

## Ep #175: Why Not Drinking Is Easy



### 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 175.

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 everyone. We are going to talk today about something that is so important. It's what makes something easy versus what makes something hard. When you are trying to change the habit of drinking or really any habit for that matter, you really need to understand this.

Because most people are going to turn around and tell you that changing habits is really hard. It's hard to say no, it's hard to say no to a drink, it's hard to stop desiring it, it's hard not to give in. People are going to give you these messages all the time that changing your drinking is hard and changing how you eat is hard and changing all of your habits is really hard.

And you know what, I don't agree at all. All of these things are actually incredibly easy if you understand two very important skills. First, how the think-feel-act cycle works, how it creates your habits, and second, how to process your emotions.

So I talk about these two things all the time on the podcast but today, what I'm going to really dive into is simply what makes something easy and what makes something hard. If you understand this, really truly understand this, you're going to be amazed at how it will change not just how you approach the habit of drinking but how you approach everything in life.

And the reason that I wanted to talk to you guys about this today was I was actually talking about this topic on Instagram. So I'm not really someone who's done a ton on social media before. I don't use it a ton in my personal

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life, but I'll tell you, over the past couple months, really since the pandemic, I have just been seeing how so many people are using alcohol as a way to cope and how society is really normalizing this behavior.

And I have just seen it from so many different places, and so I decided that I just wanted to have more connection with all of you. I wanted to reach more people. I wanted to offer more of what I teach you guys in the podcast and just say, "Hey, you know what, we don't have to do it this way."

So I've started on Instagram. If you want to check me out, it's @rachelhartcoaching, all one word. And I've been doing kind of quick Instagram stories there and really, I just like kind of offering quick little one-minute pep talks. Because sometimes I think that's all it takes to get back on track. Sometimes you just need a little kick in the pants to get in the right direction.

So anyway, I was on Instagram. I was talking about something that I teach, a webinar that I've taught before called How to Make Not Drinking Super Easy. And I had someone who was very upset with the title of this class. And I think it's really important to understand why because I think that her complaint really encapsulates how society has very, very incorrectly understood what makes something easy and what makes something difficult.

So really, this is not to call her out, because honestly, I can tell that she was really in pain. But I do want to share with you what she wrote because I really believe that it applies for a lot of you. A lot of you are thinking something very similar. So she wrote to me about the title of this training.

She said, "There's nothing easy about any of this. It's work you must do daily, and telling people it's easy not to drink is just not truthful." And I really do feel for her because I can see from what she wrote that right now, things feel very difficult for her and not drinking feels very difficult, and not obeying her urges probably is a real struggle.

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But the thing is it doesn't have to be. It doesn't have to be difficult for her and it doesn't have to be difficult for you. And honestly, if someone's going to tell you otherwise, if someone's going to say, "No, changing your habits is really hard, it's really difficult, it's really hard not to drink and to say no to an urge," if someone's going to tell that to you, I want you to know this. They're wrong. It truly is very easy once someone teaches you how to do this.

And I have watched this in my own life and I have watched this with the thousands of women that I have coached. Now, one of the really problematic ways in which this often shows up for my clients is when they are starting to do the work and learning how to manage their mind and learning all about the think-feel-act cycle and how to respond to their urges differently.

So they start doing the work with me and then they'll say kind of sheepishly, "Rachel, I feel like this is too easy. Things are going too well. I feel too good." I had someone say almost this exact thing to me the other day on a coaching call. She was on day 10 of not drinking and she was so freaked out because it was feeling so easy and she was feeling so good.

And she was so freaked out that she was telling herself, "Oh my god, something must really be wrong. I must be fooling myself because this is supposed to be a slog. This is supposed to be miserable." But that's how ingrained this belief is that changing a habit and changing your drinking is going to be a slog, when truly, it's not.

That's how ingrained this entire belief system is. And I just want show you today, you don't have to buy into it. You don't have to accept it as your truth.

