too much and ate too much and spent too much.

I had to let go of the idea that I would never start a business because I was someone who was very risk adverse. I had to let go of the idea that I would never become a life coach because that's not the fancy thing to do. The fancy thing is to be a doctor or a lawyer or an investment banker. I had to let go of all of that.

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Every thought that I had that started with, “That’s just who I am, that’s always the way I’ve been, I was just build like this, I’m just someone who...” they all had to go. The only way to tap into my potential was to let it all go. To stop being so sure that I already knew what my potential was and already knew who I was, and consider that you know what, maybe I had no idea. Because the same is true for you.

Maybe everything that you’re so sure about when it comes to yourself, you have no idea what you’re talking about. Maybe you have no idea what your potential is. When you’re telling yourself you’re so sure that you lost it or you squandered it or you never had it, maybe you’re wrong, and maybe you’re just using the habit of drinking to cover up all those negative emotions and to prove your thoughts true over and over again.

See? I told you that I had an addictive personality. See? I told you that I can’t keep promises to myself. Maybe that’s what the habit of drinking is all about. Because the potential that you have is found in the story that you tell about yourself. And you can either keep telling the same story that you have always told yourself. My guess is it’s not so great. Or you can drop the entire storyline. You can question it all.

You can put everything up for grabs and then go about creating a story on purpose. Go about choosing what thoughts you want to think on purpose, even if it’s challenging, even if it feels difficult, even if you’re not quite sure that you’re ready to believe it. That’s how you tap into your potential. Just by starting with the thought, “Maybe I’ve been wrong about myself. Maybe I’ve been wrong about my ability to change the habit of drinking.”

That truly is what I wish for all of you in this new year and this next decade, that all of you will prove yourself wrong when it comes to what your true potential is. That’s what I did over the last decade and I have to tell you, it is so fun. This past decade for me has been incredible because I was willing to do that.

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There's nothing unique or special about me. I just decided to start thinking different thoughts, and it all started when I decided to take a break from drinking and use that time not only as a way to give my body a rest, because let me tell you, my body needed a break, but to also give my mind a rest.

To open up some mental space and mental energy to stop thinking about drinking and being drunk and dealing with the repercussions and feeling hungover and having all that shame, but just creating some space to start to learn these tools and decide how I wanted to use the most precious resources that I have, time, and my mind.

Alright so listen, if you want to join me and start out the next decade right and do a 30 break with me in January, you can sign up at rachelhart.com/january. We are going to get started on Monday, January 6th, and it is the time for you to see what you have in store for your own potential. Alright, I'll see you next week.

Hey, if you're a woman who enjoys this podcast and wants to have me as your coach, you have to join the *Take A Break* program. It's a 30-day break from drinking that will teach you how to say no to your urges without deprivation, the secret to not needing a drink in any situation, including not needing a drink to take the edge off, and never again feeling like you can't trust yourself around alcohol. Join me over at RachelHart.com/join. Together, we're going to blow your mind.