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**With Your Host** 

**Rachel Hart** 

You are listening to the *Take a Break* podcast with Rachel Hart, episode 23.

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, how are you? What's happening? What did you do last night? You know what I did last night? I watched my favorite new TV show. It's called Stone House Revival. I love it. I love old houses, I grew up in an old house from the early 1800s, it had all these crazy little quirks, it still does. My parents have done so much to restore that house, and they also put us to work helping them restore it at a very young age. I remember we moved in probably when I was four years old, and my parents decided that a good family activity would be the entire family scraping away layers and layers of old wallpaper in our upstairs hallway. So I have a soft spot in my heart for old houses and for restoration.

But I'm obsessed with this show. They are restoring old houses in Pennsylvania, old stone farmhouses, some of which are from the 1600s, which blows my mind, and they do these amazing restorations, revealing interior stone walls and colonial fireplaces and incredible wood floors, it's amazing, I love it. But here's the thing, the restoration process is a nightmare. Most of these houses have had centuries of repairs and work and additions heaped upon more repairs, more work and more additions, and so they never really know what they're going to find once they start the process. And invariably, once they start, their plan gets thrown out the window because they find an errant doorframe in the middle of the wall that no one knew was there, or it turns out that that beautiful old colonial fireplace that they were hoping to find is basically a pile of bricks under the plaster.

So their plan changes and they have a bunch of freak outs along the way, but somehow, they keep going, they never throw up their hands in despair. They keep working, they keep pushing forward, and you know what, their finished product, it may not look exactly like what they thought it was going to look like, but it always looks a million times better, and this is where you come in. So here's the thing, you have some blueprints for what you want your life to look like. You have started to consider who you would be like without a glass in your hand. Who is the person under the anxiety and the stress and the boredom, and the layers of emotional armor?

You have these blueprints for who you want to be and what you want to do, and they don't include waking up feeling hungover or regretful, they don't include feeling like wine is the most exciting part of your day, they don't include polishing off a bottle when you really meant to only have a glass, and they don't include all the empty calories and wasted time and feeling anxious about the fact that you're still dealing with your drinking and worrying that this may be something you're going to always have to deal with.

But here's the thing, many of you can't even get started working on your blueprints because you're so stuck in inaction. You're not doing anything. You're not even dipping your toe in the water and seeing what your life could be like if you took a break from drinking, and because you keep thinking, I don't know, what if I fail, what if I can't do it - and this thought, what if I fail? It keeps you frozen in place.

So today, what I really want to do is have you understand this thought, what if I fail? I want you to consider what exactly your brain is telling you when you think this thought, because a lot of you are thinking it. A lot of you are thinking what if I fail, what if I can't do it, and the thought of that, the thought of failing is so intense, it's so visceral that even thinking about the idea of failing really freaks you out. It brings up all this fear and you find yourself unable to move forward. Meanwhile, the blueprints of your life, what you want your life to look like, they are rolled up, hidden away in a closet collecting dust. If you're going to move forward, if you're going to

start taking action then you need to deal with this thought. You need to deal with this thought: what if I fail head on.

Alright, so let's dive in. Your brain keeps ruminating on the thought, what if I fail? Now remember, it's just a thought. It's not some message from the deep, it's not some premonition about your future, and I will guarantee you this, it is not the first time that you have had this thought. What if I fail, did not just appear for the first time when you contemplated taking a break from drinking. For a lot of you, this thought has been hanging around for a while, it is hanging around when you're thinking about I'd really like to ask my boss for a raise, I'd really like to train for that marathon, or move to a new city or learn a new language or ask that person out, but what if I fail? What if I can't do it?

So for starters, just remind yourself that this isn't the first time that the thought what if I fail has appeared for you. It's good to know this, it's good to look at the other areas in your life where this thought plagues you. Where else are you not taking action because you can't shake the fear of failure? Because I'll tell you, what we're going to talk about today, you can apply to all of those areas as well.

Okay, so you know that the thought what if I fail appears in other parts of your life, and as we're going through the next couple of questions, I want you to keep those other areas in mind. The other areas of your life where you're worried about failing, keep those in mind as you think about the thought, what if I fail.

So here's my question for you: let's say you do fail. Let's say you give it a go and it doesn't work out. What do you think is going to happen? Now, I know some of you are like, wait, what? What do you mean? But seriously, I want you to answer this question. What do you think will happen? Because you are afraid of something happening, you are worried about an outcome. If you weren't, right, then this thought wouldn't be so charged for you. It wouldn't keep you stuck in place.