Because if you do, and then you start applying the work that I teach you, you start learning how to manage your mind and learning how your thoughts create your feelings which drive your actions, and understanding

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how it's simply just a sentence in your mind that's leading to the decision to drink, if you start applying this work and then suddenly you're like, "Wait, this is too simple," it's almost like believing that it's supposed to be hard will be an act of self-sabotage for yourself because you'll tell yourself I must be doing it wrong, when of course, you're not.

So let's just talk about what easy and hard actually are. Easy and hard are not facts in the world. They are not things that we can prove. Things are not inherently easy or inherently hard. It's not automatically easy to boil water or hard to climb a mountain or vice versa.

Easy and hard are not things that exist out in the world. I want you to really think about that. They don't exist out in the world because they exist in your mind. They exist in your personal experience, which means whether or not something is easy or hard has nothing to do with the thing itself. It has to do with your experience of it, what you are thinking about what is happening.

Really, spend a moment considering this. Easy and hard are not things that exist outside of your mind. You can't find them out in the world. You can only find them inside of your brain. So I was talking recently on a podcast about watching my son learning how to ride a scooter. He really loves his scooter.

Now, he's getting better at it than when I mentioned this a couple weeks ago, but he's still not very good. He falls down. He runs into walls. He tumbles over. But you know what, he just pops right back up because he has zero concept in his mind of easy or hard. He has no understanding of this.

He's not telling himself that riding a scooter is anything other than what it is in the moment, which is just him and the scooter and the sidewalk. So he's holding onto the handlebars and he's putting one foot on the scooter and pushing off with the other and trying to keep his balance and sometimes falling over.

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But there's no easy or hard about it for him because he doesn't even understand those concepts. It doesn't become easy or hard. Nothing we do becomes easy or hard until our mind swoops in with all the judgment. All the judgment of I'm not doing it right, this is taking too long, everyone else is doing it better.

So my son hasn't learned these concepts, so he's not creating any unnecessary drama or resistance for himself. He's not even pushing back against anything because there's no story in his mind about how it should be going and whether or not he should be further along or whether or not he shouldn't have fallen down.

He's just scooting and tumbling and scooting and tumbling. And each time, his brain is learning how to do it better and how to be more coordinated and how to balance better, but there's nothing easy or hard about it. Simply because he doesn't understand the concepts.

I want you to think about how powerful that is, just to remove the concepts, how you would show up differently. So think about that and think about what people have told you about habits and drinking and desire, and how you have previously understood whether or not those things were easy or hard to change.

I want you to think, why is it that so many people tell themselves, myself included for a very long time, why do so many people tell themselves, "It's just going to be so hard. It's going to be hard to take a break, it's going to be hard to say no, it's going to be hard to change my drinking, it's going to be hard to change all of this."

I told myself this for so long. And it's simply because I was believing a story that I had been fed unconsciously. And the same goes for you. You are just simply believing the story that alcohol is the thing that creates your desire, when in fact, it's not. You've been believing that wine is what's tempting you when in fact, it just sits there. You've been believing that urges are so

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uncomfortable and terrible and everybody hates them when really, they're not a big deal at all.

You've been told that it's hard to resist and it's hard to stop once you started drinking and one single drop will set you back and it's hard to stay sober and it's hard not to relapse and the odds are against you. These are the messages we are given all the time. We are told that not drinking is so hard.

So hard that in fact, we shouldn't have any alcohol in our homes and that we should avoid activities that involve drinking and that you shouldn't even consume the tiniest teeniest bitsiest drop in a sauce or a dessert or kombucha because it's all a slippery slope. These are the messages that you get all the time.

And all of those messages are centered around the idea that alcohol is something to be afraid of, that it's the villain and you're the victim. Alcohol has the power and you are rendered powerless. But it's not true. You're not powerless over alcohol because alcohol just sits there.

Between you and that drink on the table is all of your thoughts and feelings, but all your thoughts and feelings that no one has ever taught you how to observe and understand and recognize. And most importantly, question and challenge and change.

Now, when you know nothing about the think-feel-act cycle, then listen, of course you're going to feel powerless to change your habits. I felt powerless for a long time. I hated feeling that way but I also had the whole story that I had been fed and I didn't really understand why I did so many things.

