

Ep #61: What Story Is Your Body Trying to Tell You?



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Rachel Hart

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

Ep #61: What Story Is Your Body Trying to Tell You?

You are listening to the *Take a Break* podcast with Rachel Hart, episode 61.

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 guys, so listen, if you have, not first of all, checked out the Five-Day Reset, which is a video training that I do to help you take a five-day break from drinking, but do it in a really different, really transformative kind of way, you need to check that out. It's amazing.

And the second thing is that there is a Facebook group attached to the Five-Day Reset. It's a closed group, we've got so many people in there, and I will tell you that it is just a fantastic place if you are looking for continual support to reach out, ask me questions, and also just hear from other people. Hear what they're struggling with, hear about their challenges and obstacles.

I think so much of why drinking and drinking more than you want is a habit that people can get stuck with is because it feels so challenging to reach out and to get support. In many ways, because we have all this unnecessary shame around it, and so I really do believe that hearing from other people, other people just like you who are in your exact same situation, just that alone can be incredibly transformative. So check it out if you haven't, if you want to find out information, just go to rachelhart.com/challenge.

But the reason that I'm talking to you about this today is because you know, some of the people in there just post such amazing things, things that I am even like, that's good, that helps me. And there was a woman in there recently who posted this quote that I just loved, and I cannot get it out of my mind. And the quote was this: "Our bodies tell our stories and they always tell the truth when we listen."

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

Ep #61: What Story Is Your Body Trying to Tell You?

I mean, I will tell you, I read that and I think I got kind of goosebumps when I read it because I just know how incredibly viscerally true that is, that our bodies are always telling our stories and when we listen, which you know what, that listening piece is really challenging. I know from firsthand experience, we will hear the truth, the truth of what is going on.

Now, I tell people - I kind of had this joke that my left foot is actually what got me to change my drinking. And it's kind of funny, it's kind of a weird story, but it's also kind of true. So I told a little piece of this story in the Five Day Reset group on Facebook, but I want to tell you guys the whole thing because I really do think it is such a good example of how the willingness to listen to your body will give you access to the truth of what is going on in your life.

So on the podcast before, I've talked about how before I became a coach and I was working on this issue, I worked in human rights, and I worked in human rights for over a decade. And my previous job had me travelling all over the world. I was travelling all the time. Usually internationally, at least once a month because I was leading communications training.

So I was working with human rights activists all over the world, whether they were doing disability rights or they were working on criminal justice reform, whatever the issue was, my job was to help activists be able to tell better stories. Because if you can tell better stories, you can help get more people on board with your cause.

So that's what I was doing, that's why I was flying around the world all the time. And in 2010, I was travelling to Budapest, to Hungary, and I was going to lead a training there. And I did this trip actually pretty frequently because we actually had offices in Budapest. And this time I was travelling with a colleague and a good friend of mine from New York, and we decided that we would take the overnight flight from JFK.

That's what I most often did. I would fly overnight and you know, just get there in the morning and be able to lead the training. So we were flying through Frankfurt on the way to Budapest, and I remember that when we

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

Ep #61: What Story Is Your Body Trying to Tell You?

woke up in Frankfurt, I was on the plane and something did not feel right with my left foot. And I stood up when we were getting off the plane, and I was reaching up to get my luggage, and I just felt like I could barely stand.

Now, the problem was we were only in Frankfurt. We were only in Germany and we had to get to Budapest that day so we could start our meeting. And we already had a really tight connection, and so we had to race through the terminal to catch our connecting flight so we wouldn't miss the meeting. And I remember like, I could barely walk. I could barely keep up with him.

The tendons in my foot, in my left foot, were just screaming at me to sit down, but I couldn't sit down. I had a plane to catch, I had a meeting to run. My foot was just going to have to wait. And so we made that connecting flight, and of course, we went right from the airport, right to this training, and my foot just had to wait.

But the thing that was interesting is, of course, you are not going to be surprised that you know, this problem with my foot, it didn't appear for the first time when I woke up in Frankfurt. I had been telling my foot to wait for the previous nine months. Nine months earlier, the summer before, it had started nagging me as I was walking around New York City. And if you've ever lived in New York, you know you do a lot of walking there.

