

Ep #352: When the Drinks Are Free



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Rachel Hart

[Take a Break from Drinking](#) with Rachel Hart

Ep #352: When the Drinks Are Free

You are listening to the *Take a Break* podcast with Rachel Hart, Episode 352.

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're talking today about something that comes up a lot when I am working with people. Now, it is difficult to say no when the drinks are free. It might be an open bar. It might be bottomless mimosas at brunch. It might be a free happy hour at the hotel, or free drinks in the airport lounge or on the plane. Or waiters handing out bubbly at an event. We encounter a lot of free alcohol in the world.

Which means if you want to drink less, if you want to change your relationship with alcohol, if you want to stop drinking, this is a piece of the puzzle that you need to figure out. But here's the thing, our attraction to "free" is often with more than just booze.

"Free" can be a very powerful word when it comes to all sorts of things, when it comes to food or stuff or shipping. Why? Because we hear the word "free" and think that we're getting something valuable for nothing. So, we have this sense that there's only an upside. What's there to lose? Why not?

"Free" implies only benefits and zero cost. Why not say yes to what is free? There's no downside, right? Of course, there can be a downside. Not just to the free drink, but to anything that is free. But the downside may not be what you expect. You have to really understand what the downside is if you want to intervene successfully with the excuse, "Why not? It's free."

[Take a Break from Drinking](#) with Rachel Hart

Ep #352: When the Drinks Are Free

So, I want to back up and just talk about the brain a little bit; in particular, your lower brain. We've talked about this. The brain is very complicated, there are many, many different parts. But for simplicity's sake, we talk about the lower brain and the higher brain.

The lower brain is that part of you that really cares about survival. Its job is to keep you alive. Survival happens through a pretty simple equation, find pleasure, avoid pain, and save energy while you're at it. So, what that means, is that the lower brain prioritizes rewards. It prioritizes things that are fast and easy.

Your lower brain is always going to think that free stuff is amazing. Always. You're getting something without expending any energy. You don't have to open your wallet. You didn't have to earn money to pay for it. It's just free. So, we have this sense that free things are more valuable, but only because we don't have to pay money for it. And so, our knee jerk is like, 'Well, okay, who cares? It's free.'

I think about all the free crappy glasses of wine that I have had in my life, free crappy mixed drinks, and free crappy champagne; too many to count. They're not usually offering up top shelf liquor when you're getting things that are free. But here's the thing, even if it is a free drink from the top shelf, it isn't actually free, there always is a cost.

Now, I want to be really careful when I'm talking about this, because you might hear me say 'there's a cost' and expect what I'm going to be talking about is alcohol is bad for you, and it's bad for your liver. And that thing that you think is free is actually costing you your health. But I think that that explanation is too easy.

You can make that argument, sure. There are reasons why alcohol is having an impact on your health, but there's also a reason why focusing on health is often not very persuasive in the moment.

[Take a Break from Drinking](#) with Rachel Hart

Ep #352: When the Drinks Are Free

In fact, trying to tell yourself, “I'm going to regret this tomorrow. It's going to screw up my sleep. I don't need these calories...” Sometimes trying to argue with that part of you that's like, ‘Yeah, but it's free. Why not?’ Sometimes when you try to go down that path, it ends up having the opposite effect. It makes you want to rebel

Why? Because we desire to feel good. For a lot of us, having a drink is a tried and true way to do just that, to feel good. So, the idea of ‘okay, well, I want to feel good and now you're trying to make me feel bad. Now you're trying to guilt me into saying no, or shame me into making a choice because it's not good for me.’ Well, you can imagine what happens, you're probably going to dig your heels in, and just be like, “Oh, screw it.”

So, let's put aside for a second the cost of your physical health and consider something else. The cost I want you to think of is the cost of reinforcing that your lower brain runs the show. Because that's what is happening in the moment when you say yes to the free drink. That split second, when you're offered the free drink, and you're like, “Yeah, sure, why not?”

That moment of saying yes to something free, of reinforcing the belief that rewards are all upside and no downside, in that moment, what you're actually doing is saying, “Hey, you, lower brain, you're the one in charge. You're the one making decisions. I'm going to follow your lead.” That is a real problem.

Now, I don't want to demonize the lower brain. The lower brain is important, it's important for survival, but we don't want it running the show. We don't want the lower brain directing our day-to-day lives. Because when that happens we have a life that we don't really like.

We're just saying yes to all the urges. “Let's have more food. let's have more stuff. Let's stare at my screen longer. Let's sit on the couch more and

[Take a Break from Drinking](#) with Rachel Hart

Ep #352: When the Drinks Are Free

not move. Let's be driven by fear and impulse.” And of course, “Let's drink, and let's go back for another and another.”

That is not a life that actually anyone wants. There's a reason why we don't want that life, that has nothing to do with trying to be trim and fit and having extra cash and extra time and being hangover free. The real reason that we don't want that life is because you are meant for more. We don't want our lower brain running the show.

Because inside of each and every one of us, we have dreams and ideas and goals and things that we want to achieve and accomplish. We have a purpose and a reason to exist. And that reason is not checking off things off the to-do list.

This really is the beauty of the human brain, that it's not just a brain that is built for survival. The human brain is built to think and ponder and create and discover and invent. It's built to do all these amazing things, but in order to do it, in order to kind of free up space, we have to manage the lower brain, and we have to manage our impulses and our urges.

Otherwise, we're just running around trying to find the fastest, easiest way to find pleasure and avoid pain. We have to manage our knee-jerk response when we're offered something for free, that appears to have zero cost but actually is quite costly in the big picture of your life and what you're here to do.

So, think about the cost of your lower brain running your life the next time you encounter a free drink and you have that knee-jerk thought, “Sure. Why not?” Think about the cost of that. Nothing is truly free.

There is a cost. A cost to who you want to be, a cost of what you want to do and your purpose, and how you actually want to spend your limited time

[Take a Break from Drinking](#) with Rachel Hart

Ep #352: When the Drinks Are Free

here on Earth. Ask yourself, what's the real cost of saying yes to that free drink? A free drink that you might be choosing simply because someone's giving it away.

Alright, that's it for today. I'll see you all 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 and start your transformation today.

[Take a Break from Drinking](#) with Rachel Hart