

Ep #271: Ensuring the Progress You've Made Will Last



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With Your Host

Rachel Hart

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You are listening to the *Take A Break* podcast with Rachel Hart, episode 271.

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 is your host, Rachel Hart.

Alright everyone, I wanted to share with you today about a workshop that we have started doing inside the Take A Break membership. It is so transformative in how people really use the think, feel, act cycle. But more importantly in how you start to cultivate your own success. Because cultivating success really is what you need to do when you're focused on changing the habit.

Remember we're not focusing on being perfect. We're not focusing on counting days. We're focusing on how do I sustain my momentum. How do I continue to create progress even when not everything unfolds the way that you think it should. And so, every time we have a coaching call inside Take A Break and listen, you can do this whether or not you're in the membership or not. We focus on first and foremost let's start by celebrating what's working. Let's celebrate where you're making progress.

And I am not going to lie, a lot of times people will say, "I really had to hunt for this. I really didn't think there was anywhere where I was making progress." And the reason why that happens is because the brain gets so good at pointing out everything you're doing wrong, and all the ways you made a mistake, and everywhere you screwed up.

And you really have to start to train your brain to look for celebrations, look for progress, look for moments of success. And you will start to notice the brain doesn't like to do this, not because you aren't having success, not because you aren't making progress but because you're very good. You've

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trained the brain to find what's not working. And the brain likes to do what it has a lot of practice doing.

And so, it's really important to really focus on what's working for me right now, where am I making progress. Maybe it's just that you're listening to this podcast every day, you're setting aside time to do that. That is a great start. So, we start with finding celebrations and then what we had people do is sort of take that to the next level to figure out, okay, so how did you create that little moment or big moment of progress for yourself? What was the thought? What was the feeling that led to the action that now you are celebrating?

So, it really was kind of backing it up to help people understand, hey, you created this success, let's show your brain how you did it so that you can repeat that again. Because so often what happens and what I did myself for a very long time, people start to learn about the think, feel, act cycle and they're really amazed to see, my actions don't just happen. My drinking doesn't just happen. The drink just sits there. It's a thought and a feeling that leads to the decision.

It's like all of a sudden I had the map to the universe, I really could start to understand my behaviors which many times felt very inexplicable to me. So, it's very powerful to understand the think, feel, act cycles that are keeping you stuck, to understand the thoughts that are creating your desire. Or the story that you have about how saying no to an urge feels terrible, or you hate feeling deprived, or to understand the patterns in your thinking and the patterns in your feelings that lead to overdrinking. All of that is incredibly important.

But where you can get stuck and where I was stuck in my own journey for a while is that I was very focused on all of the kind of problem cycles everywhere I could identify that my thoughts and my feelings were working against me. And I didn't spend any time focusing on the productive cycles. I

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didn't spend any time focusing on, hey, what are the thoughts and feelings that are helping me? How am I creating moments of success for myself?

And being able to see both of these areas, not just the thoughts, and feelings, and actions that are problems and keeping you stuck in the habit. But the thoughts, and the feelings, and actions that you want to build upon, both of this is so important because here is the thing. If you don't focus on the think, feel, act cycles that are creating your success what will happen is you will become fearful that all of the progress you made is going to slip away. What happens is you end up chalking up any of the moments where you said no, where you didn't overdrink.

You end up chalking it up to like, it was a fluke. Or somehow it was tenuous. Or rather than the fact that you created the success it actually was someone else that was behind it. When you don't take ownership for the success that you're creating, by seeing this was the thought, this was the feeling that led to the action that I wanted. When you don't take ownership for it you become very fearful that your progress is going to slip away. And that is a huge thing that I work on with so many people. It's a huge thing that I had to work on with myself.

I wasn't used to taking ownership for my accomplishments, not just in the realm of drinking but in so many realms in my life. I wasn't used to claiming my success and so it always felt like, I don't know, is this actually going to last. And that's a terrible place to be in. And the way out of it is really to focus on wait, let's not just look at the problem think, feel, act cycles. Let's look at the productive ones. Let's look at the ones that are helping me and recognize that I was the person who created that.

What I see is that people aren't just unconscious of the thoughts and the feelings that lead to giving in to an urge or lead to drinking too much. Most people are very unconscious of the thoughts and feelings that create success, that create change, that create the actions and the results they want more of in their life. And that piece, really understanding, okay, so you

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said no when it was a challenging event for you. Maybe you were meeting up with friends and everyone was drinking, and you weren't.

