

Ep #302: Commitment Self-Sabotage



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With Your Host

Rachel Hart

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You are listening to the *Take A Break* podcast with Rachel Hart, Episode 302.

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.

Welcome back, everyone. We are talking today about commitment self-sabotage. This is so important for you to understand, so many people misunderstand this. I misunderstood this for the longest time. I work with people all the time, inside the *Take a Break* membership, who are struggling with this.

And when they learn what's happening with commitment self-sabotage, it really does make all the difference. So, listen, you make a commitment, you make a plan, and then you don't follow through. You said you're gonna have one drink, and then you had three. You said you weren't gonna have anything, and then you finish the bottle.

So, in these moments, the moments when you don't follow through, it is very easy to go to this line of thinking of like; oh, God, why aren't I more disciplined? Why can't I learn my lesson? What is it going to take me to just follow through with a commitment? What is wrong with me? These questions, I promise, are always going to lead to commitment self-sabotage.

Now, you have probably heard of self-sabotage before. It's when you do or don't do something that blocks your success. You're essentially getting in your own way. It happens with everything, not just with drinking. So, we know that we've got to file our taxes, they've got to get done. But the

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deadline is approaching, and we're spending a lot of time reorganizing closets.

Or, you spend a lot of time overthinking things, right? Kind of envisioning every single scenario, instead of just taking action. Maybe you break up with someone before they can break up with you. Or, you don't apply for a job, because you're kind of sure that you're not going to get it, and you don't want to get the rejection. Or, you quit when things get difficult.

We get in our way, in so many places. Self-sabotage is very, very normal. But you have to be onto it, you have to understand how it's appearing. Especially when you want to change the habit. Especially when you want to learn how to drink less, or stop drinking.

And here's the good news. If you learn how it shows up in your drinking, I guarantee you will start to see similarities and patterns with other areas of your life. This really is about learning a meta skill that you can apply everywhere.

So, what does commitment self-sabotage look like when it comes to drinking? Well, you make a commitment, right? So, you say, "Okay, tonight, I'm not drinking. I'm taking it easy." Or, you say, "I'm just gonna have one. My limit is two." It doesn't really matter what the commitment is. What matters is you make a plan.

So, you've got this plan, and then, push comes to shove, and what happens? You don't follow through. And you tell yourself, "Oh, God, it was just too tempting to say no, because everyone else was drinking. So-and-so was giving me a hard time; it would just be easier to accept the drink. I just started, and I got too tipsy. I couldn't rein myself in. Something happened at work that was really unexpected, and I just needed that drink."

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We always have some sort of knee-jerk explanation for why we broke our commitment. I'm going to tell you something, all these explanations are wrong. When we start to explain why we broke a commitment, and we notice that we're blaming ourselves; or we're blaming the alcohol, or blaming being tipsy, or blaming other people, or we're blaming what's happening in our lives. That is such a good sign that you really are not on the right track. You really aren't.

It's a good sign that you're missing out on understanding how commitment self-sabotage shows up. Because none of these things are the real problem. The problem is that you and me, and everyone really, has this very binary understanding of what commitment is. So, it's very black-or-white; either I succeeded, or I failed. There's no in-between.

And you know, it makes sense that we have this binary understanding of commitment, because we don't want to walk around breaking our commitments, and then tell ourselves, "You know, I'm just this huge success," it doesn't make sense.

But when you have this binary understanding, you will start to unconsciously self-sabotage in the moment where you break your commitment. So, just imagine, imagine that your plan was okay, I'm not drinking tonight. And then, you give in. You tell yourself, "Okay, I'll have one."

Now, your automatic knee-jerk interpretation of that moment is likely; I failed. This was my plan, and I didn't follow through. And then, when you tell yourself 'I failed,' your internal dialogue is one that more drinking is almost a foregone conclusion. It's just inevitable.

It's like; well, I opened the bottle, so I might as well have a glass. Or, I poured myself a glass, so I might as well drink it. Or, I took a sip, so I might

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as well keep going. Or, I broke my commitment, so I might as well enjoy myself and have another.

The self-sabotage comes in those moments, the moments where we break our commitment, and then fall into this binary understanding of whether or not I'm a success, or a failure. This is where the self-sabotage happens.

So, instead of going to this place of; okay, just because I poured a glass, doesn't mean I have to have it. Or, just because I opened the bottle, doesn't mean I have to drink from it. Or, just because I took a sip, doesn't mean I have to finish the glass. Or, just because I had one drink, and my plan was none, doesn't mean, well, I might as well have another and another.

You know that this happens. I know you've heard yourself do this. You've probably heard yourself do this with drinking. Maybe you've heard yourself do this with food. Maybe you've heard yourself do this with exercise; it really doesn't matter. We use this binary approach to our commitments all the time.

And the problem with this approach, when we treat everything as it's just a failure or success, there's no in-between, then it sets us up to fail even more. And I want you to know that, frankly, I think all of us have been conditioned to approach our commitments this way, especially with our commitments around alcohol.

Because we have, in our kind of cultural consciousness, this idea of one sip will set you back, right? Just one sip, and you're going backwards. That does not set you up, in that moment, to be like; okay, I had a sip. I can reassess. It's like; no, no, no. I was told one sip would set me back.

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So, instead of that moment, that sip, of just being a moment in time where you get to decide consciously how you want to handle going forward, for you to choose what you want to do next, we're kind of like; oh, well, I mean, I failed. I failed because I had the sip. And then, I just kept going.

But not because you had the sip, you kept going because of this commitment self-sabotage. Right? Imagine what it would be to be like; okay, my plan was none, and then I had a sip. And, I stopped. Versus my plan was none, and then I had a sip. And then, it led to three glasses. Because I was like, well, I failed, so I might as well keep going.