And soon that nagging, that little bit of discomfort, it turned into me hobbling around, but I just kept saying, "I don't have time to see a doctor." Listen, I'm on the road all the time, I'm running these trainings, I'm flying around the world, like, nobody can fill in for me, so this foot's just going to have to wait. Like, I don't have time to deal with it.

And I remember a part of me was also like, "What are they going to tell me to do? It's going to be so much work, I should probably go to physical therapy." Like, going to dealing with it, going to the doctor was more than just going to the doctor. I knew that it was going to be more involved, and so what did I do? I kept putting it off and just kind of thinking like, "Maybe it will magically fix itself. Maybe it will go away on its own."

Ep #61: What Story Is Your Body Trying to Tell You?

That was my magical thinking. And so when I was in Budapest on that trip, and I finally got to my hotel room, I actually emailed my sister and I said, I really need the name of your podiatrist because I knew she had seen someone in the city previously. And I called his office from 4000 miles away because it had gotten that bad. It was so bad that I was 4000 miles from home and I knew that I had to see him as soon as I got back to New York. Because I could just barely walk, right?

It was at the point where I couldn't get around. And this is the thing, my body had been telling my story. And it was a story of not paying attention. It was a story of disconnecting, it was a story of we don't have time to deal with this, there are more pressing, more urgent needs than your own, Rachel. That was the story that my body was telling me.

And when I listened to it, the truth was right there for me to see. And so when I talk to people about why I decided to take a break from drinking and how taking alcohol out of my life really not only radically shifted not just my health, my physical health - I mean, yes, that happened, but I think even more importantly, radically shifted my relationship with myself.

I often say it started on that trip to Budapest. My foot could not wait any longer. I had to listen to the story, I had to hear the truth in what my body was telling me. I had to pay attention to myself. I was in too much pain. And that's what happens I think for so many people is we have our bodies trying to tell us something. Something is not right. This habit of drinking every night when we get home as a way to take the edge off, it's not working.

Going out and having a good time but not knowing if it's going to be a night of three drinks or a night of nine drinks, not working. Our body is trying to tell us something, certainly the next day, certainly when we wake up and we feel like, ugh, not only physically bad but like, emotionally why did I do that again? But so many of us don't wait until the pain gets so bad that we feel like we have to take action.

Now listen, here's the thing. I tell people that you know, how I radically shifted this relationship with myself, which you know, included changing my

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

Ep #61: What Story Is Your Body Trying to Tell You?

relationship to alcohol, that it started on that trip to Budapest. It started with my left foot. But I did not suddenly stop drinking there. I did not have some sort of epiphany. In fact, I will tell you, I got very drunk when I was there because that is what we always did.

I would spend you know, one or two days, or three days leading these communications trainings being on, making sure it all ran perfectly, everybody had a good time, everybody was learning, and I'll tell you, I always had a lot of anxiety beforehand. And then when it was over, my brain was like, "Celebrate. Time to go out. Time to have a good time. Time to finally like, kick back because I've been on, on, on, on, on."

And you know, one would lead to two, and two would lead to three, and three would lead to four, and before you knew it, I can't even tell you how many times I would fly home with a hangover, which is just the worst combination. Think about it. You're already hurtling through the air thousands of miles above the earth, and so dehydrated in this tiny little tube, and I would just like, add being hungover on top of the jetlag and the dehydration and everything else that was happening to my body. It was a really - it was a good recipe.

But here's the thing: so my drinking didn't change on that trip, but I did for the first time really pay attention to a pain that I had been ignoring for so long. And guess what happens? When you tune in to one part of your body, you're going to hear the rest of it. And that's what happened for me.

You know, my drinking, my relationship with alcohol hadn't felt right for a long time. You know, beside the fact that hangovers get worse with age, besides that, there was all the regret, all the embarrassment, all the disappointment in myself. All of that kept mounting. I was feeling all of that, all of the physical pain and the emotional pain in my body. But the only way I knew how to deal with either of those things was to cover up how I felt.

I had no other tools in my toolbox. I had no other coping mechanisms. All I knew was, hey, I can numb myself and I can trick my brain into believing

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

Ep #61: What Story Is Your Body Trying to Tell You?

that I'm having a good time and believing that I'm happy, and believing that everything's great as long as I'm drinking.

