

Ep #155: New Year New You



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With Your Host

Rachel Hart

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You are listening to the *Take A Break* podcast with Rachel Hart, episode 155.

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.

Well hello everybody, it is 2020. It's a new year, it's a new decade, and let's just cut to the chase, shall we? What do you want this year, this decade to be about? Who do you want to be? I know some of you might still be trying to answer these questions, but I bet that you probably have an inkling about the direction that you want to head in.

Maybe you want to be in better shape or be healthier, happier, maybe you're ready to stop coming home in the evenings and opening up a bottle of wine or waking up and wishing that you hadn't said yes to another round. It doesn't matter if you have a really clear vision or just an inkling of what you want.

I want you to know that the most important thing for you to start to consider is how are you going to bring whatever it is that you want in this new year and this new decade to life. How are you going to create the year that you want to have rather than the year that happens? How are you going to create the person that you most want to be rather than the person who just acts from autopilot?

Now, I know that a lot of you right now are thinking, "Well, I just have to double down on being committed." Because that's what I thought. Not just about drinking too much. I thought that I had to double down on being

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committed with pretty much everything in my life. Everything that I was doing too much of or not enough of.

I just kept telling myself, “Rachel, you just need to be more committed. You need to be more committed to saying no, more committed to eating less, more committed to working out, more committed to saving money.” That’s where I always went to. Commitment.

And listen, commitment is important. It is. But it’s not the be all and end all when it comes to long-lasting change. In fact, and I’m going to tell you this, it’s really true and most people never understand this. Focusing exclusively on commitment can actually get in the way of what you want.

I didn’t know that for a long time. I treated commitment as if it was everything. I was kind of obsessively focused on commitment and how to be more committed and how to make better commitments and how to be someone who always follows through. And when I kept failing at my commitments, I really believed that it meant something about me and not something pretty. Not something good. It meant something bad about me.

But it didn’t, and it doesn’t, and it doesn’t mean anything about you. If you’re sometimes thinking like, why do I have all these dreams and goals and then I’m not following through? Why can’t I stick with my commitment? The reason is because you’re overlooking a piece of the puzzle. That’s what I was doing. That’s what you’re doing.

And so while commitment is important, it is a necessary required ingredient to change, focusing exclusively on it really does miss the big picture. Because if you want to do something different this year, if you want to be someone different this year, you have to start understanding what is happening between your ears. What is running through your mind.

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Some people will call it mindset, and I actually kind of shy away from this word. I mean, I use it sometimes, but I don't really like using the term mindset because I think it sounds an awful lot like positive thinking, which is not what I teach you guys. It's not what I teach on this podcast. Positive thinking, for many people, turns out not to be so positive.

It feels very false, very fake. And let me tell you, if something feels false or fake, it is not going to lead you to the change that you want. So what I like to call everything that's running between your two ears, everything that's happening in your brain, I like to call it your stories.

I think that word story fits so much better what I'm talking about. Because I'm talking about all the unconscious thoughts and narratives about why it is you drink too much, why you eat too much, why you don't go to the gym, why you aren't saving more money, why you haven't been successful at change up until now.

Stories really captures that in a better way because then we can start to just say well, what's your hypothesis? What's your explanation for why it is that you don't have what you want in life? Why it is that you finished the bottle of wine, why it is that you're not yet the person you want to be. What are your stories?

When you focus there, I will tell you, it is the fastest way to create change in your life. Focusing on your stories is everything because of the think-feel-act cycle. Because that cycle, understanding that your thoughts create your feelings and your feelings drive your actions, and learning how to apply it in your life, not just having it be an intellectual concept, that truly is what makes the difference.

And taking a break from drinking is the fastest, most direct route to uncovering all of these stories. Seriously, nothing can beat taking a break

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from drinking if you want to understand your mind. It is hands down the very best way to do it.

Because I think of it this way. Drinking kind of puts a haze over your life, and there's a part of you that is literally going a little bit unconscious. You're getting a little less present with how you are feeling in the moment when you drink. I don't mean you're passing out, although let's be honest, sometimes I was passing out from how much I was drinking.

I mean that you are disconnecting. You're blurring your ability to really understand and see and recognize and feel what's truly happening in your life. And once you take a break from drinking, trust me, that all clears up really quickly. But you have to do it the right way. You have to know how to find and access and understand, and most importantly, learn how to change all the stories that you have.

