

Ep #11: Deprivation



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With Your Host

Rachel Hart

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Ep #11: Deprivation

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.

Hey everybody, welcome back.

I wanted to start off this episode by asking you a question: "When was the last time that you felt deprived? When was that last time you had the feeling of deprivation in your body because you had the sense of really wanting something and telling yourself that you couldn't have it?"

This is such an important question because for most people, when they try to change something in their life, deprivation seems to go hand in hand with getting results. So, if I want to lose weight, I'm going to feel deprived when it comes to food. If I want to save money, I'm going to feel deprived when it comes to spending. If I want to take a break from drinking, guess what, I'm going to feel deprived when it comes to alcohol.

Now, here is the thing. You can actually change and even get rid of this feeling of deprivation, and most people don't believe that it's possible but this is what today's episode is all about. It is about deprivation, what it is, what creates it and why it doesn't have to be something that you tell yourself you're just going to have to live with for the rest of your life.

This is so incredibly important because feeling deprived, especially when it comes to cutting back or taking a break from drinking, is why most people throw in the towel. It is why most people give up after trying, because they just don't want to deal with the feeling of deprivation anymore. It doesn't feel bearable.

The people that I work with when they decide that they want to take a break, they'll tell me that often things are going really well at first, they're feeling emotionally better and physically better, they're enjoying not waking up with hangovers, they're enjoying having better sleep and waking up with more energy in the morning, and lots of time just not having to worry about what happened the night before.

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

Ep #11: Deprivation

But they'll come to me and they'll say, "I just feel so deprived. I really want that glass of wine, I really want to be drinking, I feel like I'm missing out. I have all these great physical benefits and emotional benefits, but what do I do about this deprivation?"

So the first thing you have to understand if you want to start to unravel this question for yourself is, "what is deprivation?" Deprivation literally means the state of being kept from possessing, enjoying or using something.

Here's the thing. Deprivation is an emotion in your body, but it is also a physical sensation. There is both emotional deprivation and physical deprivation, and most people never make any distinction between the two.

Now, I talk about this a lot in my work, the need to distinguish between emotions and physical sensations. This is a big piece of the work that I do. It is so important.

Emotions are one word, feeling states. Things like happy, sad, angry. Those are emotions. They are feeling states that you experience in your body.

Now, physical sensations are also things that you experience in your body. They are things like hungry, thirsty, tired, pleasure, pain. But there is a big difference between the two.

The difference between emotions and physical sensations is pretty simple, but it can be difficult because you're experiencing them both in your body. Here's how you can tell the difference between the two. An emotion starts in your mind and travels to your body, and the physical sensation does the opposite. It starts in your body and travels to your mind.

Now, let me explain that. When you have an emotion, it's because you had a thought in your mind that creates a feeling in your body. Now, this is very different when you're experiencing something like hunger, thirst, pleasure, pain. That sensation is starting first in your body - not with a thought - it's starting first in your body, that then your mind is registering. Then your mind is all of a sudden aware, oh, I'm hungry, oh, I'm thirsty. That feels good, that hurts. It starts in your body and is registered by your mind, and you really have to understand this distinction if you want to understand the difference between emotional deprivation and physical deprivation.

Ep #11: Deprivation

When it comes to your emotions and the reason why you experience your emotions in your body, your body is essentially queuing you to what you're thinking. When you recognize what emotion you're feeling, you can ask yourself, why am I feeling this way? If you understand the cycle that I use with my clients and I talk about all the time on this podcast - the think, feel, act cycle - if you understand that your thoughts create your feelings, then you will also be able to understand if you know what you're feeling, you can work backwards and figure out what you're thinking.

But when it comes to physical sensations, your body is not telling you what you're thinking. Your body is telling you how it's responding to its environment. So I want you to think of it this way: if you were standing in line, you're not automatically going to feel anything. You're not automatically annoyed or impatient waiting in line. You only experience either of these emotions when you think a thought that makes you annoyed, or when you think a thought that makes you feel impatient.

