

Ep #287: Drinking to Relax



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Rachel Hart

[Take a Break from Drinking](#) with Rachel Hart

Ep #287: Drinking to Relax

You are listening to the *Take A Break* podcast with Rachel Hart, Episode 287.

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.

All right, my friends, we are talking about something that comes up all the time, inside of my membership. I work with people on this topic all the time. And it's drinking to relax. I will tell you this, when people first start out doing this work, there's a lot of resistance to the idea that, "Well, I mean, why is it so wrong to relax with a glass of wine? Why is it so wrong to relax with a beer or a cocktail? What's the problem with that?" I'm going to tell you, it's not so wrong. There is no problem with that.

But what I see happen over and over again, and this happened in my life, this happens with so many of the people who I work with. When they're saying that, "Hey, what's so wrong..." when we start to unpack what it really looks like in their life, what we start to see is that drinking is their go-to way to relax. It is often, the only time that they allow themselves to relax. The only time that they say, "Yeah, I'm just done. I'm off parent duty. I don't have to check my work email anymore. I'm just putting my feet up. And I'm relaxing."

So often, the only time they actually give themselves permission to fully relax is when they have a drink in their hand. And listen, when that is the case, when you only really give yourself permission to relax when you're drinking... I will tell you, by the way, for a lot of people, this also looks like when they're eating. So, eating at night will often be the other time when they're like, "Okay, well." Maybe I've got the glass in one hand and the bag of chips in the other.

[Take a Break from Drinking](#) with Rachel Hart

Ep #287: Drinking to Relax

When you only allow yourself to relax, when you're consuming something, guess what's going to happen? Number one, you're not going to want to stop consuming because that means, to your brain, "I'm done relaxing. And I need to relax." So, you're not going to want to stop consuming. But also, you're going to be in this kind of constant tug-of-war with yourself, that saying no becomes then, not just saying no to a drink, it becomes saying no to this very normal need that all humans have.

We cannot be productive all the time. We cannot be producing all the time; we need to be able to relax. But unfortunately, many of us have no idea how to do it. We have no idea what to do when we're not keeping ourselves busy all the time. And then, we teach our brain, "I actually get to sit down, and stop working, and stop worrying, and stop being productive when I have this glass of wine in my hand." So, no wonder you're overdoing it.

No wonder it feels hard to say no. No wonder breaking that nightly routine or weekend routine feels really challenging. It's not about the alcohol. It's about what your brain has learned. "When I've got this drink, I can relax. And I really need to relax." This is such a big piece of what you have to start to unravel when you're changing the habit. You're not going to learn how to change your desire. You're not going to learn how to drink less. You're not going to learn how to drink fewer days during the week, or not at all...

You're not going to be able to do that if you're not also doing the corresponding work that comes with, "Hey, how do I relax? Is it even okay for me to relax? Or, do I feel guilty when I'm doing it? Do I even have any idea how to build in little bits of relaxation during the day? Or, deal with the stress, and the worry, and the frustration that comes up during the day? Or, am I just kind of putting my head down and pushing through, and just waiting until the day is done and I get my reward?"

[Take a Break from Drinking](#) with Rachel Hart

Ep #287: Drinking to Relax

That's what I did for the longest time. I didn't know what to do. I was very good at, "Okay, you're stressed, keep working. You're worried, keep working. You're annoyed, keep working. Just keep putting your head down and being productive." And so, I didn't have any skills.

I didn't know how to deal with these emotions when they came up. I didn't know how to talk to myself, in a way that actually allowed for relaxation without making it mean I was being lazy, or I was wasting time. Or, just feeling kind of guilty for taking any kind of rest or break throughout the day.

I was just like, "No, just put your head down and work. We'll deal with this when we get home. We will deal with this by consuming things. We will deal with this by getting out the food, and getting out the drinks, and letting ourselves have as much as we want."

I had no idea that that's what I had taught my brain. You really have to think about, "Okay, what does it feel like at the end of the day?" Just stop work. Put your feet up, and not have a drink in your hand, not have food that you're reaching for. What is that actually like for you? Do you even know?

A lot of people that come, at first, inside the membership, they don't even know. It's been such an ingrained thing, that relaxation is consuming something. And, this has been such a long-standing habit and pattern for them, that they have no idea.

Or, people will say, "Well, I'll try to do it. It's like I can't sit still. I can't actually fully relax. I feel agitated. One, because I have this desire. I have this desire to consume. But then, two, it's like, I can't shut my brain off. And my brain is like, 'Well if you're just sitting there, you should be doing something. Don't just sit there, don't be unproductive. There's so much to do. What about your to-do list? What about everything that has to get done tomorrow.'"

[Take a Break from Drinking](#) with Rachel Hart

Ep #287: Drinking to Relax

So, that's the thing that so many people then have to work on. It actually has very little to do with their drinking, and much more to do with the thoughts that you're telling yourself, about the need to be productive all the time.

This is something... I think that we learn this unconsciously at such a young age. That it's important to get things done. It's important to be busy. It's important to be able to show what you did, at the end of the day. Now listen, I am all for hard work. I'm all for a hard day's work and producing something, and feeling just so amazed and so proud. Like, "Look what I got done today."

