

Ep #153: How to Get Your Needs Met



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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 153.

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 everyone. We are going to talk today about getting your needs met. And I have to tell you, this can change everything. Changing your perspective on how to do this and what it means. But before I dive in, it is almost the New Year. It is actually almost a new decade. And if you are contemplating taking a break from drinking in January, I really want you to join me in the Take A Break program.

We're going to start our 2020 break on Monday, January 6th. So you can get started then to start practicing all the tools that I teach about on the podcast, but more importantly, you're going to be able to work with me directly when you join the program. It's not just a self-study course that you have to do on your own. It's a live coaching program where you and I can work directly together.

So it's one thing to listen to the podcast. That alone can start to shift your mindset. But it truly is another thing to be able to bring your problems to me and to get personalized coaching on them. If you're interested in the January 2020 start, all you have to do is head over to rachelhart.com/january and sign up there.

Now, I love the work in the Take A Break program because the women in there get to see how their relationship with alcohol isn't just about wine. It isn't just about a cocktail. It really is about shining a light on other areas of their life that they might not have been able to see before.

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And one of the really common themes that I've been seeing over and over again is not getting your needs met by a significant other. I see this come up with so much of the coaching that I'm doing in there. And I'll tell you, I think it's amazing that a simple 30-day break from drinking can start to really reveal this and shed light on an area of your life that frankly, when you're drinking, alcohol keeps kind of fuzzy.

So the other day, someone posted in the Ask a Coach section of the site in Take A Break, and that's a place where anyone can post any question. It's totally anonymous. And she talked about feeling like she wasn't getting her needs met by her husband. Now, she's not the first person to share this. I have listened to this come up over and over and over again.

And what happens is that once you make the commitment to take a break, once you decide that you're not going to open up a bottle of wine every night and you're actually going to shift your relationship with alcohol, suddenly, the areas of your life that aren't quite working, they start to reveal themselves.

Now, this is where some people can get freaked out. But of course, this is where change is able to take hold. This is where you can actually start to make a huge impact on your life. So the way that this came up is pretty simple. She said you know, my husband isn't meeting my needs, and now that I'm not drinking, I can't stop thinking about it.

And I want you to really think about how this shows up in your own life and why it happens. I think it happens for so many of my clients is because it's very easy to fall into the habit of having a glass of wine meet your needs or believing that a glass of wine is meeting your needs.

I actually did an entire episode of this, episode number 51. It's called Why Alcohol and Food Aren't Your Friends, where I start to talk about this in a little bit of a different perspective because I'm talking about how many of

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us, myself included, develop unconsciously this belief, this idea that alcohol and food are friends of ours. They're these things that we have a relationship with. They're these parts of our lives that they always have our back and they're always there when we need them.

I remember thinking this a lot. Coming home from a stressful day at work and thinking, "Thank god, I get to have a drink." It was as if the drink had my back. But here's the problem with this. Alcohol and food are not your friends. Friendship is formed by a bond of mutual affection.

Now, I had a lot of affection for alcohol. I had a lot of affection for Ben & Jerry's. These things didn't have any affection for me. They had zero. Alcohol and food, they just sit there. They are terrible friends. They don't care about you at all. They don't care about your needs, but it is easy to fool yourself into believing that when you drink or when you eat as a way to feel better, that you've developed some kind of friendship and you're getting your needs met, when of course, you're not.

Now, I talk a lot about how the habit of overdrinking and overeating are really habits of numbing how you feel. And when people hear me say that, sometimes they'll freak out a little bit. And they'll say, "Wow, Rachel listen, I feel fine. I don't have any problems with how I feel. I just really like champagne, I just really like Chardonnay, I just really like my lager. I'm not drinking because I'm depressed or there's something really wrong. I just like the way that it tastes."

But I'll tell you, this is one of the biggest misconceptions that I work with people on really overcoming. Because when I'm talking about using a drink or using food to change how you feel, people hear that and they assume that what I'm talking about is some big, heavy, deep, dark, negative emotion. They hear me say that and think, "Oh god, she must be talking about someone who is super depressed," and that's not what I'm talking about at all.

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What I'm talking about can be very subtle. It can just be the need to take the edge off after a long day of work. It could be the need to say yes when you're out at a party simple because you don't want to feel deprived or restless if you say no. This comes up a lot with my clients who tell me, "Listen I just want to have a good time. I'm drinking just to have fun," which I totally understand because this was a belief that I had as well.

But even if you right now are telling yourself that, even if you're like, I'm not having a bad time, I'm just drinking to have fun, if there is a part of you that feels like the situation could be more fun with a drink, and there's a part of you who is feeling a little subtle deprivation, and that's okay, you just need to be aware of it. Because when you use a drink to change how you feel, your brain can very easily develop that idea that alcohol is almost acting like a friend.

