

## Ep #38: Your Relationships Aren't Obstacles



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With Your Host

**Rachel Hart**

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## Ep #38: Your Relationships Aren't Obstacles

You are listening to the *Take a Break* podcast with Rachel Hart, episode 38.

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? I'm doing great. And today we are talking about relationships. This is a good topic to get into. I will tell you that one of the things that I hear a lot from people is, "You know, I really want to change this habit. I really want to change my drinking. But certain people in my life, certain relationships, they're making it so difficult. They're really just an obstacle to change, they're obstacle to my success. Maybe my husband isn't supporting me, or I'm from a family of big drinkers and when I'm around them it's so tempting to join in, or my best friend keeps saying she doesn't want me to change. She says that I'm no fun when I'm not drinking, or my mom is just stressing me out. She's driving me crazy and I need relief."

I will tell you, I get this. If you are thinking any of these things, I understand where you are coming from because for so long, I also saw people in my life as obstacles when it came to changing my drinking. I'll tell you, I have one really vivid memory of this time in my 20s when I actually decided that I was going to go on a three week cleanse, one of these elimination diets, and of course, one of the things I was eliminating among many, many types of food was also alcohol.

And many of you - I've heard from a lot of you out there that you know, you go on these cleanses as well, because in part, it's so much easier to tell people, "I'm just doing a cleanse. I'm doing an elimination diet" rather than saying, "I just decided not to drink for three weeks." So I was in that place, I had decided to do this cleanse, it was for 21 days, and my boyfriend at the

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time, both of us drank a lot. We both really liked drinking, we really enjoyed having cocktails in the evening.

And so doing this was a big shift. It was a big shift for me not to be drinking in the evenings, and I remember on day 22, the day that the cleanse was officially over, he showed up at my apartment with a bottle of gin and you know, a thing of tonic. I've talked about this before; gin and tonics were really my favorite drink.

And I didn't say anything, but you know, on the inside I was fuming. I was so mad. I just thought, "Oh my god, he's being so unsupportive. Here I am, trying to be healthy and trying to be mindful, and I felt so much better not drinking these past couple of weeks and I've even told him that, and now he's just rushing in with the booze.

But of course I kept it all inside and he made me a cocktail and I drank it. But at that time, I thought, "God, he's being so unsupportive. It's so challenging to try to change this when I have these people in my life that aren't supporting me." And I was so angry, I saw him as getting in the way of my success.

But what I want you to understand today is this: the relationships that you have in your life are not obstacles when it comes to your success, when it comes to your ability to change your habits. The relationships are not obstacles, they are actually spotlights on the thoughts that are keeping you stuck.

Now, you know all about the think-feel-act cycle. Your thoughts create your feelings, your feelings drive your actions, and your actions give you your results in life. So now the question is, where do other people fit in? Where do the people in your life, what they do, how they act, the things they say, where does that all fit in?

And I'll tell you, the people in your life and their behaviors, who they are, what they do, what they say, how they act, all of that is neutral. It's a neutral circumstance until you have a thought about it. Until you have a

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thought about it, you don't feel anything about it. People can't make you feel anything until you think a thought.

Now, if you're like, "Wait a minute, what? What are you talking about, Rachel? Are you saying that people can't hurt my feelings?" Yes, that is what I'm saying. And if this is blowing your mind right now, that's good. I want it to because I am offering you something that is contrary to how we have been socialized. Telling you that people can't hurt your feelings is not what the majority of people think.

But here's what I know. Someone can offer you a thought to believe about yourself. They are offer you thoughts all day to believe about yourself, but it's up to you to decide whether or not you choose to accept that thought and believe it.

Now, think about this. Think about a driver cutting you off and calling you a jerk. Does that automatically make you a jerk? Is his thought that you're a jerk, does that make you a jerk? Does that make you feel anything? The truth is, you get to decide. You get to decide whether or not you want to accept this thought or if you want to reject it.

You get to decide does someone else calling you a jerk, does it mean something about them or does it mean something about you? And most of you listening will hear someone call you a jerk and make it mean something about you. And the reason that I know this is because when you hear that thought, you'll feel a negative feeling.

Now, it's not because somebody else's thought, what somebody else said is creating that. It's what you think about it, and what you are thinking about it is, "That's so rude. He shouldn't say that, people shouldn't act that way, he shouldn't think that about me. I'm not a jerk, he's a jerk." Right? Does that sound familiar?

So often what you're not doing is, "Okay, he thinks I'm a jerk, moving on." Right? You get really upset about it, you get really upset about it because all these thoughts you have about the fact that someone called you a jerk

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and how they shouldn't do that and how it's rude, it's not right, it's not who you are, people shouldn't act that way.

