

## Ep #304: Drinking and Your Inner Taskmaster



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Rachel Hart**

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## Ep #304: Drinking and Your Inner Taskmaster

You are listening to the *Take A Break* podcast with Rachel Hart, Episode 304.

Whether you want to drink less or stop drinking, this podcast will help you change the habit from the inside out. We're challenging conventional wisdom about why people drink and why it can be hard to resist temptation. No labels, no judgment, just practical tools to take control of your desire and stop worrying about your drinking. Now, here's your host Rachel Hart.

All right, my friends, it has been a while since I have talked about your to-do list on the podcast. Now, I talk about this all the time, inside the *Take a Break* membership, because so often, what I see is that people develop the habit, we start seeking out and craving a reward, in response to this kind of go-go-go, non-stop, doing things all day long.

So, feeling like you're constantly on the go, yet, somehow, you're always behind. And, you're always wishing that you had more time. It is not enough to say, I want to change my relationship with alcohol. And so, I just have to double down on willpower. I just have to, you know, keep my commitment, and say, no.

It doesn't work like that. You have to really understand what is feeding the habit. And sometimes, what you will discover is that it's not your favorite drink that's feeding the habit, what's feeding the habit is your desire to rest. Your desire to stop working. Your desire to just have a signal; you know what? I'm off the clock, my day is done.

And so, I want to talk about that today. Because I talk about it all the time when I'm working with people, but I don't necessarily talk about it a lot on the podcast. Also, apologies, I have a cold. So, I thought I would record this podcast a little bit earlier in the week than normal, because I don't know where my voice is going.

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Alright, so rethinking your to-do list, it really is one of the most powerful things that you can do to cut back on your drinking. And, I'm not talking about getting rid of all your to-dos. I'm not talking about getting a personal assistant. I'm not talking even about getting everyone in your family to help out. I'm talking about rethinking your understanding, your conception of the to-do list.

And it sounds kind of, I don't know, like up in the clouds a little bit. But I promise that it makes such a big difference. Because when your brain learns to associate drinking with everything that you have done today, and everything that you have yet to do, everything that you didn't get done, and all the things that you have to do tomorrow, when your brain learns to make that association, you cannot ignore this piece of the puzzle.

What I see happen time and time again, is that it really boils down to people who have been going, going, going all day long. And the way that they have learned to stop, the way that they finally give themselves permission to sit down and stop thinking, is to pour a drink. So, that's what happens, kind of, on one end of the spectrum.

On the other end of the spectrum are people who are like, "Listen, I don't have time to sit down and relax. I still have so much to do. I got to get dinner on the table. And then, I got to make lunches, and nobody has been doing the laundry, and we got to tidy up, and I have things to do for work. Like, I still have all these things to do. But at least I get to have a drink while I'm doing them. At least I get to have a little reward."

And so, what happens, is that the drink becomes permission either to stop working, or it becomes an incentive to keep pushing through. And now, the problem, of course, is that the moment you decide, "You know what I want to cut back. I don't want to be drinking this much. I want to take a break. Or, maybe I want to stop drinking." The moment you decide to do that, you encounter this problem.

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Because you can't ignore the connection with your to-do list, and your to-do list is still there. And if your brain has learned to associate 'drinking is how we signal that our day is done,' or 'drinking is the reward to keep pushing through with the things that I don't really want to do.' If you try to cut back, all of a sudden, it's gonna be like, "Okay, well, this isn't so enjoyable. Now, I still have to do all these end-of-day drudgery. I have to do all those tasks. And now, I don't have my reward."

Or, a lot of people will tell me, "Okay, Rachel, I tried. Like, I tried to just sit down and relax without a drink. And the whole time I was sitting there, I just kept thinking to myself, 'God, I should be doing something productive.'" And so, cutting back on your drinking and saying no, in the evening, it really requires more than willpower.

It requires a whole new outlook on your to-do list. I'm gonna give you some strategies today, for you to try to work on and implement in your own life. And it's really important that you think about; how is my relationship with everything that I want to do, all the things on my to-do list, how does that relationship show up at the end of the day for me? How does it show up in my desire for a reward? How does it show up in my desire for a drink?

It's so important. Okay, so the first thing, is just responding to this thought; Oh, God, I'm so behind. How many times have you thought that, right? Like, I'm so behind. And the thought error that people have is I'm just gonna feel better once I get everything done. Once I catch up. Once I can just get ahead on this list, I'm going to feel better.

