

## Ep #92: Uncovering You



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Rachel Hart**

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## Ep #92: Uncovering You

You are listening to the *Take A Break* podcast with Rachel Hart, episode 92.

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.

Hello, hello, everybody. It is a beautiful morning in San Francisco. I was actually on my Facebook group this morning. If you are not part of it, it is the private Facebook group for the Five-Day Reset. That is the free challenge that I offer to all of you who want to take a five-day break from drinking and want to do it a different way, want to learn how to do it without just using willpower or resisting or just saying no but really start to understand what's behind the habit.

So I was in there and I saw a comment from someone who said that they had completed the full five days but she didn't understand why she was feeling unhappy. And it made me think because I could so relate to where she was. I mean, I really get this. I really understand that for all of you listening, if you are contemplating taking a break from drinking, it's because you want to feel better and not worse.

So what gives if you've ever had this experience before where you've taken a break and you don't feel better? And what she was describing was a really common reason why so many people, myself included, will fail to change the habit and pick right back up with their drinking.

I did this for so long until I discovered a different way to go about it because the reason is this: you know, when you take a break from drinking because you are kind of fed up with the repercussions or the consequences, you're unhappy, you're taking a break because you want to change something, you want something to be better, but then if you take a break and it's all about willpower, it's all about saying no, it isn't about understanding the habit.

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What a lot of people discover is that they're still kind of unhappy but unhappy in a different way. And that doesn't feel good, right? You don't want to be unhappy when you're drinking and unhappy when you're not drinking. It feels like a lose-lose situation.

And the reason is because there is a mistake embedded in this premise. It is the idea that the root cause of the habit is alcohol and consuming too much of it. And I want to tell you, that is not what is at the root of this habit. Yes, the problem on the surface is that you're drinking too much, drinking more than you want. But underneath, that's what really matters.

And in order to find out what is underneath drinking more than you want, drinking too much, drinking in a way that doesn't feel good for you, if you want to find what's underneath that, you have to answer why. Why are you drinking more than you want? Why has it become an evening routine? Why do you feel like you need it in certain situations? Why do you feel like you're missing out if you don't have a glass in your hand?

You have to answer those questions. And I'll tell you, most people have this belief and I did too, well if I'm drinking more than I want and that's what's causing all the repercussions, then if I remove alcohol, everything should be okay. Everything should be fixed, everything will be better. But just removing a substance cannot answer these questions. It will not explain to you why you are turning to it in the first place.

And I will tell you this: drinking too much is just the symptom. It is a signal that there is something else that you need to pay attention to, there is something deeper that isn't working right. That's what happens when you take a break. You remove the symptom and suddenly you get a glimpse of what's going on.

So a break will really bring into sharp focus what's not working. But most people do this by just using willpower, just saying no, just turning down drinks, just isolating and so when they start to get a glimpse of it, well, they're not teaching their brain any new tools. They're not learning anything differently, they're not developing any new coping mechanisms so they end

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up in this place of okay, well great, now I'm unhappy before and now I'm unhappy now, so where does that leave me?

But I will tell you this: when you take the symptom out of your life, it will reveal to you something that is so powerful. And this is true for everything. Not just overdrinking. It is true for overeating, for overspending, for overworking. Listen, if you stop bingeing on Oreos every night, if you stop making late night purchases on Amazon, if you stop working ungodly hours, guess what? You are going to come face to face with why you are engaging in those behaviors in the first place.

And do not let yourself be fooled. Do not just tell yourself, "Oh, but I just really love red wine. I just really love Oreos. I just really love to shop. I just really have so much to do that I can't take a break from work." Do not fool yourself.

Whenever you are overdoing at something at the expense of yourself, there is a reason for you to uncover why this is happening. Because remember, overdrinking, overeating, overspending, overworking, over anything, all these things are just our brain's way of finding something in our external environment to cope with how we are feeling. This is how we numb the things that we don't want to feel, the emotions that we wish weren't there.

And I know that some of you might not like hearing this. I know that some of you are like, "No, no, Rachel, really, I just love the taste of wine, that's the problem. I just love the taste too much, I can't say no to the taste and how much I love it."

But all I can offer to you is this: how do you feel when that desire appears and you say no to it? How do you feel when everyone's drinking at a party and you're not? How do you feel when you come home in the evening and you don't crack open a bottle of wine? How do you feel when you think about going to your next big event and not drinking?

