

Ep #299: Overeating and Overdrinking with Katrina Ubell



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Rachel Hart

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You are listening to the *Take A Break* podcast with Rachel Hart, Episode 299.

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.

Rachel Hart: Hello everyone. Today, I have a very, very special interview with one of my dear friends, an amazing coach, and someone who is going to teach you so much about the connection between overdrinking and overeating.

Her name is Katrina Ubell. She is a pediatrician; she is a Master Life Coach; she helps doctors lose weight. And she also approaches the work of losing weight and overeating through the lens of drinking, as well. Which I think is so rare, so incredible, and very, very needed. So, she just wrote a book called *How to Lose Weight for the Last Time*. I've read it, it's amazing.

And I wanted to bring her on to the podcast and share her wisdom, and her work with all of you. Because I know that many of you don't just struggle with drinking more than you want, you also struggle sometimes, with eating more than you want. And so, this podcast, if you can relate, this is going to be the podcast that I really want you to listen to.

It really is such a great conversation, and she has so many ideas that are going to help you so much. Enjoy.

I am so excited, everyone. I'm so excited when I have my friends on the podcast. My friend, Katrina Ubell is here. She is talking to us about her new

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book, *How to Lose Weight for the Last Time*. Which, I think, is the most genius of all titles, because isn't that what everyone wants, at the end of the day? Like, am I going to have to do this again?

But I wanted to bring her here because so much of her work applies to the work that all of you are trying to do, changing your relationship to alcohol. And so many of you listening are not just trying to change your relationship to alcohol, you're trying to change your relationship with food. Or, you cut back on drinking, and then you notice that you start eating more.

And I was telling Katrina, before we got started, that one of the things that I was so excited about when I read her book, was she talks about alcohol in it. She talks about how it's, you know, when you are turning to food or alcohol. And so often, it's just we treat them as if they're two entirely separate things.

And so, I was just every time I read that on the page, I was like; yes! I was so excited for that. So, Katrina, welcome. Say hello, so excited to have you here.

Katrina Ubell: Rachel, I'm so glad to be here. And, I'm so glad you noticed. Because that really was intentional, right, like I just, through the experience that I've had with clients, it's a very fluid kind of a place. Like, the food and alcohol kind of thing. And for a lot of people, they're very much intertwined.

And when we, you know, maybe reduce our over dependence or reliance on one, the other one flares up, and then we work on that. And then, the first one becomes a problem, again. So how can we figure out a way to coexist peacefully with both?

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So, I don't speak specifically like, I can help you with, you know, reducing drinking, but that's a huge part for a lot of people. How you figure out, how to, what I call have peace and freedom, around food. You know, weighing whatever it is you want to weigh; my goal is not to make everybody thin.

I don't think thinner is better, or you know, so, not like a fat shaming thing or anything like that. But there are a lot of people who really, really struggle with their eating. The relationship with food is not the way they want it to be, their relationship with their bodies is not where they want it to be. And that's what I'm working to help them with too.

Rachel: Yeah, so I want to tell you a little bit about Katrina. So, I know her because she is a coach. So, we met many years ago. She's a Master Coach. She is also a pediatrician, which I make use of. Where Katrina gets texts from me, like; help, what do I do? But she's a doctor, and she works specifically with doctors, to help them lose weight.

And as I was reading your book, and I've heard you talk about this before, but the kind of shame that doctors will feel, and the experience that you had as a pediatrician, when you're giving recommendations to your patients about how to be healthy and how to eat healthy, and then not being able to implement that in your own life. So, I think sharing that, as kind of a starting off point, would be great to talk about.

Katrina: Yeah, I was struggling with my weight. I mean, well, let's just be honest. I mean, what I was doing was emotional eating, like using food to help me to feel better. Even as a younger child, you know, I had, you know, a lot of anxiety as a child. I was, you know, relatively fearful and really didn't know what to do with those emotions.

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So, you know, now, after having done a lot of work on myself, I realized a lot of those behaviors were actually kind of like dissociative. You know, I would want to put myself to sleep, or I'd like, throw up. I mean, just literally like a physical response to my emotions. And of course, I also had chronic pain for many, many years, that I now realize was also just emotion stuck in my body, and not being processed.

But I also figured out that sugar really helps with that, too. And so, I definitely had a sweet tooth growing up. I think just being an active kid, you know, kind of kept that relatively at bay. Nobody would have said, I was like, you know, real thin, but there's nothing wrong with me, you know.

And then, I think in college, I was so stressed out that I would... You know, I gained some weight freshman year, but then I was so stressed about school that I would make myself literally, like, I'd feel sick I was so stressed. So then, you know, kind of managed the weight with that.

And it was really, in medical school, where I found the weight started really to come on more. It was the first time I really started trying any kind of real, like weight loss diet type of a thing. And then, it really just went on and on and on from there. In terms of gaining weight, losing it, gaining it right back again.

You know, I did Weight Watchers a whole bunch of times, I did other things, too. And, you know, throw some babies in there. And then, I'm like, losing baby weight. And then, you know, it was just a constant up and down. And it was really, really frustrating, right? Like, here you are...

Like, the thing about weight is that if you're struggling with your food, is that people can see it on you. You know, they can look at you and see you

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struggle with that. There's a lot of other problems that we, as humans, can deal with that are not actively visible on our bodies.