So I want you to imagine a future where you do fail. What is the terrible outcome that you're so afraid of? Now, the response that I usually get from people is something along the lines of, well then I'll be a failure. I don't want to fail, because if I fail, then I'll be a failure, and that would be terrible. It seems like you're just stating the facts, right? I don't want to be a failure, that would be terrible. And most of you, if you've ever thought about this question, you stop right here. You stop at the idea of then I'll be a failure.

It seems so obvious, that's why we all stop there, right? Wouldn't everyone just agree that being a failure is the worst thing possible? But remember, the think-feel-act cycle. Remember that your thoughts generate your emotions, which drive your actions. Everything comes back to this cycle. So when you're asking yourself what are you trying to avoid, why do you want to avoid being a failure, why are you so intent on avoiding this outcome, what are you afraid of on the other side of being a failure, remember the think-feel-act cycle.

Now, if this seems like a silly question, consider how much the fear of failure is keeping you from even stepping up to the plate. You're so afraid of failure that you're preventing yourself from even trying. So you think about taking a break from drinking, and then you think, oh god yes, but what if I fail? And remember, it's not just taking a break from drinking, it's all these other areas in your life that you also have this concern about. What if I don't achieve what I hope to? What if things don't turn out the way I expected? And because you can't know for sure how things are going to go, because failure is a possibility, you do nothing. You don't take action.

So I want you to really consider what is truly paralyzing about the thought what if I fail. I want you to really understand what you're trying to avoid. When you think about the thought what if I fail, when you worry about being a failure, what you are really trying to avoid - and now pay attention here, what you are really trying to avoid is the emotion you think you will feel if you fail.

Isn't that crazy? It's not actually failure that you're scared of, it's the emotion that you think you will feel if you fail. You are afraid of feeling embarrassed

or hopeless or ashamed or dejected, whatever it is. That's what you're really afraid of. It's not being a failure, it's the emotion you think you will feel. That's why you're not taking action. You're not taking action not because you fear failure, but because you fear embarrassment or being ashamed or being hopeless or being dejected. That's what you really fear.

Do you see the difference between these two? Because this difference is everything. Now, remember, and I've talked about this before. Your positive emotions and your negative emotions, but especially your negative emotions, they're harmless. Seriously. Your emotions cannot hurt you. I know this often does not seem like it's true. I get it. For a long time, you would have been hard pressed to convince me that this was the case. And so I understand when people tell me, no, Rachel, my emotions really are painful, they really do hurt me, I really don't want to experience them.

And this is why we really need to break down and really understand specifically what an emotion feels like in your body, because if you are able to do this, if you can make this shift, then I promise your understanding of what a negative emotion is will start to change as well. I have talked about this before, but every feeling you have, every emotion that you experience in your body produces a specific set of physical sensations that can also be located in your body. And if you're not really sure that this is the case or if this seems kind of too touchy feely, the idea that you feel your emotions in your body, just ask yourself this: how do I know when I'm experiencing an emotion? How can I tell?

The answer is always, you feel some sort of change or shift in your body. You feel it physically. Your heart rate speeds up or slows down, your breathing might change, it might become really fast or shallow as opposed to slow and deep, different muscles will tense and relax, you might feel hot or cold or clammy or sweaty, you might feel pressure or tightness or tingling or buzzing, but trust me, you are feeling something in your body.

Now, when it comes to your negative emotion, I get it. These sensations that you feel may not be your favorite. They're not my favorite, they may not be particularly enjoyable or comfortable, but they are harmless. You are

not in danger from a fast heartbeat. You are not going to be injured by a tense jaw or shallow breathing. If you can be present with these sensations, you will see that they can't do anything to do. But you will also start to see that the reason you're stuck in place right now, the reason you aren't taking action, the reason you are fearing failure and your brain keeps ruminating on this question what if I fail, what if I fail, the reason all of this is happening is because you are afraid of what you're going to feel when you fail.

You're afraid of the emotion. And just so we're 100% clear, it is not crazy to be afraid of this. No one ever sits us down and says hey, let me explain to you what emotions are. You feel a whole spectrum of different emotions and they way you know when you're feeling one is that you feel it in your body. Different things happen to your heart rate and your breathing and you may feel different temperature changes. You may feel different sensations in your body, no one ever explains this.

Nor do they tell you, hey, you know what, while some of these might not be entirely comfortable, they really can't do anything to do. You're okay. You're not in danger. You're just experiencing a set of sensations in your body, and if you don't fight it, if you don't resist it, if you don't freak out, it will eventually pass. So we don't get that information, so it's not crazy to be afraid of your negative emotions, which so many of us are.

If you take away one thing from today's episode, please let it be this: the reason you are afraid of failure is because you are afraid of a negative emotion. But, you now know about the think-feel-act cycle, you know that you don't ever feel an emotion until you think a thought first, and this is where your perspective on failure can radically change because here's the thing, failing, not meeting your goal, trying something and being unsuccessful, all of these things, they don't cause you to feel anything until you think a thought about it.