Think about this in your life. How often have you thought to yourself, "Why did I do that? Why did I drink so much? Why did I say that? Why did I eat that?" Why? Why? Why? We have so many questions just trying to

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understand why it is we do the things we do in the world, whether it has to do with alcohol or anything.

Most of us are really often very deeply confused by what we do and our own behavior. Not just our habits. And so of course, when you don't have the framework of the think-feel-act cycle and you often feel confused about your choices, of course you're going to buy into the story that like, yeah, alcohol has all the power. It's really hard to say no, it's really tempting. One drop and that could be the end of it.

But here's the thing; there's a reason that you picked up that drink and there's a reason that you kept picking up that drink. And the reason isn't booze. It's what you're thinking and what you're feeling. It's thought like, "Who cares? Why not? One more won't hurt. It doesn't matter. I want to. I want it. I deserve it. I deserve a treat. Everyone else is."

That's what's actually causing you to take the action of drinking. And listen, when you go to change the habit, when you go to decide, you know what, this isn't really working for me, I need to do something different, then you might have thoughts like, "I hate this. This is so unfair. Why me? Why is this my problem? Why don't other people have to struggle with drinking as much as I do? I hate being the odd man out."

There are all of these thoughts creating all of these feelings, and that, that is truly what's going on. That explains all of your decisions, all of your behavior. It's not what's in the glass. It's what's in your mind.

But you're taught, we're all taught that saying no to a drink is hard. And then we take this belief, this story and we recycle it in our own mind. And we inadvertently make it hard for ourselves. But here's the thing; hard and easy don't exist independently of your mind. They're not out there in the world. They're simply your own judgment about what is happening.

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And your experience of what is happening in any given moment, whether it is saying no to a drink or feeling an urge or feeling desire or feeling deprived, I don't care what it is, that judgment, that experience is created by your thoughts. It's created in your mind.

When you tell yourself that something is too hard or it should be easier, you aren't reciting what is actually happening. You're reciting a story that your brain created based on beliefs that you unconsciously took up from your family and your friends and books and media and movies. And let me tell you, all that that is going to do is create a ton of negative emotion for you.

Because when you try to change the habit and you have this internal monologue about how it's so hard and you hate it and it's too much and you deserve it and it's unfair, when all of that is happening, you're going to be creating resistance and annoyance and anger and self-pity and hopelessness.

And let me tell you, that's what's actually hard in the moment. It's all the unnecessary negative emotions that's causing difficulty for you. If we could just take those negative emotions away, imagine how easy it would be. It would be like my little boy. Just popping back up on his scooter, no judgment about the fact that he fell down. No judgment about the fact that he just scooted into a wall. Just popping back up and trying again.

And you know when you don't have any of that negative emotion and you don't have any of that resistance. That's when you supercharge your progress. Because then you're constantly not slowing yourself down and going through the slog of negative emotion. No, instead you're like, hey, I'm here, it's me again, I'm trying, let's go, let's do it.

Because that is what it's going to take for you sometimes. You have to be willing to fail. You have to be willing to have things not go the way that you expect. You have to be willing not to have it all be perfect so that your brain can learn.

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So when this woman wrote in and said, "There's nothing easy about any of this. It's work you must do daily and telling people that not drinking is easy just isn't truthful," well, I'll tell you this. She was partly right but she was right about the fact that it's daily work.

It is daily work, the work of learning how your brain works and observing and managing your mind and your thoughts and learning how to show up differently with your emotions. That is daily work. It's not particularly hard daily work. It's pretty easy actually. Just observe a thought. Ask you how it makes you feel. Notice how you behave when you feel that way and then repeat.

It's really pretty simple. But I just want you to think about this for a second. What if you just told yourself that changing your drinking was going to be easy? That sitting with an urge was easy? No big deal. That turning down a drink was easy. All you have to do is say no thank you. That not stopping at the liquor store on the way home was easy. All you have to do is not stop the car, don't get out, don't go inside, don't open up your wallet.

What then? What if you started reframing it for yourself? Now, notice if your brain wants to fight me on this. Notice if your brain is like, "This lady doesn't know what she's talking about. She doesn't get it. She doesn't know what my life is like. She doesn't know what my friends are like or what my family is like or where I live or what my job is like, or the fact that it's in the house or how much my spouse drinks."