This really is a problem. When you conceive of your to-dos as behind or ahead, you're always going to be in a race. And you're always going to be looking at what you have accomplished. And see, it's not enough, and I will feel better when I do more. Now, as you hear me say this, you can think what the problem is. The problem is, if you're telling yourself you're going to

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feel better once you get everything done, you know that that's not the case, really.

It seems, logically, like it is the case. But what ends up happening, is you just keep working and working and working and working and never resting. Because you're telling yourself; that moment of feeling better, it's coming when I stop feeling so behind.

Except, if you're like me, I mean, I feel like I've spent most of my four decades alive, believing that I'm behind. And no amount of work, and overtime, and working in the evenings, and working on weekends, and working as hard as I can and not taking breaks, none of that actually has resolved the thought; I'm so behind. It's a trap.

And when you're in that trap, when you feel like; oh, God, I'm just going to feel better if I can get everything done. But I can't get everything done. And I'm working so hard. And oh, God, this is so difficult, I just need a break. You are going to be craving something at the end of the day. You're going to be looking for; how do I finally just have a break and signal that the day is done, and I can stop thinking?

For so many people, that answer is a drink. Now, I talked about this on an earlier podcast. So, way back when, Episode 76 was all about drinking and your to-do list. I talked about this analogy, and I'm gonna revisit it here really quickly. But if you want to hear me really go in depth on this, and I think this analogy is so powerful, then go check out Episode 76.

So, the analogy is, instead of thinking about all your to-dos as a list, you can start to think of them as a river of to-dos. Sounds a little weird, but stay with me. Instead of a list, when there's a beginning and an end, right; you can be behind on a list, or you can be ahead on a list. Instead of thinking of it like there's some sort of endpoint, you start to think about your to-dos as a river. It's always flowing; the river always flows.

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There's no point in which you don't have to-dos, because as long as you're alive, there will always be things that you want to accomplish. So, the goal here is not to dry up the river. The goal is to learn, how do I make peace? How do I coexist with the fact that there is this constant flow?

How do I learn how to wade into the river of to-dos? And how do I also learn how to wade out? How do I accept that it's always going to be flowing, and there's no need to feel behind? And there's no reason to tell myself, "I'll feel better if I get ahead." I just have to decide to step in and step out.

I promise you this, if you start thinking about your to-dos, and understanding I'm not supposed to get to the place where they're all done. I'm not supposed to dry up this river. It really does change your mindset. Instead of constantly trying to frantically cross things off your list. Just like, okay, the to-dos are always going to be there. There's always going to be more it doesn't matter how productive I am. Right now, my job is just to tell myself, hey, it's time to step out of the river. It's time to wade back out.

When you're able to do this, when you're able to let go of this idea, that if only you can get ahead, you'll feel better. If only you can stop feeling behind, you'll feel better. What you'll start to see is that you start to loosen the grip on feeling like you need permission to sit down and relax. You're just able to see, like; okay, the to-dos are there, it's not a problem. They're always flowing.

It's not about this behind or ahead, those things don't really exist; it's just always going to be a flow of to-dos. That analogy has helped so many people that I work with. Has helped me to really stop telling myself; I just got to do one more thing, and then I'm going to feel better. That really is the thought error that keeps you working to a point, where then you have overworked yourself, and then you're looking for a reward.

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Alright, the second thing that you can start to put into practice, is responding to this thought; God, I should be doing something. So, I said that this comes up a lot, right? People say, “Rachel, I tried to relax. I tried to sit down on the couch, and I didn't pour a glass of wine, I didn't get a beer out of the fridge. But I was sitting there, and all I could think to myself was, ‘I really should be doing something.’”

Here's the thing, what happens, is that we try to quiet this inner taskmaster that we have. We try to quiet that part of our brain that's saying, do something, do something, be productive, you should get more done, you're behind. Instead of learning how to turn down the volume on all that noise, we end up trying to drink over it.

And, this is a huge problem. Because if you feel like the only way not to hear that taskmaster inside of me is to drink over it, then of course, you're always going to be craving a drink. And so, one of the really powerful things to do here, especially when you have this thought, like; I should be doing something, I should be productive; Is starting to reframe rest.

A lot of times I think that people will say, yeah, yeah, of course everyone needs to rest. But we actually don't give it the same kind of priority that we do work. And a lot of times we think that rest is the opposite of work. As opposed to, these are two sides of the same coin, right; rest and work, they go hand-in-hand.