All of those thoughts, all of those thoughts about what you're making it mean, that's what's creating your feelings. And let me tell you, if you're not so sure about this concept, this is great news. It is great news because if other people created how you felt, then you would always be at the mercy of other people's opinion about you.

And I will tell you, a lot of you right now feel like you're at the mercy of other people's opinion about you because you are spending so much time and so much energy trying to make sure that everybody likes you and everybody thinks highly of you, and everybody thinks you're great, and nobody has any complaints, nobody has any criticisms, right?

A lot of you do this. A lot of you spend a lot of time and energy trying to make sure that everybody only thinks positive things about you because you think that other people's opinions create how you feel. And I will tell you, I did this myself for a really long time. It is exhausting. It is exhausting because you can't control it.

I love this thing that my coach says all the time. She says, "You know, you can be the sweetest, juiciest peach around, and there will always be someone who doesn't like peaches." I love this. There are people who love peaches and there are people who think peaches are gross. So which is it? Is the peach good, or is the peach bad?

If both opinions are out there, how can you know? Because the truth is, peaches are neither good or bad. They're neutral. They're just a circumstance in this world until someone thinks a thought about them.

Applying this concept to yourself and to other people, it is so freeing because not everyone is going to agree that you are great. Not everybody is going to like you, and that's okay. Give people permission not to like you. Give people permission not to like some of the things you do or some of the things you say. It's so freeing.

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But if you're caught trying to get everybody to like you, everybody to agree that you're great, everybody to agree with your opinions and your decisions, good luck. It's exhausting.

Now, if you are on board with this piece, if you can see how this piece makes sense, what I find most people then come to, most people's next objection is, "Okay, fine, people don't create my feelings, but listen, the people in my life, my loved ones, my friends, my family, my partners, they should know better. They should not be critical. They should not say mean things, they should never be judgmental. They are supposed to love me 100% of the time, so my loved ones doesn't really apply for them."

And I get this, I understand being really focused on what your loved ones are doing but I want you to be focused on what you are doing, and I want you to ask yourself this: how often do you say mean, judgmental, critical things about yourself? How often are you failing to love yourself or to support yourself? How often are you beating yourself up, criticizing yourself, tearing yourself down? How often are you judging yourself, demeaning yourself, instead of loving yourself?

Now here's the thing. For most people, you're doing that a lot. You're doing all of these things a lot, and then what ends up happening is you turn around and you want other people to never be critical, never be judgmental, never say anything mean. And it's because you're not doing a good job of this yourself.

So what ends up happening is you outsource feeling good about yourself to the people that are closest to you. You say, "Hey, you're in charge. You have the responsibility. I want you to think all the positive, good, non-judgmental, compassionate things about me because I'm not doing a great job of it. I can't help how I talk to myself, it just happens. But you should have control. You should be able to always be in control of how you talk about me, and then I can feel good."

You are outsourcing how you feel about yourself, you are handing that responsibility over to your loved ones. And now here's the truth. People in

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your life aren't in charge of making you feel supported and loved. They can't be, because here's the thing; in all likelihood, they are having enough problem trying to do that for themselves. You are in charge of making yourself feel supported and loved. You are in charge of being compassionate and caring towards yourself. You are in charge of deciding that you're not going to say mean, critical, judgmental things. That's your responsibility.

But so many of us don't know how to do that, we're not even a lot of times aware that we're doing that, and so what we end up doing is making all these people in our life, the people closest to us, and we say, "Hey, you have responsibility for us."

If you are still struggling with this concept, I want you to think about it this way. What happens when the people in your life, who you are closest to, what happens when they say wonderful things about you? What happens when they tell you that you are beautiful and you are smart and you are kind and you are caring and you are amazing and you're successful? Do you immediately accept those words? Does that immediately make you feel great?

Or do you often dismiss them? Do you often just say, "That's not true. They don't know what they're talking about." Right? If people can't make you feel negative, they also can't make you feel positive. And I think a lot of you see this. A lot of you see how quickly you will reject when other people offer you words of praise, when other people offer you compliments, and your initial reaction is "That's not true."

You have to clean up your own house first. You have to take responsibility for how you talk to yourself first, because that's where you always have control. That's what you can always change. You can always start to become aware of what you are thinking, and you can always start practicing shifting that.

When you love you no matter what, when you support you no matter what, you will start to see other people's opinions about you and judgments about

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you in a very different light. You will start to understand that their opinions and their judgments always, always mean something about them. They never mean something about you.