So you come home and you're stressed out and you open up a bottle of wine and now you feel a bit better. Or you walk into a party and you feel a little anxious, and you head to the bar and you get a drink and you feel a little bit more at ease. And the brain is like hey, this is great, my needs are being met. I feel a little bit more comfortable, a little bit more relaxed.

But of course, alcohol and food aren't meeting your needs. They're just temporarily covering up how you feel. Opening a bottle of wine tonight is not going to make tomorrow less stressful at work. It's just going to mean that you're probably going to need more wine tomorrow.

Drinking in a social situation to loosen up isn't going to make the next social situation less awkward. It just means you're probably going to need to head to the bar the next time you're some place new and you're feeling a little out of your element. Because drinking in these situations isn't actually meeting your needs. It isn't actually solving how you feel. It's just putting off the problem until the next time it pops up.

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When you take a break from drinking, this is why it's so powerful, because all of a sudden, you don't have this coping mechanism anymore as a way to pour a drink to deal with how you feel. So you come home from work and you're stressed out and you don't have the wine to take the edge off. Or you head out to a new social situation and you don't have the beer to put you at ease.

So what does your brain do? Well, it looks for a new explanation as to what is causing the problem. And until you really start to understand the think-feel-act cycle, which is what I teach you guys, that your thoughts create your feelings, your feelings don't just arise out of nothing and they aren't just created by what's happening around you.

Until you start to understand the think-feel-act cycle, what you will do when you're taking a break and you no longer have that coping mechanism, you'll start pointing to the people in your life and saying, "A-ha, I figured it out. This person isn't meeting my needs. That's the real problem."

It sounds like this. This is really common. It will sound like, if only my partner would open up more or remember to take out the trash, or stop leaving socks on the floor, or plan a romantic date, or dress differently, or compliment me more, be more affectionate, or less affectionate, apologize, eat better, stop drinking so much, find a job, find a new job, pay attention to the kids, or stop standing up to my mother-in-law, that's what it can sound like.

Then we have all of these beliefs of what our partner should be doing. Then we tell ourselves, I would feel happier and I wouldn't need a drink. So what we're believing is that my partner isn't meeting my needs, so no wonder I'm wanting to drink at the end of the day. This is the trap that a lot of people will fall into when they take a break.

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Now, here's the problem. If you've been in this position, if you have complained that someone isn't meeting your needs, and I know I was in this position for a very long time, then the problem is you become very focused on how you want the other person to change. You become very focused on how you want them to start acting differently.

And this will always be a distraction. Focusing on how you want someone else to show up differently is always a distraction to what is really going on. And what is really going on in that moment is an emotion. It's how you are feeling. And so you have to ask yourself, how do you believe you would feel differently if your partner opened up more, or if your partner would take out the trash, or if your partner wasn't drinking as much, whatever it is.

Whatever those laundry list of to-dos are, that you have created, believing that if they are done, if they are taken care of, you will get your needs met, you have to ask yourself, okay, how do you believe you would feel differently? And whenever I ask my clients this, I usually hear the same thing. Well, I would feel loved or appreciated or accepted or secure. They're always listing a feeling that they want to have.

And that is the problem. That they're listing feelings. They want to feel a certain way. That's what we're really saying when we're saying my needs aren't being met. It's kind of code for you aren't taking care of my emotional state. But if you are looking to your partner to create feelings for you, you are looking in the wrong place because it is not his or her job. It's your job. It's your responsibility.

And the reason is simple. Because that is how the think-feel-act cycle works. Your thoughts create your feelings, which drive your actions. It has everything to do with you. It has nothing to do with another person. What your partner does or doesn't do does not create how you feel. What you make it mean, that's what creates how you feel.

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When your partner doesn't take out the trash, do you make it mean, "See, they're taking me for granted again." If you make it mean that, you're probably going to be left feeling hurt and dejected. Or do you make it mean, "Maybe they're tired, maybe they forgot, maybe they're busy thinking about something else." That's going to create an entirely different emotion.

Instead of feeling hurt and dejected, maybe you'll feel understanding or compassionate. How you interpret your partner's actions, that is everything, and that will change everything. And I know that some of you are hearing me say this right now and you're thinking, "Okay, but listen Rachel, they haven't taken out the trash in five years. It's been a million times since it's happened. And I ask them over and over and over again repeatedly and they're still not doing it. He always forgets and it always makes me feel terrible. He's literally not meeting my needs."

But here's what I want you to know. I don't care if it's happened one time or a million times. Your partner does not, cannot create your feelings. And if that is the case, then your partner simply cannot be in charge of meeting your needs. Always, always, always, the product of your thoughts is how you feel. How you interpret someone else's behavior creates your feeling.

And you have so much control to decide what you want to make someone else's behavior mean. Now listen, that does not mean that you must always make another person's behavior mean something positive. It just means that you have to know, you have to be aware that if you are feeling hurt or dejected or unappreciated or hopeless, it's because of a thought you are thinking and not because someone else isn't meeting your needs.

