

## Ep #150: Letting Go of the Forbidden Fruit



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With Your Host

**Rachel Hart**

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## Ep #150: Letting Go of the Forbidden Fruit

You are listening to the *Take A Break* podcast with Rachel Hart, episode 150.

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.

Hello my friends. Listen, my grandmother turned 97. 97. It's so crazy to me. I love her so much. I cannot wait to see her. I'm going to be in Connecticut for Christmas and I will see her, she will see my little boy, I cannot wait. But also, 97. I hope that I have 97 years in me. It just seems amazing. Anyway, grandma, I love you so, so much.

So last week, I was talking all about the cycle of binging and restricting. I think that this is so important for you guys to really understand and I want to actually do a second episode kind of diving deeper into this because you will stay stuck in this cycle unless you start to understand that you are the cause of your desire and you are the cause of your deprivation.

This can be a really hard thing to wrap your brain around. And it was a really hard thing for me to wrap my brain around until I started learning about the think-feel-act cycle and how my desire and my deprivation was created by my thinking.

But I want to kind of go deeper today into the concept of the forbidden fruit. This is a concept that has been with humanity for a really long time. Why is it that we desire things that we're not supposed to have? You can think about the story of Adam and Eve, where they are living in the Garden of Eden, and they are surrounded by all of these amazing fruits.

And they can eat any of them, except the fruit from the tree of knowledge. So what do they do? Well of course, they eat the fruit from the tree of

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knowledge and they are banished from Eden. This idea of forbidden fruits, it is a long-standing idea that has been with us for a very long time.

And the question really is okay, so why do humans do this? Why do we consume things that we know we're not supposed to? Especially when there are negative consequences. Certainly, the binge, restrict, and the binge again cycle shows us there are consequences to the ways that we are currently consuming things. How much you're drinking; how much you're eating.

We binge, and then we get the negative consequences from drinking too much or eating too much, and then what do we do? We turn around and restrict, which should have us feeling better, shouldn't it? And I will tell you, it kind of works for a while, but then what happens? You give in and then you binge again. You tell yourself, "I blew it. Who cares?" The restriction doesn't stick. It doesn't work.

And it's a very frustrating cycle to be in. I remember being in this for a very long time and just thinking, okay, so am I just doomed to suffer? Is this the plight? Am I going to have 97 years of my life like this? God, I hope not. But it sure seemed that way for a really long time.

Because I followed this pattern of bingeing and restricting and then bingeing again and then restricting again for so long. First with food. That started at a pretty young age with me, and then with alcohol. And I just couldn't get it. Why couldn't I learn my lesson? Why couldn't I see that the binge always created suffering? Why couldn't I just restrict for longer? Why couldn't I be smarter?

That's what I asked myself over and over again. I really did think deep down that this was a matter of being smarter. Because if I was smarter, I wouldn't drink so much. And if I was smarter, I wouldn't eat too much.

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Because let's face it, that's what you are telling yourself when you call yourself stupid for consuming too much of something.

"I was so stupid to drink that much last night. I was so stupid to eat that much." What you're doing is really saying smart people, they can control themselves. Smart people know when to stop. Stupid people don't.

Now listen, you might say, "I don't believe that. I don't think this is a matter of smarts." But you have to really be honest with yourself about how you talk to yourself after consuming too much of something. What are you saying? What are you thinking?

"God, why was I so foolish? Why was I so stupid last night? What was I thinking?" Whatever it is, that language matters. You cannot dismiss it. That is the most important thing that the think-feel-act cycle teaches you. What you think matters way more than you are currently giving credit.

What matters though is not the label, I was so stupid, or I was so foolish, and trying to understand why it is you were stupid or foolish. I would argue that's not at all what was going on. But it does matter to look at that thought, what was I thinking?

Now, when I had that thought, "God, what was I thinking when I drank that much, or when I ate that much," I assumed the answer was I wasn't thinking. I wasn't thinking, and that's why I did the thing that I'm now regretting.

