

Ep #147: Your Purpose



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With Your Host

Rachel Hart

[Take a Break from Drinking](#) with Rachel Hart

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You are listening to the *Take A Break* podcast with Rachel Hart, episode 147.

Whether you want to drink less or stop drinking, this podcast will help you change the habit from the inside out. We're challenging conventional wisdom about why people drink and why it can be hard to resist temptation. No labels, no judgment, just practical tools to take control of your desire and stop worrying about your drinking. Now, here's your host Rachel Hart.

Well, hello, everybody. I have to tell you something. It is almost my birthday. Actually, by the time you hear this, my birthday will have passed, but it still hasn't happened yet. So, I will tell you that one of my ex-boyfriends used to tease me that I treated November like this was my birthday month. Which really annoyed me when he told me that, but he was kind of right. I do treat November like it is my own personal birthday extravaganza month.

And, when you know a little bit more about me, you will find this a little bit funny because my sister, I have an older sister, who was also born in November, her birthday is 10 days later. And my husband is also born in November, his birthday is 15 days after mine.

And, this is crazy. When my sister first started dating her future wife, I was horrified, horrified to discover that not only was Molly born in November, she was born on the exact same day as me. I was like, "Dude, you stole my birthday day. That's my day. This is my birthday month."

So listen, I'm a little crazy about my birthday and about the month of November, but I will tell you, I'm really excited for this birthday, and I will tell you, this year feels really good and really different. And I think it might be because I have the experience of being a mom, and I can actually reflect on that experience. Last year when my birthday rolled around and I had a newborn, I was still really in the fog of being a new parent, to actually reflect on any of this.

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But now, I have a little time to myself to think about it. And I'll tell you that birthdays are crazy things. They really are. Labor is a crazy experience, at least it was for me. I also think that conception is kind of crazy and wild and magical, and the idea that yeah, in that moment, life was created. My husband and I, we often look at my son, and both of us will think, I cannot believe that we made him, that this little boy is here.

And it gets even wilder when you think about the odds of anyone, any of us, being here. I was looking this up on Google and I saw that scientists estimate the odds of you, you specifically being born, is one in 400 trillion. Trillion! That is just astounding. I will tell you, it's not even just that, it's not even just, okay, you were conceived. I think about what it took for my parents to get together, and what it took for my husband and I to get together.

I spend a lot of time kind of in awe that our relationship even happened. You know, we were actually set up on a blind date, and I came very, very, very close to not going on that date at all. I was in a really good place in my life, I wasn't drinking, and I had finally gotten to a point where I was enjoying myself. I really enjoyed living on my own.

I really enjoyed being in the city, I had this amazing apartment that I still miss, in Brooklyn. I wasn't living in a studio anymore. It was the first place in the city that really, truly felt like I was creating my own home and I was going to be there for a while. And I remember thinking, you know, things are good, and I'm good, I feel good. And I don't really want to go on another bad date.

Not only that, I knew that my husband was going to move to San Francisco three weeks later. I knew that he was on his way out of New York City, and so I remember thinking like, what's the point? But I ended up going, and the rest is history. Now I'm here living in San Francisco.

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But I do think a lot about how crazy it is about how close we came to actually missing each other. So he would have moved to San Francisco, I would have kept living in New York City, and that relationship wouldn't have happened, and our son wouldn't have happened.

And then not only that, but then I think about the chances of creating our exact son, our exact baby. And that is just a wild thing to think about for everyone. For you, for yourself, when you think about how easy it would have been for you to not be you, but for someone else to have been created.

When you think about how many viable eggs a woman has, and how much viable sperm a man has, and each sperm and egg is genetically unique, and they have to come together in order to form you, right? That's the reason why I'm not a carbon copy of my sister, even though we both have the same parents.

I think about that a lot, especially around my birthday. I think about if conception had happened a day earlier, or an hour earlier, an hour later, or even a split second of a difference, I wouldn't be here, and my son wouldn't be here, and the people that I know wouldn't be here. And it really is wild when you think about it, the chances that all of us wouldn't be here are really astronomical. Yet, here we are.

When you think about this, it always leads me to this line from a poem written by Mary Oliver, who wrote, "What is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?"

