

Ep #360: The Connector Archetype



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With Your Host

Rachel Hart

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Ep #360: The Connector Archetype

You are listening to the *Take a Break* podcast with Rachel Hart, Episode 360.

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. A couple of weeks ago, I introduced for the very first time, something called the Drink Archetypes on this podcast. So, the archetypes are eight unconscious patterns that influence why you drink and why you reach for another. Last week, we talked about one of the archetypes called The Upgrade.

Today, we're going to do a deep dive into one of the other archetypes, called The Connector. So, I will tell you this, if it feels like alcohol is woven into a lot of your relationships, it's really important that you understand The Connector archetype.

Now remember, it does not matter how motivated you are to change or how many good reasons you have to cut back or stop drinking, it's going to be hard to resist temptation. You're very likely going to feel constantly frustrated by your attempts to change because they are hit or miss, unless you're able to identify what's happening beneath the surface of the habit.

What I'm talking about here are the unconscious patterns that are really driving and they're really behind why you're desiring the drink. So, you have to learn how to work with these archetypes in order to create lasting change. The good news is working with these archetypes will also show you how to stop relying on willpower, gritting your teeth, or avoiding situations in order to say no, because you know that just doesn't work very well long term.

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

Ep #360: The Connector Archetype

So, if you haven't yet taken the Drink Archetype quiz, please go do that. You can take the quiz at FindYourDrinkType.com, it's totally free, and you will get a full breakdown of how all eight archetypes apply to you.

Let's talk about The Connector. Now, this archetype, like I said, it's all about drinking to either create or strengthen a bond. It can show up in your romantic relationships. It can show up in your friendships. It can appear in familial relationships. I actually see this archetype quite a bit with parents and their adult children.

This archetype might show up in fixing a drink, or sharing a bottle of wine as part of an evening or weekend ritual that you have in your relationship. Maybe you frequently meet up with friends for drinks or boozy brunches on the weekend. It may show up as part of certain social events, like your weekly book group where there's always a bottle of wine. You might find yourself drinking while tailgating or watching sports with others.

Some people who have The Connector archetype talk about coming from a family where everyone drinks, and alcohol is really a focal point of family get togethers. You might have grown up in a family like this. Or, I see this happen a lot, you may have married into a family where alcohol plays a central role. You might also think of yourself as a regular at your local watering hole or feel like you're a part of a community at a bar.

So, this archetype is very ingrained, because drinking has long been a social activity for humans, something that people do together. But here's the key, and this is really important, humans have been forming bonds and relationships and connecting with other humans for as long as our species existed.

Creating connection with other members of our species is a key part of survival. When we have bonds with other humans, it's easier to stay safe and stay fed and protected and stay alive and of course, keep the species

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

Ep #360: The Connector Archetype

going. The importance of social bonds is connected to our survival. Our ability to form them, our ability to connect with others, goes back for millions and millions of years, well before humans introduced alcohol into this equation.

But, and I will say this, because this is a big point, after humans started fermenting drinks, somewhere around 5,000-6,000 years ago, somewhere along the way, we kind of adopted the belief that alcohol creates connection. Not only that it creates connection, but that it's necessary for connection.

I want to say this again, because I think it's really important for you to hear this. We adopted a belief that alcohol, not humans, alcohol is the thing that creates connection. We kind of took ourselves out of the equation, and that's a problem.

Now, it makes a lot of sense to have adopted this belief. I mean, I think about my own experiences, some of my formative friendships in college, they were forged at the same time that I started drinking. They were often forged when we were drinking together.

I think about a lot of relationships that started after college in my 20s, going out with colleagues. I remember working in New York and getting drinks with coworkers. And after you'd get drinks, it would seem like the tenor of your relationship would change. After a night of drinking, suddenly that person, that maybe I politely said hello to by the coffee machine, now they were a buddy.

So, this thought that alcohol creates connection, it makes a lot of sense, and it can create a lot of problems for you. Because what happens is, we start to assume that the opposite is also true. "If alcohol creates connection, then not drinking must lead to disconnection. If I'm not drinking, then I'm killing the mood."

