

## Ep #289: When It's Hard to Say No to the Urge



### 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 289.

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. We are talking about urges today. I mean, we're really talking about urges every day, but this episode is going to be specifically focused on urges.

There are so many episodes that you can find, if you want to do a deep dive into what urges are, and understanding the difference between your higher brain and your lower brain, and why that's important, and ways in which you can respond to urges differently.

But what I want to talk about today on the podcast is, what really makes an urge hard to say no to? I think this piece is so important. It is often very overlooked. Now, I'm gonna say this, because I've been watching this happen over and over inside the membership, and it cracks me up every time.

I've been watching people who are three or six or nine months in, and they're saying, "You know, I was doing so well. I was making all this incredible progress with my urges. And now it's like, the urges aren't even there. The urge is not even there, but I find myself eating or drinking... When there's no urge, what is going on?"

By the way, this is the process of change. The process of change is not getting a bunch of gold stars, and doing everything perfectly, and crossing

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days off a calendar. It's about getting progress under your belt, and then watching, and being like, "Wait, what did I just do? What happened there? What happened last night?"

Sometimes people will find that they're having an easier time saying no to a drink, but a harder time with food, sometimes vice versa. But they will often pose it to me as, "I really understood my urges at the beginning. They were just so strong and noticeable. And I learned how to deal with them. Now, it's like the urges have disappeared."

What I always say to them is, "Or, you're just working with the urges on a more subtle level," which is amazing. Which is actually incredible. "Or, you're just at the next level of the video game. You're doing this work from a place of not only being able to spot the really big, intense, loud, bothersome urges." You know what that's like, when your brain is just like, "I want what I want, when I want it. I need to have this."

Now, you're starting to notice and tune into the more subtle urges that you have. Ways in which you haven't noticed your desire before. That is an amazing thing. I was coaching someone on this recently. And it was so fascinating to see her switch from, "I was doing really well in the beginning. Now, I'm not having any urges, but I find myself slipping up. I'm really frustrated," to starting to reframe that to be like, what if you're just working at a more subtle level.

You're gaining expertise. You're starting to understand how urges don't always present themselves the exact same way. They can be very loud, they can be very intense, they can be much more subtle. But her immediate interpretation was, "There's not even an urge there. It's just happening, and I'm obviously doing something wrong."

You start to see that urges are on a spectrum, they're not always at the same level of intensity. Part of this has to do with your own skill set of

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learning how to identify and work with urges. Part of this has to do with how you're feeling ahead of time, the intensity of your emotional state beforehand. Part of this has to do with the intensity of your thoughts and what you're thinking.

What I really want to focus this episode on, is how urges are difficult to say no to, when you're not dealing with everything underneath them. When you're not doing that deeper inner work, then urges can become very difficult to say no to. You cannot just do this work on the surface.

Now, let me be really clear here. I'm not talking about excavating everything from your childhood. What I'm talking about is understanding that yes, you may have a desire for a drink, what else are you also desiring? What is the other desire that is there? How do you want to feel? How are you hoping you will feel when you have that drink? Or, how are you hoping you will stop feeling?

You have to be able to do that underlying work. This is what happens: I was talking with someone recently, inside the membership. I think she had been there for about nine months, and things have been going really well. She noticed that, all the sudden, by the time eight o'clock rolled around, she just didn't have it in her to say no to the urge. She just couldn't muster the strength to say, no; she just didn't want to.

So, when she brought this question up, on a coaching call, and we were talking about it, of course, where she wanted to focus, "Okay, I don't know why it is that I can't muster the strength to say no. But let's just help me figure out how to say no." And I was like, "Well, wait a minute. We can talk about that, but let's back up for a second, and understand what's happening for you during the rest of your day."

And so, we started to have a conversation about: What did her days look like, on most days? Especially the days where she couldn't really muster

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the strength to say, no, what was going on? What was her predominant feeling? What was she doing? What was she thinking about?

What we very quickly identified is that she had a lot of frustration at work. She had recently moved into a different role at work. It was not what she anticipated it was going to look like. She was feeling incredibly frustrated by her new boss and her colleagues. And she felt like her work wasn't being taken into consideration.

She felt like the ideas that she was presenting people with were all being rejected. She was talking a lot how she felt like, all of a sudden, she had no power or credibility at work anymore. She just didn't feel like anyone actually really listened to her.

As we were talking about that, we started really to understand that she was feeling this low level of frustration, all day long, at work. But she was still putting her head down, and getting her shit done, and crossing things off her to do list, and showing up for meetings.

So, in many ways, she was spending her day will powering through the frustration. She wasn't throwing coffee mugs, she wasn't yelling at colleagues, she wasn't failing to show up for work. She was there. She was getting her stuff done. But she had this low-grade frustration that was with her from the time she got to work, in fact, even before she got to work.

Because she was anticipating a lot of what her day was going to be like and how it was going to be like yesterday, and yesterday wasn't very good. So, she had this low level of frustration that was with her all throughout the day. And we talked about how she was using a lot of willpower just to deal with that frustration.

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Then, of course, by the time she came home and eight o'clock rolled around, she had been will powering her way through frustration all day long. Yeah, guess what? The urge felt very difficult to say no to; she didn't want to say no to the urge to drink. She wanted to say yes; her willpower reserves were completely depleted.

