

Ep #256: Advance Certification on Numbing + Buffering



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Rachel Hart

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You are listening to the *Take A Break* podcast with Rachel Hart, episode 256.

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.

Alright, well, welcome back, everyone. So, last week on that episode, I did a deep dive about why humans avoid emotions. Which, let me tell you, is at the heart of habit change. This is why talking about emotions is at the heart of my work and the heart of this podcast. Now, I talk about the think relax cycle a lot, and I think so often when people are drawn to my work, they're drawn kind of to the logic of the think, relax cycle, and the idea that they can start to really understand why did I reach for that drink.

But sometimes, it's almost like people almost want to skip over understanding the emotional piece. It's like, oh, fascinating; I can watch my brain, observe my thoughts. I can start to learn how to shift them and change them, and I understand this because, hell, I wanted to spend a lot of time there too. That was where I preferred hanging out. But it is think, feel, act. You need to understand every piece. And if you're going to change a habit, you're going to meet discomfort. I don't care whether it's saying no to a drink, ending overeating, not spending every moment not stuck on your phone, or looking at a screen. If you're going to change a habit, you're going to meet discomfort.

Which means you better really understand that feeling piece. Because that's where the discomfort is now, habits overconsumption, and I'm talking about all types of overconsumption, here they are ultimately about seeking

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a reward. So, you better believe that when you start practicing interrupting the habit at first, you will experience the discomfort of not having the reward. And that discomfort can show up differently for different people. It might show up as restlessness, deprivation, annoyance, grief, anger, or boredom. Still, I will tell you this; you need a solution to that feeling beyond gritting your teeth, willpower, and crossing days off a calendar. That is not sustainable.

That's what I tried to do for so long, whether it was changing my drinking or going on a crash diet. It was all about just, let me make the commitment and then just grit my teeth. It would work for a while, but I would always get to that point of giving in because I didn't have a sustainable solution. I didn't have a healthy way of resolving that discomfort and resolving the negative emotions. This is where I think a lot of humans, and indeed, a lot of coaches, get confused. The confusion really stems from something that I think all of us are taught.

So, it's this idea of, if I just change my drinking, figure out how to eat less, if I can just put down my phone, and stop procrastinating if I could just get in shape, or pay off my credit card, get my business off the ground, or find a partner, or learn how to be a better parent, or figure out a work, life balance; If I can just figure these things out, then, I will feel better.

I mean, basically, you can insert any human goal in here. That is the kind of underlying belief system. If I can just figure out how to do this, then I'll feel better. If I can stop the habits of self-sabotage, if I can stick to my word and my commitment, then I'll be okay. I just want you to know; I was very confused about this myself for a long time. Because it really, truly is the message that we get over and over again; that peace, contentment, happiness, that it's just waiting for us on the other side of fixing whatever is wrong. That peace, contentment, and happiness comes from what we do or what we stop doing.

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So, we're really told the opposite of what I teach everyone. It's the opposite of the think, feel, and act cycle. Which says, hey, we have to look at all three of these things together. We have to understand that our feelings don't just happen, and our actions don't just happen; it's connected to what's happening in our minds. But we're told no, no, no, just do X, and you will feel Y. Just get X, and you'll feel Y.

So, what ends up happening is we focus so much on change and changing our actions; I have to fix my drinking, eating, body, career, relationship, and I have to fix my credit cards, right? It's so exhausting. It's just like, fix, fix, fix, fix, and it's a problem that I see show up in my own industry. Because coaches are humans, and, so we have been taught to believe this as well. If we finally figure out how to do X, then we're going to feel Y. That's going to solve the problem.

What we have to really start to see is, yes, is it amazing and transformative to stop habits over overconsumption? Sure, of course. Is it amazing and transformative to reach your goals? Yes. I would never for a moment say, let's not work on that. But that, my friend, is step one. It really is. If we don't learn how to also have a different relationship with how we feel. This is why so many people I watch kind of like, bounce around, and myself, by the way, did this as well, bounce around into all these habits of numbing and buffering and trying to escape how we feel.