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

Ep #360: The Connector Archetype

With these two beliefs together, after a while it can be hard to separate out drinking from socializing. So, you may find yourself kind of weighing the desire to feel connected to the people in your life... Which, by the way, who among us doesn't want to feel connected? But you find yourself weighing that with a decision about whether or how much to drink.

I will say that this piece about how much to drink is also key to The Connector archetype. Because when drinking is a group activity, then other people's choices can easily sway your own. So, what do I mean by this? I think about every time in my life that I swore that I wasn't going to drink tonight. "Oh, God, I've just had too much. I need just lay off for a little bit." Then, my boyfriend would show up with a bottle of wine.

Or I would agree to get drinks with friends and silently I would think to myself, "Okay, Rachel. Okay, you can do this. But just be good, have a couple drinks and then go home." I'd have my two drinks, and a friend would say, "You want to get another round?"

In both cases, The Connector archetype was working behind the scenes, and it was sabotaging my commitments. Because the fear of disrupting the mood, the fear of being disconnected, it would make it so hard for me to stay committed.

The Connector archetype can also be why, when you say no to a drink, you hate explaining yourself, right? Because you don't want to stand out, you don't want to be peppered with questions, you just want to be part of the group. Sometimes that's what drinking can be. It can just be a way to signify, 'hey, I'm part of the group here. I blend in.'

What happens a lot with The Connector archetype, is that you may find yourself people pleasing your drink choices. So, instead of choosing what feels truly aligned for you and what you want to do, you start choosing what you think someone else wants you to do. Right? It's like, "Well, I wasn't

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

Ep #360: The Connector Archetype

going to drink, but I don't want to disappoint them.” Or, “I don't want another round. But I don't want to make things weird.”

You start basing your decisions on what you perceive will make someone else happy. Why? Because of the fear of disconnection. When The Connector archetype is at play, it is so easy to feel stuck. Because you're here with this desire of ‘I want to be close to people. But alcohol is so intertwined in my relationships, which makes not drinking or even just cutting back complicated. So, what am I supposed to do?’

I remember so deeply feeling like this at so many points in my life and truly thinking, “If you're going to figure out your drinking, Rachael, it basically means you're going to have to get a whole new friend group. You're going to have need a whole new social circle.” Which, by the way, turned out was not true at all.

But I really, deeply, deeply remember believing that all of my close friendships and relationships would suffer if I stopped drinking, or even if I no longer wanted to drink as much. Because I saw myself as a person who was always up for a drink after work. I was always up for another round. So, what was going to happen if I wasn't that person anymore? saying it now, it can sound kind of silly or trivial, but truly, this brought up so much fear for me.

So, regardless of whether The Connector archetype comes up with your friends, or your coworkers, or your family or your significant other, the way to work with this archetype is by realizing that the disconnection that you're afraid of, by turning down a drink, that disconnection is actually a self-fulfilling prophecy.

The disconnection you feel when you say no, it's not happening because you aren't drinking, it's happening because of what's unfolding on the inside. When this archetype is present, when you have this belief that not

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

Ep #360: The Connector Archetype

only does alcohol create connection, but saying no will create disconnection, when you hold these two beliefs, and you have a lot of evidence that they are true, you will do one of two things.

Okay, so first, you will elevate the role of alcohol in creating connection. So, think about it, there are lots and lots and lots of factors that go into forming a bond that you have with another human. You may have a shared background or a shared experience, you may both enjoy similar things, you may have a similar sense of humor, or a similar outlook on the world. I mean, the list goes on.

But what will happen with this archetype, you will downplay all of those factors, right? When The Connector archetype is present, it will be like none of that counts. You won't sit there and think, "Gosh, there are so many different facets that make up the bond that I have with this person, the bond that I could have with this person."

What you'll do instead, is you will ignore all of that and you will fixate on alcohol being the determining factor, the thing that does or does not create connection. And so, that's the first thing that happens. You elevate the role of alcohol in your connection and downplay, if not outright ignore, all of the other factors that are also there.

The second thing that will happen, and this one's really important, you will start to unconsciously segregate yourself from the group. You will create this dividing line between you and who you're with, based on what's in your glass. You will mentally create a division between who's drinking and who's not, and who's joining in and who's sitting this one out. You will be hyper focused on this.