Maybe you were going to a party where you didn't know a lot of people. Maybe you were just coming home and cooking dinner for the kids and you're used to having a glass of wine in your hand while you did it. So, you said no. How did you make that happen? What did you think? How were you feeling in the moment? Or maybe you stopped drinking before you went overboard. Again, what was the thought? What was the feeling? So often we just want to say, "I don't know. Just sometimes I rein myself in and sometimes I don't. And I don't really know why that happens."

That's where I was for so long. It felt like this big mystery to me. But I will tell you, the cycles that are keeping you stuck, they are important but just as important are the cycles that are helping you change. And we don't spend a lot of time there. Most of us, we just dismiss all of our success in life, not with just the success we have to say no to a drink, not just with the success we have to allow the urge. We do it with everything. We do it with so many of our accomplishments.

We chalk it up to being a fluke, or saying, "Yeah, I did it once, but I don't know, am I going to be able to do it again. Or it's not actually that big of a deal. Or I only succeeded because this other person helped me out." This is actually the habit. The habit of dismissing your success and not taking credit for it is the habit underlying the habit of drinking. This is one of the habits that you really have to work on.

I talk about this a lot, how so much of what I hope people take away when they work with me and they're working inside my membership is really redefining their relationship with failure. That's a huge piece. But the other piece of the puzzle is also learning how to take credit and ownership for the success that they're creating otherwise it doesn't matter what program you're following or how much progress you have. You're always going to feel like it could slip away at any moment unless you start doing this piece.

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And I will tell you this. The other fascinating thing that you will discover when you start working on identifying the thoughts and the feelings that created the actions that you want more of. What you will start to discover is that sometimes what you think you need in the moment, how you think you'll want to feel or the feeling that will help you, it's not actually the case. It's so fascinating.

And I will give you an example from this workshop that we did. So, we were talking with someone who was really proud, had just been St Patrick's Day, she was really proud of not drinking on St Patrick's Day. Her spouse was drinking. She had the urge to celebrate. She was like, "Let's celebrate my heritage, I'm going to get a Guinness." So, she had all this desire. People were drinking around her, and she said no. So, we looked together. We said, "Alright, well, let's understand. How did you do this? How did you create the success?"

And as we worked backwards from the place of not giving into the urge, and we worked to really unpack what was the feeling, what was the thought. We uncovered that the thought that she had when her desire appeared was, this is kind of strange that I want a drink after being so sure that drinking doesn't solve anything for me. Now, I promise you this, if you are planning ahead for how you are going to say no to your desire on St Patrick's Day, you would most likely not come up with this thought.

You would come up with a thought of I need to be committed or I can do hard things. And it's not that those thoughts are a problem. It was just fascinating for her to see, that was the thought in the moment that actually helped me not give into my urge. When I had this thought, it was just kind of strange that I want a drink after being so sure that drinking actually doesn't solve anything for me. She recognized that she felt curious about the urge, the emotion of curiosity was what helped her say no to the urge.

So often we are convinced that the response we need to have to our urges, and our desire, and our cravings is determination, and strength, and

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discipline. But when she did this work of really understanding how she cultivated her own success, what she discovered was actually it was curiosity that helped in the moment. And so, she taught her brain. She gave her brain a little piece of evidence that the solution to urges is not willpower, it's not force, it's not discipline, it's just being curious.

And I want you to just imagine, imagine for a moment if when you felt a craving, if when you had desire, if you had an urge to drink that your only job in that moment was to be curious. That's it. Just be curious. Hey, what is this about? What is it trying to teach me? What is it trying to show me? How is it a window into what I'm really desiring right now? You don't need determination. You don't need discipline. You just need curiosity.

And as we were unpacking that we were talking about how freeing that feels. To just be like, "I just need to be curious. I can do curiosity." That's always available. Having curiosity is always available in that moment. It doesn't even feel like it takes a lot of energy. And so sometimes when you really focus on, okay, so how did I create my success, you will be really surprised by the thoughts and the feelings that helped you get there. They may not always look the way that you expected.

Now, another thing that may happen is you may discover that where you think you need your focus to be when it comes to saying no, or maintaining your commitment is not actually the case.

So, we had another example where someone was talking about celebrating the fact that they had done all this preparatory work to really enjoy the weekend that they were about to have without drinking. So, they knew that they were going to be seeing people and the habit was really very connected to socializing and drinking. And so, they had done a bunch of preparation. And they were celebrating that fact.