Failing is neutral. Not meeting your goal is neutral. Being unsuccessful is neutral. Isn't that insane? It blew my mind when I first started to understand this. Not achieving what you set out to do, it doesn't make you feel

anything, it's just a fact, and facts don't create your feelings. Your thoughts about facts, that's what creates your feelings.

So how do we know this is true? Because if failure or failing created how we as humans felt, then none of us would keep trying, right? None of us would ever keep taking action. But you know that's not true, you know that there are people out there who fail at things and shake it off, who set a goal and don't reach the goal and try again, who try something and are unsuccessful and get back on the horse. They don't give up. They keep trying, and that's actually how you reach the goal. To keep trying, to keep going after it. You keep taking action over and over again, so we know that those people exist.

We know that failure can't be this thing that is so insurmountable, because otherwise how would those people keep taking action? Now, most of you listening are thinking this right now, yes okay, but I'm just not built that way. That's just not my personality, I've always been like this. I've never been able to shake off failure, it's always been something that's really terrible for me. But for all of you out there who believe this, who are telling yourself right now, well that's just not my personality, that's just not who I am, let me ask you this: are you still crawling? Did you learn to walk? Right?

For everyone who says I'm not just built that way, I want you to think about all the things in your life that have required failure over and over again, and you have learned how to do it, right? And it's not just learning how to walk. It's learning how to swim, learning how to ride a bike, learning how to drive a car, learning how to speak a new language. Whatever it is, there's so many things in your life that you can point to that required failure and you kept trying. You kept taking action.

So stop telling yourself that you're just not one of those people because the only difference between people who fail and get back on the horse and people who are so afraid of failure that they never even try are the thoughts that they are thinking. That's it, that's the only difference. And the truth is that you have examples of periods in your life and things you have learned to do where failure was required and you did it anyway, you kept trying.

I'll tell you, it's a little bit like those guys restoring the old stone houses, right? They have a plan for a room and then they start tearing down centuries of plaster and oh look, there's a door frame where no one thought there was supposed to be one, or they're starting to restore this - what they hoped to be a beautiful colonial fireplace and oh look, turns out it's just a pile of bricks underneath the plaster. It's not at all what they thought it would be, and they just keep going. They just readjust their plans and their finished product may not look the way they intended but they don't stop and throw their hands up and say forget it, I tried and it didn't work, so now I'm just going to go home. They get to a finished product come hell or high water.

You are afraid of taking a break because you are ruminating on this question, what if I fail. But the reason why this question is keeping you stuck is because of the fear you have about how you will feel if you fail, right? You are afraid of a negative emotion that you believe will automatically accompany any failure. Your brain assumes right now that failure can only feel terrible, but once you understand the think-feel-act cycle, once you understand that you never feel an emotion, including your negative emotions until you think a thought first, then you can see that that's not the case.

Here's the thing, if you decide to take a break and you end up drinking during that break period, it doesn't mean anything. But you will make it mean everything. You will make it mean, oh my god, I'm never going to figure this out, something is wrong with me, I lack discipline, it means I can't do it. You will make it mean everything negative, and guess what, all of those thoughts, I'll never figure this out, something is wrong with me, I don't have discipline, all of those thoughts are going to create negative emotions for you.

But you can also decide that failure doesn't mean anything. It's just an opportunity to learn from what didn't work and try again. You can decide that the only way to truly fail is to stop taking action, and you can also decide that failure is irrelevant because you're going to keep taking action

and keep trying no matter what. So I want you to think about those blueprints you have. Think about the blueprints you have for how you want your life to look. If they are in the closet right now, if they are rolled up collecting dust, now is the time to take them out. Now is the time to decide that you're not going to keep them hidden because you're so afraid of the question what if I fail.

You can decide that no matter what you discover along the way, you're going to keep moving forward. You're going to keep working towards those blueprints. You might have to make adjustments, it may not look exactly the way you thought, but don't let the fear of failure, which is really just the fear of a negative emotion, be the thing that stops you.

Alright everybody, thanks for listening. If you have any questions about this episode or ideas for future questions you would like me to cover, you can always send me an email at podcast@rachelhart.com and thanks for tuning in, I'll see you next week.

Alright, so before I go, I want to share with you a new free resource that I put together. If you are struggling to change your drinking, I created a worksheet, it's called Your Complete Picture, that I promise will completely change your perspective. I always tell people, if you only ever do one exercise about your drinking, do this one, it is that powerful. It is the exercise that changed everything for me. If you want to go grab it, all you need to do is go to rachelhart.com/picture and download it now.

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.