

Ep #362: The Escape Archetype



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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 362.

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, hello. Back again, talking about The Drink Archetypes. If you haven't heard, which you should have by now, these are eight unconscious patterns that influence why you drink and why you reach for another. They are a brand-new framework that I recently introduced, that I am so, so, so excited about.

Today, we're going to do a deep dive into one of the archetypes called The Escape. I'm going to tell you this, understanding this archetype is so important if you notice yourself pouring a drink as your go-to way to shut off your mind or forget about what's bothering you.

As a reminder, these archetypes don't just apply to problematic drinking, they apply to the human experience with alcohol. And it's really important that you understand which archetypes apply to you. Because if you want to change your relationship with alcohol, it doesn't matter how motivated you are, it doesn't matter how many good reasons you have to cut back or to stop, it's going to be really hard to resist temptation.

You're going to feel frustrated by your attempts to change, and the fact that it always feels kind of hit or miss, unless you're able to identify what's happening beneath the surface of the habit. That's what I have been talking about with all of you for years on this podcast. Let's understand what is actually unfolding on the inside. What is so fast and so automatic that it feels like nothing is there, but I'll tell you, something always is.

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These archetypes are the key to really figuring out what's going on. When you understand the archetypes that apply for you, you will understand exactly what's going on behind your desire, and why your attempts to change haven't worked.

I will tell you this, if your explanation for why you drink is, "I just like to," which I had that explanation for a long time as well. If your explanation for why it's hard for you to keep your commitment or why it's hard for you to say no is 'I don't know something must be different about me' or 'I must be missing something,' you are going to find yourself going in circles unable to get traction, because neither of these things are true.

The archetypes are really going to help you understand what's actually happening. So, the goal here is learning which ones apply so that you can start to work with them in order to change your drinking. The good news is, when you do this, when you start to approach your drinking from this totally different way, from understanding the archetypes, you can let go of willpower.

You can stop gritting your teeth. You can stop relying on rules. You can stop avoiding situations in order to say no, because you will have changed the habit from the inside out. That is the power of this work.

So, if you haven't yet taken The Drink Archetype quiz, it's free. Go do that. Go to FindYourDrinkType.com, you can take it there. You'll get a full breakdown of how all eight archetypes apply to you. It's so, so valuable. With that, let's talk about The Escape.

This archetype it's all about pouring a drink to stop worrying, to forget, to quiet your mind. It commonly shows up during periods of prolonged stress or unexpected transitions in life. Just to note, some of you may be thinking, "Well, I use a drink to quiet my mind or to stop worrying in social situations."

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There's a totally different, separate archetype for that situation called The Mask.

What we're talking about today, is less about the kind of chatter or anxiety that you have in social situations, and more about the day-to-day spin that you sometimes may find yourself in, with whatever is happening in your life.

The Escape archetype can show up for people in lots of different ways. You may be juggling work and home life and feeling like you're failing at both. That is no fun. It can show up if you're feeling consumed by the news or politics or world events or environmental disasters, or what you're seeing in the headlines.

You may have a lot of stress concerned to a demanding, high-pressure job that's kind of hard to shake. You might have a lot of worries about your kids, especially if they may be going through something difficult or they have special needs. You might have worries about extended family members.

The Escape archetype can show up in times of financial stress, or when you're having relationship problems; maybe you're going through a breakup or a separation or a divorce. In my work, I have found that The Escape archetype appears again and again with people who are exposed to trauma on a regular basis. So, doctors, nurses, first responders, social workers, journalists, human rights activists; the list goes on.

The Escape, of course unsurprisingly, shows up in times of loss or serious illness or a sudden disability. Basically, this archetype shows up in moments when we feel really overwhelmed by our brain. It's that sense of 'I just don't want to think anymore. But I also don't know how to stop thinking about this thing.' Which, by the way, is the worst feeling in the world when you're desperate to escape your brain but you don't know how.

