

Ep #251: Worrying About Your Drinking is Not Your Life's Purpose



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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 251.

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, hello, hello everyone. Welcome back. I'm going to say, today's episode is really a reminder for all of you here. I don't care if today is your first episode or you've listened to every episode since 2017.

It's a reminder that the journey you are on to change your relationship with alcohol, and it is a journey, there will be twists and turns and ups and downs, and none of that is a bad thing. It's all part of the process.

But this journey is to get you to a place where you can just free up the mental energy that you spend thinking about drinking and longing after a glass of wine and wondering, should I pour another? Is it time to order another round? And then beating yourself up when you've had too much and worrying, "God, am I ever going to figure it out?"

It's about freeing up all of this mental energy. I mean, just imagine that you could do, what you could put this energy towards if you just didn't have to worry about your drinking anymore.

I talk about this a lot on the podcast because I think so often we go in to wanting to change our relationship with alcohol with this very limited end point. So it's about, okay, I'm just going to learn how to say no, or I'm just going to learn how to only have one glass.

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So we're thinking really small, and I want you to start thinking bigger. I want you to think about how your life would be different if you had all this space freed up for you. Because guess what? When you have space to think about other things, you really can focus on what you really want.

And I know for all of you listening, there is something in there that you really desire and maybe it's small, maybe it's really big, maybe you just want to spend your evenings working on that art project but you never get around to it. Maybe you want to switch careers.

It doesn't matter what it is, if you want to write a book or get out of a dead-end relationship, or travel, see the world, or see your backyard, it doesn't matter. It's just thinking about that there is something that you really do desire that excites you, that aligns with your soul's purpose, and it's very hard to start moving towards that when you're just spending all this time caught on the hamster wheel of like, "Oh God, I've got these urges, and then I give in to the urges, and then I beat myself up, and then I worry that I'm never going to figure it out."

You really can get off the hamster wheel. Now, I will tell you, I have been thinking about this topic in particular a lot because it's about to be November and my birthday is right around the corner. And I've talked about this on the podcast before.

Birthdays used to be an excuse for me to okay, let's just go all out and get wasted. I really didn't know how to celebrate myself without alcohol. And let me tell you, oftentimes it was because my birthday would come around and I would feel like, oh God, I'm a year older, here I am again, another 365 days have passed, another year is gone, and I didn't do any of the things that I said I was going to do. I didn't make the progress that I wanted.

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So no wonder it felt hard to celebrate. No wonder I was just waiting until, okay, when is it time to party? When can we open up the champagne? Changing my relationship with alcohol changed all of that.

Not because alcohol was some sort of terrible thing, but because learning how to do this, learning how to change my relationship, and keep in mind, that's not learning how to say no. Those are two very different things. I'm talking about learning how to actually see what's creating your desire and learn how to shift that.

Learning how to respond to your urges differently without just giving in, or relying on willpower, but actually allowing them and seeing like, hey, they're no big deal. I don't have to be at the mercy of my urges. All of this were the building blocks of learning how to manage my mind.

And it is only by having a managed mind that I have been able to go after the things in life that I truly desired. And I promise you this; it's always bigger than what's in your glass or what's on your plate. What you desire is always bigger than that.

So here's the thing; for today's episode, I was thinking I want to do something a little bit different. So when you join the 30-day challenge, once you complete it and you start doing the monthly work with us, we have a private podcast. And it really is a place where it's just kind of a free-for-all. But it's a place for me to really go deep and share my experience using everything that I teach.

Because I think it's really important for all of you to understand that you're listening to me talk about these ideas and these concepts and these tools and it's very easy to sit back and think, "Oh, she's got it figured out. Rachel must not struggle at all."

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But here's the thing; the truth is having a managed mind requires that I'm managing it. So you better believe that even though it's been a very long time now since I was drinking and that was a regular part of my life, I use everything I teach you.

I use observing the sentences in your mind and learning how to shift them in a believable way, identifying and allowing feelings, and changing how you respond to them, and also learning how to start changing your actions from a place of curiosity rather than okay, I just got to grit my teeth, or have a lot of discipline.

