

Ep #278: What's Getting in the Way of Changing Your Drinking



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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 278.

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.

Alright, friends, let's talk today about what's getting in the way of change.

I hear all the time the reasons that people write in to my team and explain why they can't join *Take a Break*. People will say, "It's just too crazy right now, in my life. I'm too busy with kids. I'm too busy with work. I'm too busy taking care of elderly parents. I can't do it now because I have health issues. Because my partner has health issues. Because a family member has health issues. I can't do it right now because of money. I can't do it right now because I'm just not in the right head space. I can't do it right now because of everything that is happening in my life."

When we think about what is getting in the way of change what we do is we often look external, we look and see what's happening in our environment. Listen, there's nothing wrong with that. This is what we're taught to do. This is what I did for the longest time.

This is why it took me so long, and I struggled for so many years with my drinking. Because I was, so often, in this exact same mindset, "Now is the not the right time. I can't do it because... Because I have a trip coming up. Because I started a new job. Because I'm single again. No, wait, now it's because I'm dating again."

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Right? There were just so many things. I was always looking to my external environment and assessing what was going on. Then, my brain was telling me, "This is just not a good time. This is not the time to do it; we need to wait."

It felt like what was getting in the way of change... Change, by the way, that I desperately wanted. I was desperate to be a normal drinker. I was desperate to stop worrying about my drinking. I was desperate to wake up and not feel regret and shame, and not feel like something was wrong with me. I was desperate for that change, but I was always looking around at my life, thinking, "Yeah, it's just... This isn't the right time. This is not the right situation."

I want you consider, for a second, that if instead of looking externally at everything that's happening in your life, and how much money is in your bank account, and who is sending you text messages about the things that they need, and what's going on at work... Instead of doing that, what would happen if you looked internally?

What would happen if when you started to ask yourself what's getting in the way of change, instead of listing out everything in your external environment, what would happen if you said, "What's happening inside of me? What's happening inside of me when I consider trying to change?"

One of the things I teach, and I talk about is, if you're not taking action towards a goal, it's because your brain is weighing another option. And, that option is keeping things the same. As long as that option is on the table, your commitment to taking action will always waver. You might start, then stop, but you're never going to see things through because there, in the back of your brain, there's that commitment to, "What if I don't change? What if I just keep things the same?"

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I will tell you, that when you start to really understand this, it will not make a lot of sense to you. You will have so many reasons why you want to change. So many reasons why your drinking is not serving you, and all the problems it's creating. So why, on earth, would you want things to stay the same? Why would you want to keep what isn't working?

I'll tell you why, because you have a human brain. You have a human brain that doesn't like change; it likes what it knows. It likes the known. Change is something to be avoided. That's why we want to keep things the same, even if we're totally, unconsciously aware that that option is the option that is keeping us stuck.

I would swear, up and down, that I would do *anything* to change my relationship with alcohol. I would do *anything* to not be someone who couldn't control herself. To not be the person, who would wake up the next day, feeling like, "Oh God, what's wrong with me?" I would be anyone, to be that person who could keep her commitment.

But I found myself not taking action over and over again. I found myself in the place of "keeping things the same." It didn't really make any sense except that I would always look at my external environment. My external environment would give a lot of reasons, a lot of excuses for why I wasn't changing, and why now wasn't the right time.

The reason you're making the choice to keep things the same, even if it's unconscious, and I will promise you it probably is, the reason that you're doing that is because it's safe. That's what makes it appealing to your brain. It requires no risk to keep things the same.

It requires very little energy, on the part of your brain, to keep things the same. To come home and open a bottle of wine because that's what you

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did yesterday, and the day before, and the day before that. Or, to go to your favorite restaurant and place your favorite drink order, because that's what you did the last time you were there, and the time before that. It requires very little risk and very little energy.

Your brain gets to keep doing what it's been doing; and that is easy, and that is safe. And, in the moment, you don't have to be uncomfortable. In the moment, you don't have to venture into the unknown. Now, I know that you may have discomfort waiting for you, down the line, but in that *moment*, you get to be comfortable.