So, I will tell you this I was doing a coaching call inside Take A Break, and we always start our coaching calls with celebrations. Because what I have found is that most people are conditioned not to celebrate themselves, right? They're conditioned, especially when they're working on changes. They're conditioned to really point out everything that's not working. Here are all the problems. Here are all the flaws. Here are all the errors. Here are all the mistakes that I'm making.

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We really, we're so good at, like, writing out that laundry list of everything I'm doing wrong, every way in which I screwed up, every way in which I'm not meeting my commitment. Which is fascinating when you think about it because it's not like we don't have the skill of not knowing how to celebrate people; most of us are very good at celebrating the people that we love. We're very good at celebrating our best friend, kids, spouse, and that actually comes pretty easily. Even in times when a loved one comes to us and says, ugh, I just, I can't figure out this problem. I think I really screwed up. I am feeling like a failure. We are often so able to quickly show them an alternative interpretation, right? We're so able to quickly show them a place where they're failing to give themselves credit.

So, we know how to find celebrations. We already have this skill. It's just we have very little practice applying the skill to ourselves. So, I was on this coaching call, and we were starting out. Everyone was typing in their celebrations into the Q&A box. And someone celebrated going to a party with friends and family, not drinking, and having a good time.

Which I will tell you when you're really deep in the habit of drinking, when you have really taught your brain to believe that, hey, a drink in my hand is just what we do at parties. That's what normal people do. A drink in my hand is how I have fun. It's how I open up. I taught my brain to believe a drink in my hand means that a better version of Rachel can come out, which is so crazy to think now. But I truly deeply believed that I was a better version of myself once I started drinking.

So, when you do something like this, and it doesn't have to be going to a party, it's anything right now that your brain is like, I don't know. I am not sure I could do that. Like, I'm not sure I could end my day and not immediately go to pour myself a glass of wine, or go to the fridge and grab a beer, or whatever feels kind of impossible for you, when you start to disprove that when you start to show yourself that your brain is wrong and

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that's what that person was celebrating. They were like, hey, went to a party with friends and family, and I had a good time, and I wasn't drinking.

That, at first, is so mind-blowing. It really truly is. It's like walking around being so sure that the world is flat, and all of a sudden, your entire conception of reality transforms, so then you realize it's round. I know that sounds extreme, but when you truly believe this, and you have truly conditioned yourself to think that something is impossible or that you can't possibly enjoy yourself without a drink or whatever it is. When you disprove it, it's like, it really is just such a mind-blowing experience.

But now, here's the thing what happens when you go to your 5th, 10th, or 50th social event, and you don't drink. And you now know you can do it, right, so it's no longer amazing. It's no longer that feeling of like, here I am doing something that I just couldn't even ever believe that not only I could do, but I could enjoy myself, right? That piece is really important, too. It's like, people are like, yeah, I know I could do it; but it wouldn't be very fun, right?

I know I could end my day and not have a drink, but it wouldn't be very relaxing. So, when you really disprove it and start practicing it, what happens, it becomes the norm. But what then? Then you have to deal with what I talked about on last week's episode. It's the truth of your life, and the truth of your life is always just how you feel in the moment. It's your emotional experience. It's whatever is bubbling up for you. And when you're no longer drinking too much, and you're no longer astonished at hey, I'm not drinking and having a good time, or hey, I'm just having one glass, and that's it. I feel fine. Whatever it is for you when you're no longer astonished by it, and when the negative consequences from the habit are gone. Then the astonishment is also gone because now it's just your new normal, then you're left with your emotional experience.

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The truth of your life in that moment; how you happen to feel and let me tell you, I learned this, and it didn't feel like a fun lesson at the time, but how you feel in that moment can be a letdown, especially when you were believed because you were taught this message. We are all taught this message. If only I solve this problem if I solve my drinking then, I am going to be happy, and everything's going to be okay. Then, I am going to feel good.