And then, when you're a doctor, particularly a pediatrician, you know, the families will come in at these periodic intervals. And so, depending on when they would catch me, in my gaining or losing cycle, right, they might make these comments like; oh my gosh, look at you, oh, you've lost weight, you look great. And then, maybe the next time, if I was up, right, then they're not saying anything.

And, it just made me really self-conscious. It never feels good to be giving advice to people when you're not following it. It's not like it was bad advice. It was just like, I couldn't follow it, how can I expect other people to? And then also, like having my kids eat this total healthy food, and then I'm like hiding in the pantry, eating chocolate chips and crackers, and whatever.

You know, it makes you feel like somehow, you're just not living a life of, the word that comes to mind is "alignment". You know? You're not really walking you're own talk, you don't feel like you're, you know, your mind and body are focusing in the same direction.

It was really frustrating, and I was approaching my 40th birthday. And I'd had my last baby, I knew I was done having kids. And I'd lost that baby weight. And I mean, I really promised myself, very strongly, I mean it this time; you're not gaining the weight back. And then, I promptly gained it back.

And I was like, what is happening? You know, but at this point, I did not identify as an emotional eater at all. I really was just like, I just like food, right? So, people listening might be like; I just like wine, or I just like craft cocktails, or I just like beer. I really was like, this is not, this is just

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something... You know, I like to cook, it's a hobby, it's kind of like a two-for-one because we have to eat anyway. So, I get to enjoy it. And then, the family is fed.

Except, by feeding the family, I was mostly feeding myself, right? Saying, "Oh, I'm making these muffins for them." But then, I was eating most of them. I really got to a point of realizing like, I have to do something different, if I want to solve this problem.

And I did realize, you know, a lot of people, just as they age, they gain weight. And I could work on acceptance of that. And I don't think that that's a problem at all, I think that can actually be a great solution for some people. But deep down I was like, but something just doesn't make sense here.

And I think that was like, the logical part of my brain was like, it just literally does not make sense, when you just think about human evolution and human physiology, that it's this hard to get your food under control. And so, as this was all going on, I also was realizing how I was feeling more stagnant and dissatisfied in my career.

And what I was sharing with you before was like, you know, for sure, I had actually decided to take... This is a kind of an overlapping transition, where I was like; yeah, I think I'm going to become a coach. And I'm also working myself out of my pediatric office. I'm not sure what I'm going to do next. But I just I want to take a break. Do I want to go back? I don't know. Let me see.

And I gave six months' notice to my practice, and in those six months, it was the longest six months of my life. You know, I knew I was out. I knew I didn't want to do it anymore, and I still had to do it. And I was eating,

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eating, eating; totally gained weight during that time. And then, I started noticing that I was relying more on alcohol. So, it's like when the food wasn't really cutting it anymore for me, then I started relying more on the alcohol. And I'm...

Rachel: Wait, just hold on. Like, it wasn't cutting it because your level of stress once you gave notice...?

Katrina: Yes. Just dissatisfaction and feeling so disempowered, and all the complaints that I'd had for all those years, were still unresolved. I did know about coaching, and I had been coached somewhat, but not in the way that I would say now, would have probably really benefited me, you know, at the time.

So, it was a lot of blame, a lot of thinking other people were the problem, you know, other situations outside of myself were the problem. The snacks and stuff just didn't make me feel as good as I wanted to feel. Or, maybe, we could even say, didn't numb me the way that I wanted to be numbed. And so, alcohol helped with that.

So, then it was like; okay, I'm gonna come home and have a glass of prosecco or whatever, like sparkling wine. You know, have that. Well, then, I'm like, now it's two. Then I'm noticing my husband's having a real small glass, and I'm drinking the rest of it. And then when I really knew, oh, this is weird... Because alcohol, I mean, it just was never so much of a thing for me. Like, I'd go out for sure. I mean, I had my, you know, my experiences, lots of other people.

But I think that I felt so bad, when I over drank, that that was enough of a deterrent for me; I didn't feel as bad when I overate. So, it was like, I'll rely on the food. But what I noticed, I remember coming home, and being like,

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oh, man, I'm so excited, I get to have this wine now. And I open up the fridge and there's none in there. And I'm like, pissed. And I'm like, where is it?

Rachel: Who dropped the ball?

Katrina: I'm literally like, what happened? Because I'm not the one who typically is purchasing the alcohol in our home, my husband's usually the one who's just kind of noticing or whatever, and picks it up. So, I'm like, "Don't we have any more wine?" He's like, "Oh, no, you know, you drank the last one, last night." And, it was a Wednesday or something. I thought he had just bought some, on the weekend. And I was like, well, that's weird.

I remember being really like, it was a very victim-ey kind of a place. You know, kind of that, waah, toddler like, I want that. I really want that.

Rachel: I was looking forward to it. I was excited to have it. Like, we have all this anticipation, right. When you have all this anticipation, and then whatever, you open up the fridge, you open up the pantry, and all of the sudden, it's like; where's the thing? Like, I was promised the...

Katrina: Like, literally, where is it? I've been promising myself all day, to get through my day, to get to this point. And now, I can't have it. And that's when I was just like; oh, I can do this with something besides food, too. It's not like I didn't know food was an issue for me. But I was like; oh, alcohol could be a thing, too, for me, if I'm not careful.