What I am *not* for, is this kind of story that so many of us have, which is, "I'm not allowed to rest. I'm not allowed to relax. I'm not allowed to take care of my needs." I talk about this inside the membership a lot. I'll talk about how this, for me, even came down to the place of, I wouldn't even deal with my thirst during the day, or my need to use the bathroom during the day. It was like, "I don't have time to go fill up this water bottle. And, by the way, if I fill up the water bottle, then I'm going to have to use the bathroom more, and that's annoying. I just want to be able to work, work, work."

The number of people that I talk to that are like, "Oh yeah, I hate when I have to go to the bathroom; It's so annoying." I want you to think about it. We have this really normal bodily function that we're like, "Oh God, so annoying. I hate this." That's how I regarded it, because I was so committed to this idea that the most important thing for me to do, was to always be productive. And anything that was taking time away from that, was a problem.

But here's the thing, we're just not meant to be productive all the time. I mean, just look at nature. Everything in nature has a period of being

[Take a Break from Drinking](#) with Rachel Hart

Ep #287: Drinking to Relax

productive, and growing and moving, and then needing to relax and rest and recuperate. Everything.

You can't just keep working a field over and over again. Sometimes that field has got to lie fallow. It needs time to regenerate, so that it can start producing your crops again. So, we see it in nature, but when it comes to ourselves, we don't know how to do it. We don't know how to give ourselves permission to relax, permission to just be without, "I have a drink in my hand."

That's what so many people haven't realized is the underlying habit. That they've been using that drink as permission to put their feet up, permission to be like, "Okay, day is done. You don't have to do anything anymore."

It's a huge piece of what I really have people focus on. And you can see that it has nothing to do with guidelines, or rules, or counting drinks, or just say no; it's so much deeper than that. When people do the work inside *Take a Break*, and they go through that 30-Day Challenge, and they learn those initial four pillars that will help you change the habit, one of the first advanced classes that they work on, is all about stress and overwhelm.

It's all about that inability to relax. What do you do? How do you treat yourself during the day when the stress and overwhelm appears? Do you just push through? Do you tell yourself that the reward is coming later? If that's going to be how you're going to deal with stress and overwhelm, then guess what? You're always going to have a ton of desire.

Also stopping, being able to say, "Hey, I've had enough," is always going to feel terrible. Because it's like, "No, then my relaxation ends. That's no fun." So, I just want you to think today...

[Take a Break from Drinking](#) with Rachel Hart

Ep #287: Drinking to Relax

I want you to think about; do you allow yourself to relax during the day? Little bits, I'm not talking about going to get a spa massage, right? I'm just talking about: Do you even give yourself the permission to get up from your chair and go for a five-minute walk? Do you give yourself the permission to just stop what you're doing, and take a couple deep breaths? Do you do that? Do you give yourself the permission to get up and stretch, and move?

Also, for some of you out there, you're like, "Yeah, I do give myself the permission to do that." Okay, then what is the narrative running through your mind while you're doing it? Are you thinking to yourself, "Ooof, I really shouldn't be doing this; I really need to get back to work. I'm so lazy?"

How, actually, is it for you? What is the experience like when you actually stop and pause, and stop being productive? A lot of people will say, "Oh, well, yeah. I'll pick up my phone. And I'll be scrolling through the internet or whatever. And so, I'm actually not productive all the time, Rachel." And I'm like, "Okay, great. Are you enjoying it? Or, are you beating yourself up while you're doing it?"

So, you have to look, first, are you giving yourself permission throughout the day? If not, why? If you are, is that an enjoyable experience for you? If not, well, we need to work on that. Then, number two, what have you taught your brain relaxation looks like? How is that connected with consuming things? Why do you need to consume something, in order to say, "The day is done, I'm off the clock?"

There's nothing wrong with using a drink to relax, nothing. It's not a bad thing. The problem is, most people just don't realize how ingrained it is. Most people don't realize that the only time they really offer themselves a chance to relax or the chance to switch off their brain, is when they have a drink in their hand. That's the real problem.

[Take a Break from Drinking](#) with Rachel Hart

Ep #287: Drinking to Relax

It's not that it's somehow immoral. Or, it's not virtuous; like the virtuous ways to relax are when we're doing the deep breathing seated on a pillow. No, it has nothing to do with that. It has to do with the fact that most people don't know how to give themselves permission. They don't know how to enjoy taking breaks for themselves, without making it mean, "Oh, I really should be doing something. I'm being too lazy. There's too much to do."

They don't know how to switch off how they talk to themselves, without trying to drink over it or eat over it. That's the real deeper skill that you have to learn. And when you learn that skill, guess what? It's so much easier to say no. It doesn't feel like saying, no, is suffering. It doesn't feel like you're giving something up. It doesn't feel like you're being really good, but you're suffering for your health. Changing the habit and saying no to urges, it's just so much easier.

All right. 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.

[Take a Break from Drinking](#) with Rachel Hart