

# Ep #280: How to Create a New Mindset About Drinking



## Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Rachel Hart

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You are listening to the *Take A Break* podcast with Rachel Hart, Episode 280.

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, hello, everyone. We're talking today about practicing thoughts. This is really important if you want to change your relationship with alcohol. It's really important if you want to change your drinking habits. If you listen to this podcast, you know that your body doesn't make a move towards the drink until you have a thought and a feeling. The think-feel-act cycle, that's what's driving everything.

First, the work is becoming aware of it. Getting away from that place of, "I don't know why I drink that much. I don't know, that's just who I am. It always seems to happen." You have to get away from that place of confusion, and into the place, first, of awareness. Start to see the cycles. Start to see the think-feel-act unfold.

I was talking about this with someone, today actually; I was coaching her. She was saying, "I have this commitment to not drink when I went out to a restaurant with my husband. And then, on the way there, I turned to him in the car, and I said, 'You know, maybe I'll just have a sip. I'll have a sip of yours.' Then, I got to the restaurant, and I had a sip. Then, I ordered one. And then, I ordered two. And then, I ordered three. Why did I do that?"

What I was talking about with her was, "Listen, instead of being confused about why that happened... Instead of looking at the actions and judging them, and making them mean that you've done something wrong, and making them mean that you've let yourself down, or you didn't follow

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through your commitment, let's just understand the think-feel-act cycle. Let's understand the thought and the feeling that led to you saying, 'I'm going to have a sip of yours.' Then, the thought and the feeling that led to, 'Maybe I'm going to order one for myself.' Then, the thought and the feeling that led to, 'Let's have another, and then, let's have another.' Then also, the thought and the feeling that led to stopping.'"

This is the work you have to do to create this awareness, because otherwise, what we do is we just fall into these storylines that we have about ourselves. Like, "I don't know, I just can't trust myself. I don't know, once I start, I can't stop. I don't know, I've just always been someone who overdoes it." That's the story that I had of myself for so long.

You have to really start to bring awareness... That's why we start the *Take a Break* membership with a 30-day challenge. It's not so that we can give you a gold star every day, although some of you would like it. I know that's what used to motivate me a lot in life. "Where's my gold star?" We don't actually hand them out.

The reason that we do this is so that you can start to build, really, really intensely build, awareness around the habit. It's not because you're going to stop drinking forever. That's what a lot of people say, "Well, I don't know. I don't really want to do this because I want to keep drinking." Great! Everybody's got different goals.

Some people want to drink less in a sitting. Some people only want to drink on special occasions. Some people want to just experiment with taking a break for longer. And, some people come in and they're like, "You know what? I just feel like I'm done. I just want help with that."

The goal of the break is not to get you to stop, the goal of the break is to create massive awareness. But here's the thing, once you create massive awareness, which is incredibly, incredibly important, then you have to start

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learning how to shift your thoughts. Then, you have to start learning how to think new sentences. Rather than, “Well, I should just know better. I should have learned my lesson by now. Why is this taking so long? I’m too old. It runs in my family.” You have to learn how to think new sentences.

This is why I call the work that we do here, it’s like going to the gym. Instead of going to the gym for the muscles, you’re going to the gym for your mind. You’re teaching your brain a new skill. The skill of coming up with new thoughts.

First, you’ve got to see the thought that’s leading to the action, leading to the drinking that you don’t like. You’ve got to gain that awareness. Then, you’ve got to brain-storm potential alternative thoughts. That, my friends, is a skill. It really is.

You have to be willing to think of your thoughts as like, going into a store and trying on a piece of clothing. Sometimes something will look really good on a hanger, and then you put it on and you’re like, “Ew, no. I do not like that.”

You’re going to brain-storm thoughts and try them out. Do they work? Do they feel believable? Or, do you feel like you’re b.s.’ing yourself? If you feel like you’re b.s.’ing yourself, it’s not going to work.

So then, thinking about, “How do I practice this? How do I practice thoughts?” This is something that, again, I think that a lot of people, when they approach this work, they’re like, “Oh, well, I should just think better. I came up with this new thought, but somehow my brain is not adopting it.”

Number one: Is it believable? Number two: Are you practicing it? You have to do the work of practicing new thoughts. I’m going to give you some ideas for what that can look like. This is not all the ideas out there. There’s many,

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or more, ways you can practice this, but these are some of the things that I've done.

One, is just write it out. Write it out over, and over again. I think of the opening to *The Simpsons*, if you remember this... Where Bart Simpson was in trouble, and he was in the classroom, after school, writing the same sentence on the chalk board over and over again... Just write out the new thought.

Writing helps hardwire new thoughts in your brain. If you set aside a minute or two, each day, to write out, "Urges have no power over me. Urges are harmless. This is a normal experience, to feel an urge." Changing your thoughts about urges. What if you did that for a minute every day?

You start to get your brain remembering, and hardwiring that thought. You can put thoughts on sticky-notes. You can post them where you'll see them. You can post them on your bathroom mirror. You can post them on your computer. You can post them on your fridge. You can post them in your car.

