

## Ep #303: Preparing for Drinking Too Much



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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 303.

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.

Alright, hello, everyone. We are talking about something today that you might find a little unusual. We're talking about preparing for when you drink too much. This might seem like a really weird topic; why would I want to prepare for the thing that I don't want to do? I don't want to drink too much, maybe I don't want to drink at all. That's the problem. I want to be good. I don't want to keep making the same mistakes.

But I will tell you this, preparing for these moments, going into the process of change, by preparing for moments when you're not perfect, is so valuable. And it is a step that, across the board, everyone misses. I missed this for the longest time, and it's what held me back in my own journey of change.

You know, I was talking about this recently, inside the *Take a Break* membership, I was talking about the importance of really focusing on three thoughts. So, I talk all the time about the think-feel-act cycle and how your drinking doesn't just happen. Your body doesn't make a move towards the drink without a thought and a feeling.

And it's so important to understand what they are. It's also important to pay attention to the thoughts that we have about our ability to change. Do we actually believe that we can learn how to drink less? Do we believe that we could be happy not drinking? Do we believe that we could have a

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relationship with alcohol where we feel totally in control and never deprived when we say no?

Now, a lot of people will come to the membership, and they'll say, "Well, I want to believe that. I want to believe that it's possible." And I say, "Well, okay, that's fine. But let's look at what you actually believe, right now." What are you telling yourself, deep inside, about what is possible for you? If we don't look at that, if we pretend like that thought isn't there, I'm telling you, it's always going to get in the way. It's always going to sabotage your efforts.

Also important, is your belief about your cravings, right? That desire to drink, the desire to have another, those urges. Again, when I present this to people, it's a little bit like; I don't know, that's weird. Why should I think about that? I just don't want my cravings to be there. I wish they would go away. I don't like them. If I had fewer cravings, then I wouldn't be where I am right now.

But again, this is really important. Because so much of the work that I teach is about learning how to detach from these cravings. Learning how to allow them and not make them mean anything about you, or anything about your progress. Learning how to be curious about them. What are they here to tell me? Oh, this is interesting. I wonder why I want relief right now? I wonder why I want another? What's going on here?

Using them as kind of stepping stones to understand. But of course, we often miss this because our unconscious belief about our cravings is like; I just don't want them. I wish they would go away. I hate them. They're too strong. They're too much. They last forever. I mean, the list of thoughts that we have goes on and on.

And then, finally, the other thought that's so important, so important to focus on; okay, well, what are you going to think on purpose? What are you

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going to make it mean the moment that you break your commitment? So, you promised that you wouldn't have any, and you drank. Or, you promised that you'd be good, and you had so many you don't even remember. What are you going to decide to make it mean?

This is what I'm talking about when I'm talking about preparing for drinking too much. And this one, this is the area that really breaks people's brains. Because they're like; why am I preparing for this? I don't want to keep messing up. I don't want to keep breaking my commitment. And you're telling me prepare for that moment. So, are you essentially saying that I can't do it? Are you saying that this is going to be too hard for me?

No, I'm not saying all of that. What I'm saying, is that if you don't decide ahead of time, how you're going to respond in these moments, what you're going to make them mean, then what's going to happen is that your brain is going to revert to its default patterns. Its default thinking around what it means when you don't follow through, what it means when you drink too much, what it means when you got drunk, and you said you're only going to have a glass.

And I will promise you this, those default patterns are not helping you. They are part of the problem. And if we kind of say, "Well, I don't want to think about this, because I just want to know how to stop screwing up," we're setting ourselves up for a bigger problem. Because what we're saying essentially is; I just want to be perfect.

And I'm sorry if I'm the one breaking the news to you, that perfection is not happening, then sorry, but that's the case. This is what I wanted too for the longest time. I just wanted to stop making mistakes. Then, the thing was, because I wasn't preparing for these moments, then just my default thinking was kicking in the next day.

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And it didn't matter if, you know, this was about I was on a streak of not drinking, and then all of a sudden, I gave in. Or, if I was on a streak of like being really good, and being really responsible, then I just got so wasted. Didn't really matter, the same patterns of thinking kicked in, right?

It's like; oh, my God, I blew it. Why did I do that? What's wrong with me? When am I going to figure this out? Why can't I keep my commitment? Why is it so easy for everyone else? And here's the thing, when we don't choose on purpose what we're going to make it mean, what will happen is that we will end up going one of two routes, both of which are not very helpful.

I kind of ping-ponged between both of these, for the longest time. So, the first route was okay, I just gotta start over, right? Gotta reset the clock. I'm starting again today, or I'm starting again tomorrow, like, let's just start over. It is a very common habit, this desire to just reset the clock, is really not helpful. I'm going to talk about that more.

But the other pattern that people fall into, the other response they have is like; okay, well, I mean, I just can't do it. It's just like more evidence that I'm never going to be able to figure this out. So, I might as well stop trying. I might as well just enjoy myself today and tomorrow and the next day, and just drink as much as I want.

So, these two responses are the result of our default thought patterns, after we break a commitment, and neither of them are helping. So, what I really encourage people to do, is think about; okay, today, right now, if you knew that you could mail a letter to your future self, on whatever day in the future, your future self broke their commitment. And if you knew that letter would arrive right on time, right when it needed to be there.

What would you want it to say? What would you want to tell your future self? Would you want to tell that version of you who drank too much last

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night, or who had this long streak of not drinking and then that streak is gone...

Would you want to tell your future self; you know, all your hard work is really down the drain. You're such a screw up. I don't know why you can't figure this out. But last night is just proof that you're not going to be able to, so you should just go ahead and quit trying to figure this out. Because drinking is always going to be a problem.

