

#### **Full Episode Transcript**

With Your Host

**Rachel Hart** 

You are listening to the *Take A Break* podcast with Rachel Hart, episode 131.

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.

Well hello everybody. Welcome back to the podcast. I have to tell you before we get started today, I am so excited, so excited about a brand new program that I am going to launch at the end of the summer to help all of you out there, all of you women who want to take a 30-day break from drinking and who want to work with me directly. Live coaching from me directly.

I have been working on it for a couple of months now and I am just so excited for everything that I am putting together into this program because taking a break from drinking isn't just good for your mind and good for your body, and trust me, it's good for both of those things, but it is the fastest way to rewire your brain.

Because you give your brain some space, some energy to actually understand the habit without trying to constantly manage the alcohol that you're putting in there. So in this program, I'm going to walk you through a step-by-step process so that you can really learn how to be someone who can trust herself. This is a huge thing.

Feeling like I couldn't trust myself around alcohol was so demoralizing, to feel like why am I always giving in, why am I always caving, why am I going back on my word? Not just with that but with so many things in my life. That's what I want to teach you how to do so you can really stop that neverending battle with your desire to drink and that desire for immediate gratification.

I want you to be able to learn how to feel comfortable hanging out with people who are drinking when you're not, and also not spend the entire time feeling deprived or restricted or having that feeling that you're missing out or worried about answering their questions or thinking to yourself, oh, I'd rather just stay home. This is really going to show you how to avoid all the common mistakes that so many people make. I made over and over again that was actually increasing my desire to drink when I was attempting to say no.

And all of this really is about learning how to master what I'm talking about on this podcast to all of you, the think-feel-act cycle. It's not just an intellectual concept. I mean, it can be. You can just have it be an intellectual concept, but if you want to create change, if you want to learn how to change your relationship with alcohol, if you want to learn how to make sure that you don't just replace habits with one another, so you don't stop uncorking a bottle of wine but then start rummaging through the fridge, then you have to learn the self-coaching tool that I teach, and that's what I'm going to be showing everyone doing this break with me and working with me directly.

I'm so excited to work with more of you. Right now I'm doing a year-long program where I work directly, exclusively with a small group of women and I love that work but I've just heard from so many of you who want to work with a coach on this, you want to work with me, and so I'm so excited to launch this 30-day program.

Now of course, I want you guys, my listeners, to have early access to the program. Because I know this, if you are taking the time to listen to the podcast and really think about your drinking, think about the habit, start applying the work and figuring out how to change your relationship with alcohol, I know that you are committed, you are in a place where you don't want to have to spend so much time and mental energy thinking about your drinking, and that's what the program can do for you.

So I'm going to open up a wait list for you guys. And as a little treat, I put together a list of some of my favorite books. Now these books aren't just

about drinking, they're about how to change your relationship with food, money, sex, how to be more productive, how to be more creative, how to incorporate mindfulness and minimalism into your life. I even have a couple of recommendations for kids' books that actually talk about the think, feel, act cycle.

So when you sign up, you'll be the first to hear when doors open for my new program, and I will send you a copy of my recommended reading list right now to your inbox. So if you want to get on the list and grab your copy of my favorite reads, all you have to do is either sign up at rachelhart.com/books, or because I know a lot of you are listening to the podcast on your phone, you can actually text me your email address. Please only use all lowercase letters, to (415) 275-6589. And when you're asked for the secret word, just text back BOOKS in all caps, and then I will send you the list of my favorite reads right to your email inbox.

Also, for those of you who are signing up by text, please know that you will only ever hear from me in your email inbox. I will not be sending you random text messages, because you know what, I don't like getting spam text messages. Okay, so super excited. I hope you guys will get on the waitlist. I cannot wait to work with more of you. I cannot wait to do this work together. But let's talk about today's episode.

Today's episode is all about the willingness to be wrong. And it is so important when it comes to changing your drinking, but you know what, it's so important with really everything in life, and I will tell you this has not been an easy lesson for me to embrace because I love being right, and I love doing things right.

I love getting gold stars. I love putting things in the right place. But I will tell you this; my willingness to let go of being right an doing everything right, my willingness to embrace being wrong is what has been so transformative in my life. And I will tell you, I am not 100% there yet. It is still something that I am constantly working on and you know what, also something that is being pointed out to me in my own life.

I will tell you, this past weekend I was in Dallas with my coach and my mentor and a small group of women that I work with on my business. And I have to tell you, oh my gosh, I ran head first into my love of being right, and it did not look pretty. It really did not. But I will tell you, having it shown to me, being coached around this, it really made clear how there is a part of me that is still inside that is still really desperate to never be wrong.