I use these tools day in and day out. And so on this episode, from the private podcast, I'm talking with one of my absolute favorite people in the world, Riece Morris. She is an amazing coach who is on my team inside Take a Break, and we really talk about what it has meant in our own lives to really end the habits where we found ourselves numbing and buffering, and really just start to use all that mental energy for what we really wanted to go after.

Because that really, that to me is why this is so worth it. Yes, you will feel healthier, yes, you will wake up and have more energy in the morning, but it's just so much bigger than that. It's such an amazing gift that you can give to yourself when you learn how to do this.

So I hope you enjoy this episode of the private podcast. It's normally only available for people inside Take a Break. But all of you, really, whether this is your first time listening or you've been here since 2017, you all are an amazing gift for me and I love that I get to talk to you every week. So with that, I hope you enjoy this episode.

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Rachel: Hello.

Riece: Hello.

Rachel: How you doing Riece?

Riece: I am really good today, thank you for asking.

Rachel: I just want people to know that I showed up late, which is very unlike me.

Riece: I literally sent a Slack message saying this is very unlike Rachel. Has she been heard from?

Rachel: And the first thing Riece said to me was, "I'm so happy it's not me."

Riece: I have been late to a couple of meetings recently and so when I was sitting here waiting I was like, I'm so glad this wasn't me.

Rachel: Thank God. Okay, so I have been thinking a lot about something that has been coming up in the challenge, something that I've been seeing in Ask a Coach, and I've also been thinking about this because my birthday is coming up. I am a Scorpio for all of you who are into that. You know what that means.

Riece: I have no idea what that means.

Rachel: You have no idea what that means?

Riece: I don't, I don't. I don't know anything about astrology.

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Rachel: Not astronomy Riece.

Riece: I know, it was risky.

Rachel: It was a risky moment. So I have been thinking about this a lot because I talk so much about the goal of what we're doing inside the 30-day challenge and in the advanced work. It's not to be healthier, and it's not to be better at following rules.

And I really do think that a lot of people hear me say that and they're like, uh-huh, uh-huh, but I mean we're going to get better at following rules, right? And I think about this in terms of my birthday because alcohol was a really - it was both a big part of my life in terms of how I celebrated myself and how I had fun and how I felt like I got to cut loose and be silly and be more outgoing.

And it was also something that I worried about for a very long time. And I worried very silently. I think a lot of people - we see this a lot inside Take a Break. A lot of people will say, "This is the first time I'm talking to anyone about this. I don't talk to my partner, I don't want to talk to my friends."

And I really do think it is just the act of kind of showing up and saying, hey, I'm here, and I don't want to worry about my drinking anymore, I don't want to spend so much brain energy about this. I shared this in an email recently. I was talking about worrying about your drinking is not the purpose of your life, people.

Riece: Yes.

Rachel: It didn't feel like it was the purpose, but it felt like I just spent so much time and so much energy and it consumed so much of my brain power. Why can't I figure this out? Why is it so easy for my best friend or

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for my sister to say no? Why is it that I can't - the title of my book is Why Can't I Drink Like Everyone Else?

It really was something that sucked a lot of my energy. And I think really understanding that I don't think I'm here to worry about my drinking, I don't think that that is the purpose of what I am meant to do, and again, not to say this in a, oh my God, I have to fix this because I'm being bad and this is a problem, but more just really understanding when you understand that you have a limited amount of mental power and energy and resources, and I think there was a point where I was just like, okay, I got to figure this out. I'm just done using a lot of resources on this issue. I've been thinking about this since I was 17. I'm kind of over it.

Riece: Yeah, I think for me, even when I started dipping my toe into the self-improvement realm, I think it really quickly for me became like, oh, that's my life's purpose is to be better. And I think that's really similar to what you're talking about in that we can really get stuck, and I think we see this with people that come into the challenge too.

They think that the point of doing this is so they can be better, so that they can - I mean, what's underneath it for all of us ends up being like, so I can prove to myself and other people that I'm somehow worthy, right?

Rachel: Or that I'm good, I'm not being bad. Because if I'm drinking too much I'm being bad. Yeah, exactly. It's not about then becoming good.