You could also think of host of other thoughts that can make you experience a whole range of emotions, but when you stub your toe, you are going to feel a physical sensation connected to that experience. Your body is responding to what is happening to your toe and sending a signal to your brain about that sensation. This is the difference.

Emotions start in your mind and travel to your body, physical sensations start in your body and travel to your mind. This is a huge piece to understand and honestly, it can take some time to really wrap your mind around this, for a lot of reasons.

One is that, who gives us this information about experiencing our own emotions in our body and what is creating them? Most of us are given very little instruction on this piece of information, and if you do ever find it, it's usually because you're searching it out for yourself. No one's sitting you down and explaining all of this to you.

The other reason why it can take some time to really understand this is because most people are actually really good at not experiencing or feeling their emotions, especially the negative ones.

Let me tell you, if you have gotten into the habit of using a drink as a quick and easy fix to feel differently, which many, many, many people do, if you have gotten into that habit, you may be so quick to cover up a negative

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

Ep #11: Deprivation

emotion, you may be so quick to pour a drink so that you don't feel that kind of anxiety or awkwardness or boredom or loneliness or insecurity, whatever it is. You may be so quick to changing how you're feeling that you don't actually even give yourself a lot of time to experience what these negative emotions are like in your body.

So what does this mean for deprivation? Not all deprivation is the same. This is so key. This will really change everything for you. Some deprivation is created by your body, and some deprivation is created by your mind. If you can figure out the difference between these two, if you can understand how these are different in your body, I will tell you this is really going to be amazing for you because so many of us quit, so many of us give up around trying to change our drinking because the deprivation piece feels too difficult and impossible to overcome. So if you can figure this out, you're really going to be golden.

Like I said, most people have it backwards. I asked you at the outset about the last time that you were feeling deprived, and I want you to try and go back and remember that situation. Think about that feeling of deprivation in your body. Whatever it was, maybe it was a drink, maybe it was something else. Think about what that was like, what was going on? You wanted to have something and you told yourself you shouldn't have it and you were feeling deprived. Really put yourself back in that moment and ask yourself why was I feeling deprived? What was causing this feeling?

Now, here's what almost everyone will say. Everyone will say, well of course, the thing that I wanted but wasn't giving myself was the thing causing me to feel deprived. So it was the glass of wine or the chocolate ice cream or the outfit I wanted to purchase. Whatever it was that you told yourself you couldn't have, that was the thing causing your deprivation. But, of course it doesn't work like that.

Things external to us do not create our emotions. They do not create how you feel in your body when it comes to an emotional response. What caused your feeling of deprivation in that moment was your mind. It was not the thing external to you. It was not caused by the glass of wine, it was not caused by the ice cream. Whatever it was, it was caused by your thoughts.

Ep #11: Deprivation

If you're really going to understand this, you have to start to understand the difference between a need and a want, and the difference between a need and a want will really help you understand this at a deeper level.

There are things that your body needs in order to function. It needs oxygen, it needs water, it needs food, it needs sleep, it needs warmth. There are things that your body is driven to seek out as part of its impulse to survive. Your body needs these things. They are basic requirements. Your body needs basic levels of each so that it can function and maintain homeostasis.

Think about it. You cannot hold your breath indefinitely. You cannot decide that you no longer need sleep. When it comes to the things that your body truly, truly needs, they're non-negotiable. What happens when you try to deprive yourself of one of these things, as we sometimes do?

It will feel terrible. Now, think about holding your breath. Even if you tell yourself, I'm going to hold it for as long as I possibly can, at some point, it is going to feel so uncomfortable in your body and you're going to be forced to take a breath.