And seeing that in the moment, it was pretty painful. I have to tell you this. There were tears, I was having a little bit of a vulnerability hangover. I was really feeling quite a bit of shame. And I think that that piece is really important and I want to share that with you. I want you to know that I am human.

I know that some of you guys listening, some of my clients, you hear me talking about the think-feel-act cycle every week and learning how you can manage your mind and change your habits, and you might think it sounds like Rachel has this all figured out. But I want you to know that I am still a work in progress. I am still uncovering deeper and deeper layers. I am not at some sort of promise land where I don't experience any negative feelings and I feel wonderful all the time.

That is not the case because I set bigger and bigger goals for myself. I'm constantly asking myself to step outside of my comfort zone. And I will tell you, I spent this weekend in Dallas feeling about as vulnerable as I can remember. It felt a little bit like I was an exposed nerve. I don't know if you've had this experience when you start crying when you're around other people and you are trying so hard to hold it together, so hard, but you're not really doing a great job of holding it together. This was me.

And then here's the thing; then you know, I got this idea. This may have happened to you as well. I got this idea okay, you know what, just step away, go to the bathroom, pull yourself together, you can do this. And then you get to the bathroom and you look in the mirror and you just start crying even harder. This was what my Saturday was like.

Now, some of you might be like oh my god, if that is what coaching is like, why on earth would you ever do this? And that is a totally valid question. Why on earth would you do something that would have you feel emotions like this? I will tell you, my husband sometimes has this question for me as well. He hears about what it's like when I work with my coach and he's just like, "Okay, that doesn't sound very fun, Rachel."

But listen, the reason why you do it is because of who you discover on the other side. Because the only thing that's ever holding you back, the only thing that's ever blocking you is a thought. And discovering who you are when you can let that thought go, knowing that it's not who you are, discovering what you're capable of, that is so powerful. Because it's only ever a thought that is blocking you from taking the action that you want in life.

I tease my husband about this because when we met, a couple weeks after we met, he had just come back from running a race in Madagascar that was 155 miles long. I was like, why on earth would you ever do this? That just sounds painful and excruciating. But his reason for running that race is very similar to my reason of setting big goals and getting coached. He wanted to see if he could do it. He wanted to discover who he was on the other side of setting a goal that would blow his own mind.

And I will tell you this; every time that I am willing to be wrong about myself, who I discover on the other side, she's amazing. But I will tell you this; before you get to that part, being wrong in the moment, it doesn't feel good. Having your belief systems that have been the foundation of your life crumble beneath you, it can feel kind of terrible when it's happening. But the more you do it, the more that you see what happens when you're willing to question yourself, the more you see the kind of amazing results that you get, you're willing to do it because you want to have your mind blown.

I want to have my mind blown. I want to see what I can create and discover in this world. And that is what I will tell you is necessary if you want to take a break from drinking where you can actually change your relationship with alcohol. I'm not just talking about when you say no and you use willpower

and you cross days off a calendar and you isolate yourself. That will not change your relationship. That will just teach you how to hide.

If you want to do it in a way where you can rewire your brain, you have to be willing to be wrong about yourself, to be wrong about alcohol, to be wrong about your brain, to be wrong about everything. Because when you cling to the idea that you have to be right, that will always get in your way, and that's what I really want to dive into today.

Why we like being right and what exactly is happening in your brain to make it so that you want to be right. How wanting to be right will get in the way of changing any habit, but especially your drinking, and why being open to being wrong is a skill that you can actually develop. It's something that you can practice, and the more you practice it, the more your life will change.

So let's just talk about why it is humans like to be right. I have talked about the idea of confirmation bias on the podcast before. I think I talked about it in episode 93. Confirmation bias is simply your brain's preference to scan for evidence in the environment that supports thoughts you already believe to be true.

Now, every human brain is constantly doing it. It is constantly searching for evidence in the world to support the beliefs that we already have. It's like a reflex that proves your existing thoughts true. You have to understand that confirmation bias is at play if you're going to start to unpack and dismantle this need to be right.

I was actually thinking about it before I even got to Dallas. I was at the airport and I have to tell you, I have talked about travel before. I've talked about using thought work at airports before because it's so powerful. I used to fly all the time for my job, and I will tell you, I was frazzled and anxious and annoyed and you know what, I always needed a drink. I could not wait to get through security and go to the lounge and get a drink.

I couldn't wait to get on the plane and order a drink because I was having so much negative emotion. And now I will tell you that flying, traveling, it is not a big deal. I am not stressed out at all. It used to be that my stress would start when I started packing, and it would last all the way through until I was on the plane.