But of course, I was. There's always a thought going on. There's always a thought happening before you make the decision to say yes or no to something. And understanding what exactly it was that I was thinking in that moment, before I said yes, that was key, and that's what is key for you.

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This is where the think-feel-act cycle can shed so much light on the habit and what's going on. It really shows you why it is that humans crave the forbidden fruit, why the forbidden fruit even exists, and why we get stuck in this binge and restrict cycle.

So let's just start by understanding the thoughts and feelings and actions that are keeping you stuck. So I want to start by looking at a binge. So we're not going to start with the place of the very first moment when you had your very first drink or your very first bowl of ice cream.

We're going to look at the moment when you ate too much or drank too much or overdid it. This is where most of us start to examine, hey, what's going on here? Why am I consuming this way? So let's just say, last night you had way too much of something and you woke up and you didn't feel good.

What then? What happens next after the binge? I will tell you, for me, what happened next was the shame set in. There was so much shame that I had about, god, why did I do that again? I was so sure that something must be wrong with me. I just got a janky brain in the brain lottery. I just got the brain that didn't have the off switch. That's why I felt so much shame.

But I want you to consider for a moment that the shame that you feel the day after a binge is optional. It's not a given. Drinking a lot or eating a lot does not create shame. Shame is not the product of overconsumption. It is the result of what you make that overconsumption mean about you.

And this piece is really important that you understand the difference. For the longest time, I thought that shame was caused by the action of overdrinking or overeating. So when I woke up the next day and I felt shameful, I thought, well of course, because I drank too much last night or I ate too much yesterday.

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But the truth is shame is caused by what I was making the overconsumption mean about me. Who I was as a person and also, what I was making it mean about my future and my ability to figure this out?

Now, how do we know this is true? That overconsumption does not create shame? Well first, not everybody feels shame about how much they consume, even when they consume a lot of something. I always think about the hotdog eating contest. There's one every 4th of July on Coney Island in Brooklyn.

I looked it up. The current record is 71 hotdogs. 71. In 10 minutes. Now, does the winner of the hotdog eating contest automatically feel shame because he consumed so much of something? No. He probably feels pride because he looks at what he consumed and he thinks thoughts like, "I did it. I'm a winner."

Now, this isn't just food. You can apply it to alcohol as well. I remember in college cheering people on as they would chug or funnel beers. I remember doing this myself. Consuming a lot of beer was the point. And the next day, people would laugh about how much they drank or someone else drank. I would laugh about how much I drank.

The point is that the amount of how much you are consuming, whether it is food or alcohol or something else, it doesn't matter. How much that amount doesn't create any feeling, much less the feeling of shame, until you make the amount mean something.

Now, I know you might be questioning this and thinking, "Okay, but what about when the overconsumption results in a negative consequence? Then obviously I'm going to feel shame, right? What happens when I wake up the next day and I'm feeling bloated or I weight myself and I see that the number on the scale has gone up? Or I said something or I did something

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last night that now I regret? So maybe it wasn't how much I consumed. Maybe it's that negative consequence. That's what's creating shame."

That's where some of you are stuck right now. Thinking that, okay, if it's not how much I consumed, then it's the result of my overconsumption. But I have to tell you, you are wrong again. The results that you create from consuming something does not create how you feel.

You don't feel anything when you see the readout on a scale until you make that number mean something. That number, no matter what that number is, it doesn't matter if it went up. It is still neutral. You don't feel anything about what you did last night or what you said last night until you make it mean something about you.

I don't care what it is that you did or said. It doesn't make you feel something until you have a thought about it. And what I was so often making the results of my overconsumption mean, I was making it mean I'm such a screw up, something is really wrong with me, I'm never going to figure this out, nobody else has this problem, I'm just an idiot. That's what I was making it mean.

So this really is the starting point. You have to really back up and understand okay, no matter how much you consumed last night, I don't care what number of donuts or daiquiris, it doesn't matter. You don't automatically feel shame about the consumption.

