

Ep #356: Drinking and Lack



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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 356.

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.

Hey, everybody, we are talking about lack today. Lack, of course, is a state of being without. Or you could define it as not having enough of something, or the sense that something is deficient. Lack is so important to understand because it is so often connected to the desire to drink, whether or not you realize that it is. A lot of people don't realize that lack and their desire are so intertwined.

But here's the thing, when I'm talking about lack, I'm not talking about wanting more alcohol, I'm talking about wanting more of a feeling that we're all after. I was teaching a workshop recently inside *Take a Break*, all about mastering temptation over the holidays. We're doing a whole holiday workshop inside the membership.

I was talking about how this time of year, the end of the year, is a time when things can really go off the rails when it comes both to drinking and eating. It happens for obvious reasons, right? You get to the end of the year, and you thought this year was going to be different. "I was going to drink less. I was going to stop. I was going to get healthy." And then, here you are kind of staring down the end of the year and you're not where you want to be.

It's really easy to decide in that moment, "Well, that plan didn't work. So, I might as well live it up." It's not just that the holidays are filled with so many opportunities to drink, I know that they are.

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It's that so many people will approach the holiday season and drinking with this kind of sense of resignation. This sense of it's too late, too many triggers, too much temptation. When really, this is such a good time to do the work of retraining your brain, changing the habit, and engaging with lack.

It's a good time to do this because you're steeped in an environment where the instinct really is to just say, "Forget it, it's too late." But when you do this work anyway, even when it seems like the odds are stacked against you, that's when you have the possibility of really supercharging your progress.

Because doing this work at this time of year, engaging with your urges and excuses and lack when everybody says, "Just live it up. Forget about it," when you see that it's possible to start to change your response during the holidays, one of the hardest times of the year, then the rest of the year will feel so much easier.

Doing the work during this time helps you instill the belief 'I can succeed now. And if I can succeed now, I can succeed no matter what time of year it is.' Now, some of you might hear me say those words 'I can succeed now' and think, "Yeah, but what if I don't." But here's the thing, the success I'm talking about is probably not the success that you are envisioning.

Because when it comes to our drinking, we envision success as being totally perfect. I think that everyone, all of us, need a new definition. It is so common to define success simply by a number or a metric. So, what I mean by that is, "I said I wasn't going to drink and I didn't drink." Success. "I said I was going to have only two drinks, and I kept my promise." Success. It sounds great.

Except, on the flip side it's not so fun. You said that you weren't going to drink, and then you gave in. Utter failure. You said that you were only going

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to have two, and then you polished off the bottle. Total fail. This is how we're so used to responding to these moments.

But I think we have to have a broader definition for what success is. So, stop looking at it purely through numbers. Because not only are numbers really limiting, but it's actually probably working against you. It certainly worked against me.

Because think about it. If you're struggling with your drinking, how many times have you failed to keep your promise? Five? Ten? One hundred time? I failed to keep my promise more than I can count, well over 100. What happens, when you are stacking up failures so many times, failure after failure, you start to believe that change might be impossible.

But it's not impossible for you to change. I don't care how many times you have tried. What you need is a new definition of "success" when you're doing this work. What if success, when it comes to retraining your brain and changing your relationship with alcohol, is about something other than a number? What if success is about, "Hey, did I actually learn something new? Have I expanded my understanding? My knowledge?"

Now, I know some of you might be thinking, "Yeah, I learned that I can't keep my promise, Rachel. I learned that I can't control myself." What I'm talking about is, did you learn something new? Do you have a new piece of information, a new data point, about how the habit works? That's the real question.

Is your knowledge about yourself and your relationship with alcohol, is it growing and evolving? Because you need that knowledge to grow and evolve, if ultimately, you want to create lasting change.

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This is why when I work with people, I always say we're not here to count days, we're not going to go back to square one. If you break a commitment, that's not what's going on here. In that moment, the moment that you want to swoop in and say, "Oh, I failed," that's the moment to practice new tools. That's the moment to learn, instead of going into a shame spiral.

Starting to investigate, "Hey, what was going on? What was happening for me? Why did I give in? What were the excuses that I said yes to? How am I going to plan to respond differently next time?"

But one of the most important ways to grow and evolve your knowledge, no matter what, is to focus on lack. When you're drinking from a place of wanting something that you don't have. So, I want you, for a second, just to imagine temptation. All of a sudden, you feel very tempted to drink.