Riece: Exactly. And I think any angle that you're talking about that from, it just presupposes that you're somehow broken or bad or messed up to begin with. And I think so much of this work is about learning that that's not really true you're not - working on your relationship with alcohol or any other thing that you want to change, you're not working on that because it's going to make you better or unbroken or something like that.

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Rachel: This is why I think that what we teach and the think-feel-act cycle and really just understanding alcohol just sits there, it truly does just sit there, the ice cream, whatever it is that feels like you have a lot of desire and it feels kind of compulsive, it really is just sitting there.

And when you can start to break it out and just understand, okay, so there was a thought that led to a feeling that drove my decision to say yes or say no, when you can start to understand it that way, I think that's one of the things why it was so freeing for me.

Because for a long time, I did have a belief of like, I don't know why I drank that much, because I'm stupid. I was just stupid and I can't learn my lesson. It was so much of that kind of next-day narrative. It was like, what is it? I don't know, what is it called? The Monday morning quarterback?

But my Monday morning quarterback always sounded like, I don't know, because you're a dumbass, because you just can't learn your lesson, because you just have this kind of - you're missing an off switch in your brain, you treat everything as more is better.

I was so used to relying on those stories about myself to explain why I said yes, why I said yes to another, why I said yes to another, and another. Instead of just kind of breaking it down and being like, it's actually not the thought I'm stupid that leads to the decision to drink.

That was kind of what I came up with the next day, but I could start to really understand like, oh, maybe it really is as simple of just finding these thoughts that I just didn't have a lot of conscious awareness. I didn't have a lot of conscious awareness around I deserve it, or screw it, or who cares, or one won't hurt.

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I mean, there were so many of them. But it wasn't until I really saw that, oh, it really just is a sentence. It's not my - I don't know, it's not my goodness or badness that's hanging in the balance that is driving this habit here. I think that's why it's so powerful.

But then especially because I'm coming up on my birthday, I mean, learning that and understanding that, to really understand, oh wow, and now that I'm not worrying about my drinking, I can free up my brain to think about and create other things and go after bigger desires.

I think this is so important. When you really believe that you just truly love - for me, I talk about this a lot, gin and tonics. I was just like, I just love a gin and tonic. I just love it, you don't understand, I'm just a gin and tonic person. The special gin and the special tonic.

And when you truly believe that, it prevents you from having that kind of deeper conversation with yourself about what do I actually deeply desire in this world, what do I actually truly want to create, and what do I actually want to use my brain for? What do I want to use it for?

And I think that to me, that's everything that we're doing inside of Take a Break. It's not about being good, it's not about being more disciplined. It's not about well, I didn't drink for 30 days, therefore, here's my gold star. It really is just having that kind of deeper conversation and realizing like, yeah, I don't think I was put here to worry about my drinking. I don't think I was put on Earth to worry about food or worry about the size of my butt or the rolls on my stomach. I just don't think that's what I'm here for.

Riece: No, that's so good. And I think one of my favorite ways that I've heard you put that is you have just talked so much about how that struggle with your drinking and that whole process of figuring out your relationship with alcohol and looking at your relationship with alcohol, you have talked

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about what a gift that is and how it was so easy to have such a negative story about it and that this is a problem and this is something that's wrong with me and all that.

And you looking at it from a completely different angle now, which is that that was such a gift and it has opened up an unbelievable amount of joy and unbelievable things in your life by doing that, and I definitely have experienced that.

I just think there are so many things that when my brain was completely occupied with everything I was doing wrong and thinking I needed to be better, and why can't I figure this out, when that was the tape on repeat in my head, there were so many things that I just didn't have room to think about. And once I did, that's when things got really fun.

Rachel: I know. But I just want to say because I do know that people are listening to this being like, "Okay, it's a gift, yeah. What are you talking about?" But this is why one of the things that we so encourage people to do, people have no problem finding the downsides of their drinking, right?

They could just list it off for pages and pages. But to really stop and consider, what is the upside? And for all of you hearing me say that, it's not a trick question. The answer is not there's no upside. No, of course there's an upside. If there wasn't an upside, you wouldn't be doing it.

And I think we get blocked from seeing that because so often, what we're told is you should really focus on how damaging it is for you and how bad it is for your health. And listen, we don't just do this around alcohol, we do this around food as well.