You feel shame because of the results of the negative thinking you have about your consumption and what you're making it mean about you. And let me tell you, this really is important for you to understand this distinction. Because if you don't understand this, you will always think it is the binge that is creating the negative emotions and so you will always be terrified of the binge.



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When you really have so much power to take what you are right now looking as this terrible, shameful thing, and use it as a stepping stone to understand the habit better, but you can't do that if you're saying, "Well, I just can't feel any other way about it."

Again, this isn't to say that you should feel happy and joyful and positive about it. It's just to say that you have to look at the thoughts creating how you feel about it. You have to understand that distinction. But here's the thing; when we're in the binge and restrict cycle, we don't yet understand the role of our thoughts. And that's why the binge so often leads to restriction.

Because without knowing that are the one creating the shame that you feel the next day, without knowing that that is actually a product of your mind, not a product of what you did, what do you do? You look at what you believe is the culprit of the shame you are currently feeling. You look at the substance itself. You look at alcohol or you look at sugar and you decide, oh my god, I hate how I feel, I got to take this thing out. The solution is to restrict. I'm going on a diet, I'm quitting drinking, I'm cutting this thing out of my life that causes me so much pain.

Now here's the thing; you guys know I am a big proponent of taking breaks. I think that taking a break from anything in life can be one of the very best and most powerful ways to actually change any habit that you have. But the caveat is this; you have to do it the right way.

You have to take a break where you are actually learning about the think-feel-act cycle. When you are understanding the role of your mind in creating how you feel. Most of you are not doing this. I know because I didn't do this. No one showed me that I could do this.

I would binge and then I would get to the place of, oh my god, I got to go on a diet, or I got to quit drinking, and my entire focus would be on saying no.



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My entire focus would be on restriction. And it makes sense because in my mind, I was consuming too much and all that overconsumption made me feel bad so now I needed to stop consuming so that I could finally feel good.

And it all sounds so logical, but it doesn't match how the think-feel-act cycle works because when you restrict yourself, guess what you create? Deprivation. You create that deprivation and then how do you try to solve deprivation? By consuming the forbidden fruit. By consuming the thing that you aren't supposed to have.

This is the binge and restrict cycle. But here's the thing; your deprivation that you feel when you're restricting yourself, it is not caused because you're not drinking, and it is not caused because you're not eating sweets. Your deprivation is caused by your mind. This is one of the biggest things that I work with people on when they are in my program to take a break from drinking.

You have to notice the subtle language in your mind that is creating all the restriction and all the deprivation that you feel when you're not consuming something. If you cannot change that piece, you will always be stuck in the place of deprivation and you will always be looking to solve that deprivation by consuming the thing that you feel deprived of, by going after the forbidden fruit.

When you have thoughts like, "I can't drink, I'm not allowed to eat this," this language of restriction is so subtle that it's really easy to miss, yet it is so destructive. Because when you think thoughts like, "I can't have it, I'm not allowed to eat that, I can't drink this," you are creating the feeling of deprivation.

And deprivation, that state of feeling deprived is really the feeling that something has been taken from you, when really, nothing has been taken

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from you. You made a decision to stop consuming something but now you're acting as if this was a rule or restriction that was put upon you. You make that decision from a place of empowerment, only to turn around and disempower yourself with your language.

So do you see what's happening here? You are creating the forbidden fruit for yourself. You are turning a decision to say no into a rule or a restriction, or something that has been forced upon you by some sort of outside power. When really, the only person making you do anything is you.

You are locked in battle with yourself and you don't even know it because your focus is all on the forbidden fruit. And I think the reason that we do this is because we're so sure that our desire for alcohol, our desire for food is fixed. It is unchangeable. And if it's fixed, if we can never change it, then we're always just going to love wine or crave chocolate.

And the only solution is to try to build up the prison walls. That's what happens when we believe that desire is fixed and unchangeable. We decide that need someone who will discipline us that we'll stay in line. So what happens?