But then I always told myself, you know what, you'll feel better when you're on the plane, but of course I didn't because what happens when you're on the plane? Well then you're seated next to someone that you don't want to be seated next to, and maybe the plane is delayed, and maybe there's turbulence. There are all these other reasons on the plane for me to have a lot of negative emotion, or so I thought.

So I was thinking about confirmation bias when I was headed to Dallas because the plane that I was taking was delayed, and then it was delayed for a little bit longer, then we heard that they were actually missing a part and then we heard that they couldn't find the part. And then finally we were being told that the plane was being taken out of service and the next plane to Dallas was totally sold out.

So you can imagine if you have been in this scenario before, what was happening at my gate. It did not look pretty. But I managed to feel calm throughout all of it because I was able to manage that kind of knee-jerk thinking. Oh my god, this is a disaster, I have to get there, how am I going to get there, am I going to miss the meeting, what am I going to do? I was able to manage all of that.

But I started thinking about confirmation bias because I was talking to another woman who was on the flight to Dallas. We were talking about whether or not we would make it. And the tensions were pretty high and people were not showing up in their best behavior, and at one point she said to me, "You know, people are just terrible."

And I want to just preface this by saying I have no judgment on her about this thought, people are terrible because this used to be my thought. I used to think this all the time too. All the time my brain because of confirmation

bias was scanning to find evidence to support the idea that people were terrible. So I was constantly observing people's behavior and favoring the interpretation that people weren't good.

My brain was always like see, see, they are terrible. Look at that, people are terrible. But here's the thing; you can just as easily, if you're willing to be wrong, think that the opposite is true. You could think that people are amazing. You could put your brain to work to scan for that. But when you recognize that confirmation bias is at play, you're not actually asking your brain to do anything. Your brain just acting on this reflex. It's going out and finding evidence and you don't even realize that it's going out and finding evidence. You think you're just observing the world as it is.

But when you start to learn how to manage your mind and direct your brain to think something differently, to find different evidence on purpose, you'll start to uncover that that might not be the case. That what you believe to be true could be wrong. And if you do this enough, if you practice it enough, this will start to become automatic. You can actually override this tendency, this knee jerk to just find evidence supporting your existing beliefs.

I had a client say to me recently, she said you know, my brain is just coming up with the positive reframe when I'm not even directing it to do that. It's just doing it on its own. And that is the magic, not only of your brain and the fact that it can be endlessly rewired. It's the magic of thought work. It's the magic of the think-feel-act cycle and of learning how to coach yourself that you can teach your brain new skills.

So here's the thing; confirmation bias isn't just your brain scanning for evidence for what it already believes. That is a part of it. There's also another piece for why it is that we don't like to be wrong, because it feels good to be right. You get a little reward, you get a little bit of dopamine when you're right. And if you think about this, I talk a lot on the podcast about human evolution and how that shaped the brain that is in your head today.

It makes a lot of sense that the brain wanted to reward you for doing things that were right. It wanted to incentivize you for being right because that would keep you safe. So if you were right that hey, that mushroom is the poisonous one and you avoided getting sick and dying, well, that kept you safe. If you were right, hey, that noise in the bushes is a bear, and that would help you stay alive.

Being right was good for human survival. So we're rewarded when we think we're right. We're incentivized for being right. We get that little bit of pleasure. But now here's the kicker and this is really important. We get that little bit of pleasure even when what we are right about doesn't feel very good. How would this happen? Because of the think-feel-act cycle.

We can have thoughts like people are terrible, the world is unfair, you can't trust anyone. Those thoughts are going to create negative emotions in this cycle, but when you believe them to be true and when you find more evidence that proves these thoughts true, it's weirdly satisfying. You probably know this. You probably have had this experience when you're kind of like, see, see, I knew I was right about the way that the world worked. We get a satisfaction in feeling negative.

Now, this piece is like, wait, what's going on here? Why would we want to feel satisfied about a thought that feels negative? And it has to do with the fact that your brain is always trying to save energy. Always. Because thousands of years ago, it took a ton of energy for humans to survive because the world was very dangerous. You had to go out and hunt and forage and build shelters and build fire and find clean water and stay safe from predators. You had to do all these things every damn day and it took a lot of energy.

And so the brain evolved to prioritize anything that would save energy because anything that saved energy was a huge benefit when you were expending so much just to stay alive. And guess what? Believing thoughts that you already believe, finding evidence to support those thoughts instead of questioning them, that saves energy.