When you're looking at the drink, if we could just press pause on that moment, and for a second you could step outside of yourself and view what's happening from afar, what would you see? More important, in that moment what do you think that your brain is seeing when it looks at the drink? It's kind of a weird question. I know, but stay with me.

When you go beyond the kind of knee-jerk explanation of 'I just want to have it, I just like the taste,' what else is there inside of your temptation? What does your brain think it is looking at when it sees the drink? Let me tell you, your answer could be so many things.

You could decide, "You know what? I think my brain thinks, when it's looking at a drink, that it sees something special, that it sees relaxation, belonging or entertainment or connection or escape or relief or freedom or fun, or a boundary or something fancy or something celebratory."

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But here's the thing, when you ask and answer that question, over and over again, you start to realize how it is. You are drinking from a place of lack, even if you don't realize that. Because if things truly felt special, or if you felt relaxed, or if you felt connected and you belonged, would the drink be so tempting?

Now, some of you might be listening and say, "Yeah, it would still be tempting, because more is better, right? I'm having fun. I want to have more fun. I'm enjoying myself I want to enjoy myself more."

But even when you're starting from that place of 'I'm having a good time, let's just make it all better.' Even when you're having fun, even when you're feeling relaxed, in that moment, that moment that we press pause, where you think, "Oh yeah, a drink or another drink would make this experience even better." Whatever experience you are seeking, you immediately, in that moment, step into a place where the present is lacking. Always. Always.

Because instead of enjoying a good time, instead of enjoying the fun that you're having, instead of enjoying the connection that you feel, that thought, "A drink would make this better," immediately moves your attention away from that good experience. And when you move your attention away, when you're thinking that there is something better that you could be experiencing, you are in a place of lack.

Now, this happens so fast, we don't even know that we're doing it. But when you get curious about what you think your brain sees when it looks at the drink, I promise you, you're going to discover lack, and it's so important to know that it's there.

Because once you start to see how connected it is to temptation, you'll start to understand, "Okay, so my brain is learning. It's getting this lesson over and over again, that the drink is the thing that I need in order to fix the lack.

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I need it to celebrate. I need it to connect, to relax, to have fun, to escape, to feel better, to feel uninhibited,” whatever it is.

But here's the thing, what if you focused on fixing the lack first, before reaching for a drink? Do you even know how to do that? Do you even know how to make something more special or more relaxing? Do you know how to feel more connected, to have more belonging, to make things more fun or feel more free? Do you know how to do this on your own?

I am guessing you do not, because we're not taught how to do this, right? I wasn't taught how to do this. It's just like, no, if you want to feel these things, just have something to drink. In my mind, this was the whole point of alcohol, the whole point of drinking. It was to feel these things that I wanted to feel, because certainly I had no idea how to create these things on my own.

But I will promise you this, you can learn how to do it; when you hear me talk on the podcast all the time about the think-feel-act cycle. Yes, the think-feel-act cycle is amazing and so important to help you understand, ‘hey, why did you actually say yes to that drink? Why did you reach for it?’

It didn't just happen, right? The drink didn't move towards you. You didn't make a move towards it without a thought and a feeling unfolding inside of you. So, so often, we're trying to understand that piece of the puzzle. But we can also use the think-feel-act cycle to create more of what you're actually desiring.

How do you do that? By starting to get curious. “Hey, what are the thoughts right now that are blocking what I desire, whether it's connection, or fun or relaxation? What's happening inside of me? So, you can start to find those thoughts. But you can also start to see, ‘hey, what would happen if I spent more time working with these thoughts? Instead of just trying to drink over the lack that I feel.’

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Because you can drink over lack all you want, but you're never going to solve the root issue. Right? The root issue is, in that moment, the thing that you want to be feeling that you aren't feeling. Which, guess what? Why aren't you feeling it? Because of a sentence in your mind.

The fact that your brain has learned to see the drink as a way out of lack is part of the problem. It's part of what's keeping you stuck. It's why focusing on just numbers and metrics and quantity is never going to work long term. Until you teach your brain otherwise, saying no is always going to feel like you're missing out or giving something up. And, that doesn't feel good. That's not the foundation for lasting change.

But it doesn't need to be this way. You don't have to be in this place where you constantly feel like, 'okay, well, I was really good, that I said no. I'm being really healthy,' but part of you feels like you're suffering for health. That is not sustainable.

You can use this work, not only to change your relationship with alcohol, but to change your experience of life. To change your experience of lack. And, at the end of the year, to change your experience of the holidays.

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.