Now, the reason why this happens is because your body needs oxygen. So when you're not breathing, when you're holding your breath, there are rising levels of CO₂ in your body and those rising levels of CO₂ are actually irritating your lungs, and so your diaphragm and the muscles in between your ribs, they'll begin to spasm totally outside of your control and it will feel like your lungs are going to burst. It will feel uncomfortable, and you will finally gasp for air, and it's really outside of your control.

The same thing is true of sleep deprivation. Think about how awful it feels when you are forcing yourself to stay awake when your body wants to sleep. When you are depriving yourself of sleep, it feels terrible. And it's true, you can keep yourself awake for some period of time. You can pull an all-nighter, but sleep is a basic biological necessity for all humans. You need it to perform basic cognitive functions. You need it for your immune system. You cannot keep yourself awake indefinitely and it feels terrible when you're trying to do that.

There are moments when deprivation for things that we really need, it does indeed feel very uncomfortable. It is not pleasant when we are depriving ourselves of things that our body truly needs. But again, this is physical

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

Ep #11: Deprivation

deprivation. The impulse to breathe, to sleep, to eat, they are created by your body, and when your body doesn't get the basic things it needs to function, it not only feels terrible but it actually forces you to try to seek them out.

Now, your needs are totally different from your wants and again, most people do not make this distinction. We get our needs and our wants all mixed up together. It seems like food, oxygen and sleep and wine and chocolate and money - right? Our needs and wants become totally entangled.

Your body does not need the things that you want. You just think that it does. It's so important to be able to understand those two differences because when your body truly needs something to function, there will be physical deprivation when you don't give it to yourself. But when your body doesn't really need something to function, when you just want it, you are much more likely experiencing emotional deprivation.

Now, people will ask me what about addictive substances like drugs and alcohol? Isn't it possible for your body to become physically dependent on alcohol? In other words, if you don't consume it, your body becomes physically ill, it needs it. The answer is of course yes, but most people who want to cut back or change their relationship with alcohol or take a break are nowhere near the point of being physically dependent. They are nowhere near the point of their body needing alcohol, or else it gets physically ill.

When they are not drinking, they are not suffering tremors or shakiness or sweating. Their body is not getting sick without alcohol, and I think it's really important to understand that distinction. Most people are not in that category. If you're drinking a couple of glasses of wine and you want to cut back but you're finding that difficult, if you're not drinking during the week but you drink a lot on the weekends and you're finding that difficult, this is probably not applicable to you.

So what this means is that the deprivation you feel when you try to cut back, the deprivation you feel when you try to take a break is deprivation that is not being created by your body, it is deprivation that is being created with your mind. It is emotional deprivation, not physical deprivation.

Ep #11: Deprivation

I will tell you that this is the very best news because once you understand this and once you are able to make the distinction, it means that you can start to exert some control over it. You cannot tell yourself to stop feeling hungry when your body needs food. You cannot tell yourself to stop feeling tired when your body needs sleep. You cannot do that for any of the basic needs that your body has for survival. But you can start to work with your mind, you can start to work with your thoughts to stop feeling deprived when you want to cut back on your drinking or to stop feeling deprived when you want to take a break.

This is so essential because feeling deprived and feeling like you're missing out is usually the number one reason why people aren't successful when they want to cut back or they want to take a break. Because they feel the deprivation is too much, it feels impossible to overcome, like it's never going to go away, they're going to be missing out forever. This idea of I just can't go on living life like this and I'm always going to feel deprived, this is always going to feel terrible. It feels like too much for people, and so they quit.

But if you understand the difference between emotional deprivation and physical deprivation, if you understand the difference between true needs and wants, if you understand the difference between how an emotion is in your body and how it starts in your mind and travels to your body versus a physical sensation, you have the pieces that you need to start to untangle this for yourself and start to understand how you are feeling, and also how that is being created by what you're thinking.