So, knowing that there was that kind of blend, and then also being aware enough about coaching tools, you know, had a lot to learn still and stuff, but being aware enough that I see where this is headed. There's a history of

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alcoholism in my family. And my mom was always, very strongly, told many cautionary tales, let's just say, about that. And so, it wasn't so much that I was afraid I was gonna become an addict or something. But I was like, let's just not even find out. Let's just, maybe get this under control, before it really turns into a bigger thing.

And so, I think, you know, that's what I really noticed for myself, where it could be food, it could be alcohol, kind of either way. And then, as I started coaching more doctors, I coached many people who were like; oh, you know what? Now that I'm getting the food under control, I'm realizing food was never really the problem.

But take the alcohol out of my cold dead hands, like, do not take that away. All the emotions came up for them, with just the idea of, maybe reducing how much they were drinking, or maybe even taking a break for a little while to see what would happen.

Rachel: It's like, I'm fine reducing food. Right? And for everyone listening, this happens both ways. It's like, I'm fine reducing food, but don't you dare take away my chardonnay or my prosecco. Right? Or, I'm fine cutting back on drinking, but by God, I better keep my ice cream. I better have my chocolate. we're not also...

And that's such a good signal to start to notice, right? If we reduce one thing, and then we start gripping really tightly on the other. But there's so many genius pieces here, that you said, that I just want to pull out for people.

One is, and I noticed this happened a lot around alcohol. People will say, "Oh, well, I mean, I don't have a lot of energy, and my sleep isn't that good. And I don't feel that great, but I'm just getting older." And so, hearing that

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same thing from you. It's like; yeah, okay, like I'm gaining a little bit of weight, but I'm getting older.

How often we kind of use age as a way to explain away what's going on. I think, to totally normalize it, right. And so, I think that's really important. So, for everyone listening, kind of identify if you've been like; oh, yeah, well, I put on some weight, or I don't feel so great in the morning, but I'm getting older.

Katrina: Pretty sure this is normal, or my friends say the same thing. This is what everybody's all talking about. Like, that still doesn't mean it's normal.

Rachel: Okay, so there's that. I think also, it's really important to, you know, you're now able to identify that food was a kind of emotional fix, right? Like you were trying to solve how you were feeling with food. But you did not have that awareness for a really long time. You were just like; I just love to eat. I just love to cook. I love the whole experience. And I think that's a big place where a lot of people who listened to this podcast, are like; I just love to drink. I've just always loved to drink. I love the culture around it. I love, you know, learning about...

Katrina: Learning about the wine tastings, going to the brewery, whatever. It's like, so fun, and I'm educated around it, and I'm a super taster or like, whatever it is, right?

Rachel: Yeah. And it's not, listen, it's not that that can't be true. I believe that that is true for people, right? It's just that sometimes that very simple explanation will just act as blinders. Right? Because it's like, I know why I like it. I like it for this reason. And it's almost like we answer the question. And we're so sure that we have the answer, that it's like, why would I dig any deeper?

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Like these other people might be, you know, eating because they're stressed out or drinking because they're feeling anxious, but like, I'm just someone who loves to eat, or I'm someone who loves to drink. So, I think that piece...

Katrina: I had to really to work on that identity component like, yes, that was a really big turning point, for me. I was working with a dietician, and her husband was a doctor. So, I thought; okay, she'll understand better what my life is like. Because there's so many unpredictabilities and stuff. And you know, by this time, I've got like, three kids, and it's just...

I was like, you know, the people who are like, you have to this thing exactly this way every day. I'm, like, never gonna work for me. Like, I've got to find somebody who can understand better. And honestly, the food stuff probably wasn't so helpful with her. But the one thing she did make me do or like, strongly encouraged me to do, was to find any book by Geneen Roth and read it.

And so, Geneen Roth is an author, who in the 90's, early 2000's, wrote several books about what was called then, compulsive eating. It was kind of the word they use then, and I knew about her work, but I never read any of it because I didn't think I was a compulsive eater. I'm like, no, compulsive is like, you literally can't control yourself. I'm like, no, I can control myself. So, I didn't identify with that word at all.

So, I found the easiest, the shortest, easiest to read book, that she had written. Like, it all seemed like very heavy. I'm like, what is like the easiest one? Like, I got that one, and I read that one. And in there, she talked about what emotional eating is.

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And up until that point, I had been like, the vision that I had, in my head, of an emotional eater, as judgmental as it sounds was a woman, literally, folded up on the floor in the corner, sobbing into her bag of potato chips. You know, just a complete mess, unable to deal with life.

Like, and I just did not see myself that way at all. I'm like, no, I'm totally functional. Like, I'm a doctor, for goodness sakes. You know, I've got three kids, I've got a life, everything is going really quite well. Like, that's not me. Well, what I realized then was like, no, it's eating for a reason besides nourishing your body.

And it truly was like... I read that book, and I remember it was one of those shower moments, I was in the shower and thinking about it. And I was like; well, wait a minute, if that is what emotional eating is, then yeah, I totally do that.

And I'm so grateful to myself that, at least, I could just be like; oh, I just thought it was something different. So, if that's what it is... I was like, open to changing my identity and realizing like; oh, no, I am an emotional eater. Like, I am using food to solve for my emotions.

That didn't mean I knew what my emotions were, at all. Didn't mean that I knew, at all what, I was thinking. I remember even being at coach training going, like, I think I just have song lyrics in my head all the time. Like, I don't think I have thoughts. I mean, I was serious. I was really sure, I mean, I believed that, you know. And that was my experience of being me.