I will tell you, I love that line. Because for a very long time, what I wanted to do with my one wild and precious life was to consume. I wanted to drink. I wanted to eat a lot of food. I wanted to buy a lot of stuff. I wanted to watch a lot of TV. I didn't want to have any restriction at all, and then I wanted to do it over again.

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And when you take a break from drinking or a break from any of these things, for that matter, you have got to confront this. What is it that you want to do with your one wild and precious life? Is consuming what you really want to do? I had to ask myself that question. Not that consuming is bad, not that it is wrong or immoral, just is it what you really want to do?

And when I had a close look, my answer was no. Deep inside of me, even when I was like, I don't want any restriction. I want to just be able to drink as much as I want, and eat as much as I want, and buy whatever I want, and just sit in front of the TV, if that's what I want to do. I don't want any restriction. Deep inside of me, I knew that that answer was no. That's not what I really wanted, even when I truly believed that the world was going to be this sad, sorry place if I never had another cocktail again.

And you know what? I think you know that that is true for you, too. Otherwise, why else would you be here? Why would you be listening to this podcast? So, on my birthday around my birthday, this is what I want you to be thinking about, because it's what I think about all the time.

What is your purpose? You're here. It is really against all odds. It's a miracle that we're all here. What is your purpose? What do you want to do with your life? How do you want to spend your time? So many of us spend so much time really fixated on, what's my purpose? And how will I know when I have fulfilled it?

I really love the second part of that question. Because often the first part, what's my purpose? The answers that I used to come up with, and I think a lot of us come up with, they sound so similar. Well, I just know that I'm here to do something worthwhile, and I want to make a difference, and I want to make the most of my life.

And it's not that there's anything wrong with any of these answers. But I think that there's so much more interesting material to be found in the second question, how will you know when you've fulfilled your purpose?

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The answer, of course, is always how you expect you will feel. So, I remember this a lot, really not knowing what I was supposed to be doing or why I was here. What was the point of it all? And I really wanted to find my purpose. And I believed, you know, if I knew what my purpose was, if I knew that, then I could fulfill it, and then, then I could feel good. Then I could feel happy and proud and peaceful. Then I could finally sit back and relax. But I was just chasing all the time.

And when you understand the question about your purpose, from that perspective, how will you feel when you've fulfilled it? You'll realize that the search for your purpose isn't what you will be doing. It's a feeling, and that's what all my consuming of stuff and food and alcohol and entertainment and achievement and praise, that's what all my consuming was about. I was in search of a feeling.

The problem was, I was always setting myself up to fail. I was chasing a feeling that was only ever going to be fleeting when it came from food, or alcohol, or praise, or money, or what I was doing. It was only ever going to be fleeting, because then I was just left with my mind. I was left with the thoughts that I was thinking about myself. The buzz, the high, the sugar rush, the newness of stuff inside of shopping bags, the attention from men, it all wears off.

I was trying to accumulate feeling good about myself through eating and drinking and getting praise from bosses and guys and gold stars and being perfect and never making mistakes, and it was not working and it was so exhausting.

And at the end of it, I just wanted to drink, until drinking didn't feel so great, and then I didn't want to drink. And then I decided I did want to drink, and then I just kept going on this crazy roller coaster. And the only way to get off, the only way that I found to get off was to really redefine what my purpose was.

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What was the reason for me to be here against all odds? What was the point of my existence? I tell you, one of the ways I love thinking about this question, the point of your existence, is to think about things other than you.

So, the point of a tree's existence is just to be a tree, not to do anything else, just be a tree. And the point of a bear's existence is just to be a bear, do the things that bears do. Same thing for water. It's not meant to do anything except just to be water.

And the same is true for the point of a human's existence. It's just to be human. Just to be human and feel what it's like to be human, which is the full spectrum of your emotions. Because listen, having the full spectrum and that complete emotional experience is what makes you human, rather than a robot. You have to have the light and the dark and the good and the bad, you have to have the contrast.

And let me tell you, if it sounds silly, or inconsequential to say, the point of your existence is to be human, just think about how hard that simple task is for most people. I think about how hard it was for me for so long. Think about how hard it has been for you, and how hard it is for other people that you see around you, to just allow themselves to feel whatever they are feeling without trying to cover it up.