Would you want to say: you know what? You wasted all the work that you've been doing. All of that work doesn't count anymore. Now, we have to reset the clock. We have to start again at day zero.

Most people realize, when we think about it that way, when we think about telling this future self, we think about telling that version of ourselves these things, most people realize; yeah, that's probably not the best idea. Those probably aren't very helpful thoughts.

But yet, we don't plan for these moments, because we're so insistent that we don't want the moments to happen at all. So, I really want you to consider what you would tell your future self. I really want you to decide on purpose, even if it feels a little uncomfortable, even if you're like; yeah, but like, am I giving myself permission to break my promise? You're not.

Even if you tell yourself; oh, I just like, I just want to stop making the same mistakes. I promise you; this work is gonna get you closer. When I pose this to people, I will say, this one exercise is the one that I think really breaks people's brain.

They're like, so fixated on 'I don't want to screw up,' that they don't realize that that desire to be perfect, that desire to never make a mistake, is actually what's keeping them stuck. Because it puts you in this kind of all-

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or-nothing binary thinking of, either I'm succeeding or I'm failing. Either I'm doing it right or I'm doing it wrong. Either I'm good or I'm bad.

And that thinking is part of the problem. Like, what if you had a commitment to say no, or you had a commitment to have two drinks, and you didn't follow that commitment? But you didn't make it mean that anything was wrong with you. Or, that you were never going to figure this out, or that all your hard work was down the drain.

What if you didn't make it mean any of that? Because when you make it mean those things, what happens, of course, is you feel shame. And then, when we feel shame, what do we do? We hide, we avoid looking, we want to forget about what happened. Many times, we go deeper into our numbing behaviors.

So, we drink more, and we eat more. We're trying to find more ways to escape. So, what if, instead, you could just choose what you want to make it mean? Doesn't mean that all your hard work is lost. But that really is the mentality that so many people take. And by the way, we take this with not just drinking, we take this with all our commitments, right?

So, we have three weeks of eating healthy, right? We're doing really good. And then one day, we just eat all the things. Does that mean that you just lost the past three weeks of healthy eating? Of course not. You didn't have 21 days of eating all the things. You had 21 days of healthy eating, and then one day of eating all the things. Those previous 21 days have not been erased.

It's true with food, it's true with drinking, it's true with going to the gym, right? You can have three weeks of not drinking, that doesn't all disappear after one night of getting drunk. I really want you to think about it. All your hard work is not lost. This idea that you have to reset the clock is part of the problem.

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You still had all the practice of saying no. You were still doing the work of rewiring your brain every time you were saying no. Now, what you have is an opportunity. You have an opportunity to ask yourself; okay, let's understand why this happened.

What was going on? What was happening in my life? How was I feeling? Oh, I remember, my in-laws were visiting. All these projects hit at the same time at work. My chronic pain flared up. I remember that I was having a lot of stress. I was feeling really resentful. I was feeling kind of stuck.

Whatever your answers are, when you get curious, all of a sudden, you see that there are all these clues. It's like, little puzzle pieces about how the habit is working. And when you start to get curious, you understand; oh, I guess I just didn't have the tools.

My in-laws were here, I didn't have the tools to deal with my stress about that. I had all these deadlines at work, I didn't have the tools for when I have no time for myself, and I feel really exhausted. My chronic pain flared up; I didn't have the tools, because what I have taught myself in the past, is that I use a drink to deal with pain.

When you decide ahead of time, what you're going to make this moment mean, the moment that you break your commitment, you gain the opportunity to really understand the habit and not lose information. That's what happens for so many people when they reset the clock. They don't realize that they're... It's like putting shutters or blinders on, so you can't actually learn from what happened.

So really, you can decide right now. You can write it down on a piece of paper. Put it aside somewhere where you know you will find it. What are you going to make it mean when you drink too much? When you break your commitment?

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You can make it mean; okay, there's a part of the habit that I don't yet understand, I can't yet see. There's something for me to learn here. There's a skill that I need more practice with, or a skill that maybe I don't even have at all. Maybe this is an opportunity for me to grow. Maybe this is an opportunity for me to get to know my inner self on a deeper level. Maybe this is an opportunity for me to be curious. And instead of shaming myself, to ask a lot of questions.

That's what you can actually do. And imagine how different, imagine how different you would approach the day after breaking your commitment, if you made it mean all of those things. Instead of; all my hard work is lost. I'm never going to figure this out. Something is wrong with me.

Which, when you take those thoughts and you put them in the think-feel-act cycle, you see that they lead to feelings and actions that are not actually helping you create change. But instead, you can decide right now; okay, well, what am I going to make it mean? What am I going to make it mean when I break my commitment? What's that letter that I'm going to send to my future self?

Because I know that whatever I make it mean, reverberates so much through the next days and weeks and months. This is why so many people, myself included for the longest time, this is why so many people end up in this kind of like start-and-stop pattern with their drinking.

It's like, I'm being good, I'm being good. Oh no, I was bad. Now I'm really being bad. Oh, I can't figure it out. So, I just I'm going all in, I'm being bad. Now, I've been too bad. So, I gotta go back to being good. It's so exhausting. We would actually create change at such a faster pace, if you just spend five minutes right now, preparing for the moments when you break your commitment.

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Preparing for the morning after when you drank way too much. If you just spent five minutes right now, writing down and deciding; hey, of all the things that I could tell that future self, what do I want to tell that person? I promise you, that your journey, your work, changing the habit would be ten times faster.

This really is a step that is so powerful, I don't want any of you to skip it. Even if you're telling yourselves; I just want to be good. I just don't want to make any mistakes. If that's the thought you're having, you need this work even more.

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

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