The moment when you say yes, where you keep things the same, you're not venturing into the unknown. You're not doing the difficult thing. Part of your brain, loves that.

I think this can be confusing, sometimes, because there is, often, a lot of physical and emotional discomfort connected to drinking too much. To keep choosing for things to stay the same, seems illogical but it's not illogical, it's how your brain works.

Why we aren't taught about the human brain? Why we aren't taught about how habits work? It still blows my mind because just learning the very, very basics... Just understanding that I had a higher brain and a lower brain, and that lower brain is just concerned with keeping things safe, and doing things that would save energy. It is focused on immediate pleasure, and immediate gratification, and avoiding pain.

Understanding that I have that part of my brain, and I also have a pre-frontal cortex. I also have a higher brain that could weigh the pros-and-cons, and have dreams and ideas about the future, and set goals.

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Understanding these two parts of my brain, all of the sudden, everything started to make so much sense. “Oh, right. Of course, there’s a part of me that wants to keep things the same, and wants the choice that requires no risk and very little energy, and allows me to be comfortable in the moment. Because I have a human brain. And, the human brain has a lower brain.”

It helped so much, but we’re not taught about that. The fact of the matter is, changing the habit of drinking, changing *any* habit, it’s going to require some short-term discomfort. There’s no two ways about that.

You’re going to feel the urge, and you’re going to have to learn how to allow it. You’re going to have to learn how to allow that restlessness, and not answer it with a drink. You’re going to have to allow your desire to go unanswered. You’re going to have to face some of the negative emotions that you’re used to drinking over, whether it is boredom, or anxiety, or stress, or loneliness. You’re going to have to face some of that. You’re going to have to face dealing with other people, and their questions, and their comments.

For all of you out there, like me, who have spent a long time being people-pleasers, that’s going to be uncomfortable, at first. So, yes. There is going to be some short-term discomfort. The thing that we really have to activate our higher brain to understand, is that we’re choosing the short-term discomfort so that we can create long-term comfort. So that we can build the skills to stop choosing instant gratification all the time. The instant gratification that has us suffering the next day.

We have to learn how to supervise our own mind so that we can create the greater thing that we want. I always say this, I always say this inside *Take a Break*, discomfort is coming, either way, in the human experience. It just is.

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I hate to break it to you. I really didn't want this to be true, for the longest time. But discomfort is coming, either way, in the human experience.

Are you going to choose a discomfort that has you stagnating? The discomfort that creates so many negative consequences in your life? That's the discomfort that I was choosing, for the longest time, by not working on this habit. By choosing to do the same thing.

Or, are you going to choose the discomfort that helps you grow, and evolve, and become the next version of yourself? It's coming either way, people, so which one are you going to choose?

When I really started to understand it that way, it just became so clear. "Oh, of course I want the discomfort that's going to help me grow." It's just that I was living a life, for so long, where I really believed I could just find a way out of discomfort. I really believed that the answer to discomfort was to pop something in my mouth, pour something in my glass, light a cigarette. Right?

I was so sure that I could navigate my way out of it. It didn't even occur to me that, "You know what? It's not about avoiding discomfort. It's not about making it go away. It's about choosing the discomfort that you want in your life."

If you're not taking action, right now, to change your drinking... If you're just sitting back and listening to the podcast, but you're not actually applying what I'm teaching... You're not actually applying these tools, or you're applying them once or twice and then they're not working, and then, it's like, "Meh, Well, I tried."

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If that's where you're stuck right now, it's because you're unconsciously weighing the option to keep things the same. It will not make a lot of sense, until you understand that, yeah, you're doing that because you have a lower brain that's going to choose the option that requires very little risk, very little energy, and instant gratification in the moment.

Now your choice is: Which discomfort am I going to move towards? Which discomfort am I going to choose on purpose?

Choose a discomfort that has you grow; it will change everything.

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. 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 www.RachelHart.com/join and start your transformation today.

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