So I want you to take these two concepts, the concepts that people and their behavior are neutral until you think a thought about it, and that you are responsible for how you feel. You are in charge of whether or not you are accepting someone's thought or choosing not to believe it, choosing to reject it. And I want you to apply these concepts to the idea that so many of you have that the relationships in your life are actually serving as obstacles to changing your habits and changing your drinking.

So the first thing I hear a lot is just, "It's so tempting when I'm around other people who are drinking. My family is drinking, or my husband is drinking, or my sister is drinking, whatever it is, their drinking is just so tempting." Now, here's the thing. Their drinking never tempts you. Their drinking does not create your desire. Your thoughts about their drinking, that is what is creating your desire. Their drinking is neutral until you have a thought about it, and those thoughts usually look like, "That looks good, I want some, that would be fun. This looks tasty, why can't I have some? This is unfair, I hate this, I just want to drink too."

Those are the thoughts that are creating your desire. Those are the thoughts that are making it tempting. It's not what they are doing. And when you understand this concept, you get all your power back because it means that you don't have to avoid being around people who are drinking. You don't have to ensure that everyone in your life isn't drinking if you decide that you want to take a break.

You can practice being around people who are drinking, you can practice noticing your thoughts, noticing your thinking about their drinking and then work to shift that. You don't need other people to change their behavior, you don't need them to stop drinking so that you can succeed. You just need to understand that other people and their decision to drink, it is not what is tempting you. What is tempting you are the thoughts that you are thinking that are creating your desire.

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Now, okay, fine, you'll say, "Maybe they're not temping me, but really my husband isn't being very supportive. He's just not on board. It would be a lot easier if he was supportive." Now, here's a question. Why do you need anyone to support a decision that you make?

I want you to really think about this. We don't think about this idea a lot. We just automatically have this belief that people should support our decisions, but why? Here's the thing. Do you need someone to support your decision to pay for a meal at a restaurant and not walk out without paying the check? Do you need someone to support that decision? No? How come? How come you don't need someone to support that decision?

The reason is because you don't have any doubt that paying the check is the right thing to do. You don't have any doubt that like, that's how you want to show up. That's a decision that you want to make. You don't want to walk out without paying.

When you have doubt about a decision, that's when it starts to get tricky for you, because then when someone else expresses their own doubts, what happens is their brain freaks out because then you have to look at your own uncertainty, your own questions, your own doubt about the decision you're making. And that's why we get so fixated on, "Well, people need to support me. People really need to support me, they need to be on board."

If you're really fixated on that, part of why you're fixated is because you don't want to have to look at the doubt and the questions that you're having, and if everyone supports you then you never have to look at it. But the moment that somebody says, "I don't know, is this a good idea?" Then you're forced to confront it.

If you felt 100% about your decision, if you felt 100% that this was the right thing for you and you wanted to take a break, then it would be the same as deciding that you were paying for a meal at a restaurant, somebody said, "You don't need to do that." You'd be like, "What are you talking about? I'm doing it."

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People don't need to support your decision to take a break, people don't need to support your decision to change your habit. You need to support it. But then what about that best friend who doesn't want you to change?

Now, some people in your life will not want you to change your drinking, that's just a fact. I will tell you, this was true for me as well. Some people didn't want me to change. They didn't want me to take a break. The truth is that you can make someone not wanting you to change, you can make it mean something about you, and who you are, and what it means about you, or you can make it mean something about them.

When you decide to change something in your own life, and it's not just drinking. It's really anything. When you decide to change something in your own life, it can act like a spotlight for someone else on their own decisions and their own choices.

So think about it this way. If everybody's doing the same thing, if everybody is drinking, then nobody has to question that choice because everybody's doing it. There's no disagreement. But as soon as one person bucks the trend, as soon as one person makes a different choice, then all of a sudden, that lack of agreement throws a spotlight on everyone's individual choice.

The moment that you make a choice that is different from someone else's, they all of a sudden, their brain starts thinking about the fact that there's disagreement. And what will happen is that people often find it easier to try to get you to switch your choice, switch your vote than to confront their own discomfort.

And one of the ways they will do this is by saying, "You know what, you're really not any fun. It won't be any fun, I can't enjoy this, I can't enjoy going out to dinner if you're not going to drink, then I can't drink, right? Everybody's got to be drinking at the table."

I heard this a lot. I heard this fun one a lot. And you know, for a long time, I took it so personally, I really wanted everyone to agree that I was fun. I

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mean, I was really - it really made me mad, right? I'm fun, don't tell me that I'm not fun. It got me really bent out of shape.