The problem is, of course, you're still a human being with the full emotional experience, who you can reach your goal, and clean up the negative consequences from the habit. Which, let me tell you, is amazing. But that doesn't mean that you get to delete boredom, anxiety, loneliness, grief, and anger from your life because you're still human. These emotions are still part of the human experience. But now, what you need is a new way to handle them. And that's where I think so often people just don't have this skill. No one teaches us this because it's just like, no, just like fix your drinking, fix your eating, fix your credit cards, then everything is going to be better. And I think so many people are kind of left hanging there. It's not just with drinking, right?

You lose the weight, and then the novelty wears off, and now it's just you facing your life, right? You still have to go through life, and now you're just a smaller size. You build up your bank account after being in debt, so now you have this new number that becomes your norm. But you still have the experience of being human. Now you just have money in the bank. Or you fall in love, right? Maybe you've wanted to be in a relationship for a long time, and you fall in love. Then after the honeymoon phase wears off now, you have the experience of like all your human emotions with another person having all of their human emotions.

Most of us are not prepared for this. I was not prepared for this. I was so sure that changing whatever external problems, so my weight, drinking,

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career, money, relationship status, I was so sure that was the solution. And the problem was when I got what I thought was the solution after the astonishment kind of wears off, it's like, oh, okay. Like, what? That was supposed to be the fix. That was supposed to be the problem. Now, what am I supposed to do? And that is why inside Take A Break, we don't just focus on the habit of drinking. Yes, you need the tools to change the habit, understand your mind, show up differently when you break your commitment, and respond to urges differently. You need all of that as a foundation. But that is really just the beginning. It's why we have a whole section of advanced classes where we really go deeper into other topics. So, we talk about numbing and buffering. We talk about handling stress and overwhelm without trying to drink over it, eat, or work over it. We talk about cultivating pleasure. I think that is such a big thing that is not really stressed enough. It's not enough to just be healthy or to just feel healthy. People really deeply desire and want pleasure.

We talk about reconnecting with your body because that, of course, is the seat of where we feel our emotions. We talk about making peace with food, building healthy relationships, creating more confidence, and changing your relationship time. This is a huge thing, because so many people feel like they're at the mercy of the clock, or they're kind of like, waiting to get through the day until they can get to their reward. We talk about releasing shame and regret and creating new ways to really take care of yourself, and I'm not talking about bubble baths.

I'm talking about really learning how to be an advocate for yourself, in a way that we know how to be an advocate for other people, right? We know how to celebrate people. We know how to say, hey, you can think differently about this moment that your brain wants to interpret as a failure. Let me just show you how. Well, you have to start learning that skill for yourself, and it really is about unlocking a new version of you.

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Otherwise, what happens is, I find, that people get really left into the lurch, and it's like, okay, I fixed my drinking, and I was really sure that my drinking was my problem. And that after that was fixed, everything was going to be amazing. So, why don't I feel amazing? This is why so many people bounce around in so many different ways to numb and buffer than how they feel cause' there still looking to escape the human experience. That's what the advanced certification that I am doing this January for coaches specifically is about because this isn't just a problem that I see my clients struggling with. It's something that I see many coaches missing as well.

Because, of course, they're human too. They're allegedly the same life, like, fix the problem, and it will all be good. When in reality fixing the problem does solve many things, but it doesn't release you from the experience of being alive and dealing with the contrast of emotion. That really is the only way to get the peace and contentment and happiness also knowing that those won't be the only three emotions that you will experience, but that you can feel peaceful even when you're in the negative emotion, and not rushing to something to try to cover it up.

It's why I see so many people get stuck in these kinds of fix-it loops. So, it's like, okay, I fix my drinking so, like, what's next? I guess I have to fix the food. I guess I have to fix work. I guess I have to fix money. I guess I have to fix my relationship. These fix-it loops are exhausting. And I think a lot of times when coaches don't have this kind of underlying skill of really understanding the deeper work, the kind of next-level work is the relationship you have with your emotions. They, too, can get caught in these fix-it loops.