If any of these emotions, deprived, bored, awkward, insecure, or just a sense of feeling like you're missing out comes up, then guess what? What

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is really at the root of this habit is avoiding negative emotion. I get it if you don't want this to be true. I did not want this to be the case either. I did not want there to be something more for me to discover. I wanted the issue to be just how much I drank.

The idea that there was something else wrong really kind of terrified me. Because you know what, I could barely figure out why I was drinking too much in the first place and the idea that there was something else I had to explore, it was like, oh great, something else I have to fix. Because I spent a lot of my life feeling like everything about me was something I needed to fix. I didn't need something else to add to the plate.

But this is what I can tell you: what I didn't know then and what I do know now is that taking a break and taking a different kind of break, not just using willpower, it helped me get clear on what wasn't working in my life and that is where the magic kicked in. That is where everything shifted for me.

And looking back now, I can see it really clearly. You may not be able to see it right now if you are in the throes of this. But once I decided to take a different kind of break, a break that wasn't all about relying on willpower, just saying no, resisting my desire, isolating, once I decided to take a different kind of break where I told myself, you know what Rachel, you're going to focus instead of understanding why you feel like you need alcohol in certain situations, why you think it makes your life better, how you think a drink is helping you, and you're going to figure out how to deliver all of these benefits that you think you can only get at the bottom of a glass, you're going to figure out how to deliver them to yourself on your own.

That was the turning point for me. That is what changed everything. I used that time to figure out why I was drinking too much, why I felt like I needed it to relax, to be confident, to be funny, outgoing, to socialize, to celebrate, to commiserate, to lick my wounds, to take the edge off of everything, to make friends, to meet guys, to have sex, to be myself. That's what I thought.

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It's so crazy to me now but I truly believed this deep down that I needed a drink to be myself, that that was when the real Rachel came out, the fun Rachel came out. It's so crazy. It's so crazy in retrospect but I would have sworn up and down that that was truly the case.

And when I decided to start doing this, when I embarked on this different kind of break, you know, I never said, "Rachel, you know what, that's it, you're never drinking again," because you know what, I had done that time and time again and it didn't work. And frankly, it kind of freaked me out, this idea that all of a sudden, here I was in my 30s making a declaration about what I was going to do until I was 90. That really kind of freaked me out.

I just said, "I'm going to promise myself that I'm going to take a break until I can figure out the why, until I can develop the skills to provide these things for myself, to not feel like I need it at the bottom of the glass." Because you know what, alcohol would always be there. It wasn't going anywhere, it's not going anywhere for you. It's hanging around.

I needed time and space to focus on me and learning new skills. And I'm going to promise you, that's probably what you need to. And I'll tell you, I took that break and at first, yeah, I enjoyed no longer having hangovers and I really enjoyed not waking up with that terrible kind of fuzzy feeling in your mouth after a night of drinking way too much. And I really loved not having to worry about what I did or what I said and I'm a morning person.

I wasn't really when I was spending my nights and my weekends drinking a lot, but I really am a morning person and I enjoyed waking up early on Saturday mornings and actually feeling rested and going out and exploring the city. Back then I was living in New York. I really loved being awake in New York before the rest of the world woke up.

But you know what, at first, I still felt lost. Even though I had all these things that I could really tangibly appreciate, I still felt lost. And in retrospect, that sense of being adrift really makes sense. And the reason is this: I spent over a decade devoting so much mental space, I'm talking a ton of mental

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space to drinking. And I'm not just talking about mental space on the downsides of drinking. Just drinking in general.

And I didn't realize I was doing it at the time, but in retrospect, I can really see clearly how much space was devoted to it. So there was space in my mind devoted to looking forward to drinking and then space in my mind taken up by actually the haze of alcohol, when I was drinking. And then space in my mind the next day regretting and recovering from the night before, and then space in my mind filled with shame and guilt about why this was a problem for me that I couldn't figure out.

I mean, I'm telling you, it's crazy when I look back on it how much of my brain was taken up thinking about alcohol. I was looking forward to it, I was immersing myself in it, I was recovering from it, that was a big one, right? The recovering from it. And then also worrying about it. Why I seemed to have more desire than my friends, why I sometimes drink more than I wanted to, why my drinking was so unpredictable, and why this was my problem. And I was so sure it was nobody else's.

All this space in my mind was taken up by thinking, reading, worrying about alcohol and how it affected me. And looking back, when I look back on that time, I started drinking when I was 17, right when I entered college. It's really amazing that I accomplished what I did given how much of my brain space I unknowingly devoted to this substance.

