

Ep #63: The In-Between Time



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Rachel Hart

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

Ep #63: The In-Between Time

You are listening to the *Take a Break* podcast with Rachel Hart, episode 63.

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, I want to talk to you today about something I call the in-between time. So I see this happen with my clients a lot, and it happened with me as well. You're at this point where you've taken a break and you're getting amazing results. You're actually enjoying yourself. Not just physically, but also emotionally. You're starting to see that there is a different way of being without a drink in your hand, without a drink at the end of the day, or at a party.

And you're learning how to create how you want to feel on purpose instead of feeling like you need to constantly cover up or take the edge off these negative emotions. And so things are really going well, but people will come to me and say, "Why do I feel so unsettled? Why do I feel like I don't know who I am?"

And I'll tell you guys what I always tell them. You're in the in-between time. You're in this place where you're slipping off one identity and starting to create a new one, and that place of unknown will bring up a lot of fear for people, and I remember so clearly how unsettling it was for me. Because of course, I didn't know what was going on. Nobody told me this was an in-between time. I didn't figure it out until after the fact.

And the thing was I had a pretty solid identity. At least after that first week of college, I was a party girl. I was a girl that was always up for a good time, always up for a crazy night or being able to outdo somebody else's ridiculous tales of what they did when they were so drunk the night before. That's who I became. And as much as I wasn't liking the results of that

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

Ep #63: The In-Between Time

anymore, more than a decade later, it was an identity that I was familiar with and comfortable with.

Now, I didn't always have that identity. That wasn't my identity at all in high school. You know, high school was a period for me - and I think a period for a lot of people, where I felt like I was kind of grasping at straws. I really didn't know where I fit in. And you know, one of the reasons why for me was that you know, from around sixth grade through ninth grade, I got really, very mediocre grades, and was kind of disruptive in class. I really was.

It sounds so silly now but I was so committed to this plan, and it was a plan of mine. Because here's the thing: I knew that I could do well in school, but I didn't want to. I didn't. I have a sister who's three years older, she's incredibly smart, incredibly accomplished, we grew up in a tiny town in Connecticut and so we basically had all the same teachers all throughout school.

And we look a lot alike, and I was always being mistaken for her. People were always calling me Rebecca. And at some point, my brain thought, "Huh, this is how I'll be different. This is how I'll be different from my sister. If she's the A student, I'll be the C student. If she's the goody two shoes, I'm going to be the pain in the butt."

I thought it was a genius plan and I was very committed to it. And that plan lasted all the way up until my sister's high school graduation. So it was the very end of my freshman year of high school, and I remember sitting in the bleachers of our high school gym, watching her graduate, and all of a sudden, I had this thought, "Oh, you have to get good grades if you want to get into a good college. I need to get good grades."

Like, it had just never occurred to me before. And suddenly, when I went back to school a couple months later, overnight I went from being a C student to an A student. That's how I started out my sophomore year. My parents I think were completely perplexed. Because they had been on my case for years, but all of a sudden, I just changed my ways.

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

Ep #63: The In-Between Time

And the crazy thing was I remember I started getting really good grades and I started to badger my high school administration to let me into the honor's classes, but because I hadn't been on that track, I think it was around seventh grade or eighth grade that students in my school got tracked and put into the honor's track, but I was doing pretty poorly then.

And so they really were quite resistant to let me on, and it took an entire year of me really annoying them quite a bit and proving that I could get straight As that they finally let me in. So I'm in high school, and I remember at that time, that sophomore year, my best friend at the time was like, "I don't get it. So what? Like, now you get good grades? Now you're a goody-goody? What's the deal? What's going on?"

And the more I studied, the more that friendship kind of faded away. And then my junior year, when I finally got into these honor's classes, I was in all these classes with the students, the honor students that had been in the same classes with each other since middle school. And they were kind of like, "Where did you come from?"

They knew me because I went to a tiny little school, but I hadn't been with them. And so I was really in this place of like, where do I fit in? I feel like I don't fit in anywhere. What is my identity? So I just studied and studied and studied, and made it my mission to get into my dream school, and that's what I did.