It's like no matter how much work, we're still met with the reality of being human. That isn't ever going to be solved by a fix-it mentality or crossing off a kind of like, personal to-do list of all your problems. The only way to escape the fix it loops and to escape finding like a new problem about

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yourself to fix is to transform your relationship with the feeling part of think, feel, and act. That is the only way to transform your relationship with the full human experience, the 50/50 of living, the light, and the dark.

So, you know the human experience, it is fear and peace. It is anger and acceptance. It's grief and connection. It's scarcity and abundance. It's jealousy and wholeness. It's disgust and pleasure. It's self-pity and appreciation. It's doubt and trust. It's hate and love. It's desire, contentment, boredom, curiosity, apathy, joy, shame, and worthiness. You can look at all of these as like the light and the dark are opposite each other.

That's what it is, and if you heard me read that kind of like, first half, that you would classify as a negative emotion, and think like, okay, so, how do I make those go away. Just tell me how not to feel the anger, sadness, doubt, hate, shame, etc., then that, my friend, is the problem. Because there's no amount of work that you can do when it comes to think, feel and act, and the tools of self-development. There's no amount of work that you can do to suddenly not have to be in the human experience.

I sometimes think when people hear me talk about on the podcast, they hear me talk about the think, feel, and act cycle, and you're drinking doesn't just happen. There's always a thought that creates your feeling, and the feeling then drives your decision to drink. I think what happens is because we have been so set and taught this kind of mentality of okay. If I just changed this problem, I think I would feel better. I think what people naturally do is they gravitate towards, okay, tell me the thoughts to think so that I can just feel good all of the time.

But that's not possible. And that's not even what the think-feel-act cycle is about. It's not about feeling good all of the time. It's about how do I have this full emotional experience knowing that sometimes I am going to be

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angry, and I am going to experience grief. I am going to experience shame, and I am going to experience doubt. How do I do that and not drink my way over it, eat my way over it, buy my way over it, work my way over it, or try to achieve my way over it? Because guess what, none of those ways work. They all end up creating collateral damage along the way.

To be human is to have all of the feelings, which means you really have to work to change your relationship with how you feel, and change your relationship with your emotions, and not believe that you just need to fix one more thing. Then finally all of those negative emotions are going to go away. That's what I teach people inside Take A Break, ultimately.

That's what the challenge is about, kind of opening up people's world to see. And it really is the work that all coaches need to have for their clients. Otherwise, you set them up to just "fix the problem," whatever the problem is. It doesn't have to be drinking. It can be whatever problem you work on with your clients. But then you don't give them the foundation for how to relate to themselves and the truth of their life and their emotional experience in a way that doesn't just boomerang into a new problem to fix.

And that comes with things like learning concepts, like, emotional fluency. You are learning how to identify the emotions you avoid and understand why that is. And I will tell you it is not what most people think. Most people will say, and I started this work believing, like, because that emotion feels terrible, that's why I avoid it, duh. That's never the reason. It's how you condition your brain and body to respond to it. It comes from your cultural conditioning, and what you learned and watched from your immediate family, and how they dealt with those emotions.

How you were taught and what you were taught was appropriate for your gender. There are so many other factors that go into it. But you have to

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really understand that in order to be fluent in emotions, it really is like being fluent in a language. It's like, imagine if you could only speak just the positive words from a language. I mean, you wouldn't really be able to capture life. You have to be able to work on the entire spectrum when it comes to your emotional experience.

Part of this skill set is for coaches and clients, but I go deep in the advanced certification with coaches. It's about learning about emotional bypassing. How are you using the tools in the tool kit that you have learned from self-help and self-inquiry? How are you using them against yourself? This is a big thing. Every single tool, and the tools that I teach here every single tool you can weaponize against yourself, and you have to know, you have to be able to spot when you're doing it yourself; otherwise, you will never be able to spot when your clients are doing it.