But you know, the more I wanted everyone to agree, the more I couldn't actually even look at that statement and question it for myself because I was so caught up on trying to change everybody's opinion. But when I finally gave myself the space to look at it and to finally just ask myself, "You know what, Rachel, are you fun when you're not drinking?"

The thing that I realized was this. A lot of time I wasn't. I wasn't a lot of fun, and the reason was because I was so caught up in my negative self-talk, I was so fixated on wondering, "What do these people think of me?" I was so feeling out of place and insecure that I wasn't acting very fun. I couldn't.

The truth was that I couldn't be a lot of fun with all the thoughts that I had in my head. And once I was able to see it, then I could start to change it. You know, there was nothing wrong with that. The fact was that I had practiced outsourcing fun to a drink for a really long time. I had practiced outsourcing using a drink to cover up all my negative self-talk, and so I had to learn a different way.

So if you are hearing this, one, just be open to asking yourself, is it true? How do you act? Are you as fun? And if you discover that you're not, it's okay. I wasn't at first either, because I had so long practiced, "Oh no, drinking is what makes me fun. Drinking is what allows me to chill out and to relax and to be silly. I can't do that on my own."

Your choice is always this. You can always go back to drinking, to become that fun version of yourself, or you can learn how to be fun on your own. You can go back to a time when you were fun and you weren't drinking. All of us have that period in our life. You can go back to that time and relearn those skills. Those skills are always there for you. It's just a lot of us have forgotten them.

And then the final way that people will say that relationships in their life are really standing in the way of change is the idea that my loved ones are

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stressing me out and I need relief. Now, here's the thing. If people don't hurt your feelings, people also don't cause you stress.

What's causing your stress is what you are thinking about the people in your life and what you are thinking about their behavior, and what you are thinking about everything in your environment, thinking about your job, thinking about your house, thinking about what you have to do today. That is what is causing you stress.

And if you start to pay attention to that internal talk, you are going to notice a lot of thoughts like, "Oh my god, they're driving me crazy. I have too much to do, why don't they understand? They shouldn't be doing this, they shouldn't be saying this, they shouldn't be acting this way, they should do this instead." We have all these thoughts about how people should be behaving differently so that we won't have to feel stressed.

And here's the thing. You can devote all your effort on getting others to change. You can certainly choose to do that, or you can start to see how your thoughts, what you are thinking about the people in your life, what you are making situations mean, how that is causing how you feel, including your stress.

Listen, if people are the cause of your stress, then good luck. Because how will you ever stop needing relief unless you can get them to change? How will you ever be able to change your stress unless you can change them? But if your thoughts are what is creating your stress, then you are in such a place of power because then it is something that you can observe and you can shift and you can practice something different.

I think today's episode is so important and I really want you to take some key things away from it. If you believe that your relationships, the relationships in your life, the people closest to you in your life are standing in the way of changing your drinking, what I want to offer to you is really standing in the way of change is your relationship with yourself.

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The reason you want others to fully support you and never criticize and never judge and never tempt and never stress you out is because you are doing all of these things to yourself. You aren't supporting yourself. You are criticizing yourself and judging yourself and stressing yourself out. You are tempting yourself, you are creating your own desire.

But it's hard to see that until you understand the think-feel-act cycle. And so unconsciously what we do is we hand that responsibility over to other people, and we say, "Hey, you are in charge of my success. You are in charge of how I feel. You are in charge of making me feel loved and supported."

If you can focus on your relationship with you first, if you can work on cleaning up your own thoughts and taking responsibility for what you are choosing to think and what you are making situations mean and how that makes you feel, if you can do all of that instead of handing all of that responsibility over to someone else in your life, then I guarantee it is going to dramatically shift how you see your closest relationships and how you understand other people's behavior.

But until then, you will be at the mercy of getting everyone to support you, everyone to like you, everyone to alter their behavior so that you won't be tempted. And that is exhausting and also usually, very unsuccessful. Taking responsibility for how you feel because you now understand the think-feel-act cycle, it is so worth it. It will change everything for you and it will help you see your relationships and understand your closest relationships in your life in a totally different light.

Alright everybody, thanks for listening. I'm going to see you next week.

Hey guys, if you want to go over to iTunes and leave a review about the podcast if you're enjoying it, I would love it. But not only that; I am giving everyone who does a free urge meditation. I will tell you, this meditation, it is super simple. All it takes is five minutes and a pair of headphones. If you are having an urge and you want a different way to handle it, just pop those headphones in, find a place where you can sit down undisturbed and teach

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your brain, retrain your brain a very simple method to make urges more tolerable. All you need to do is head on over to [rachelhart.com/urge](http://rachelhart.com/urge) and input your information there.

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](http://RachelHart.com/join) and start your transformation today.