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In that moment, pouring a drink can seem like a quick and easy fix. But of course, it's not a great long-term solution. Here's the thing, when life doesn't let up, which it has a way of happening that way, right? Not letting up, it's easy to notice that neither does your drinking. In fact, you may notice that the amount that you're drinking may start to creep up.

This is why it's easy to feel stuck. You don't want to drink this much, but you're like, "Yeah, but I need a break from my brain," so you find yourself caught in this tug-of-war. Maybe you wake up promising yourself today's going to be different, I'm going to be good, I'm not going to drink. And then, life happens and you give in later on.

Maybe you get rid of all the alcohol in your home, and then you find after a couple of days of not having a way to shut off your brain, well, now you're back again, putting the wine in your grocery cart. Maybe, and this happens to a lot of people and I really relate with this one as well, you're so overwhelmed that you just are like, "I just need to keep myself as busy as possible so I don't have time to think."

That might work for a bit, except that it's exhausting. And no matter how productive you are eventually you're going to run out of gas. And then you're going to be faced with your brain, and then what? It's like, "Oh, my brain is too overwhelming. I don't want to think about this. Let's find a way to just tune it all out," and go right back to the drink.

What's happening is that The Escape archetype, this desire to quiet your mind, and not having another effective way to do this besides drinking, means that no matter how motivated you are to change, no matter how many good reasons you have, keeping your commitment is going to be difficult.

It's no fault of your own. I think it's important really to dispel some of the myths about why we really struggle to say no sometimes. For a long time, I

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really fell into the trap of believing that there's something wrong with my brain; there's nothing wrong with your brain. I thought that I had an addictive personality. If you listen to this podcast, you know I've talked extensively about this and how an addictive personality is not a thing.

I thought that maybe my genes were to blame, right? Like, maybe it was the fact that people struggling with alcohol ran in my family. That's not what's going on here, either. Finally, I would look around at my life sometimes and believe like, "This is the problem, people. My life is making it impossible to say no."

I will tell you this, even if you're going through a really difficult time, and I know a lot of you listening are, I promise you, your life is not making change impossible. That doesn't mean though, that everything's hunky-dory. I will tell you this, the real reason it's hard to cut back when you're overwhelmed by life, despite having lots of good reasons to say no, is really simple.

We're taught to believe that alcohol is a helpful antidote in times of stress. This belief is so pervasive, it's so pervasive, and a lot of people have a lot of evidence that it's true, right? At first, it kind of works. Drinking can be a welcome relief when you have a lot of stress.

But when your stress is unremitting, when it's not a temporary blip but a prolonged period of being under a lot of pressure, or feeling a lot of intense emotions, not only will you start drinking more but you're going to find it harder to say no.

When you're drinking, it may feel like alcohol is helping. But in the grand scheme of things, drinking is depleting your resilience, which makes coping with life's ups and downs harder. This is the key here. It's depleting your resilience.

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I work with people all the time, and I'll tell you this, there's no amount of alcohol that can make it so we can avoid grief, it's part of the human experience. At some point, we're all going to have to deal with it. There's no amount of alcohol that can heal trauma, or ease worries and fears. There's no amount of alcohol that's going to make your life less stressful. If anything, it's just going to add to your stress.

We have to learn how to find ways to cope that don't put us at a deficit. That, really, to me, is the job of every human being alive. How do I learn how to cope with the moments I'd rather escape? Nobody shows us how to do this, right? We just kind of grow up watching what the adults around us do, and a lot of them weren't choosing very healthy things to do. We look around and see what other people are doing.

We go for what seems kind of logical and easy. Like, "If this feels like too much, maybe I should just escape into a drink." But learning how to navigate these moments rather than escaping, this is something everyone has to figure out. Otherwise, if you keep relying on a drink, here's what's going to happen.

You will, especially with The Escape archetype, you're going to find yourself unconsciously pouring larger servings, drinking faster, and rushing to the next glass. Why does this happen with The Escape archetype? Because it's natural to want quick relief when stress levels are high. Right? So, it makes sense that you're like, "Yeah, let's have more and drink faster and rush to that next glass."

