

Ep #361: The Reward Archetype



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Rachel Hart

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

Ep #361: The Reward Archetype

You are listening to the *Take a Break* podcast with Rachel Hart, Episode 361.

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.

Hello, my friends, we are back again today talking about another of the Drink Archetypes. As a reminder, these are eight unconscious patterns that influence why you drink and why you reach for another. Today, we're going to do a deep dive into one of the archetypes called The Reward.

Now, I will tell you this, understanding this archetype is so important if the drink at the end of the day, or the end of the week, is kind of a little bit like a pat on the back for all that you have accomplished. Remember, understanding these archetypes is so important, because no matter how motivated you are to change, or how many good reasons you have to cut back, it's going to be hard to resist temptation.

You're probably going to feel frustrated by your attempts to change, because they're hit or miss, unless you really, really understand what's happening beneath the surface of the habit. That's where these archetypes come in. That's where you'll find these unconscious patterns that are part of what's really fueling your desire and what your brain thinks the drink represents.

So, you have to learn how to work with these archetypes in order to create lasting change. The good news, it's totally possible. It's also how you can stop relying on willpower, gritting your teeth, and avoiding certain situations in order to say no.

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

Ep #361: The Reward Archetype

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

One of the things that I think is so amazing about these archetypes, is that they don't just apply to problematic drinking, they also apply to the human experience of drinking. And really understanding your unique blueprint, that will be transformative.

So, let's talk about The Reward. With this archetype you can kind of think of the drink as a treat to maybe help you push through your end-of-day tasks. It can also be a boundary that allows you to stop working. But either way, the drink serves as kind of an external motivation. Think of it like, "If I do this thing, then I get to have a drink."

This archetype can show up in all sorts of ways. Maybe you're someone who's always putting work and family or friends first, and you have very little time for yourself. Pouring that drink, it might feel like, "Hey, this is something that's just for me," so you may resist ever taking it away.

Maybe looking forward to a drink helps you kind of power through the drudgery of your day. Or it helps you keep going when you get home from work or your day is over and you still have to make dinner, pack lunches, help with homework, get the kids ready for bed, do the laundry, and a million other things.

The drink in this archetype, it might be a way to stop looking at work messages, right? So, once you pour the drink, it's like, "Day is done. I'm off the clock. It's my boundary that I can stop working," and permission, in many ways, to stop working. Sometimes people use alcohol as a reward in this archetype for following a strict diet or exercise plan. So, you've been so good all week, don't you deserve it now for being so good?

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

Ep #361: The Reward Archetype

Sometimes I see this archetype come up a lot, for the sense that you've had to give up so many pleasures in life. This can come up around people that have food intolerances. They've been forced to give up some of their favorite foods, but they can still drink. Or sometimes this comes up with people who have had weight loss surgery. They can't eat the way that they used to, but they can drink.

The common theme in all of these different situations, the common theme, is using a drink to reward some sort of suffering. Now, I just want to say this really quickly, this does not mean that you have a terrible life. This does not mean that everything is bad.

In fact, you may have a wonderful life. You may have so many things that you are just profoundly grateful for, and you can still be using the drink as a reward to help kind of serve as a treat for something that doesn't feel good or isn't working in your life right now.

I think part of why The Reward archetype is so ingrained for so many people, is because we are taught that drudgery deserves a treat. Here's the thing, it's not like I don't like to treat myself, I do. But when we regularly use any concentrated reward in the brain as a treat, it can cause all sorts of problems.

I think the other reason why it's easy to fall into this trap, is because, at first, we unconsciously start doing this. We start using the drink as a treat, as a reward. The strategy kind of works well, right? A drink can be a nice antidote to a long, unforgiving day. Knowing that you're going to open a bottle of wine when you get home can be something that you have to look forward to, and helps you power through your midafternoon slump.

Especially for all you parents out there, when your task list doesn't let up in the evening, it feels a little bit more like your day job ends and then your

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

Ep #361: The Reward Archetype

evening job begins. It can feel like everything you need to get done is less of a slog with a drink in your hand.