Here's the thing, you have to, also, then make the practice of when you encounter the sticky-note, you have to pause, and you have to say that reason out loud. We have to say that thought out loud. Or, say it quietly to yourself. You know what the brain will want to do? It will want to see the sticky-note, and be like, "Moving on." It'll become part of your background.

The practice is not just putting sticky-notes everywhere, the practice is using those sticky-notes as a cue to stop, and practice that thought. "Maybe it's possible that I can change my drinking. Maybe it's possible that it's not true, 'Once I start, I can't stop.' Maybe I have a lot of evidence of stopping." Whatever you want to practice, sticky-notes can be your thing.

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You can set reminders. You can set a thought as a daily alarm in your calendar. You can set reminders on your phone. You can record voice memos in your phone, and listen to yourself reciting that thought. There are a lot of apps that you can try, where they have you practice thoughts. I've never gone down the app route, but a lot of people inside *Take a Break* will use some of these apps, as a way to engrain these new thoughts that they're practicing.

You can change the background on your phone, or your computer. Maybe it's just a word or an image that helps you to connect with this new thought. You want to start seeing it more. You want to start engaging with it more.

My favorite, and the thing that I use all the time... It drives my husband nuts because he's like, "Oh my God, what is your password now?" I'm always changing my passwords. I'm always using my passwords as a thought that I'm practicing, because I've got to sit down at my desk every day and type my password to get into my computer. I love passwords because I know that I'm going to have to type it out.

Here's the other thing, that's become really beautiful when I use passwords, I also... When I'm typing it out over and over again, I know when that thought is really believable, and when I'm like, "Meh, that feels like b.s. I'm not really connecting with that. I don't really believe that." That is also part of the work.

It's not to become a kind of recorder and spit out words. It's to try on these thoughts like pieces of clothing. Then observe, "Hey, do I like how I look in the mirror? Does this thought create a positive emotion in me? Does it feel a little bit better than what I've previously been thinking? Does it give me a little bit of hope?"

The more you practice it, practice the thoughts that actually do create something positive for you, the more you will start to re-wire your brain.

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I will tell you the other thing, and I think this is really powerful, is really choosing what you fill your brain with. I have made a conscious effort to cut down on how much news I am consuming.

Listen, I worked in communications for a really long time. I worked in human rights for a really long time. It was incredibly important for me to be on top of what was happening in the world, everywhere. It was part of my job. That has almost become a habit, the idea of, “I’ve got to know what’s happening everywhere.”

My husband will laugh sometimes, because I will look at reporters and I’ll be like, “Oh, that person’s not at the Moscow bureau, anymore.” He’ll be like, “Why do you know this?” And, I was like, “It was my job to pay attention to pay attention to by-lines. It was my job to pay attention to who was writing what.”

I find that for myself, that I have to put a limit on it. I have to put a limit on how much news I’m consuming because it’s not part of my job anymore. I want to stay up-to-date with what’s happening in the world, but I also want to choose, consciously, what I put in my mind. I want to choose to put thoughts in there that are going to help me.

One of the things we’ve done inside *Take a Break*, in the membership, is we have... We have one private podcast, and we’re actually coming out with a second private podcast, as well. The first private podcast is: You can listen to all the call recordings, all the call replays, we have special bonus episodes. You can just listen to that all the time.

The idea behind that is you’re able to really consistently give your brain new ways to think about urges, and new ways to think about emotions, and new ideas and ways to think about alcohol and what it means to drink, and what it means not to drink, and what it means to drink too much.

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Instead of just relaying on the thoughts that society unconsciously gave you, and you unconsciously absorbed, the private podcast is really about absorbing a new way of thinking.

We're coming out with a second private podcast, that we're just about to launch, that's like our entire curriculum. All of the lessons that we teach. All of the pillars on habit change. All of the quick-starts. All of our SOS modules, when people are feeling really stuck. Everything is also there, so you can just listen, and re-listen, and go back to it again.

I cannot overstate the importance of not being, "Oh yeah, I've heard this one, so now I'm done." So many times, when I encounter a podcast episode in the world, from someone else, that I'm like, "Whoa. That was amazing." I listen it to it again and again. I listen to it a couple of times because I really want my brain to absorb it.

You really do have to think, "What are the thoughts that I'm putting in my brain? Not just the thoughts that I'm choosing to practice, but what am I choosing to consume?"

There's a lot of ideas here for you, and I just want you to try one. Pick one thing that you can start to do. Maybe one thing that you've heard me say, one thing that you've heard someone else say in another podcast. Whatever it is, pick one thought and just commit to start practicing it.

Then, check in with yourself. Does it feel believable? If it doesn't, that's okay. Just like we take that dress off and put it back on the hanger, and try on a new one. But you have to be practicing your thoughts. You need awareness first, then you need brain-storming, and then you need practice. Sooner or later, what you discover is, all of the sudden, you just automatically start thinking and seeing the world in a totally different way.

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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](http://www.RachelHart.com/join) and start your transformation today.