Deprivation is usually just an emotion and emotions are always caused by the thoughts that you are thinking. So if you want to start the process of doing this work, you have to start to pinpoint the thoughts that are creating your deprivation. Thoughts like I really want it, it tastes so good, this isn't fair, this sucks, I hate missing out, everyone else is drinking, no one else has to deal with this, I hate this, I just want to have a good time - whatever these thoughts are, you have to start to bring awareness to what you're thinking. What are the thoughts that are creating emotional deprivation for you?

I will tell you that just having this awareness is so big. It makes such a big difference and so many people when I introduce this idea of the difference between emotional deprivation and physical deprivation, they want to run

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

Ep #11: Deprivation

straight to the point when they hear, oh, I can change this, I don't have to feel this way? Let's change this immediately.

But I always tell them, you have to first start with awareness. You have to first start to see that you are the one creating your deprivation, not the alcohol, not the glass of wine, not the beer, whatever it is. You have to see that you are the one creating it with your thoughts, because once you understand that - and it will take some time, because this will be a big shift for you. It will be a big shift to start to think, I'm creating this deprivation? It's not the glass of wine that's creating the deprivation? This is not how we think about things. This is not how we think about all sorts of deprivation.

So it will take some time, but once you start to see how your thoughts are creating the feeling of deprivation, all of a sudden you have so much more authority over it. Just through awareness. Not even through changing it. Just through recognizing what you're thinking, you gain so much more authority, and the reason is because you move away from just being at the mercy of your thoughts and having no idea of how they're affecting you, to suddenly being in a place where you can notice your thoughts and you can see what they are creating.

So for now, I just want you to wrap your brain around these concepts. These are new concepts for you. We do not think about deprivation in this way, we do not talk about deprivation in this way and just starting to understand it is going to be really important and then, once you feel like you have a handle on that, start to work on awareness. Do not try to jump to changing it. Do not tell yourself, okay, so if emotional deprivation is created by my thoughts and I can control my thinking, then I shouldn't experience any deprivation anymore ever again. It doesn't work like that.

It is a process where you really have to start to have awareness around it and really believe, really understand that you're the one creating it. Then you can start to change your thinking but not until you see 100% that you are the one creating the deprivation that you're feeling.

But again, this really is the best news, because it means the one thing that people are so afraid of, feeling like they're always going to be missing out, they're always going to be wanting something, they're always going to have to tell themselves no, when really they want to say yes. That is not set in stone. Too many people struggle with this; too many people are stuck in

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

Ep #11: Deprivation

this because they just don't understand the difference between emotional and physical deprivation and how they can start to change the emotional deprivation that they are experiencing.

So just as a recap, deprivation is often the thing that keeps people stuck when they want to change their drinking, because they feel like they're unable to change it. We tell ourselves it's impossible, we tell ourselves that we're just missing out, that we're just going to have to live with feeling this way, but it's not true. You can start to feel differently. You can change emotional deprivation because it's not the same as physical deprivation.

Emotional deprivation is created by your mind and your thoughts, and awareness is that first step. You have to fully understand that your thoughts are creating these feelings before you can begin to change it. So pay attention to what you're thinking. Pay attention to your thoughts in your mind, pay attention to the things that seem kind of innocuous but the thoughts like, I really want it, this isn't fair, it sucks, everyone else is, I hate doing this, I have to have it - whatever it is, notice your thoughts when you're feeling deprived and that is going to be the very first step to change.

Alright, that's it. I really loved sharing this episode with you guys because I think this is really the key to change everything. I would love to hear what you think if you have questions, if you want to know more about this, you can always send me an email at podcast at rachelhart.com. I love hearing from my listeners, and to celebrate the launch of this show and to thank you all for listening. I'm going to be giving away ten copies of my e-book "*Why Can't I Drink Like Everyone Else?*" All you have to do is leave a review on iTunes and then head on over to my website, www.rachelhart.com/iTunes and let me know the title of your review and you'll be entered to win, and that's it for this week. Thanks everybody for listening.

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

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

Ep #11: Deprivation

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.