And the moment that you view yourself as different, what happens? Well, you mentally withdraw. You may still be physically present, but you will undergo all these subtle shifts. You will stop fully listening, because you'll

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

Ep #360: The Connector Archetype

be caught up in all the chatter in your head about: Are people noticing? What do they think? Are they going to give me a hard time? Are they going to ask any questions? Are they going to think it's weird?

You will stop making as much eye contact. You will stop smiling as much. Or maybe you're smiling but it feels kind of forced. You will hold back and stop fully participating in what's happening around you. Basically, in short, you're going to clam up. It's this unconscious clamming up that actually blocks your connection to who you are with.

Now, later on, you're going to look back and you're going to chalk it up to the fact that you weren't drinking, or you weren't joining in for another round, because you're thinking that not drinking is what's to blame; not realizing the truth. The truth is, the only reason this happened is because you created that dividing line in your mind, and elevated alcohol among all these other facets that are part of the connection that you have.

So, this is why trying to change your drinking by setting rules, or swearing that you're never going to drink again, doesn't work. I mean, it might work for a little bit, right? But it's not going to be sustainable in the long run.

Because you're going to find yourself doing things like trying to disguise what you're drinking so you can blend in, or trying to find the perfect excuse to explain why you don't want another round. You might even find yourself bailing on plans or staying home. All of these tactics, all of them, they have your attention focused in the wrong place. It's focused on alcohol, instead of the thing, that deep down, you're truly desiring to feel more connected.

The other thing that the truth is, there's absolutely nothing wrong with feeling connected to others, because you're both drinking. But at a certain point, your lower brain convinces you that the connection you feel is made possible only because of the drinking. Instead of realizing what has been

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

Ep #360: The Connector Archetype

true since the dawn of time, connection is made possible by you, right? Humans make that connection possible. We don't need alcohol.

This, to me, really is the superpower of The Connector archetype. The realization, “Hey, maybe my lower brain has been confused this whole time. Maybe alcohol is irrelevant to the connection and the bond that I'm desiring.” When you stop using alcohol as a gateway to create connection, because that's not actually what it is, you're able to step back and create the closeness that you crave, regardless of whether or not you're drinking.

In the process, I think the other really powerful piece is discovering the relationships which are truly important. So, I've talked about this a lot in my own journey among my group of friends. I'm usually pretty unusual in the fact that when we get together, I'm the one not drinking. I was so sure, I was positive, that this was going to be a huge deal. And truly, it's just not a big deal at all.

Now, are there relationships in my life that faded away when I started down this journey? Yes, of course. But I'm pretty sure that would have happened anyway. There are people for whom I realized, you know what, we didn't have a lot in common other than the fact we liked to drink.

There are other people, I realized, that my decision to say no was just irrelevant, it was never going to change our bond. In fact, in many ways, I experienced the bond becoming stronger once I realized that, “Hey, this bond, it supersedes anything that I'm drinking.”

So, the goal with The Connector archetype is to stop giving credit to alcohol for feeling connected to someone else. When you learn how to stop doing this, which really is about learning how to exercise a muscle that for most people has atrophied over time, learning how to do this gets you to this really empowered place.

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

Ep #360: The Connector Archetype

If you're not drinking it's not because you're afraid of being the odd man out. You're not having more than you want because you want to prevent others from being disappointed. You're making choices that are aligned with you. Knowing that the desire to feel connected and bond with others doesn't have to suffer. So, you're able to drop all the chatter and feel comfortable with whatever feels right for you.

From that position, it's easy to know what you want, and so much easier to keep your commitment.

One final thing that I want to add today, when we're talking about The Connector archetype, if you're listening to this and thinking, "Yeah, but Rachel, I have so much social anxiety when I'm in certain social settings." I want you to know that that is actually a different archetype at play. That's something called The Mask, and we're going to be talking about that a little bit later.

Today, really just think about how The Connector archetype may apply for you. I'm going to be back next week talking about another archetype called The Reward.

Remember, if you haven't taken the quiz, all you need to do is go to FindYourDrinkType.com. Taking the quiz will be the best thing that you can do if you want to transform your relationship with alcohol.

All right, everyone, 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.

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

Ep #360: The Connector Archetype

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.