So, that helped me to then go; okay, well, if I am an emotional eater, then I've gotta approach this differently. Because certainly, Weight Watchers is not addressing this, in any kind of way that's helpful to me. And that's how I ended up finding life coaching as a modality for that.

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And I think it can be the same thing with alcohol, too. Where it's like; yes, I get all this enjoyment out of it. But I'm also leaning on it, to help me to feel a way I want to feel. Like, okay, and we're not even saying that's bad or good. We're just saying it is. Like okay, that's a good thing to know.

And then, understanding that, like; okay, well, sometimes, at least, I'm probably using this to solve a problem for me. So, maybe I could just find out what that problem is, first. People often ask me, and I'm guessing they ask you, too, in a different way, like, what advice would you give to someone who just every night can't stop eating? And I would say, it's just the same thing. If you're like, before, I know what I've had, you know, the bottle of wine or whatever it is.

I think of it as there's a potential space between the decision to drink the thing or eat the thing, and actually eating it or drinking it. And if we can expand that, if we can create a little space in there, even if it's just a couple seconds going; I'm not saying I can't have it.

I'm just saying that before I have it, let me just get curious. Not judging, but let me see if I could just find out a little bit more of about why I want this. Besides, I have the thought, I want this. What's going on for me, right now, that I want to solve with this alcohol or with this food?

Again, I think the more we tell ourselves we can't have it, then the more we want it, and we're like...

Rachel: And then, the more we rebel. I trapped into a whole pity space, right? Like, when I told myself that I wasn't allowed to drink, it, so, for me, I was like; this is unfair. And why is this my problem? And how come like, why doesn't my sister have to deal with this? Why do I have to deal with it?

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Then, it just made me want to rebel. It made me want to be like... It was almost like I wanted to prove to myself that I could have as much as I wanted. So, those were really fun nights.

Katrina: It's like, don't tell me what to do. I'm having all of it. And it's like, hold on, no one's telling you anything. You absolutely can have it. We're just trying to understand a little bit more about what's going on. And, you know, I think some people can more easily tap into what they're thinking. Some people can more easily tap into what they're feeling.

You know, I think there's lots of different roads into this, you know, different paths to figure this out. But if we can, at least, even just go, there's this thing that I want to do. Let me just find out more. I just want to educate myself, about myself. I want to know more about me in this scenario, so that I can stop telling myself that I have no idea and it's unsolvable.

And I'm broken and feeling bad about myself. Like, let me just maybe see if I can understand a little bit more. And then, maybe we can figure out oh, you know what, yeah, there is this feeling. I'm feeling kind of bored. I'm feeling kind of restless. I'm feeling a little bit lonely. Okay, that's good to know.

And then, I like to just go into, how do you know that you feel that? Like, how do you know what... What does lonely feel like in you? Like, you know, we use those words. It's like, literally, how do you know that that's the feeling?

Rachel: It's so interesting, right? Because we'll all use the words, like; I'm bored, I'm lonely, I'm frustrated, I'm anxious, I'm stressed. But then, when you ask people to start to be like, what does that mean? What is that experience like in your body?

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And I remember the first time this was asked of me, I was like, what? Why are we talking about the body? Like, no, I just know. But I think that that really goes to what you were talking about, about increasing the space, right?

The moment between, you know, the decision and then acting on it. Part of increasing that space is like, oh, is what's happening inside of me, actually, as intolerable as the story that I'm telling myself? Is it actually as unmanageable? Because my story was so often like; I hate this, I can't feel this, I feel too much of this, I have more, this was a big thing. Like, I have more anxiety than other people. I have more anxiety than what is normal.

And so, starting to just connect with the sensation was a way to see like, oh, there's something happening in my body that doesn't necessarily line up. But the story that I have about it, the story is like very, very, very dramatic. What's happening in my body is sometimes like, a little uncomfortable. And it's not what I would choose, but it usually doesn't match the story.

Katrina: Right? Yeah. And I think that's what a lot of people find. And I have found that, too. Where I realized like, well, okay, this is what's actually in my body, whatever word I want to assign to it. This is the feeling in me, can I just stick with it for maybe a couple minutes? I'm not saying I can't have that thing. I can totally have it if I still want it later. But let me just see if I can I stay with this.

And what you find, over the course of time, is you can process these emotions sometimes, way more easily and quickly than you think you can. And then after that, you're like, you know what? I guess I don't really need that, or want that anymore.

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And, that is so empowering. When you start realizing we're not even saying you ever have to do that again. We're just saying you do have way more control over this, than you think you do.

Rachel: So, I want to talk about this emotion piece because, I mean, you're a doctor, you have a scientific mind. You work with doctors. A lot of times when we start talking about emotions, it's like oh God, here we go. We're like all in the touchy-feely space. How do you talk about that with people, who don't feel comfortable talking about touchy-feely emotions? What's your kind of way in?

Katrina: I mean, the way in is through the brain, because they have to through thinking, right, they have to get on board. And at least, on a conceptual level. Even if they're like; no, I'm completely cut off from my body. I have no idea what I'm feeling in my body. They at least, logically, understand that might be a problem, the fact that they're cut off, you know.