But all of those actions are going to make it harder for you to drink less or to say no. But, and this is actually the bigger problem, you're going to start to doubt yourself. You're going to start to believe that you can't handle whatever is happening on your own. You're going to start to fear that you have a choice between drinking or ruminating about problems that seem too big, too messy, too overwhelming to face.

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You're going to keep telling yourself, "Okay, I'll cut back or I'll stop drinking once I get through this period," this really hard time. Well, what happens? I mean, you know the answer to this. The next difficult, hard time, unexpected, stressful thing crops up. It starts to feel like you're in this no-win situation.

But change, it really is possible. Not through rules, not through discipline, but by reframing the noise that's happening inside. That is what truly creates peace of mind. Peace of mind is not the byproduct of a stress-free life, or never having to deal with big emotions, or having a mind that never worries or ruminates or catastrophizes. That is not how you get peace of mind.

Peace of mind is about learning how to reframe what is unfolding on the inside of you. Learning how to redirect your mind in these moments when things just feel too big and too overwhelming and too messy. It's teaching your body that you are safe with big emotions.

It truly is about developing the belief that no matter what is going on, no matter if you're in a situation right now where you cannot see a way out, it's having this belief that you can always hold onto. "I can figure this out. I don't know the how right now, but I can figure this out. I believe there is a solution, even if I don't know what it is."

This has been really the tether for me in some of my darkest moments. The knowledge that I may have never faced this exact situation before, but I have been in the depths of despair. I have listened to my brain tell me that there was no way out, and it was too much, and it was too big, and it was too overwhelming, and I couldn't take it.

You know what? I've discovered that my brain has been wrong a lot. I am stronger than my brain thinks. There is always a solution, even when my brain says, "Nope, no solution here." You know what? Even in those

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moments when it feels like things are never going to get better, I always discover that something will change, and things won't always feel like this.

This, to me, is one of the most important things that comes out of The Escape archetype. Realizing there are only two outcomes when you're feeling truly overwhelmed. One, greater suffering or two, greater resilience. That's it. Those are the only two outcomes.

When you learn how to choose the path of resilience, and truly, it is about learning how to do this. Instead of creating greater suffering for yourself by drowning your sorrows and turning to a drink, when you learn how to do this, you will discover how to bend and not break, no matter the situation.

This, to me, is a superpower of The Escape. Learning how to be a steady captain when the seas are really stormy. That's what this archetype is trying to teach you. If you want to change your relationship with alcohol and this archetype is present, you have to stop trying to tough everything out on your own.

You have to learn how to feel more comfortable asking for help and support. And you have to learn the basics of how, do I start to manage this mental chatter? What do I do when my brain starts ruminating? What do I do when my brain starts catastrophizing? We're not given any tools for this. Other than, I think a lot of times, the tool of gratitude.

Which, you know what? Gratitude is great, but I don't feel like it works very well in these moments. What you actually need our systems and ways to start to logically challenge some of these beliefs. Really have a way to redirect your mind. that's so much about what I talk about on the podcast. And when you learn all these things, when you start to develop these muscles...

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Yes, I like to think of it as a muscle. Maybe you didn't even realize that muscle was there, right? Maybe you didn't realize that it needed a workout. But now you know that it's there, and you can make it stronger. When you develop this muscle, it makes it so much easier to stop turning to a drink when stress levels are high, and to keep your commitment.

The Escape archetype, it's so common. it's one of those archetypes that can feel like 'oh. my gosh, I'm not really even sure that I can figure this out.' But I promise you that you can.

Next week, I'm going to be back talking about Dry January and what you need to know in the new year if you want to reset your drinking. Remember, if you haven't taken the quiz, go to FindYourDrinkType.com and take the quiz.

I will tell you, with so many of these archetypes, a lot of people will find that they identify with multiple; that's really, really normal. A lot of people will also say that different archetypes appear in different situations. Taking this quiz is really going to give you your unique blueprint, so you can see, "What is actually getting in the way when it comes to the change that I want to create with my relationship with alcohol?"

All right, that's it for today. I will see you next week, talking about Dry January.

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

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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.