In order to get things done, you need to actually be able to rest. Because when you're able to rest, and when rest is a priority in your life, you have more energy; you have more focus, you're able to solve problems better when you prioritize resting. So, you actually make yourself more productive.

But I don't think that most of us are taught to understand rest in that way. We were taught to kind of see rest as a luxury, right; I'll sleep when I'm

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dead. As opposed to, no, rest is key. It is vital for me to be performing at my highest level. I will tell you this mindset shift, it takes practice. But the more you start to see that rest is essential for getting things done, the more you're able to actually sit.

Sit on the couch, just not do anything, or watch TV, or read a book, or whatever you want to do to relax in the evening, and not have that little part of you that's like; you know, you really shouldn't be doing something. You really should be productive. You know there are dishes. You know there's laundry. You know all these things on your to-do list are waiting for you to do them.

These things go hand-in-hand, right? If we're telling ourselves that we're behind and that we'll feel better once we get everything done, guess what happens? It becomes very difficult for us to actually rest. And so many times, that's what the drink signals.

It's not only permission to rest, it's the way that we have unconsciously learned to shut off that inner taskmaster. But I'm telling you, the work that you do, to actually quiet that part of you, without needing a drink, is so important.

Okay, and then, the last kind of tactic I want to give you, that's so important: When you notice this connection, between feeling like you need to do all the things, feeling like you can't take a break, feeling like you need permission to stop, is really starting to examine your language about how you talk about the things that you do.

So, if you are like me, it will often sound a lot like; ugh, I have so much to do. I just have so many things that I have to get done. So, again, this is a good example, when we kind of use a drink to push through the drudgery. It's like; Oh God, I have so many things to do. I'm never gonna finish at all. I

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can't take a break. But at least I can have this drink while I'm doing all these things that I have to do.

And one of the things that I tell people to start to practice, is to really ask themselves; listen, is this a have to or a want to? Now, when I first introduce this to people, sometimes I get a little bit of an eye roll. Like, okay, really? Does that make that much of a difference? A have to versus a want to?

You know what? I was in that place, too. When I started to really examine the power of my thoughts and the power of my words, it's like; oh, God, isn't this just semantics? But I'm going to tell you, when you really understand how the think-feel-act cycle works, and you start to notice how you feel when you tell yourself that you have to do something; you have to do the laundry, you have to make the lunches, you have to respond to this email.

When you start to understand how that makes you feel, you see that that language is very disempowering. And this is such an important place to start to make the shift. To start to discern; what are my actual have tos versus my want tos? Because every time I tell myself, I have to do something, it kind of feels terrible. It kind of feels like a little bit of my freewill is being taken away from me. It makes me feel like I'm no longer the one calling the shots.

But the truth is, when you really look at it, when you kind of write down all your have tos, and you ask yourself; are they really have tos, or are they want tos? You start to see, yeah, a lot of these things, they're actually things I just want to do.

Now, some of these tasks, they may not be your favorite thing to do. But you will likely still want to get them done. And when you make the shift, and again, it's so small, but it's so powerful. When instead of like; Oh God, I

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have to do this. And I have to remember to do this. And these are all the things I have to do tonight. When you make that shift, and you start using the language of want to, again, it may not be your most favorite thing in the world.

But you start to get a little bit of your power back. You start to feel a little bit more in control. And when you start to feel that way, the need for a reward to push through the drudgery, it starts to dissipate. You no longer feel like it's as important.

So, these three strategies that I gave you today they're really small. They're really shifting how you view your to-dos from a list to a river that's always flowing. Starting to talk about rest in a different way, rather than; yeah, it's like a nice thing or a luxury, or I'll get to it when I have time. Really seeing it as integral to your productivity.

And then, looking at some of the language that you use around your tasks. Are you talking about have tos or want tos? These are all really small things that you can implement right away. And, I promise you that it makes such a big difference when you are trying to cut back on drinking in the evening. When you're trying to no longer use a drink as a signal that your day is done. Or, to push through the things in the evening that you don't want to do. Or, to be able to shut off that inner taskmaster.

These things are really simple, and they make a big difference. Again, if you want to change your relationship with alcohol, you need to really look at everything in your life. You can't treat it like it's happening in a bubble. And how you approach your to-dos, it's always going to show up in your drinking.

Alright, that's it for today. I will see you next week. Thank you for bearing with me as my voice sounds a little funky. Alright everyone, talk to you soon.

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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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