Because if you're missing that piece of the puzzle, you're just going to be fixated on commitment. And let me tell you, you've probably already been fixated on commitment. I spent so much time there. Maybe it is time for you to come at this problem from a different angle.

Simply saying no to alcohol for a month is not going to get you where you want to go. Yes, it will give your liver a rest, and you know what, it's going to give your entire body a rest. There is a reason why people notice such a tremendous impact on how they feel physically when they stop drinking. How they feel when they wake up in the morning, what they see when they look in the mirror, the clarity of their skin or the fact that it's not as puffy.

What they notice in terms of their overall stability of their mood overall. That was a big one for me. I always felt like my mood was jumping up and down. Just to feel it so much more stable. Because alcohol isn't just a problem for your liver. It's a problem for every cell in your body.

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So when you give your body a break, there are so many tremendous benefits, but that break, saying no is not enough to surface all the stories that are keeping you stuck. Because just saying no will not teach you how to uncover all of that thinking. It will not teach you how to look at your mind in a new way and actually harness your mind as a tool that you can use rather than this thing that just has you on autopilot all the time.

This is what most people overlook because they don't know how to do it themselves. They don't know how to teach people how to do it, and certainly, that's not what we are taught in our society. We don't think of drinking by looking at stories. That's not what we're taught. We label it as oh, that's a problem of the person being powerless, or that's a problem of the person and a disease, when really, it's a problem of a person in his or her stories.

I want you to consider this. Even if it sounds so radically different from anything you've ever heard, I want you to consider that alcohol is just a story. It is a bunch of thoughts that you've unconsciously taught yourself to think about a substance. Nothing more.

Do it. Just picture your favorite drink. Whatever it is. The drink itself has no meaning until you created meaning, until you created a story and attached it to the drink. And let me tell you, it's the story that makes that drink powerful. It has no power without your thoughts. It has no power without the narrative that you have unconsciously connected to it.

The story that you have unconsciously created about how having that drink will make you feel better or feel relaxed or take the edge off or help you open up. That's what's so powerful. Those thoughts, those stories connected to it. And that's why the story matters so much more than actually the contents of the glass.

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The contents of the glass are truly meaningless. It's the story that you're after. I will tell you, understanding this was what was so radical in my own journey. Considering that my love of drinking had nothing to do with drinking. The fact that I said yes and said yes a lot and more than I wanted to had nothing to do with alcohol.

And - and this is important - it had nothing to do with me. It wasn't a sign that I was broken or lacking discipline or had an addictive personality or was compulsive or came from a long line of drinkers. No. All of that was irrelevant.

Drinking, the habit that I had created had to do with the story that I had also created, albeit unconsciously. How I anticipated I would feel when I said yes and how I anticipated I would feel when I said no. My story of course was more is better because I thought that about a lot of things. More is always better, right?

And not drinking, my story about that was it's kind of boring and weird. It's like being a buzzkill and meant that I was different and I would stand out. And most importantly, my story was that not drinking left me feeling deprived, and I didn't want to feel deprived, certainly not after the day, the week, the month, the year that I had had.

I wanted to feel anything but deprived. Now the problem was that I didn't, for the longest time, know that any of this, all of these thoughts were just a story that I had unconsciously created and attached to the substance of alcohol. I was sure that it was the truth. And the reason why I thought it was the truth was because I had a lot of evidence to back these stories up.

When I said yes to a drink, I was more fun. When I said no, I did feel deprived. So if someone back then had told me, "You know what, Rachel, it's all just a story," I would have looked at them, been very annoyed, and

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been like, yeah, excuse me, it's my experience. It's the way the world works. It's not just a story. It's true. Here's all my evidence.

But that's where I was mistaken. That's what I couldn't see for so long and if you are in the same place, that's where you're mistaken too. Because this is not what the think-feel-act cycle tells us. How you feel is always, always, always a result of your thoughts. It's not a result of alcohol.

If you're not having a good time, it's because of a thought. If you're feeling stressed out, it's because of a thought. If you're not connecting to your husband or your friend or the group of people that you're standing with, it's also because of a thought. And if you're feeling deprived or like you're missing out or feeling restricted when you're not drinking, it's also because of a thought.

Alcohol has zero, and I mean zero to do with any of it. Because alcohol is not part of the think-feel-act cycle. It is not the thing that generates your feelings and your actions. Your thoughts are in charge of that.