You become the warden and the prisoner. You put up the bars, but you also have the key. And it is a crazy situation to be in with yourself because that is how you end up in this fight against yourself. That's why you end up feeling like you are drinking against your will or eating against your will, because you don't understand why you're in this binge and restrict cycle in the first place.

Telling yourself, no, you can't have it. But then also, but I want it. It really is this never-ending cycle. And what happens when you try to put yourself in prison is you might be able to hold out for a while, but eventually you can't take it anymore because the deprivation is just growing and the desire isn't changing.

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And so eventually, because you have the key, you break out. You are so desperate for relief, not knowing that the reason you have all this desperation is because you have created it with your mind and how you are thinking about the object of your desire and the very subtle, subtle parts of your language, like can't and not allowed, is creating all that deprivation.

I will tell you, so many people will say to me, "I just don't connect with the idea of being powerless. It's never resonated with me and I just don't believe that I can change my habits by admitting that I'm powerless." And I will tell you, I get this because it did not resonate with me either.

But when I start working with my clients and we really look at their language together, what they discover is the language of a prisoner. I can't. I'm not allowed to. And I did this too. I hated the idea of being powerless. It did not make sense to me. It didn't make sense how I could change the habit from that stance.

But then I was using the language of being powerless all the time. When I would go on a diet, or I would quit drinking, that was the disconnect that I couldn't see until I really started to understand and apply the think-feel-act cycle. And if it sounds like a change in words will never make a difference, I want you to know I get it, but you really have to test this out to really understand how powerful it can be.

To understand how a shift from I can't drink to I'm choosing not to will create a different feeling in your body. To understand how telling yourself, "I'm not allowed to eat sugar," and switching to, "I've decided to take a break from sugar," how that shift can be everything. Words matter because the words that we string together to form the sentences in our mind that form our thoughts create how we feel. That is the basis of the think-feel-act cycle.

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So it's up to you. On the one hand, you can choose words that have you feeling restricted and deprived and powerless and it is a recipe for throwing a pity party. Let me tell you, I threw a lot of pity parties for myself. A lot. Or you can choose the words on the other hand that have you feeling empowered and capable and in control. And that is such a better place to be in.

You are creating the forbidden fruit with how you talk about the object of your desire. How you talk about the object of your desire leads to restriction. And all that restriction leads to deprivation when you look at the language of how you are restricting yourself.

Unless you look at the role of your thinking, unless you look at the role of your mind, that deprivation is just going to grow and grow and grow because you will tell yourself over and over and over again, I can't, I can't, I can't. And it will grow until finally, you give in and you binge and you start the cycle all over again because then you start shaming yourself for what you ate or what you drank last night.

There is no forbidden fruit because you decide what you want for yourself and you always will. You decide what you consume. You get to be the decision maker when you look at the results you get from what you're putting in your body. You get to decide how you want to think about alcohol and how you want to think about food and if the ways that you are currently thinking about it are helping you or actually creating more obstacles for you.

You can make choices about what you want to consume and put in your body that have nothing to do with restriction and deprivation, even though on the surface, they might look the same. Because there's saying no to a drink because you can't drink, you're not allowed to, and there's saying no to a drink because you're choosing not to.

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There's saying no to food because you're not allowed to eat it, and there's saying no to food because you've decided that when you eat this certain thing, you don't really like how you feel afterwards, or you don't really like the results that you get.

It can look the same on the surface, but what matters is what's fueling them. What matters is how the think-feel-act cycle is unfolding for you. No fruit is forbidden until you make it so with your mind. And when you can learn that you can undo that, you learn how much power you have to change your deprivation and your desire, and that's how you get out of the binge and restrict cycle.

Alright everybody, that's it for today. I will see you guys next week. And happy birthday to my grandma. 97. So amazing. Bye guys.

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](https://RachelHart.com/join) and start your transformation today.