Because honestly, when you consider how much space was either looking forward or just being taken up by the haze of it or recovering or regretting, it's kind of amazing to me that I managed to graduate college, that I managed to write my thesis in college, and I succeeded at getting promoted at work and not only that, but scraping together a life in New York City on a non-profit salary. I actually was able to pay off my college debt, which I still think is a huge miracle that I was able to do that because I also think, "God, you were spending a lot of money going out to bars and drinking."

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So all of those things were great. All of those were amazing accomplishments but really, what would I have been able to accomplish, what would have been possible if I had not directed so much of my mental space to drinking?

But here's the thing that I understand now. The truth is this: as long as my mind back then was directing all this energy to this part of my life, you know what, I didn't have space to figure out anything else. I didn't have space to figure out my future, I didn't have space to figure out what I wanted to pursue or my passion, or how to be in a satisfying relationship, how to create personal wellbeing. And you know what, although I never would have said it out loud, back then, in my mind I was always kind of fixating and ruminating on this idea, how do I drink like everyone else?

And so I didn't have space for all these things, but you know what? I really kind of believed if I figured that out, if I figured out how to be a "normal drinker," then that would solve everything for me. And until I figured that out, I unknowingly put my future on hold. I didn't dream big. I wouldn't let myself. It was too scary.

Because guess what? When I would dream big, I would have a lot of thoughts that would bring up negative emotions and guess how I like to deal with negative emotions? Oh, by numbing, by turning to something to cover them up. So it was too scary to let myself really dabble in my future.

If I couldn't figure out my drinking, how was I going to figure out what I wanted to do with the rest of my life? But I will tell you, this is the magic of taking a break and doing it differently. Yes, at first, I felt lost, but it opened up space in my life to discover what I actually wanted. Something deeper than my previous goal of to drink like everyone else, which now when I look back on it, it's really like, Rachel, that's what you wanted to devote all your time and energy to? That was your big goal? Of all the things you could pick in the world, of all the dreams you could have, that's what you wanted?

And the shift for me was a shift in thinking. It was learning the think-feel-act cycle, learning that our emotions don't just appear. They are created by our

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thoughts. And that our actions are not these unknowable things that we can never understand why they happen but they're driven by how we are feeling.

Now, the whole time before I learned about this work, before I learned about the think-feel-act cycle, my while focus was always on the action of drinking. Was I saying yes to a drink or was I saying no to a drink? And that's where people are at when they focus on willpower, when they focus on resisting, on isolating and just saying no. All of their energy is devoted on that action area of the think-feel-act cycle.

But of course, acting is just one piece of it. Saying yes or saying no is just one piece of it. You need to understand what is driving that action. How do you feel? What are you thinking? And it was only when I started to focus on the thoughts and feelings driving that action that I started to be able to understand the why behind my drinking. The why behind why I felt like I needed it in certain situations. Why I felt like I was missing out, why I felt like I couldn't be myself.

And I'll tell you, once I shifted my focus from how much I was drinking to why I was drinking, I learned so much. I mean, it blew my mind. I discovered that there was a side of New York City that had nothing to do with bars or drinking or stumbling home late at night after one too many. I discovered the people in my life who loved me and wanted to hang out with me regardless of whether or not I drank.

And you know what? I also discovered the people who didn't, and that was just good information. I discovered that despite rising the ranks at work and being really successful and spending a decade in communications, it was not the job for me, it was not what I wanted to do.

And I'll tell you, when I had that realization, it was really scary but at the same time, the only way for me to make a change was to have had that realization. I discovered art again after so many years of refusing to pick up a brush because I was so incredibly judgmental of anything that I tried to produce. I discovered how to dance in public, completely sober and enjoy

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it. I'm not just talking about being able to dance in your house by yourself when no one's watching. I mean dancing in front of people and not needing a buzz in order to feel like I could do it.

I discovered how to manage my mind and cope with negative emotions in a healthy way, and in fact, not be afraid of my negative emotions. I discovered how to have compassion and acceptance and love and even admiration of myself, including how to admire and love my body without losing weight or getting rid of stretch marks or shrinking my pores or covering myself up from head to toe. That was a big thing for me because I always felt like I was so self-conscious about my appearance and I could only let go of that when I was drinking and had alcohol to quiet my mind, quiet all that self-critical judgment inside of me.

I discovered how to be in a healthy relationship with another person and show up as a partner that I wanted to be and not show up as the partner that had to apologize for the night before, although you know, I still have to apologize, right? We all do. I also discovered how to have really great sex without needing or having to open up a bottle of wine first.