And then I got there and college, all of a sudden was this chance to have a fresh start. So at that first party, or really afterwards, I realized, "Hey, nobody knows the uptight version of Rachel who does all her homework and never goes to parties and doesn't fit in." I was like a party girl that night. I guess I could be fun, like, legitimate fun. I could be that person. As long as I just had enough to drink in social situations, my insecurities and awkwardness would dissolve.

And so that's what I did. I was the party girl. That became my identity. I took that identity when I was 17 and I just wore it for a very long time. I was the friend who was always up for a good time. A late night, one more drink,

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

Ep #63: The In-Between Time

being ridiculous, and looking back, I really think I was actually a lot of people's excuses to get drunk. It was like, "Well, Rachel will do it. She's always up for a drink."

So when I got to the point where I felt like, listen, this is not working. I don't like the results that I'm getting, I feel so embarrassed about the things that I do so often, and I just physically don't feel good, you know, I was in my 30s and I decided, alright, listen, I got to do something different. I've been flip-flopping back and forth throughout my 20s, none of that has been working.

And so I resolved that I was going to take a break from drinking, but I was going to do it differently. It wasn't just going to be about willpower and gritting my teeth and saying no over and over again because I had done that for so many years.

So I resolved, you know, I'm going to take a break, but this time I'm going to figure it out. I'm going to figure out this habit. Why I over desire alcohol, why I feel like I need it in certain situations. Like, why I can't feel like myself without it.

And that was what I was committed to, and I was doing the work, and I was really challenging myself. And you know, part of it felt so good. It was so amazing to wake up on the weekend early and not be hungover and not wonder what had happened the night before.

You know, it was great to go out with coworkers and wake up the next day and be like, "Oh crap, what did I say? Is that going to get back to my boss?" There was so much about it that felt really good, but here's the problem: I also was looking at myself and I was like, okay, like, who am I now?

Because I was always the party girl, I was always the girl that was up for a good time and getting drunk and being everybody's excuse. So now who am I? I feel physically good, which is great, and I have less negative emotions because I wasn't creating them for me with nights of overdoing it. But I just didn't know who I was.

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

Ep #63: The In-Between Time

And I've talked about this before in the podcast. I didn't even know what I liked to do, like, what was fun for me. And then on top of all of that, remember, I was drinking in large part to cover up all these negative thoughts and negative emotions that I had about myself.

And so once you stripped the alcohol away, I was sort of looking at what I thought was the real me, being like, do I even like her? Because I had used a drink for so long to blot out all the thoughts, "I don't measure up, I don't fit in, I'm not pretty enough, I'm not smart enough, I'm so weird, I'm so awkward," whatever it was, I had used alcohol to blot those thoughts for so long. But of course, they were still there, they didn't magically go away during the break period.

In fact, if anything, I was now more tuned in to them. So I was in this in-between time, but I didn't know it. I just felt like I wasn't myself. I felt kind of like, I didn't know who I was, I didn't have an identity anymore.

So when you think about the word identity and what it means, and identity is just a set of qualities and beliefs that makes one person different from others. That's it. But so much of the qualities and beliefs that made me different in my mind from others was tied up in drinking, tied up in being that party girl, tied up in being always up for a late night.

That's what my identity was so tied up in. And not to mention, I thought the only way to access the fun, confident version of me was to have a drink. So there I was in this in-between time, not understanding that it was an in-between time and not really knowing what to do, but knowing I didn't want to go back to how things were before, but I had no vision. I had no idea where I was headed, and that felt really uncomfortable.

So this is the problem. When I see this happen to my clients, they're in this space where they're just like, "What do I do?" And I think a lot of times, if you're doing this on your own, you're trying to figure this out on your own and you don't have any kind of guidance, there's this temptation to just revert back to your old habits, even though you know those habits weren't

Ep #63: The In-Between Time

serving you. Because at least they're familiar, at least they're comfortable, at least you know what that looks like, right?

And so that, of course, is never a great solution. But in our mind, our brain kind of thinks, "Well, I don't really know who I am now, I don't really know where I belong or where I fit in, or what my identity is, but at least I know that other person. Maybe it's just better to go back to being her even though there are negative consequences. At least it feels familiar."