It's so difficult for us, because we'd rather eat than feel bored, and we'd rather drink than feel deprived, and we'd rather work all the time than feel unproductive, and we'd rather buy something than feel insecure.

But being human, experiencing the entire emotional spectrum, it is your purpose, and that is really not something to be taken lightly, because it's challenging. Feeling all your feelings is no joke, but it's also what makes for a complete human experience.

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Without our emotions, which all the time I will tell you, when I do work with my clients and I ask them, we're using the think-feel-act cycle and I'm asking them, "Okay, so how would you like to feel?" So often people just say, "Neutral. I'd just like to feel neutral."

You know what? That really is a lie. Because without emotions, all of this, everything around you, your entire day, your entire past, your entire future, would all be grayscale. Nothing would have any depth or distinction. Every moment of your life would be the same as the next, because we only distinguish them as different because of how we feel.

There is not enough alcohol or food or stuff or achievements in the world to make your feelings go away, to just be in this place of neutral. They're always going to be there. Even if you are numbing a lot, you can never fully escape them.

But you don't need to, because the whole point is to learn how not to escape them. The whole point, the whole purpose of being here is to learn how to feel them and how to be human and how to coexist with them, and not try to escape into a bottle of wine, not try to escape into a pint of Ben and Jerry's.

Now, here's the thing. A lot of you might hear this and feel a little disappointed. The point of human is to be human, and to feel all the feelings, and you don't want to feel all the feelings. But you do have so much say in how you experience the feelings that right now you are resisting or numbing.

So just take, for example, disappointment. Disappointment is a normal human emotion that is going to be part of your life no matter what. It is a fact of being human. The choice, however, is how you are going to experience disappointment in your life.

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So, are you going to feel disappointed because you want to drink and you're choosing to say no? That's one area where you can feel disappointed. Or, are you going to feel disappointed because you drank too much last night, when you said you weren't going to? Disappointment is coming either way. Which one, which version of it do you want? That's where you have all your power.

And you can really do this with every emotion. Are you going to feel inadequate because you set a big goal and you didn't reach it? That's one version of inadequacy. Or, are you going to feel inadequate because you didn't set any goals? You sat on the sidelines of your life and never tapped into your potential. It's coming either way. Which one do you want?

Are you going to feel uncomfortable because you're stepping outside of your comfort zone and doing something new? Or, are you going to feel uncomfortable because you're living a life that isn't what you want? It's coming either way. If the negative emotions are going to happen either way, if they're part of the human experience, then which kind do you want?

Do you want the negative emotions that are in service of you going after a life that isn't just about consuming? You going after a life that isn't just about staying in your comfort zone, going after your goals? Or, do you want the negative emotions that are in service of numbing and distracting and escaping and consuming?

You get to choose, because if I know one thing, the human experience is not supposed to be where you only feel good all the time, you only feel all the lovely, happy, shiny emotions. That isn't human. Maybe it's the afterlife, I don't know. But it is not life here on Earth.

It's also not life here on Earth where you feel 90% of the time positive, and only occasionally sometimes bad once in a while. That's not human either. We need the contrast. The contrast is what allows emotions to exist.

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So, I really want you to consider this, allowing yourself to feel the full spectrum of human emotions is your purpose. Otherwise, you're just trying to escape your humanity. And when you realize this, it puts your attempts to numb yourself and escape and overdrink and overeat and overspend and overwork into such a different light.

Just think about how much you have resisted being human in your life. I did this for so much of my life. I was so often pushing away my feelings and trying to numb myself and distract, and trying to stuff everything down. Being human is your life's work and it's no joke.

When you say no to a desire to drink, or a desire to do anything and you feel that restlessness, you are fulfilling your human purpose. When you say no to working all the time, even though your brain kicks in and starts telling you that you're being unproductive, you are fulfilling your human purpose. When you allow yourself to open up and feel vulnerable and share, you are fulfilling your purpose.

Allowing yourself to feel what you most want to avoid is the point of existing. That's the only way you have a complete human experience. And once you know that the good and bad is coming, then you can decide what you want your life to be about, beyond just the purpose of being human, right? You don't just have to say, "Oh, well the point of existence is to be human, and so I'm practicing being human, so all I do all day is sit around and feel my feelings."