So you have to keep this in mind when you are considering well, why it is that my brain is holding so tightly to never wanting to be wrong. It's just because your brain likes to keep thinking the thoughts it already thinks, even the thoughts that feel negative, even thoughts like I'm not good enough, I can't figure this out, things never go my way, I'll never measure up.

Even though those thoughts create negative feelings in the think-feel-act cycle, your brain has a preference to think them because they are easy to think. They save energy. It takes more energy to start questioning them, to start challenging them, and your brain will not do that unless you direct it to, unless you tell it to do it on purpose.

So I really want you to consider both of these pieces. Unless you are coaching yourself, unless you're paying attention to what is happening inside your mind, unless you're directing your brain to challenge your thoughts, it will always run on this default of preferring to think thoughts that it finds very easy to think and to find evidence for thoughts that it already believes.

So let's talk about how this is going to get in the way of changing the habit of drinking because you have a lot of thoughts right now that you're very wedded to. You really believe are 100% true and I know this because I was in your shoes. I'll tell you, some of my old thoughts about drinking sounded like this.

I love to drink and I will always love to drink. I just love it too much and that's why I can't control how much I drink. Alcohol is amazing and my life won't be as good without it. Drinking makes me fun and relaxes me, it makes me easygoing, and if I don't drink, I will never have that outlet and I will never be able to loosen up. Only people who have problems with alcohol don't drink and I don't want people to think that's me.

That's what my old belief sounded like, and you know what, it feels kind of crazy in some ways to even read them out loud because there's a part of me that recognizes how true I used to believe they were and how tightly I

held to all of those beliefs. And now, I can see that the complete opposite is true. They're actually wrong. All those beliefs are wrong for me.

And being able to stand in that place of seeing a way that you used to view the world that you were so sure was 100% correct, to find out is 100% incorrect, it's pretty mind-blowing and it's a fascinating example. A really powerful example of just how incredible your brain is.

But listen, the only way that I could challenge them was because I was willing to be wrong. Because my brain had a lot of evidence to prove these thoughts true. It had a lot of evidence to prove that I love to drink and I couldn't control how much I drank and that alcohol was amazing and that drinking was the only thing that made me fun and relaxed and easygoing. And that only people who had problems were people who didn't drink.

I had a lot of evidence for that because I didn't understand that confirmation bias was always working in the background. You have to be willing to consider that you might be wrong about alcohol. You might be wrong about your relationship with alcohol, even though you have so much evidence. And it's easier for you to do this when you realize how the think-feel-act cycle is working.

Your thoughts aren't just creating how you feel. They're driving your actions, and everything you do or don't do in life is creating more evidence for the original thought. The think-feel-act cycle is all part of confirmation bias. So let me give you a couple of examples. If you have a thought, I can't figure it out, you will feel confused. And as a result of that confusion, you will likely quit. You will likely give up. And then when you quit, when you give up, when that's your action, what you have done is created more evidence for the belief that you can't figure it out.

It works this way with everything. You might have a thought I deserve it. You think that to yourself and you feel entitled. When you feel entitled, you have a drink or you eat the cookie, or you buy the dress. Whatever it is. You take an action based on the thought I deserve it. And then you start to

teach your brain that the thing that you deserve most is the reward of dopamine that you get from these false pleasures.

If you have a thought like I hate the way I look and you feel disgust, what do you start doing when you feel disgusted? You probably start trying to fix all the flaws that you see. Or you might hide. You might tell yourself I don't ever want to see what I look like in the mirror. Either way, the more you try to fix your appearance, the more you hide from your appearance, the more you create evidence that yeah, the way you look is wrong.

Your thoughts will always prove themselves true and it is why people stay stuck in habits because they don't realize that their brain is just doing the easy thing and it's scanning for evidence. And the think-feel-act cycle that is constantly running is actually creating that evidence. They think they're just seeing the world. They think they're just seeing reality when in fact, they're just seeing reality through the lens of their thinking.

You have to be willing to be wrong about you, be wrong about alcohol, be wrong about drinking, be wrong about your capacity to change if you want to stop being someone who is at the mercy of her urges. I had to do this. I had to do the work of thinking and practicing thinking it's possible that I might not always think alcohol is the best thing in the world. It's possible that I can be in charge of how I respond to the urge to drink or any urge, for that matter. It's possible that life could be even better if I wasn't drinking. It's possible that I can teach myself how to be fun, how to relax, how to be easygoing, how to loosen up without a drink. And it's possible for me to decide that I don't want to drink and to not have a problem and to not have anything wrong with who I am.