Now listen, are there things happening in your brain when you drink? Yes, of course. Is dopamine being released? Yes. Are there changes in your body to muscle tension, coordination, speech, vision, temperature? Of course, all of these things are happening.

But you are turning a chemical and physical reaction in your body into a story with your mind. You're making it mean something. And it's the reason why I have so many clients who say to me, "I have always loved wine. I have loved it for decades. And now suddenly when I have a drink, I don't enjoy it as much as I used to. In fact, sometimes I don't even like it. Sometimes I notice it makes me feel kind of nauseous. How is that even possible?"

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Because the wine hasn't changed. The only reason it's possible is because their story has changed. They've lifted off the haze. They've stopped being unconscious about all of their thoughts connected to alcohol. And in that newfound clarity, all of a sudden, they start to shift their desire and shift how they feel.

This is what it takes to create change. If you want to be a new version of you, if you want to have a new relationship with alcohol, you have to be willing to examine your stories. You have to be willing to question everything that you think you are and everything about what you think it means to drink or to not drink. You have to be willing to say it's all up for grabs.

And this is what most people miss when they take a break from drinking or start doing a dry January challenge. I love these challenges. I think they're amazing, but I think that they often only show you one piece of the puzzle. Because so often, saying no becomes the entire focus. It's all about resisting a drink and using willpower. And maybe telling yourself that alcohol is really bad for you and it's a poison and it's a toxin and you shouldn't drink it, which I am not on board with.

Alcohol just is. We don't need to label it as a negative substance. Now, doing this, when you take a break, you can of course reap the benefits of giving your body a break. But I just want you to know that if you aren't examining the stories that you have, you're missing out on so much. There is so much more available to you.

And why would you want to miss out on that? It really requires that you have to start considering this one question. Maybe, just maybe, my drinking has nothing to do with alcohol and it has nothing to do with who I am as a person.

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If you accept the premise of this question that your drinking has nothing to do with alcohol and has nothing to do with who you are as a person, it's going to send you right to all your stories. I'm going to tell you something though. A lot of people are not willing to consider the premise of this question. They want to fight me on this.

They want to tell me no, no, no, I just really love the taste of Chardonnay. Or no, no, no, I've just always had a compulsive personality, long before alcohol ever entered the picture. Or I come from a long line of big drinkers. They fight me to keep these stories, simply because they don't want to consider this question that maybe, just maybe, your drinking has nothing to do with alcohol and it has nothing to do with who you are as a person.

And I want you to ask yourself when we're here, the new year, a new decade unfolding, are you willing not to be one of these people who hangs onto these stories so tightly? Are you willing to really ask yourself this question and really go deep with it? And really see what's there?

Are you willing to stop assuming that you drink too much just because you love the taste of alcohol or you love the taste of wine or you love the taste of a cocktail? Are you willing to stop assuming that the reason you struggle to say no is because you're lacking willpower or something is wrong with you or it's because of your family history?

Because if you are willing to do this, I promise you, that's when everything changes. That's when your world truly explodes. Because then you really can create a radically different relationship with alcohol, but more importantly, a radically different relationship with yourself.

And it starts by considering that change is not just created by commitment. Commitment is important, but it is only one piece of the puzzle. This is what taking a break from drinking can do for you. It's what I teach the women in my Take A Break program. It's not just about saying no. It's about learning

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how to understand and manage all of these stories that you have unconsciously created. That's what's so powerful.

It's about learning how to say yes to yourself. We're not just talking about saying no and fixating on don't drink, don't have this. It's about saying yes to yourself and yes to you and the you that you want to be. It's about learning how to have a different relationship, not only with the urge to drink, but with all your urges. It's about learning to have a different relationship with the people in your life and the world around you, and of course, a different relationship with yourself.

That's how you make this a new year and a new you. That's how you create the change that you want. So here's the thing, my 30-day break is under way. If you want to get started, it is not too late to sign up. All you have to do is head on over to rachelhart.com/join and you can spend 30 days learning all of this.

But I will tell you, I want you to make sure that you are willing to consider this question. You are willing to consider that maybe your drinking has nothing to do with alcohol and maybe the reason you keep saying yes and say yes more than you want has nothing to do with who you are as a person. If you're willing to consider that, then join me. It will change everything. Alright, that's it for today. I will see you guys 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.