It's just like, remind yourself how bad it is for you and that it's not good for you and you don't like the results that you're getting, and focus there. And

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the problem is yeah, okay, that might be true, it might be true that it's screwing up your hormones and messing with your sleep and extra calories that you don't need and you're waking up the next day and you're not having energy or you're feeling hungover.

Yeah, all of that is true, but guess what? You don't need to spend any more time thinking about that. I really do think that that is one of the biggest mistakes is that we think that we need to dwell more or swim more in this lake of misery about how bad it is.

Riece: Well, and actually to that point, I think that's something that sometimes holds people back from examining their relationship with alcohol because they think that if I look at this, it's going - I already don't like how much of my life it's consuming. If I really take a look at this, it's just going to consume me more, it's just going to be more of a focus of my life. And I do think that that can be a little bit of a limiting factor for some people.

Rachel: Yeah of course, and it's like, there is an upside. Let's spend some time thinking about that and I promise you, the upside is more than I like the taste. I promise you that there is an upside if you're willing to be curious about it that actually, when I talk about my entire experience with alcohol, now being able to look at it and see it, it's like, oh, this was a gift.

This was me not knowing how to manage my nervous system, manage my emotions. It was me not knowing how to deal with things that felt very overwhelming, that I was very used to like, okay, let me just run away, let me just escape, let me just numb out, let me just zone out.

It was an invitation for me to say, okay, you're going to learn it this time, we're going to figure it out here. And I do think - I mean, we talk about this a lot too, the idea that this isn't a problem to solve, it's a puzzle. I mean, do we really want another problem to solve about ourselves really?

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Riece: Not really.

Rachel: I think it's one of the things where - obviously I'm in the self-improvement world, but I really do think that I don't even like seeing it as self-improvement. It really to me is more like self-curiosity and self-exploration. I don't want to be something that needs fixing. I don't think anyone...

Riece: A project.

Rachel: I don't want to be - like, oh God, another thing to fix, what am I doing wrong now, as opposed to like, this is an invitation for me to get to know myself and get to understand my brain and my nervous system and my emotions and all of it on a deeper level, in a way that no one ever showed me.

Certainly no one was taking me aside in school and helping me figure out how to deal with this. And I think a lot of us, we grew up and our parents didn't have these tools. And so it really was like, okay, so this is how you're going to figure it out.

Riece: Yes, and I love that. I love the way that you put it too. Those kinds of questions, your brain is just focused on the wrong questions I think at some point. And when we can start thinking about it in another way, and we can start thinking about it as an opportunity, as something that's trying to teach you something, it's a complete game-changer.

Rachel: I say this all the time so I am a little bit of a broken record on this, but everything that we learn inside of Take a Break, so whether you come in for the 30-day challenge, whether or not you decide to come longer, a lot of people will do the 30-day challenge and then come back to it after practicing this work on their own.

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All of this, these are not skills that are unique to drinking. These are not skills that are unique to managing your desire around alcohol. These are literally foundational skills.

I was talking with someone recently and I was coaching her and she said, “I’ve been doing this for a couple months, I guess I have to go back to the pillars. I guess I got to go back to the pillars.” And it’s like, listen, it’s not like one and done.

These are the foundational skills. The way that you show up with your urges, the way that you start to learn how to observe your mind, rather than just being at the mercy of it, the way that you start to learn how to take everything that’s happening in your unconscious brain and write it out in the think-feel-act cycle, all of these are skills that I just can’t even tell you, I just use them every single day in my life.

I just - there’s never a moment when I’m like, moving on, don’t need these skills anymore. And also I will say, the ability for me to continually practice that commitment is not a one and done thing, it’s not about being perfect, I talk about this all the time but I really do have to practice this with myself.

I know we were talking recently about how I signed up with a bunch of my girlfriends to do a walktober challenge. And started off super strong and was getting those leaves, they were giving me leaves on a tree. Like pretty leaves, then I wasn’t feeling well, I was under the weather, my kid’s going through a sleep regression, he’s waking me up in the middle of the night, and I wasn’t getting as many steps in.