Now, I just want to slow down here for a second to point out, yes, you can actually celebrate the fact that you've done work before you've actually

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gotten the result. That is something that we often overlook and does deserve celebrating. So, this person had done the work of doing the preparation because we don't just focus on discipline, or just saying no, or how to keep your commitment. We focus on, okay, what strategy do you actually need to put in place.

And one of our key tools that we use is called challenging events. And it's really about planning ahead for those moments where you know it's going to be hard, the moments where you know you've given in, in the past. Okay, so what do you need to do? How do you need to show up in that moment? Not how do I dig in and say no, and access my willpower. But what's the strategy that I need? How can I understand the think, feel, act cycles in the past that have led me to breaking my commitment, or going back on my word, or giving in to my urges?

How can I do that work to understand what's happened in the past so that I can better strategize how to prepare for the future? So, we looked at the thought and the feeling that had her taking the actions of preparing. And what we discovered is that she had a thought, I can enjoy this time with these people that I'm going to see. I can enjoy this time with these people that I'm going to see. I want you to notice something here, that thought, it's not about alcohol. It's not even about the commitment to say no. It has nothing to do with that. It's about enjoying her time.

And when she had that thought, I can enjoy the time with the people I'm going to see, she felt excited. And that to me is something that is so often missed. Because when we think about changing a habit or not giving in to our desires, or not resorting to our excuses and justifications, we focus on everything that we don't want to do. We focus on not drinking. And we focus on the desire not to have the urge and how to stay committed, instead of focusing on, hey, what do you actually want in the moment. What is it that you're actually desiring?

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And in this case she was really desiring to enjoy her time with others and was excited about the idea that she could make that a possibility without relying on the drink. And so that is a big shift to make, to instead of focusing on what you don't want. So, I remember, I would think, well I just, I don't want to have a bad time. And I don't want people to ask me questions. And I don't want to feel deprived. And I don't want to have a lot of cravings. I would focus so much on what I didn't want when I was preparing to say no.

Instead of focusing on what I did want. I wanted to feel relaxed. I wanted to feel at ease. I wanted to have fun. I wanted to just not worry. So then how was I going to strategize to create that experience for myself. Because in the past the habit had been, the way that I create it is I get drunk. I pour a drink, that's how I create it. That was actually the real strategy that I needed and so many people skip this step. They skip the step of asking, well, what do I want.

And to remove your answer completely from the question of alcohol, or urges, or drinking, or questions, we should just focus on what's that feeling that I want. If you didn't have to worry that drinking was an issue, if you didn't have to worry about your cravings, if you didn't have to worry about questions how would you just want to feel? What are those emotions? And what would you need to do to cultivate more of those feelings? The answer of course lies in the think, feel, act cycle but so often we miss this.

We don't believe that we can actually cultivate and create our own experience because we're so used to having a drink to do it for us. We're so used to consuming feeling good instead of creating feeling good. We're used to outsourcing this power that we have to actually create how we want to feel. And that was what was so powerful for this person looking back, it was to see, the thing that created my success, I wasn't even thinking about not drinking. I wasn't even thinking about what I needed to do to say no. I was thinking about what I deeply wanted.

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And what I deeply wanted was to enjoy the time that I had with the people that I was going to see. That, that shift made her feel excited. And when she felt excited she wanted to strategize for how am I going to make that happen.

So, what I want all of you listening to this podcast, many of you have been listening for years, notice if you have a tendency to focus on the think, feel, act cycles that are keeping you stuck, the thoughts that are problems, the feelings that are problems. Yes, that's important. It's important to bring awareness to that. But equally important is to bring awareness to the thoughts and the feelings that are creating actions that you want more of. And you do that not just because it feels good to take ownership for the progress that you're creating, and the success that you're creating.

You do that so that you can let go of this fear that somehow all this progress is going to slip away. Somehow you're going to backslide because when you teach your brain over and over again, listen, no, I'm the one creating this. It's me. It's the thoughts that I'm choosing to think and the feelings that I'm generating for myself that are leading to this success. You will feel so much more secure in your ability to know that you're never going to lose the progress that you create for yourself.

Alright, that's it for today. I will see you next week.

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.

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Decide what works best for you when it comes to drinking. Discover how to trust yourself and feel truly empowered to take it or leave it. Head on over to rachelhart.com/join and start your transformation today.