And so, you know, all of us, to a certain extent, have enough awareness around emotions, to be able to recognize some that are quite uncomfortable to feel. Even if we are experts at like, numbing that, and stuffing that, and staying away from feeling that as much as possible; it's not possible all the time.

And so when I can help them to see... The way I kind of describe it, just even from a scientific standpoint is, what are thoughts? It's just two neurons having a synaptic connection. I mean, there's an electrical connection in your brain, and that's the thought. And when you keep thinking that thought, that synaptic connection just gets stronger, and kind of meatier.

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Because the brain is all about efficiency, it will eventually down regulate that more to your subconscious. So, you don't even have to think that anymore, to be able to create that connection. So, an example of that, like, where I will feel that is like, so for instance, I just had this book come out.

I would, at times, feel a lot of anxiety for a whole different variety of reasons. I would be thinking and telling myself; this is all okay, because of this. We don't need to worry because this person has got that handled. You have all the support you need, or whatever. And I believed those thoughts, they felt true, but I still felt very anxious.

So, where are those emotions coming from? There still was this subconscious kind of line, train of thought, that I wasn't as aware of, but it was like; that's all fine and good, but you are in danger. And you need to run. You need to get away from everybody, you know. And that was what was creating that feeling.

So, I like to just speak to that, because sometimes when we really simplify it is like, you know, you have your thoughts and then your feelings and your actions. But sometimes they don't match up. And if they don't match up, it doesn't mean you're doing it wrong, it means that there might be something else going on a level of thinking, or beliefs, that have been downregulated. Or, are fear based, primitive type of thinking, that once we create some awareness around that, we can actually deal with the issue, and process that fear and stuff.

So, that's your thoughts. And then, once you have these neurons connecting, it creates a chemical cascade, you know, through your brain, and then into your body. There's so many different hormones and different chemicals that can go through your bloodstream. But that is literally, what's making you feel, in your body, the way you feel.

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And so, I always feel nervousness is something that people get, they're like; oh, right, you know, I know. Or, something like that. They understand it; I had that thought and now I feel this way in my body. They can kind of understand that.

So, that's all that's going on. It's like we're not in danger, if we feel our feelings. It's just, you know, our bodies are constantly going back to homeostasis, are constantly filtering out all those chemical cascades. But if we keep thinking those same things, we're gonna keep creating those same emotions.

I think that's how I can get doctors on board with this idea. This is not some, like woo woo, made up, whatever, this is human physiology. And it for us to pretend there's no effect of that chemical cascade in our bodies, it's just not true. It's just the habit, right? As doctors in particular, right, we're so valued for our ability to think, especially under pressure, professionalism, all that stuff. So, that's all amazing and great.

But yes, you do need to hold yourself together when there's an emergency or things like that. But what do you do after? It's like, no one ever talks about that. So, we can't just pretend that that hasn't affected us. I mean, I've done emotional processing on things that happened in the hospital while I was, you know, a resident 15 years ago. More than that, actually 20 years ago.

To think that that stuff isn't still in us; it is. And so, I think they all see that, too. Like, all of us can go back to some time during our training where there was, for sure, a little 't' trauma that we experienced, or were part of, or something. And how much those emotions still are there.

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So, it's an experiential kind of process. We're like; okay, I hear what you're saying. And yeah, okay. I see that, maybe there was something to that.

Rachel: I love describing it as a chemical cascade. I think that that... Because one, it's like everyone can at least acknowledge like, okay, I guess I do have hormones. Like, I do have chemicals in my body. They probably cascade sometimes. And, I don't have complete control over that. Right?

But I just also like thinking, there's no amount of food, there's no amount of wine, that's ever going to be enough for me to stop it. Right?

Katrina: You can blunt the effects, but it's not going to change your normal human physiology.

Rachel: Exactly, you can't change the normal human physiology, and it can blunt the effects. But my experience, is that the more I tried to drink over anxiety, the less I was able to tolerate anxiety. Because then, it was like...

Katrina: You get a little reprieve; a little false, artificial reprieve. And then it's like, well, I wish I could just live here forever.

Rachel: Exactly.

Katrina: Well, hmm, that's not so good.

Rachel: Actually, anxiety became almost a bigger and bigger, looming threat for me. Because I was like, ugh, I don't want to deal with this chemical cascade. I didn't realize it was a chemical cascade, I was just like, how I feel it right now, is obviously a sign that something has gone wrong, and I shouldn't feel this way. And, my solution is at the bar.

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Katrina: Right. Exactly. It's so intolerable, I have to find a way for it to go away. And I have so much compassion for people who are dealing with that, because, I mean, I, at times, feel that way even still. Where I'm like, oh, my gosh, I almost feel like I'm breathing through it. It's like I'm in labor or something. It can be really hard.

No one's talking about how hard it can be to just be an adult human in this world. Or, just in any world. You know what I mean? Just to be an adult human, living an adult life, when we think it shouldn't be like this, we think we're doing something wrong. We're feeling this emotion. Obviously, something's gone wrong, we're broken, whatever it is. Everyone else is figuring out a way to not feel this way. So, I obviously missed the memo.

Instead of just going like, no, this is the hard part. And yes, it is really hard. And then, creating the support systems that are going to help you when you're going through all the stages of it. You know, thankfully, for a lot of people, we're not living in that super heightened, really terrible feeling emotional state all the time, or a lot of the time. But I think enough of the time.