And I watched my brain want to be like, oh, well, I screwed that one up, good job there. And it has to be like, wait, hold on, slow your roll, how are we going to use this as a moment to be really curious and a moment to see how I show up, rather than I think what my default has been for so much of

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my life is just like, okay, well, let's just throw in the towel, that didn't work. Maybe I'll figure it out.

Riece: And I think it's just like you said, if you can start using that skill in every area of your life, when you're looking at interactions you have with your kids, or your partner, or at work, or any part of your day, if you can bring that kind of curiosity to it, you're going to see that there is so much opportunity there and that this is such an amazing gateway to do that I think.

When you take something that you know that you want to change and that you want to approach in a new way, and you start learning how to do that, you kind of get those muscles strong so that when you are presented with these kinds of interactions in the rest of your life, that's going to be so much easier.

Rachel: Which also is why you and I always talk about how we're doing this work in our real lives. Actually, I have to tell you today, I don't know why, I started re-listening to our skunk episode.

Riece: Did you really?

Rachel: I did. I did. I was really like, oh yeah, even when I encounter skunks in the wild, stop, drop, and breathe.

Riece: That's too good. I mean, all the time, there are times that I have interactions with my kids that I don't like how they went, there's times in my marriage that I want to bring a little bit of distance, and I just think that ability to - just to look at something a little bit from the outside and not be so in it, which I think is exactly the skill that we're learning by doing the think-feel-act cycle and actually looking at our think-feel-act cycle, that is something that once you learn it, you just can't unlearn it. Once you start

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seeing how that shows up for you in your life, it's just impossible to not see it anymore.

Rachel: Yeah. I will tell you, I have not been feeling well recently and actually, I'm convinced my son is getting another cold. I woke up this morning and I was like, oh no, started sneezing, what's happening? And so I've been feeling a little under the weather and it's so interesting.

This is one of the things that for those of you who haven't done it yet, there's a whole area in the bonus section of the site where we talk about doing this work specifically around chronic pain and specifically around physical ailments.

Because so often, that's what we find. A lot of people get into this habit of well, I feel terrible or I have this pain, and so reaching for a glass of wine is how I feel better. And I think that can be such a powerful place to really change not just your relationship with alcohol but also your relationship with how you respond when you don't feel good.

I think about how many times in my life that my response to being sick and exhausted was just now I have permission to have all the things. It's such a pity party.

Riece: That's a blank check right there.

Rachel: Yeah, it's like a blank check. I get anything I want. It's a free-for-all. That's going to help. But I have been like - always to me, it's like you're just doing this work on deeper and deeper levels, and here I am not really feeling well, and it's just - to me, it's like here we go, we're going to do it at a deeper level.

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There's something more here for me to understand and the ways in which I want to fall into habitual patterns and thoughts around this isn't fair, and it's never going to go away, and oh my God, he's sneezing, and start catastrophizing. It's like, all of that is going to continue to happen.

We're not trying to clean our brains and have them sparkly clean and only the best and brightest thoughts ever appear. It's really just like, how do I manage what's there? I don't need to delete it all.

I was just doing an episode for the public podcast, you know I talk about the rolodex of excuses, how the brain likes to just flip through its rolodex of okay, will this one work? Will this one work?

And I was thinking like, sometimes people will hear that and be like, oh my God, but I have so many excuses, I use so many excuses to drink or to eat too much, and oh my God, I'm going to have to get rid of all these thoughts. It's just understanding you don't have to get rid of them at all. You just have to develop a different relationship.

You just have to understand them on a deeper level and see what they create for you when you're using the model, and really understand, how do I teach my brain that this thought doesn't lead to a reward, or this is not actually the solution, or the desire that I'm really seeking.

So for everyone doing this work, I can't state this enough that this is not about being healthy, this is not about not being a good person, this is not about being more disciplined. It's an opportunity and an invitation to learn how to show up with your mind and your body and your nervous system and your desires and your urges differently. And that to me is like, what better gift to give to yourself?

Riece: I love that.

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Rachel: Happy birthday me.

Riece: Yes. That's a much better way of thinking about our life's purpose. I think that's so much funner.

Rachel: Awesome. Alright, Riece.

Riece: Have a good rest of your day. Bye.

Rachel: Bye-bye.

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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.

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