I came across this quote by Katherine Woodward Thomas, which I think so beautifully sums up what the in-between time is and I remember when I read it for the first time I was like, "Oh, that's what was going on." So she writes, "If you want to create something wonderful in your life, if you truly want to make a big change, you've got to learn to tolerate the in-between time. The period in which we let go of who we know ourselves to be in order to allow the possibility of who we might become."

That's what that time is. And you know, I love how she phrases it. I love how she talks about the idea of letting go who you know yourself to be in order to allow the possibility of who you might become because there is so much possibility.

But here's the thing: you can't just go from one identity to another without any in-between time. It doesn't work like that. You have to make room and space for discovery. You have to spend time finding out who are you now, who are you now that drinking isn't the most fun thing that you do? It isn't the thing that you look forward to so much, it isn't the thing that glues together your friendships.

Now that you don't spend your evenings and weekends focused on, you know, "When am I going to drink? Where are we going to drink? Are we getting a drink?" Right? Then you have to start asking yourself questions like, "What do I want to do? How do I want to spend my time? Who do I want to hang out with? Who do I want to be?"

Ep #63: The In-Between Time

There are all these questions and so many of you freak out when you don't know the immediate answers. It's like, I got to know this right away, but the truth is you can't. You have to discover them. You have to allow time for the discovery. But of course, we're like, "No. Oh my god, I have no idea how to answer these questions, this is terrible. What do I do?"

We want to know what the next steps are, and we want to know them now. But that's not how the next steps come to us. You can't just answer these questions all at once. You can't just snap your fingers and have a brand new sense of who you are. You have to actually live in the question. I love putting it that way. You're not just answering the question; you're living in it. That's how you're going to find the answer.

And listen, the identity that you previously have and where you are right now, it may feel like a huge shift. But it may also be possible that what feels like a huge shift may not be all that big. And honestly, I think it was kind of true for me. It felt like such a huge shift to no longer be the party girl. Like, who was I possibly going to be then? That's who I was.

But I shed that skin, I shed the skin of feeling like I needed to hide and cover up who I really was, and that I could only be fun and outgoing and confident when I was drinking. And you know, it took some time, but I truly believe that I connected with a version of myself that had always been there deep down.

It just - it feels to me so much - I tell people all the time that it feels so much like I'm so much more connected to the little girl version of me who was running around at four and painting and fascinated by nature and being silly, and dancing without any care to what people thought, she didn't hate her body, she didn't hate herself, she didn't think she didn't measure up or wasn't smart enough. She was just entirely herself.

But in order to do that, I had to have this in-between period, and that period is a lot like staring into a void or an empty space. You're not quite sure that anything's there. You know, I like to think of it like a blank canvas, and what happens for some of us when you look at a blank canvas is we think like,

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

Ep #63: The In-Between Time

"Oh my god, I could paint anything. But what am I going to paint? And what if what I paint is terrible and it looks ridiculous? Then what?"

And so just the blank canvas in and of itself feels like of paralyzing. But the truth is you cannot find out what you could paint, what you could create, what could be there until you start painting, until you start trying. That's what you have to do. You have to just be open to exploring and discovering and being curious and dabbling, rather than trying to answer these questions immediately.

So the question for you is if you feel like you can identify with this. You know, are you rushing to that next place, to that next identity? Or can you allow yourself to just kind of rest in the in-between time? Are you willing to let it unfold, or are you hell-bent on trying to control it and move through it as fast as possible?

Because I will tell you, that will not work. You have to have room for discovery. You have to have room for exploration. You have to live in the questions. You cannot evolve into the next version of yourself if it is already known. And so your work is really tolerating that period of in-between time, to let go of who you were before in order to allow the possibility of who you might become because there is so much possibility.

So I want you to think of this: think of your in-between time as a stepping stone. You aren't where you were, you're not where you're going, but you are on your way.

Alright, guys, that's it for this week. As always, reach out if you have any questions. You can shoot me an email at podcast@rachelhart.com. I'm always looking for ideas about what you want to hear me talk about on this podcast. Otherwise, I will see you guys 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

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

Ep #63: The In-Between Time

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, 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.