I discovered how to ask for what I want and how to stop being a people pleaser. I discovered how to let go of perfectionism. And honestly, I really discovered how to be me again. And all of that was only because I shifted my focus to why. Why I had unknowingly created this habit. Why did I feel like I needed it?

I shifted my focus away from just the action to understand the full think-feel-act cycle. And I discovered really that all of it was all about avoiding negative emotion that I thought I couldn't handle, I thought I had no control over, I thought I was powerless to confront and I needed something to help me cope with.

And once I discovered this, you know what, my life just exploded. I left my job, I moved cross country, I started a business, started coaching, I wrote a book, I started a podcast, I married my husband, now we have a family. And the thing is that my brain just keeps on dreaming. The future, which

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was a place that I was so kind of afraid of, so fearful of is now a place that I love to think about because I just keep dreaming and imagining and coming up with all these things that I can create and do and become in the future.

The future is now a place of endless possibility. And for so long, it was a place where I was just terrified of it. I watch so many people who are freaked out, freaked out by their future, freaked out because they tell me, "Well, I can't figure out my passion or I don't know what I should be doing or I have this sense that I am meant for something else, something bigger, but I don't know how to go about it."

And I'm telling you, that is what a break can do for you. If you do it the right way, it can open up this world, it can help you figure out these questions, questions that are so much bigger and frankly, so much more important, so much more interesting than did you say yes or no to a drink.

You know, I recently heard my coach, Brooke Castillo, put it this way and I loved how she said it. She said, "My life called and I answered. I didn't send my life to voicemail when it called. I didn't wait a couple days and text back with a non-committal reply. I answered the call." And that's what I feel like has happened for me.

So I want you to imagine what your life could be like if you freed up all that brain space you are devoting to looking forward to drinking, drinking itself, regretting drinking, recovering from drinking, worrying about your drinking, if it just ceased to be an issue. Imagine if it wasn't the thing that you looked forward to the most at the end of the day or on the weekend. Imagine if it wasn't something that you felt like you needed to be at ease, to be confident, to open up, to meet people, to make friends, to have good sex.

Imagine if it didn't really matter to you at all and you could devote all that energy to something else. What would you do? Where would you redirect it? What would your brain focus on? Who would you become? There's so much possibility there, and that is why taking a different kind of break and focusing on the why, understanding the think-feel-act cycle is magical.

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Instead of just willpower, gritting your teeth, saying no, isolating, none of that works. If you do it differently, it really is the key that can unlock so many things for you. I mean, I really tell you and I'm not kidding, in some ways, I am grateful that I had this struggle and I had to figure out my drinking. Because it was what sent me down this path, to learn these skills, understand how my mind works, understand the think-feel-act cycle that has just changed for the better everything in my life. Everything.

It really can be that way for you too. So I've mentioned this on the podcast before but if you are interested, I am doing a live version of the Six-Week Solution, the Six-Week Solution is a course that I created that has all my best coaching materials to help you do just this, to understand the why, to learn a different relationship with your urges and desire instead of just using willpower. To really explore how you can have fun in different ways, how your relationships can be different, and how all of this is connected to the habit of drinking.

It really will send you down this path. So if you are interested, this live version is going to be starting on October 28th. It's now available for you to sign up and go through the six weeks with me. It's going to be amazing. I promise. This work will change everything for you. The ability for you to switch from focusing on how much you're drinking or did I say yes or did I say no to the why, to get beyond just the symptom but to get really to what is underlying this habit, that will change everything.

And like you have heard me before, it is a metaskill. Once you learn how to do this, you can apply it to everything and anything because guess what, it's not just connected to drinking. Wanting to avoid our negative emotions is something that many people struggle with in all areas of their life, and that's why it's so powerful.

So if you're interested, I really encourage you to head on over to [rachelhart.com/live](https://rachelhart.com/live) where you can find out all the details about how to sign up. I would love to work with you. I would love you have you join me for the six weeks. I think this is a fantastic time to get started in large part because

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so many people will say, "I don't know, I think I got to wait until after the holidays," right?

Guess what? Just our brain's way of delaying, just our brain's way of saying hey, no, no, no, I've learned to drink in certain situations, I can't have fun, I can't have a good time, I can't deal with my family, I can't celebrate unless I have a drink in my hand. So doing it now will be incredibly powerful. So I hope you will join me. Go on to [rachelhart.com/live](http://rachelhart.com/live) and I will see you guys next week. But I promise this work, it's magic. Alright everybody, have a wonderful day.

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.