This is what I watch all the time. I see clients who are trying to weaponize the tools that I teach against themselves. To make it so, like, oh, see, I'm doing it wrong. Oh, see, if I could just think enough positive thoughts, I won't ever have to feel this emotion that I don't know how to handle. And it really is about developing greater body awareness and understanding about body-based practices. I will tell you, when I started down the path of becoming a coach, I was like, ugh, the body stuff is like, very woo-woo. I like the intellectual, I like learning about the brain, I like the neuroscience, I like being able to have this kind of logical system to write out, think, feel, and act, and I still do love and appreciate all of this.

Listen, we're not just our minds. We're not just our brains. You have a body as well. It is a seat where you feel your emotions, and it is where most people least want to be. This is so true for me, when I said that I felt like, you know, I had a drink in my hand. It was like, the best version of me could come out, such a big part of that, that I didn't realize for a long time was like, there was so much discomfort in my body and the reason why I

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felt like; finally, the real Rachel could come out is because the more that I would drink the less I would feel my body.

So, really understanding, yes, you need to understand how your brain works, and yes, you need to understand how the habit cycle works, and how to manage your mind, and how to observe your thoughts. But that is just one piece of the puzzle. You have to really do work with your body as well and have body-based practices. Otherwise, it's like you're trying to change your relationship with your life, emotions, and you're literally avoiding a huge piece of the puzzle here.

All of this really helps release you from this kind of fix-it loop. And if you're a coach, you have to see if you're on it as well. So, that you don't take your clients down this same fix-it loop because we really all have been taught to believe that we just have to fix this problem, and then I will feel better. This is why people do what I call habit swapping, right? You fix your drink in, and you start overeating, you lose the weight, and then you start sabotaging other areas of your life. Not because something is deeply wrong with you. That's what I thought for a long time. Like, oh, if I have all of these problems, it must mean that something is deeply wrong with me.

No, all of it, all of the ways in which I tried not to feel, all of the ways in which I numbed and buffered were actually a product of the exact same thing. I didn't know how to be with the full human emotional experience. I hadn't yet learned how to use transformation and change and goal setting as a way to relate to myself differently. I can't stress enough how important it is because the last thing I want is for people's work when they listen to this podcast when they join Take A Break, is to get stuck in a fix-it loop.

I've been stuck there, and it's not particularly fun. I want you to use this work and these tools so that you can start chasing after goals that aren't

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about fixing yourself but goals with creation, inspiration, unique and original ideas, and innovation. That's what I really think people have to really offer. But it's so hard to access that when it's like, okay, I fixed my drinking, what's next? What's next to fix?

So, listen, if you want to do this work with me, if you're not a coach and you're listening, and this is appealing, this is what we do inside Take A Break. This is what you could be doing in all of 2022. It's what the 30-day challenge is about. It's why I say over and over again that my work is way bigger than saying no to a drink or crossing days off a calendar. It's about changing your relationship with alcohol to change your relationship with yourself.

If you're a coach and you know that you need this work for yourself. You know that this is a missing piece for your clients' work, so I am inviting you to apply for my advanced certification on numbing and buffering. It starts in mid-January. We're accepting applications right now. And it's really a three-month program, where you get to work with me, and really start to just change how much you relate, understand, and the void, all the kind of like icky, yucky, in the muck emotions that most people would be like, yeah, like, what do I need to fix? So, I don't have to feel that.

Because when you do that, when you change your ability to handle discomfort, then not only do you release yourself from these fix-it loops, but you feel so empowered to handle anything that comes your way. Because then you know, oh, I have the foundation for handling whatever discomfort comes up, easy peasy, no problem. I got this. Not because I deleted the human experience, and I am no longer experiencing them because I now know I have trained my mind and trained my body to see that they're not the big deal that I thought they were.

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Alright, so, if you're a coach and you're interested, head on over to rachelhart.com/ac so you can learn all about it and go through the process of submitting your application. Alright, everyone, so excited as always to share this work with you. I know we are close to a New Year. I can't believe it. I don't know how we are already mid-December, but we are. And I just want to say that the work that you do here to apply these tools, to change your drinking or any habit of over consumption it really is the work to transform your life.

Alright, everyone, that's it for today. 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.

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