Rachel, I think the other thing is like, once you learn the skills that no one ever teaches us, right? No one ever really teaches us anything about our emotions, other than the names, right, the words. And you start to learn skills to cope with it on your own. And just I talk about, just name, notice, and allow, right?

And notice that you have stories that may not match up with what's actually happening in your body. Once you have all those tools, then it's so much easier to have food and alcohol in your life, in a way that then feels good for you. Because then, food and alcohol are not about like, okay, this is how I deal with my stressful day.

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This is how I reward myself for getting the kids to bed. This is what makes things fancy in life, right? It's like I have my emotions and my tools, my toolkit to really handle it. And I also then, get to make much cleaner decisions about how do I want to eat, and how do I want to drink? When they aren't my kind of go-tos for like, well, this is obviously how I feel good, or distress, or have a fun time.

Katrina: It's like you're basically figuring out; what are my emotional needs? And how can I meet them without another substance? And how can I, you know, help myself with those? And then, I get to eat and drink, if that's something someone wants to do, in a way that's supportive. That's exactly what you're saying.

And that's what I think of as peace and freedom. Where it's like, I can have it, I cannot have it, and either way, I'm fine. It really doesn't matter to me. That's very different than if I don't have it, what am I gonna do?

Rachel: Right. Like, where's the prosecco? Oh, my gosh, there's so much... Listen, you guys have to read this book. It's so good. It really blew my mind. Katrina explains things in such an easy and understandable way. But I'm looking at my notes, and I'm like, there's so many things I want to talk about. We don't have that much time left.

So, one of the things, you talk a lot about the impact of food on insulin, and really like, needing to understand that piece of the puzzle. And I wanted to talk about that with alcohol. And so, one of the things that I see quite a bit is, especially when people you know, start doing a break, they're working with me in my membership.

A lot of women who are currently going through menopause will say like, where'd my hot flashes go? Like, all of a sudden, it's like they're not having

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like the same kind of level of hot flashes. A lot of people will also recognize that their sleep has totally changed. So, again, they're used to kind of blaming their 2am, 3am wakeup on their age, and suddenly it's like, oh, I just slept through the night.

And so, I wonder if you can talk about that insulin piece, a little bit.

Katrina: Yeah, yeah, I mean, the thing with insulin, is like insulin, it's just you know, your pancreas doing its job. I suppose, think about our bodies. It's like, no matter what we throw at them, no matter how much we, you know... Really, our bodies are like; no, please, don't eat more. Okay, fine, I guess we're eating more. I'll deal with it. You know, the body's just like up for whatever. It's like, I can't guarantee you, I'll feel good, but I will deal with it, I will deal with it.

So, really the, you know, the pancreas' job is to help the nutrition in your body to get into your cells, so your cells can use them. And you know, it's also, what's tricky with alcohol, is that alcohol kind of ends up hijacking the whole process. Like of it kind of elbows its way to the front of the line. It's like, well, this has to be, you know, processed right away.

It kind of makes the rest of the nutrients, if you're drinking and eating at the same time, wait. And, you know, what I find so, I mean, it's so similar to what you were saying, so many of my clients are like, you know, when they just kind of eat the way a human body is really designed to eat. I mean, it's nothing that crazy, it really isn't. But just honoring that, they can't believe like how much less hungry they are, how much better they sleep.

I mean, asking your body to process anything, whether it's alcohol or food, while you're sleeping, denies your body, and your brain really, the full

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opportunity to repair itself, and to, you know, really rest so that you do feel better in the morning.

Like, there's even more data now on how athletes will notice, really competitive professional athletes will notice like, if they get an injury, it's often they can tie it back to like a night where they you know, deprioritize sleep or drank more, or whatever. I find that really, really fascinating. Just because I think we're learning more and more about how important sleep is.

The thing, when it comes to especially like, you know, being overweight, insulin is just, by default, a fat storage hormone. It really is. Because it's helping glucose, the real, most simplest breakdown of carbohydrates in your body to get into your cells. Well, when there's extra, it helps get that to your liver for quick storage, kind of just putting it away for a little bit later.

And then when the liver is full, that stuff, it's got to go somewhere. So, like that energy has to go somewhere, and it's repackaged, and it's put into fat cells. So, when you think about it that way, it's like, you know, when we're drinking, sipping for hours at night, on a beverage. When we're snacking a lot throughout the day.

When we are drinking, drinking, drinking, right up until bedtime, and then get up in the morning and right away start eating, we're not giving our bodies very much time to actually utilize the energy that we already have on board. And so that's where, you know, just maybe not even snacking, can be a huge thing.

Or like, okay, if you're gonna have your glass of wine, have it with a meal, to just, you know, and I don't like that word hack or whatever, but just like, I

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think of it more as like, work with your body in the way that it works best, right? We all know that.

Drinking on an empty stomach, I told you... Oh my god, I remember one time in med school, where they had a formal event for us. And it was kind of late and then, I hadn't eaten, and then, you know, I had some drinks, and by then I wasn't hungry. You remember how you'd have too much alcohol before, and then you'd you lose your appetite. And then, you were like really feeling the effects; like, oh my god, right?

Like we got to work with ourselves. So, really, it's just understanding what insulin is doing. It's trying to help. And it does help; it will help you process whatever you consume. And so, if we want to work with our bodies, what we want to do is allow insulin to drop in between, you know, periods of consumption, whether that's alcohol or food. To allow our bodies to actually utilize what we've stored away for later.