What she didn't realize, is that she had actually been will powering herself through the entire day. The urge didn't suddenly become hard, what became hard was everything that was happening underneath that. What I was saying to her was, "Listen, if we just focus on; how do we get you to say no? How do we get you to exert more strength or more discipline in the moment? The problem is, it's not actually solving the underlying issue here. The underlying issue here, is that you're feeling really frustrated at work."

We started really looking at that and looking to see; can we start figuring out a way for her to feel better? Is there a way that we could look at what she was thinking, all throughout the day, and start to shift that in small, subtle ways, that would make her feel more in control?

Let me be really clear here, because I think when I start talking about this, this idea of how you are thinking and feeling during the day impacts your desire to drink in the evening, and also, how strong, or intense your urges feel, or how much you are willing to say no to them, or how much you want to give in... When I start talking about doing that kind of deeper work, where people, I think, are often afraid and where I was afraid sometimes...

It's like, "Uh huh, okay, I know, I should be more positive. I know, I should have a better attitude." It was a lot of this fear that what I was being told to do is put on a smile, and be more positive, and be thankful that you have a job.

I'm not talking about any of that. I'm talking about, are there actual believable shifts that you can start to make in your thinking, that will make

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you feel slightly better? I'm not talking going from frustrated to like, "I'm so grateful that I have this job. Other people would kill for it. I'm lucky that I just have a regular paycheck."

I'm not talking about that. I'm just saying, can we start to make slight changes in your thought process, so you feel a little bit better, 10% better? You will be amazed at how feeling 10% better, will then show up, when eight o'clock rolls around and that desire appears, and that urge appears.

This is what is necessary. This is what is needed if you're going to start to really turn down the intensity of your urges. It's learning; how do I start to shift in really believable ways? That's what I worked on with her. It's like, "Okay, let's not go to the place of..." She was feeling very out of control at work. She had no control and had no power.

Let's not go to the place where it's like, "No, I'm totally empowered. I totally have control and say, over what I do," because her brain was like, "No, that's crap. That's BS, I don't believe it." How can we start to shift it in more believable ways? So, one of the things that I offered for her was, "Yeah, there are things outside of my control, and there are things that are inside of my control. Both of those exist at the same time. We're not going to rainbows, and daisies, and everything's amazing. And I should feel grateful."

Her brain only wanted her to see all the places where she didn't have control. It's like, "Well, yes, that is true. There are things that are outside of my ability to control. That's true of any job." And I was saying, "You know, it's true for me. I'm a business owner, I don't get to control everything." But there are also ways that she could start to find and pinpoint: Well, how do I have control? Where am I exerting control at work?

Maybe it's when I complete my assignments, or how I'm getting through my to do list, or the ways in which I'm choosing to show up. It was about

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expanding her brain, just a little bit, to be like, "Yeah, there's also places where I am in control." And just starting to do that work... That work is dealing with the things happening during your day. The things underneath your desire, that if they are left unaddressed, guess what? You can cut out alcohol, you can double-down on willpower and say no, and swear that you're never going to drink again.

What's going to happen? You're just going to look for some other relief. You're just going to switch habits because you're not actually dealing with the root cause. You're just going to be looking to fulfill your urges in some other way. This is why so many people, habit switch between alcohol and food.

They cut out alcohol, and then they immediately go to food, because they're not actually dealing with everything underneath. That is not sustainable. I did this forever. It was like, "Okay, I'm being so good. I'm not drinking. I'm just gonna like eat all these chocolate bars." That doesn't work.

What works is how do I help myself feel better, during the day? How do I even recognize, number one, how I'm feeling during the day? And then, maybe I'm trying to willpower my way through it? And then, how do I start to feel better?

When you do that work, when you deal with what's underneath, whether is frustration, or anger, or boredom, or feeling unfulfilled, or a lack of connection... When you start to do that work, guess what? It becomes so much easier to deal with the urge when the evening rolls around.

That's the real work that you need. That's the real work that will transform the habit at the deepest level. You can't ignore it. You cannot make this a game of following rules and being disciplined. It won't work not in the long run. And also, what a great skill to have.

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That's why I'm always thankful for all the struggle that I went through with my drinking, because I'm like, "Oh, it brought me here." It brought me to this place where I was forced to learn about my brain, and learn about my mind, and learn how to manage my thoughts. To learn the skills of observing my think-feel-act cycle, and learn how to relate differently, not just to my urges, but to all of my emotions.

No one taught me that in school, no one modeled that for me growing up. I had to learn it to figure out my drinking, and I'm so glad that I did. Because it's such a powerful skill set to bring to everything in your life. So, when an urge is feeling really hard to say no to, you have to ask yourself; am I dealing with what's underneath? And if not, how come?

Most of the time it's because people are saying, "Well, I can't change what's happening in my life. So, I'm kind of stuck." But you always have the ability to start to talk to yourself differently, and talk in ways that are more supportive and more compassionate, and more open to what's happening around you. Not to be a Pollyanna, not to go to this place of rainbows and daisies, but you have so much more power than you think, to feel better. When you learn how to exert that power, guess what? Your urges just become so much easier to say no to.

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

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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.