I just want you to know, that when your understanding of commitment is this very binary, black-or-white, you are always going to fall in this trap. This is part of the problem. It doesn't matter if your goal is not to drink, or to have one drink, or to have two drinks. It really doesn't matter what your goal or your commitment is.

When success is binary, when there are no degrees of success or failure, there's just 'I failed,' then you are going to get caught in this kind of self-sabotage. So, when you think about it, it's like, okay, so your goal was two. I'm just gonna have two drinks. So, why did you have four? The answer is not because you had a third glass; that's not the answer.

The answer is found in what you made the third glass mean. What you made it mean when you finish the second and then reached for the bottle, or ordered another with the waiter. What you made it mean in that moment is why you continued on.

In those moments, when we break a commitment, and we have this binary understanding, where there's only failure or success and nothing in-between, what happens is we go, in these moments, into doom and gloom. And it's like; oh, I failed, that didn't work. Or, that commitment's out the window. I screwed up, I broke my promise.

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But here really is the crazy thing. It's like we're telling ourselves that we screwed up and we failed, and we broke our promise, therefore, we should break it even more. Because a fail, is a fail, is a fail. That's what happens when we have this binary understanding. That really is the commitment self-sabotage. It's not breaking your commitment, it's the sabotage that you do in the next moment.

Because here's the thing, I want you to imagine this. Imagine what you would teach your brain, if in the moment you broke your commitment, you didn't use that then, as an excuse to drink more. I want you to pause and think about that. That might kind of break your brain a little bit because you're like; but I broke my commitment.

But I want you to really think about that. In the moment that you broke your commitment, and you didn't then use that as an excuse to drink more, imagine what your brain would learn. Imagine how powerful that would be. The self-sabotage comes in when we unconsciously make breaking a commitment mean something negative about us, mean all is lost, and then act because of those thoughts.

This is why the think-feel-act cycle is so important. It's so important for you to really understand and shine a flashlight on what is happening in that moment. You know, so often... I was just working today, I was doing a workshop inside *Take a Break*, and we were talking about someone who had a commitment to moderate, and then they were overdrinking.

And, you know, I was saying, "Okay, let's get really, really specific here." Because a lot of times we want to deal in these generalities, and it's just like; okay, well, you know, I was supposed to moderate, and then I drank too much. And it's like, "Okay, what exactly was your plan?" Her plan was for two.

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And I was like, “Okay, what exactly happened in the moment after you finished the second glass? Like, what was that thought and feeling that lead to pouring more? And then, what was the thought and feeling after the third glass, that led to pouring more?” We often don't understand our habits with this level of specificity.

It's so important that we do. Because imagine how powerful it is to teach your brain; at any moment I can choose to make another decision. It doesn't matter what happened the moment before. Self-Sabotage comes in, when you make breaking a commitment mean everything, and everything bad.

So, there's a broken commitment; that's on one side. And then, there's the meaning that your brain makes of breaking it. That's where you start to see thoughts like; ugh, see, I can't do it. I never follow through. All those lost. And then, you feel defeated. And then, guess what happens when you feel defeated? You give yourself permission to drink more.

You're not drinking more because you broke your commitment, you're drinking more because your brain has interpreted success and failure in this black-and-white binary way. Rather than; oh, I still have an opportunity to grow, and learn, and teach my brain something new, and choose a different way forward.

But that is never available to you, when you only see commitment as this black-or-white thing, either I did, or I didn't. I want you to consider how would you approach things differently if you always thought there was something you could learn? Doesn't matter if you broke your commitment, there is always still a moment to teach your brain something new, to choose a different path, to rewire your brain differently. Even after you didn't follow your plan.

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Because that really is the truth. The goal here is not; okay, we've got to be perfect. We've got to make sure that if we have a commitment we always follow through. The goal is how do I learn to have my back in all moments, not just the moments when I'm perfect? Not just the moments when I succeed? How do I learn how to have my back in all moments? Including the moments when I make a plan and I don't follow through.

Then what? Am I going to fall into this kind of knee-jerk interpretation; ugh, see? I can't do it; I never follow through. I mean, I might as well keep going because I broke my commitment. Am I going to choose that? Or, am I going to use this as an opportunity to teach my brain that the most important thing is not really the commitment itself. It's how we show up, no matter what.

So, when you have your back in every situation, including those situations when you said you're going to do one thing and did another, that is what is so powerful. Most people don't know how to have their back in these moments. I didn't for a long time. I didn't know how to have my back in the moment when I "failed," because I only saw success and failure. And, that's why I would self-sabotage. That's why I would go off the rails on those nights.

So, you can keep doing that, which is what most people do. Or, you can use the moment, the moment that you had a plan, and you didn't follow through. You can use that moment as like the best practice that your brain can have about choosing something different. You can tell yourself; I can always start over. I can always do something different in the next moment. I can always recalibrate. I can always decide what I'm going to do next, no matter what happened the moment before.

And when you understand how to do this, when you start to remove commitments self-sabotage from your life, not just around learning to change your drinking habits, but around everything. It will just make things

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not only so much easier, but it gives you so many more opportunities to learn, and grow, and teach your brain new things. And how to show up differently, and how to have your back, no matter what is going on in all areas of your life.

So, really spend some time thinking about that today. Think about the black-and-white way that you may approach commitment, and the ways in which you may be self-sabotaging. It's not because who you're with, or the fact that you broke your commitment, or what was going on in your life, or what was happening around you, or the fact that you were tipsy. If you can really just look closely; what did I tell myself, in that moment that I didn't follow through? How did that make me feel?

When you start to see that think-feel-act cycle, you will see commitment self-sabotage. And when you see that, you'll start to see a whole new way forward. That you don't have to be perfect, you just have to start practicing always having your back.

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.

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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.