Listen, the ability to feel your feelings, that's no joke. But you can also decide, okay, so what do I want to do with my time? What do I want to focus on? What matters to me? And there truly are no right or wrong answers. You can be a horse trainer. You can be a welder. Be whatever you want. You can be single; you can be polyamorous. It doesn't matter.

You just have to decide rather than being on autopilot, because that's what I was for so long. I was just on autopilot. I was living my life the way I

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thought I should. I was doing the things that I thought I should be doing, and working at the jobs and choosing the careers that I thought were what I was supposed to do, in order to have a good life.

I will tell you now, now that I both understand that the point of my existence is just to be human, which means practicing feeling all my feelings and not escaping them, I have decided that how I want to spend my time, beyond that, is to teach people that life is way bigger and way better and way more fun than anything you will ever find in alcohol, or food, or anything that you can consume.

And that means something so important for my life. It means that I have to continually do the work to make my life way bigger and way better and way more fun than drinking ever was. And you know what? It has been amazingly, amazingly easy to do this. I did not think that that would be possible.

And I think that's why I love having this as the focus of my life because it felt so impossible. I couldn't conceive that anything would be better than drinking. I couldn't conceive that anything would be better than a pint of Ben and Jerry's. Or anything would be better than going shopping, or smoking, or having no restriction, right? That's what I was telling myself all the time. I just don't want to have any restriction.

I couldn't conceive of it. And now I look around at my life, and I see how much better it is, light years better it is. And not just because I'm like, waking up without a hangover. That's just the tip of the iceberg. Because I'm so much more connected and I know how to have fun on my own, and I know how to connect on my own, and I know how to find magic and enjoyment and excitement in the world, on my own, because I know how to manage my mind.

That's why it's so amazing. And I look around and I think, God, this is wild. I cannot believe I did this. And I've watched this happen for my clients, too.

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They think, God, I just wanted to feel better. I just wanted to wake up in the morning and not feel like crap. I didn't know this was what my life was going to be like. I didn't know this was what was possible.

Focusing on this for my life reminds me not just to set bigger and bigger goals, but to also be constantly checking in with whether or not I'm having fun. My coach, Brooke, always says, "There's no point to any of your goals if you can't make them fun." If you're not having fun now, while you're working on your goal, you're not going to have fun later, because you're bringing your brain with you.

So, trying to grow and expand at the expense of yourself, it isn't going to work. Chasing your goals as a way to prove that you are worthy, prove that you are deserving, isn't going to work either. You have to practice enjoying your life, enjoying the process, enjoying the journey right now.

My purpose in life is to have the full human experience and open myself up to all of the feelings, because they're going to happen anyway, but I do get to decide, and you get to decide, how you want to have them in service of what?

And then my decision is to make my experience of life about creating something that is so much bigger and better and way more fun than I was ever having when I was drinking. This doesn't mean that life is fun all the time, but it does mean that I don't delay having fun at the expense of myself. And I certainly don't believe the lie that fun is waiting for me in something that I can consume, and that that is ever going to sustain me.

But I'll tell you, all of this only works if I accept that the point of life is not to be happy all the time. The point of it is just to be human. So, there you go. That's my birthday wish for all of you. Go and be your most human self. Go and practice experiencing and learning how to coexist with all the emotions that you are trying to run from. And then, and only then, can you really decide what it is that you want to do and how you want to spend your time.

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And that is how this work, learning how to manage your mind, taking a break from drinking, that's how this work can just crack open the universe for you. It really can change everything, because that's what it's about at a deeper level. It doesn't matter if you said yes or no to a drink. What matters is what you are discovering as part of this process.

All right, everybody. I'm going to have a wonderful birthday. I hope whenever your birthday falls, this year or next, you have a wonderful birthday as well, too. See you next week.

Okay, listen up, changing your drinking is so much easier than you think. Whether you want to drink less or not at all, you don't need more rules or willpower. You need a logical framework that helps you understand and, more importantly, change the habit from the inside out. It starts with my 30-day challenge. Besides the obvious health benefits, taking a break from drinking is the fastest way to figure out what's really behind your desire. This radically different approach helps you succeed by dropping the perfectionism and judgment that blocks change. Decide what works best for you when it comes to drinking. Discover how to trust yourself and feel truly powered to take it or leave it. Head on over to RachelHart.com/join and start your transformation today.