

Ep #310: The Most Important Step to Change Your Drinking



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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 310.

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, everybody, welcome back. Today is going to be a short and sweet episode, because I know everybody's got a lot of stuff going on at the end of the year. I also know it's the end of the year, and you really are ready to change; you are ready for this upcoming year to be different.

So, what I'm sharing with you today, is the only question; the only question that you need to ask yourself when it comes to changing your drinking. And, you don't need me to tell you this. This really is the only question that you need to ever ask yourself when you're trying to figure out how to do anything in life.

This is the beauty of all of these skills, everything I teach around changing your desire, changing your response to urges, understanding how your mind works. Everything that you learn on this journey to change your relationship with alcohol, you can apply it everywhere. That really is the beauty.

So, the question is simple; do you believe that you have what it takes to change your relationship with alcohol? Do you believe that is possible? Do you believe that it is possible to have a crappy day and not crave a drink in order to feel better? Do you believe that you can say no to a drink, without all this internal back and forth and internal drama?

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Do you believe that you could start drinking, and then forget to finish your glass? Do you believe that you could go to a party and not just have an okay time or a fine time, or “Yeah, I survived not drinking” time? Do you believe you could go to a party and have as much fun or more without a drink?

Whatever it is for you, whatever, when you think about the way you want to change your relationship with alcohol, whatever feels like that stickiest area for you; maybe, it's not socializing. Maybe, it's drinking when you get home and when you're cooking dinner. Maybe, it's not drinking when you're at home, it's drinking when you're, you know, watching a game with people.

Whatever feels like the stickiest situation for you, I just want you to ask yourself; do I believe that it is possible for me to change this? Asking and answering this question, it really is the very first step that everyone wants to skip. I wanted to skip it, too. Everyone wants to bypass this step.

But you have to be willing to do it. You have to be willing to answer this question, honestly, and look at your answers. We all want to skip this step because we're so afraid of what we're going to see. We're so afraid of our answer. And what happens, is people will say, “Yeah, I don't think I really believe... I don't think that I can do it.”

And then, it's so painful to look at these thoughts. It's so painful to come face-to-face with all my doubt and all my worry that maybe, “I'm the exception. Maybe, I'm the person who can't figure this out. And so, I don't want to look at it. Let's just try to like shove it in the back of the closet and pretend it's not there, and double-down on effort, double-down on willpower.”

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This is exactly what I did for the longest time. Deep down, I was like, “I don't know, I don't think it's possible. I have just failed too many times. I have too much family history; relatives who struggled with drinking. I see this pattern of overdoing it and always thinking, ‘more is better’. I see this pattern in so many areas of my life.”

And really, most of all, I really thought I would be missing out on something huge. Right? So, I kind of believed, “Yeah, I can say no. But oh my God, it's like, so you want me to live life in this kind of, you know, grayscale instead of Technicolor.” I just didn't believe that life would be as good or as fun, or I would feel as at ease as I did when I was drinking. Or, that I would have the same kind of connection with people.

It was painful to look at these answers. It was painful to believe that I couldn't do it. So, what did I do? I just told myself, “Rachel, you got to work harder. You got to put in more effort. You got to make more rules, and try to be more disciplined and focused on willpower, and just like double-down on trying to be better.” But this is the problem; you can't do better. Without better thoughts, your actions don't just happen.

This is the premise of the think-feel-act cycle. This idea that you know everything that you do; whether or not you say yes to your desire, you say no, whether or not you stop by the liquor store or you drive on by, whether or not you reach for another glass, or you say no things. None of this just happens.

Our actions aren't these kinds of spontaneous, unknowable things. They are the product of our thoughts and our feelings. And the problem, is that for most of us, not only do we never learn about this cycle or how it works, but for most of us, all we see are the actions; that's the most visible part of

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the cycle. And the thoughts and the feelings remain kind of hidden in our unconscious, and that really is the problem.

This is the thought error here: The thought error is, "I'll believe I can change, when I change. I'll believe that I can stop desiring a drink at five, when I stop desiring it." It's essentially, this kind of seeing is believing mentality, "I'll believe it, I'll believe it's possible, when I see that I have done it."

Here's the problem; you're putting the belief last. That's not how the think-feel-act cycle works. Belief always comes first. You have to believe that change is possible; believe that you can figure it out, believe that you have what it takes. Regardless of how many times you've tried to change before. Regardless of your family history. Regardless of how long you've been drinking. Regardless of all of the reasons that you want to kind of, you know, hold up and say, "This is why I can't do it."