When I finally decided to take a break from drinking, it was an exercise in paying attention, and this is why I think applying the work of the think-feel-act cycle to understand the habit is so different than just saying no, just counting days, just using willpower. Because here's the problem: when you count days, when you use willpower, when you just say no, you're not understanding what is driving the habit in the first place. You're just counting. You're just saying no, right?

What I did, and what I want all of you to do is to really practice listening to yourself. You're going to have to listen not only to your body but also to your hang-ups, your fears, your wants, your needs, your hopes, your dreams, your disappointments. You're going to have to listen to all of that as well. And you know what, that was the last thing I wanted to do.

I was like, I do not want to listen. Listening feels terrible. Because I didn't understand at all at that point how to use the think-feel-act cycle, not just to listen and to understand what was creating how I was feeling and why I was taking the actions that I was changing, but also that I could use that tool to change it, to take different actions, to feel better, to think different things.

That's why I didn't want to listen because I felt like I was stuck. I felt like, well, I can't change it. I can't change what I hear. I was so good at telling myself, "I don't have time. I'm too busy. I don't have time to deal with any of my insecurities, any of my hang-ups, any of my wants and my needs. There's too much going on. I got to get on a flight."

It was so much easier and faster to ignore what was happening and just manufacture this false sense of happiness and this false confidence, and manufacture that by drinking whatever was in the contents of a glass. All the while, I was doing that and I just kept hoping that my tendency to overdo it, my tendency to drink more than I wanted would just go away.

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

Ep #61: What Story Is Your Body Trying to Tell You?

But of course, it didn't. I couldn't ignore how drinking made me feel physically and emotionally. Both of which are felt in your bodies. Your body is telling you a story right now, and that story is the truth. But you have to be willing to listen.

It is so amazing to me how easily all of us fall into the trap of ignoring our physical and emotional pain, telling ourselves we don't have time to deal with it, turning a blind eye to the signs that something is really, really wrong. And hoping that whatever is bothering us will somehow go away on its own. It's not going to.

Your body is trying to tell you something for a reason. It's trying to be helpful. So many of us don't want to listen. I know that this is true. It is true for me, it is true for everyone that I coach, everyone that I talk to, there are going to be different moments in your life where you will have this sensation. Often a strange sensation that something doesn't feel quite right. Something's off.

You're going to feel that in your body, and it will be so much easier in the short term to ignore what's going on, to cover up how you're feeling, to hope that it goes away. And you know what, that may work for a while, that may buy you some time, but there is so much to be gained when you choose to pay attention, and the truth is, in the end, you will have to pay attention.

Or else you are just going to be in a place of this physical and emotional pain. And so my question for you, for all of you to consider this week, and it's not just in regards to drinking, but everything in your life. What story is your body telling you? If you had to write the story that your body was trying to tell you right now, what would that story be?

How do you feel in general? How do you feel after work? How do you feel when you wake up in the morning? How do you feel when you're with other people? How do you feel when you're with just yourself? How do you feel before you start drinking? While you're drinking? After you finish drinking?

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

Ep #61: What Story Is Your Body Trying to Tell You?

How do you feel when you wake up in the morning? How do you feel the next day? What happens when you go to bed?

There is a story there for you that your body is trying to tell you, and it may be in the form of anxiety that never seems to go away, anger that is just always right there below the surface, an inability to sleep, feeling like you can't ever get on top of what's happening in your life, that you're always rushing. Insecurity, a search for validation.

It might be the story of the tension in your shoulders, or the grinding of your teeth. It might be the story in something that's happening in your foot. It might be the story of something that's happening in your gut after you eat food, or before you eat. There is a story there that your body is trying to tell you. And if you listen to it, if you're open to that, you will hear the truth. And from there, you can take action.

Ask yourself those questions this week. Write it down. See what your body is trying to tell you. There's a message there for you, I promise.

Alright guys, if you have any questions, if you want to hear me talk about anything at all on this podcast, I'll do it. Just write to podcast@rachelhart.com. Otherwise, I will 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 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 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,

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

Ep #61: What Story Is Your Body Trying to Tell You?

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.