Which is really ingenious if you think about it. I mean, in a hunter-gatherer society, to be able to survive for actually quite some time when you can't find food. That's why we're still here. Right? So, we just have to know how to work with that.

Rachel: Yeah. And I think part of it is, you know, so many people that I work with will say, I really need a drink to go to sleep. You know, like that nightcap is so important. And there, I think is that kind of cultural or societal idea that that's going to help me sleep and not even realizing well, what happens when you are drinking alcohol in the evening, or right before you go to bed? That your body... Like sleep really is supposed to be that time to repair. And all of that stops, because your mind is like oh, I got to deal with this, you know,...

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Katrina: I'm not going to digest, and I can't actually take care of things. I just find people are uniformly surprised at how much better they feel. I have this aura ring now, that a lot of people have, and I find it fascinating. One drink, hours before bedtime, how much it negatively impacts my sleep; it's really, really eye opening.

And I feel like there's so much more of a push these days for non-alcoholic cocktails, like true craft cocktails. And I think it's because people are getting on to this, or they're like, you know, maybe they don't even struggle with overdrinking, but they're like I just don't want that effect in my body. Because it just isn't good for me.

Rachel: Although I will say you do have to be very careful with sugar levels in a lot of the non-alcoholic options. Because sometimes, I think when they're not crafted... In kind of like a lazy way. It's like, we'll just make it really sweet.

Katrina: Right, right. Even the fact that that's available, I feel like that's a pretty newish thing, you know. I mean, what did you have before O'Doul's? That was probably it, you know.

Rachel: In San Francisco, they have non-alcoholic liquor stores. Like you can get... Like whole stores that specialize... And I'm just like, man, if I had had that, right? I would remember going out to a restaurant and being like, you know, what do you have for non-alcoholic things? And they're like, you want to Shirley Temple? It's like, no, I'm not a kid. I'm not five.

Alright, the last thing I want to talk about, because you do talk about this a lot in your book, is kind of the work that we have to do around reprogramming our brain, when it comes to the clean plate club, and finishing everything.

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And this is something, again, that comes up so much with people when they're drinking, and I kind of call it the clean glass club or the clean bottle club. And, and it's that idea of like, oh, but it's like, I don't want to waste it. Or, it would be silly, or...

Katrina: I just paid for it. You know that bottle of wine is expensive.

Rachel: Yeah, it's expensive. I paid for it. And so, I'm really interested to hear how you work with like, your own work around this and how you work with doctors around this.

Katrina: Yeah, I mean, I totally struggled both ways, like with food and with alcohol. To more in the like, restaurant, you know, kind of situation, where it's like you go and it's some special event, then you have, you know, some amazing cocktail, and then you get the bottle of wine. And then, you know, dessert is like coming, and you're like, you've had too much, you don't even want more, but you're forcing yourself to drink it because you paid for the thing.

So, what I had to really work on, because this, for sure, was not at all how I was raised, I had to really work on internalizing the concept that there is no way to avoid the waste. It's wasteful, it's wasted, if it's left behind. And it's wasted if I consume it, when I don't even have a desire for it, or it's not in my best interest. And that goes for food, or with alcohol.

And what really, I struggled with this quite a bit. The thing that, just for me personally, was kind of like a turning point, where I started to see myself making some progress, was when my youngest child was still in a highchair. You know, and you chop up all the food real little, and put it you know, all over the place. And, I mean, this was my third child, so I'd already been doing this with the other kids, when they were younger.

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But like kind of, you know, sometimes they don't touch some stuff. And you're like, oh, I can save that. They can have that for lunch tomorrow or whatever. And picking through, trying to find anything salvageable. And then, I remember asking my husband who does not have this issue so much, you know, is this gross, or, can I keep this?

And he was like, you know, it's like a quarter cup of food. It's almost nothing, you could just throw it out. And, I felt so much discomfort. But I knew like, I'm going to have to be with this discomfort. I can't wait until I feel good about leaving behind the food or the alcohol. I have to recognize this will make me feel uncomfortable. And, I'm going to do it anyway, because it makes sense.

So, this still comes up for me not to the extreme, but it still comes up for me. Like my kids, like, my son has no problem leaving like one blueberry left on his plate.

Rachel: You're like, it's just one.

Katrina: You cannot tell me you're so full, there's not room for one more blueberry, you know, and he's 11. Like, he could eat another blueberry, right? And I have to literally, inside, zip my lip, don't say anything. If he is done, he is done. And, he is allowed to leave it. And so, it is so ingrained in me.

I'm at an acceptance place with it, where I recognize, to some extent, it's probably always gonna feel a little bit uncomfortable for me. And that's okay, that's my work. We just had our wedding anniversary, and my husband and I went out to a really nice meal. And I was finishing up the dinner, which I would always force myself to eat the whole thing, before.

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And I could tell, you know, okay, I'm about ready to be done here. And I left a little of it behind, which, you know, is a really big deal for me. It might be very easy for other people, but it's the same as like leaving that half glass of wine. I would go sometimes, I've been like to Napa or whatever, and you're going and tasting and then, like people would dump out like the rest, instead of drinking the whole pour.

And I would be like, why do I feel so bad at the end of the day? Because I've been drinking these like really heavy, you know...

Rachel: Right, instead of using the spittoon.