Now, that said, if you relate to this archetype, you probably already know it's a little bit of a vicious cycle. Because work doesn't let up, right? Your task list doesn't let up, and neither do your cravings. So, the more overextended you are, the more you're going to find yourself craving a drink. You may also start to notice an uptick in your drinking.

A lot of people who identify with a reward archetype, they're overextended, they're burned out, or they're in need of rest. You may be actually not great at allowing yourself to rest. These are people who are often burning the candle at both ends.

And so, adding alcohol to the mix, when you are overextended and burned out and in need of rest, it does not do great things because alcohol takes a toll on your body. Even if you stay in the recommended drink limits.

Now, listen, this is not about demonizing alcohol, or trying to convince you that it's poisoning your body. But I do think that we have to be honest, that when you drink, it does tax your body. We don't have to make that wrong or bad, we can just be honest about it.

The goal here, and this is really important... My goal for me and for everyone that I work with, and for all of you, is not to convince us to live a perfectly pure, healthy life where we only choose the most healthy, nourishing supportive things for our body and live off green juice. It's not what I'm talking about here.

The goal is knowing how to consciously choose the ways we want to support ourselves, rather than falling into autopilot. Especially when autopilot is doing more harm than good. So, alcohol taxes your body. And

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

Ep #361: The Reward Archetype

this is true even if you stay within the recommended drink limits. Which, by the way, that's one standard serving a day for women and two for men.

When your reserves are low, because you're overextended or burned out, and you're not getting the rest that you need, drinking is only going to put you at a further deficit. Now, it may feel good in the moment, I don't deny that. But if your body already isn't getting the rest it needs...

By the way, if your overall needs aren't being met, this is going to cause a problem. Because now what's going to happen, during your sleep, when your body needs to focus on repairing, it has to now address the fact that you were drinking a couple hours earlier. And so, all of that repair work that needs to be done, well, that just has to wait. It's very common.

I see this all the time; that people will wake up kind of low level, maybe anxious or cranky or feeling low or just having less energy to tackle the day after drinking. Just as an aside, all of the time, and I mean over and over again, when I help people take a break from drinking, so many people will say, "I had no idea that I was even feeling this way, Rachel."

They would have told me ahead of time, they would have said, "No, I don't wake up with low-level anxiety. I'm not cranky. I'm not regularly feeling down or blue in the morning." And after just taking a short break from drinking, so many of these people turn around to me and they're like, "Whoa, I had no idea."

I think what happens a lot. We're so used to feeling this way it just becomes kind of our normal way that we feel. And a lot of times, if we do notice something feels off, we'll chalk it up to, "Well, I don't know, this is my personality. This is what it just feels like to get older." But in reality, drinking may be the cause of what's happening here.

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

Ep #361: The Reward Archetype

Here's the thing, this is why this matters: Yes, it sucks to just wake up low energy and feeling anxious or feeling kind of down. That's no fun. But the real reason that this is a problem, is when you wake up not feeling so great from the night before it's a lot harder to keep your commitments. You're so much more likely to give in and break your commitment later in the day.

Not only that, but here's the thing when your desire for a drink is tied up with your task list. If your to-dos keep piling up, you may notice that your drinking creeps up too. It's not just that you have more to do, therefore there's a bigger desire for relief at the end of the day or the end of the week, it's that your brain is adapting to the effects of alcohol.

So often, The Reward archetype shows up in regular daily drinking. It doesn't have to, sometimes it shows up as you don't drink all week, and then you drink a lot on the weekends. But oftentimes, when you are regularly drinking, your brain is starting to adapt to the effects of alcohol. In other words, over time, the reward that you got from that initial drink, it starts to diminish. The reward isn't as rewarding.

What happens when it's not as rewarding? We go back for more, because we're not getting the feeling or the sensation that we want. This is really the reason why you cannot overcome The Reward archetype by setting rules, or promising yourself that you're never going to drink again. Your good intentions are going to go right out the window after a stressful day. You know how easy it is to fall into the "eff it" trap.

And the other piece is, even if you do manage to say no and keep your commitment, you still have the desire for a reward, right? Then your brain is like, "Okay, well, if it's not the drink, what other reward can I get?" You might start finding yourself raiding the pantry or the freezer in search of a replacement.