Notice if your brain wants to fight for the story that it's hard. Why do you think that is? Why would your brain want to be right that it's hard? Why would it reject the thought that it might be easy? I'll tell you why. Because when you believe that changing your drinking is hard and that changing habits is hard and that saying no is hard and that sitting with an urge is hard, when you believe all of that, then you always have an excuse just waiting for you in your back pocket for why you failed.

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You always have a reason for why you said yes and why you gave in. And instead of looking at your mind, instead of understanding the think-feel-act cycle at work, you don't have to because you're like, "Well, it was hard. See? I couldn't do it. It was hard."

So you get to just chalk up your failure to the fact that everybody knows that it's hard. We all agree that it's hard. So when you tell yourself that it's difficult to change habits and it's difficult to change your drinking and it's difficult to say no to urges, not only is it not true, but it's like putting blinders on yourself.

You get this free pass to stop looking at what actually was going on. And that really is the most important thing is to learn how to take the blinders off. And you can't do that, you can't look and see what's actually happening, what's actually driving the habit until you start to open yourself up to the idea that hard and easy are just made up.

They don't exist independent of you. They're made up by sentences in your mind. Sentences that right now, you're not choosing on purpose. And here's the thing; you don't have to believe that saying no is easy or that sitting with your urges is easy. Maybe you're not there yet. Maybe that feels like way too big of a stretch. But you could practice believing that it's neither hard nor easy.

You could practice believing that it just is. It has no judgment attached to it. No judgment saying it's really difficult or it's really simple. Imagine that. Imagine if you just took away the concept of hard and easy. How would you describe what was happening in the moment when you saw the bottle of wine, when someone offered you a drink, when it was 5pm and you felt the urge, when your spouse said, "Hey, let's split a bottle of wine tonight?"

How would you describe what was going on for you in the moment when you knew that you wanted to say no, you wanted to change the habit, you are committed to doing something different, but we took away the language

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of hard and easy? How would you explain to yourself what was happening if we just removed these concepts? If we deleted hard and easy from your brain?

How would you describe the experience of saying no or noticing an urge? You'd have to go into your body, right? You would have to discover what sensations were actually going on instead of just going immediately to the story that we've been sold. You'd have to actually go in and see, hey, what does desire or deprivation or awkwardness or loneliness or annoyance, what does it actually feel like?

And maybe none of those things are hard or easy either. Maybe they're just sensations in your body that your body was built to handle. I really want to challenge you to do this today. Drop the story because it is a story that saying no to a drink is hard, that sitting with an urge is hard, that changing habits is hard. Drop the story forever.

Stop listening to what everybody says. Stop believing the thoughts, "It's so hard, it's so difficult." And instead, just ask yourself, what would happen if it wasn't hard and it wasn't easy? If all I had to do was just observe what was happening in my body and in my mind? Two things that, by the way, you always have access to.

Then you'd just be curious and there's no limit on your curiosity. There's no limit on being inquisitive about how your brain works and your body works and how habits work. But you wouldn't have all this baggage. You wouldn't have all this resistance. You wouldn't have all this additional negative emotion.

And I'm going to tell you this. I think that makes it a lot easier. Really, how would this change everything for you. Certainly, you'd stop relying on the excuse that the reason why you said yes to the drink last night was because it was hard to say no. You'd be able to stop explaining away your

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decisions with that excuse and instead, look and see what's really happening.

And once you start to see that hard and easy are just completely made up concepts, they don't exist outside of us, they only exist by how our brain is currently judging what is happening, once you start to see that, and if you learn how to do that with the habit of drinking, you will start to see how your life can just take off in so many areas.

Because suddenly, instead of fighting and battling with things being hard and wanting them to be easier and all of that struggle, you'd just see that all the struggle was made up. All the struggle was existing as sentences in your mind and you could choose different ones. And then, I'll tell you this, you'd be pretty unstoppable.

Alright, that's it for today. I will 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](https://RachelHart.com/join). Together, we're going to blow your mind.