That's what you get all your power back. Because that's when you get into the driver's seat of your own life. I will tell you, I really truly believe that this thought that so many of us are taught, that my partner is supposed to meet my needs is one of the most poisonous, detrimental thoughts that you can

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have in a relationship. Because it puts your partner in charge of your emotional wellbeing.

When your partner is in charge of meeting your needs, you end up at their mercy. You are hoping that they're going to do everything you want them to do so you can feel good, and here's the problem. We're not very good at controlling people. I've tried. Trust me. I have not been successful.

You have to start to do the work to understand that you're in charge of meeting your own needs. And no one's ever taught you how to do that, and that's why you don't know how to do it. Meeting your own needs isn't about how often you pick up the house or how often you take out the trash. It's about doing the work to create how you want to feel in life, instead of sitting back in life and expecting that someone else or something is going to make you feel secure, loved, appreciated, accepted, or worthy.

Most people will sit back and spend their entire life waiting for someone else to do it. But here's what I know. Other people are terrible at doing this. Because they have a hard enough time trying to make themselves feel good, trying to deal with their own emotions. How are they going to possibly succeed with ours?

And listen, this is why the work to change your drinking is so transformative if you do it correctly. Because what happens is you open up this window into your life and you start to see, oh, I had been handing over responsibility to food and alcohol to meet my needs. And when I clear that up, then you realize, oh, I was also handing over responsibility to the people in my life to meet my needs.

And that's what happens. That's how it opens up a window into your life because when you stop hiding behind opening up a bottle of wine at night to deal with your stress, or getting tipsy on the weekends or drunk on the

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weekends to have fun, then you get a glimpse of what is really going on in your life.

And only then, only when you commit to no longer believing that it is your partner's job, or your mother's job, or your boss's job to make you feel appreciated, worthy, or loved, or whatever feeling you're after, then and only then can you start the work of learning how to be someone who can take care of your own needs.

This is the work I had to do. This is the work that I teach my clients to do. And this is what becomes so incredibly powerful because when you know how to meet your own needs, when you're not turning to a bottle of wine or a bag of chips, or looking to your partner, when you know how to do it for yourself, then you're unstoppable.

Because there's nothing then that you will be afraid of. There's nothing that you won't go after. Because you'll always know, I have my own back. It really is learning how to be kind to yourself, how to be accepting towards yourself, how to be loving towards yourself, how to be honest and present and willing to grow, willing to challenge yourself, willing to have your back when you fail and when you make a mistake.

I always tell people this. One of the most powerful things that you will take away from working with me is how to redefine your relationship with failure. How to have your own back when you don't show up the way that you want to. That is everything. That is a skill that no one teaches us and it's so important because if you don't have your back, guess what will happen.

You will avoid failure. You will avoid putting yourself out there. And then you'll look to someone else or something else to make you feel better. You'll come home and you'll want to raid the fridge. You'll come home and you'll expect your husband or your wife to do it. That's the problem.

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Because how to be kind, how to accept yourself, how to love yourself, how to be honest and present and willing to grow, it's what we want from all of our relationships. We just don't realize that it starts with the relationship we have with ourselves. It is the very best present that you can give yourself.

Learning how to meet your needs and always be willing to have your back and not need to turn to the fridge or the wine cabinet, not need to look to the people in your lives and put it on their shoulders. That's when you really can change anything in your life. That's when you can start to step outside of the habits of numbing.

Because if you don't feel this way, and I didn't for a long time, if you don't feel accepted or appreciated or worthy, if you aren't being honest or present with yourself, if you're always hiding, it's always just because of a thought. The only place you need to look is the think-feel-act cycle. That's it. It's always just a sentence in your mind that is creating that negative emotion for you.

That's what I want you guys to understand. That's what I want you to see. This is what you are opening up space for in your life when you take a break from drinking. Suddenly, you're not drinking over your feelings. You're not eating over your feelings. Life isn't fuzzy in that way, so you can start to find those sentences that are creating the negative emotions that then you're trying to run from.

Because that's your work. To find these thoughts and to start learning how to shift them in a believable and meaningful way. This is why changing your relationship with alcohol can change everything. It's why it can lead to a life that is so much bigger, so much better, so much more fun.

It's not just because you aren't taxing your liver anymore. It's not just because you're getting more restful sleep. Listen, those things are wonderful. They're beautiful. But it's because you're creating a totally new

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relationship with yourself because you've learned how to manage your mind. That's how you get your needs met.

When you take this burden off your loved ones, then you're just free to love them without expecting that they're going to make you feel happy. That is the best way, the most freeing way to have a relationship with another person, but it requires that you have an incredibly strong and powerful relationship with yourself.

So listen, this is the work that I teach people. And if you want to start out this next decade of your life right, if you want to take a break in the New Year, I really hope that you will join me for the 30-day challenge. Sign up at rachelhart.com/january. We are going to get started on Monday, January 6th. I cannot wait to meet you. Alright guys, I will 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.