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

Ep #361: The Reward Archetype

This is why so much of the work that I do with people is not just about alcohol, but also encompasses food. Because when you are still in need of a reward, when you're still searching for something even if you remove alcohol, that archetype is still there. It can start to feel like you're in a no-win situation, and you're just always going to be craving something.

The solution here, is actually to acknowledge what's going on. You acknowledge that your quest for a reward is really about tolerating something that isn't working. And again, this does not mean that your life is bad or messed up. You can have a lot of amazing things in your life and still, it can be like, "You know what? Something's not working here." It may just be that you're putting your needs on the backburner all the time.

This also doesn't mean that in order to change this archetype you need to blow up everything in your life, not at all. All you have to do, is really start getting curious. Start asking yourself questions like: Why does this reward feel so necessary? How is having a reward helping me maybe cope with certain things in my life? What parts of my life maybe right now don't feel so sustainable? If I thought about them continuing on forever, it really feels like a bummer.

Answering these questions will help you start getting curious, and start noticing, "Hey, where am I putting my needs on the backburner, or putting them last? Where am I overextending myself? Where am I not allowing myself to rest?"

Because it's both the real issue and the superpower of this archetype, your needs. It really forces you to make yourself a priority, and stop ignoring what you truly need. Stop trying to make up for it by always resorting to giving yourself a treat.

Now, I've talked about this a lot on my own journey. There was a time in my life where everyone came before me; this was even before I had kids. Work

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

Ep #361: The Reward Archetype

was more important. My boyfriend was more important. I was always stretching myself too thin. Unconsciously, I was trying to make up for the fact that my needs weren't being met, that I was overextended and burned out, and definitely didn't allow myself to rest because it was really important to be productive.

I was trying to make up for this by finding rewards, which for me, looks like drinking, smoking, and overeating. So, the work that you do with this archetype, it's so transformative. Because it's the work to start to learn how to establish boundaries that you may have previously tried to set with a drink.

That's why it was so transformative for me, right? Using a drink as a sign that you're off the clock, or using it as a way to kind of carve out 'me time.' I mean, great, but it may be having a blowback that you are now having to deal with the next day.

Then, to ask yourself: Well, why do I actually need the drink as a boundary? What's so hard about just setting a boundary without it? What's so hard about carving out time for myself without it? Sometimes the biggest changes that you will make when you're working with The Reward archetype, are way less to do about restructuring your life and much more about just changing and letting go of this internal dialogue that's filled with all these "should" and "musts" and "have to."

When you start to do that, when you change that dialogue, you will start to feel less put upon. You will stop feeling so resentful. And when you feel lighter as you move through the day, when you allow yourself to rest without feeling guilty, can you imagine that? Just letting yourself rest without feeling guilty? And not telling yourself, "Oh, God, I should be doing more."

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

Ep #361: The Reward Archetype

When you're able to do that, when you can take some stuff off your plate or ask for help, or simply stop telling yourself that everything must be done and must be done perfectly... When you can do all of this, the constant search for a reward starts to lessen.

To me, this is one of the most powerful things that can happen on your journey to change your relationship with alcohol. What you're really doing here is changing your relationship with yourself. You're learning how to stop putting yourself last. You're learning how to no longer hold yourself to impossible standards that you don't request of anyone else in your life.

You learn how to stop ignoring your needs and start treating them like they matter. In other words, you learn how to treat yourself with the respect and attention that you already give to so many people in your life. And when you do, when you do this, the desire to drink is no longer about rewarding yourself. Which makes the desire a whole lot less intense or insistent, and that's when you start to create real change.

I'm going to be back next week talking about another archetype that often shows up alongside The Reward. It's called The Escape. It's all about drinking to forget what's bothering you, so make sure you tune in for that.

Remember, if you haven't taken the quiz, go figure out what your Drink Archetypes are. Go to FindYourDrinkType.com, and take the quiz. The 15 minutes that you spend doing this will be the most worthwhile investment you make all year.

All right, 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

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

Ep #361: The Reward Archetype

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.