I had to practice thinking new thoughts, and the only way to do that was to be open and to be willing to be wrong about myself and everything that I clung so dearly to when it came to drinking. So the question is how do you cultivate this skill? You have to start out by wanting to be wrong. You have to want to be wrong about yourself, and I hope that you do want to be wrong about yourself because if you are right, then change isn't possible.

You have to start seeking out being wrong. And there really is a good reason why. Because listen, unless you love all the results that you have in your life, unless you love your drinking and unless you love all of your habits, then it makes a lot of sense to be wrong. Because if right now you're right about you and the world and your capabilities and alcohol and your capacity for change, then there's nowhere to go.

If you're right about all of these things and you don't like your results, then what are you going to do? The only thing that you can do is to make peace with being unhappy. But if you're wrong about all of these things, then the world is your oyster. Then there's so much room for change and possibility and growth.

Now, I have had people say to me before well Rachel, but what if I open myself up to being wrong, what if I question my beliefs and it turns out that the belief was right? What if I open myself up to believing that life could be better without alcohol but it turns out that that's not true? Now, let's just say that someone could prove that life was better with alcohol, which I don't think they can because people like me exist in the world who used to drink and used to love to drink and drank a lot and really thought it was the best, and now we're on the other side and say hey you know what, life is way better and way bigger than you can possibly imagine when you're not drinking.

But let's just say for the sake of argument that you opened yourself up to the possibility that you were wrong, but it turns out that you were right all along. This is a fear that some of my clients have. A lot of people are really afraid of that. I would just say this; who cares? Who cares? At least you attempted to figure it out. At least you tried. At least you opened yourself up to a new possibility. Because the only other alternative is to never question yourself and never see if a new future is possible for you.

So if you want to create the skill of opening yourself up to being wrong, you have to start by looking at what you believe about alcohol and drinking and how it helps you and how it improves your life and how it makes things

better, and you have to start seeing if you can find evidence right now in this very moment that all of these thoughts might not be 100% true.

So just take the thought I love to drink and I'll always love to drink, which I held very dearly to for a long time in my life. You know, once I opened myself up to the idea that potentially, I could be wrong, I remembered you know what, there was a time in my life when I really didn't even care about alcohol because there was a time in my life where I hadn't started drinking, so I didn't think it was the best thing.

And even once I did start drinking, there were times when I didn't like it. I didn't enjoy it, especially when I was waking up feeling kind of sick or hungover. In fact, many times it was repellent in those moments. And I didn't like drinking at 6am. I didn't like drinking on my commute. There were lots of times during my day where I didn't think it was the best thing in the world.

Same thing with the ideas that I had about how drinking made me fun or more relaxed or easy going, and that if I didn't drink, I would lose that outlet. I would lose my ability to loosen up. When I opened myself up to the possibility of being wrong, I could say well, you know what, there are people that I enjoy, who I am around and I never drink around them, and I'm pretty fun with my best friend and alcohol is not always involved. And I am friendly with people at other times than when I'm at a bar or when I have a glass of wine in my hand.

I had to start doing that work and that's what you have to do. You have to challenge your mind to be wrong. Otherwise, it's just going to run on default and default means confirmation bias. Default means that you think the thoughts that are already easy to think. Default means that you'll get a little reward for being right, even when the thought that you keep thinking feels terrible. You have to be willing to be wrong.

This will change everything for you. It has changed everything for me and you know what, if my trip to Dallas proved anything, I still have more work. But you know what, that's great. I want there to be more work because I

don't have all the results that I want yet in my life. I want to be wrong about what I think my possibility and my capacity and my capabilities are because maybe not just for me, but all of you out there, we have only scratched the surface of what we can create in this world.

Alright, so if you are interested in signing up for this program that I am launching at the end of the summer, you can just visit rachelhart.com/waitlist or text me at 415-275-6589. Only put your email address in all lowercase letters in that text, and when it asks you for the secret word, text back waitlist. That's it for today. I will see you guys next week.

Hey guys, if you're finding this podcast helpful, and I really hope you are, I would love if you would head on over to iTunes and leave a review. And as a special thank you, I've updated and expanded my free urge meditation giveaway. I've created two audio meditations plus a brand-new workbook that will teach you a different way to respond to the urge to drink.

The meditations are super simple. All it takes is five minutes and a pair of headphones, and each one now comes with a follow up exercise in the workbook to help you dig deeper and really retrain your brain when it comes to the habit of drinking. So after you leave a review on iTunes, all you need to do is head on over to rachelhart.com/urge, input your information, and I'll make sure you get a copy of both meditations plus the workbook in your inbox.

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 30day 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.