Katrina: Horrible, I know. No, the way that you do this, and still feel good, is you don't drink it all, especially when you don't even really like what they've given you. So, it's like I had to create some rules for myself around what I'm going to do, and then also, being aware that there will be some resistance, and I'm willing to feel that for the greater good, essentially. But I think, no matter what, it's already wasted.

Rachel: Yeah, I think for me, it was really recognizing like how much my brain was just using visual cues. Like a plate, or a glass, or a bottle, to tell me when I was done. So, I was looking outside of myself. And that's true for food, and that's true for alcohol. I was not connecting with my body to figure out when I was done. I was like, No, there's more left in the glass. There's more on the plate. There's more in the bottle; that's what tells me.

And to just understand that like, that really is a rewiring. To understand like, no, you have to bring your gaze inward. What does it feel like for you? It's so interesting, because we do a mindful drinking, there's a whole module inside the membership. And when people start doing it, it's like, oh, what? It's so annoying listening to my body. Right?

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Like, I don't want to. What are you talking about? And to just even notice the resistance that will bubble up with that. And, I mean, I talk about this, I remember the first time I did a mindful eating exercise. And that literally left me in tears. Because I was eating... I was eating something, a sandwich that I would have sworn, up and down, was my favorite sandwich in the world.

And when I was actually eating it, and actually experiencing it, I didn't like it. And I remember just being like, but if I don't like this, and if I can't get pleasure from this, at that point, I wasn't drinking, right. I was like, I'm not drinking. And now, I can't even get pleasure from my favorite sandwich. Like, what is left for me in this world?

Because it sounds funny, but I legit, I remember just sobbing in my apartment. Like, this is awful. Because it didn't even occur to me that pleasure was something that I could generate from within, right? It was always something to be consumed. And so...

Katrina: Like, it happened to you.

Rachel: Yes, the pleasure happened to me. Exactly. So, I think this is a good kind of bookend from where we started. This idea of like, when you notice, if you notice, kind of annoyance of like, okay, I just opened the fridge, and I was expecting my bottle of prosecco. Where is it? Or, the annoyance of kind of, what do you mean I have to listen to my body?

Like, that is such a good just kind of queue and little bit of information, to be like, oh, what's going on here? What's happening? Like, what is my consumption really about? And not because we're judging it as good or bad or right or wrong. But like, just to be curious about, oh, why do I feel this

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kind of intensity around it? Is it just because I'm a foodie? Is it just because, you know, I'm someone who loves wine?

Or, is there something else here that I can explore a little deeper? That actually will help me so much when it comes to changing my relationship with alcohol or changing my relationship with food? Listen, tell us the name of your book, again.

Katrina: It's called *How to Lose Weight for the Last Time: Brain-Based Solutions for Permanent Weight Loss*.

Rachel: Everyone has to get this. Really, I got it. And, you know, when you get those books, and you're just like, every spare moment, you're kind of reading, reading, reading. That's how I was with it. It's so good. It's so genius. I love that you talk about alcohol, as well.

And so, I think that is really powerful for a lot of people. But Katrina just makes, she makes these concepts so easy to understand. And so, I'm, you know, putting it in practice right now. I love it. And I'm so excited that you wrote this book.

Katrina: Thank you so much. I mean, I love hearing you say that, because that was really my goal. I mean, how many times are we bored to tears on the explanation of the whole thing. It's just like, just tell me what to do. I was like, how can I make it, so people really understand? When you understand why you're doing what you're doing, you're so much more likely to be able to do it over the long haul. That's why I'm saying like, it's for the last time. It's like, let's put this issue to bed.

And I do just want to say one thing. You know, a lot of people are like, well, you should just not even try to lose weight or whatever. And it's

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everybody's choice. I'm not saying that people need to lose weight. But I also do recognize that everybody, particularly women in this day and age, have the right to decide, you know, what size body they live in.

And nope, you know, nobody needs to be telling us what's best for us. But I want to say that, I think the title has kind of like two meanings. The first is, like if you want to lose weight, for sure, I can help you to do that. But the second meaning is, another way to lose weight for the last time is just to stop trying to lose weight, right?

Stop thinking about it through that lens and instead think about, okay, well I just want to understand myself better. I want to understand how food plays a role in my life. What I ask it to do for me, what I want it to continue doing for me. What I want to, maybe, have it stop doing for me.

If you start to figure out how to reconnect to your body, and listen to its signals, and actually honor those signals, like, if there's excess weight on your body, you will probably lose it, whether you're aiming to do that or not. So, even if weight loss itself is not necessarily your goal at all, there's so much more in here.

Because the way that you no longer struggle with your weight, is by doing all these things. So, whether there's weight to lose or not, you can get something from this.

Rachel: Yeah, and I think it moves you from that place of, what we talked about, of like, I should know better, right? And like, why am I doing this? I know that I shouldn't be to this place... Of like, oh, this is how things work, right? And, this is how I develop this relationship. And, this is how my body is functioning. Like, it actually takes you to this place of understanding, which is just such a better foundation then, to decide what you want to do.

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Katrina: This is for the person who's like, I know what to do, but I'm just not doing it. Yep. Read this book.

Rachel: Oh, my gosh, thank you so much. I could have had you on for another hour, because really, I had so many notes. It was like my book is very, very underlined.

Katrina: Oh good! I'm so glad. Thank you, so much for having me.

Rachel: Thanks, Katrina.

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