It's so crazy, right? I did this, too. We're so committed to proving that we can't do something. I would do this all the time, I would just kind of be like, but what about this? But what about this? But what about this? And it's like, well, what if we fought for the possibility that we could do it?

Because when you're saying to yourself, "Yeah, I'll believe I can change, when I change," what you're essentially saying is, "I don't believe I have what it takes. I don't think that I can do it." And what I'm asking you to do today, is really to just start with this question; do you believe that you have what it takes to change your relationship with alcohol? Whatever is the stickiest area for you. Do you believe that change is possible?

Don't answer this in your head; write it out, get it on paper. You have to be willing to look at it. You have to see those answers. And listen, if you don't

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like what you see; I certainly didn't when I answered that question. Just remind yourself, they're not the truth.

There is not a single person that I have worked with, and I have worked with thousands, there's not a single person who comes to this work without doubt. Everybody comes with doubt; doubt is normal. You can't just kind of shove it in the closet and act as if it doesn't exist. You have to acknowledge that it's there. Acknowledge that you have the doubt; the doubt isn't the problem.

The problem is you don't yet know how to work with it. That's a skill; knowing how to work with your doubt is a skill. It's a skill that we should learn in school; nobody teaches us. And, it's a skill that you can learn. I just want you to think, "It's possible that no one's ever given me the tools before. It's possible that all the times I've broken my commitment, it's possible they're not indicative of my future." It really is okay to doubt yourself.

What's not okay, is staying in that place. Staying, as if that is the only possibility. Of course, you have doubt, we all have doubt. "Okay, so how do I keep taking forward action? How do I keep having forward momentum? I tried something, it didn't work. What's next?"

Every time you break your commitment, you can either make it mean, "Okay, I'm never gonna figure this out. Change is impossible; I'm doomed. I'm never going to be able to learn. Something is wrong with me." Every time you drink too much, you can make it mean all these things. Or, you can make it mean, "Okay, well, the thing I tried, didn't work. It's time to try something else."

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So often, when I start working with people, the only thing they know to try is another restriction, another rule. But they are putting in place rules and restrictions while holding on to this belief that they can't actually do it. And I just want to say this, you know, 99% of the work that I do with people, is just teaching them how to try something else. That's it.

And most times, that idea comes from inside the person, right? You actually know what is best for you. You actually have that kind of hypothesis for why didn't that work. But so often, we're not able to access that kind of knowledge, because we're so stuck in this belief that we can't do it.

It's like, okay, so you tried to X, and X didn't work. Let's try, why? So often, we don't even get to 'why'. Right? We are so bogged down in this kind of thicket of self-recrimination and despair, that we don't even get to why we just give up. That really is the work; how do I get to my next best step?

And I will tell you this, it is not coming if you just focus on willpower, and discipline, and restrictions, and avoidance, and all of the things that we are taught, right? We're taught so much; "Just say, no. You should be able to do this. You should be able to use willpower. And if you can't do it, it means something is wrong with you."

You have to really be willing to answer the question, whether or not you believe you have what it takes, be willing to see those answers. Write them down, be honest with yourself. Look at the thing you're afraid to look at, and then recognize, "Okay, so that's one possibility. All of my doubt is one possibility. How do I keep making change?"

You can't do that by putting your belief last. You have to learn how to put your belief first. And that practice of really baby stepping, you know, using

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kind of like baby steps, or finding a bridge to a new thought, learning how to shift your thoughts in truly believable ways, not b.s.ing yourself, that is what is so key. That is what is so essential.

And I will tell you this, it comes with working with someone else. Trying to do this all in your head, I think really, is what keeps most everyone stuck; is this idea that, "I should be able to figure this out on my own. And if I can't, it must mean that I have a problem."

If we just treated this like anything else in the world, which is like, "Okay, I want to learn a new skill. So, maybe I should get some help. Maybe, I should see if someone can help me along the way." If we're open to that, which of course we're open to in so many areas... Because in other areas, we don't make it mean that something is wrong with us if we don't know how to do it right out the gate.

I want to encourage all of you today, answer this question for yourself. And you know what? You can use this question for anything that you want to figure out in life. Do you believe that you have what it takes? Don't try to hide from your answers. Just be honest with yourself. Be willing to look and then know that doubt is normal. Know that, every time you want to look towards the past to tell yourself why you can't do it.

That you could instead, be looking towards the future. You could instead, be looking towards a version of yourself that you just haven't met, yet, who just tried something, and another thing and another thing, until you figured out what worked for you. You can do this. This is what is possible for you in the new year. I know that you can.

Alright everybody, I'll see you next week.

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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 and start your transformation today.