

**Ep #382: Interview with Kara Loewentheil  
on The Brain Gap and Drinking**



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## Ep #382: Interview with Kara Loewentheil on The Brain Gap and Drinking

**Rachel Hart:** You are listening to the Take a Break Podcast with Rachel Hart, Episode 382.

All right, everybody. Welcome. Welcome. So today on the podcast, we have a very special guest. We have Kara Loewentheil, author of the upcoming book, "Take Back Your Brain: How a Sexist Society Gets in Your Head and How to Get It Out". She's also a brilliant coach and my very best friend in the world. And I will say more than anyone probably in the world, she is very familiar with the trenches of my own brain. So I think today's going to be a great conversation and her book is amazing, even though it doesn't specifically address alcohol. So many of the concepts in there that she teaches really can help you on your own journey to drinking less and changing your relationship with alcohol. We're going to be talking about all of that today, but let's just dive in. Welcome. Welcome, Kara.

**Kara Loewentheil:** Thanks for having me here. I won't talk about the trenches publicly.

**Rachel Hart:** You won't talk about it. That's all right.

**Kara Loewentheil:** The trenches are between you and me.

**Rachel Hart:** The trenches are just that. Kara and I met almost a decade ago. When we were both training to become coaches, and I think the trenches are just the fact that this work really is about having a skill set that you apply with yourself. It's not this kind of, "Oh, I magically fixed my brain and I only think the most helpful and supportive thoughts." You can attest that, that my brain certainly does not always think helpful and supportive thoughts.

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**Kara Loewentheil:** No. And that's why you need to be working with a coach like you. If you're working, you need to be working with someone like Rachel, if you're working on your drinking or whoever you're working with, because even the best, even those of us who do this professionally at the top level, like need help with our brains all the time. It's pretty normal. It does not mean that you're like not doing it right. Or you haven't listened to the podcast enough or whatever other kind of perfectionist nonsense your brain gives you.

**Rachel Hart:** Yeah. So one of the things that, that I'm always talking about on the podcast, I'm always teaching about the Think, Feel, Act Cycle and really helping people understand that, whatever behaviors that you want to change, right? Whether it is related to your drinking or anything else, really, your actions don't just happen, right? We got to back up and understand that there was a cycle. There was a sentence in your mind. There was an emotional experience that you are having that are, that is connected to the behavior. And so you talk a lot and teach a lot about this as well. And one of the things that I really appreciate that you talk about and teach is that these thoughts that we're having that we got to find and pay attention to and ultimately change if we want to change our behavior. We don't just come up with these in a vacuum, right? These are, whether it is thoughts that we have about gender or anxiety or a body or alcohol or what it means to drink or what it means not to drink or what it means to struggle with your drinking. Many of these beliefs are beliefs that we inherited. And I think that's a really powerful thing. I talk about it in with the Drink Archetypes, but I'm curious your perspective on this and why you think it's important for people to understand, that we didn't just come up with all of the thoughts that we think.

**Kara Loewentheil:** Yeah. So when I became a coach, as like we were trained, the coaching tools that we were taught were primarily informed by,

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I would say, evolutionary psychology, evolutionary biology. Also cognitive behavioral therapy, which is where we get the Thought, Feeling, Action Cycle or variations of that. And if you think about talk therapy, I think the kind of primary assumption in talk therapy is that your emotional and mental experience is created by your family of origin, right? Your experiences when you're a small child, your care, your relationship with your caregivers. And I think both those things are totally true and are very big influences on how we think, but there's a third whole influence on how we think that sort of before, you and I were trained and before I started doing this work, nobody was talking about. And that was the impact that society has on the way we think based on our different identities. So it's not just about gender at all. All of us live in different identities. And you, for instance, a passionate nutmegger, very committed to your identity as a Connecticut born. For me, it might be that I'm Jewish, my family's from New York, I'm, highly educated, I live in a fat body, like I have these different identities. And so we receive messages from society, implicit and explicit, about what people like us are like. "What are women like? What are women good at? What are they bad at? What comes naturally to them? What's unnatural for them? What should they like? What should they not like? How should they look? How should they behave?" And that happens for every identity we have. All of that messaging is getting sucked up by our hungry little brains when we're little, because when we're born, we don't know anything. We have an instinct to nurse, to cry. That's about it. We're learning everything else we now understand about the world as adults, we're learning as children. And that is a huge influence on how we think about ourselves. So I do think sometimes maybe one of the misconceptions when I say like feminist coaching is people think, "Oh, she must be talking about like my thoughts about gender." But think about your belief system around pleasure or your belief system around rest, or your belief system around productivity, or about parenting, or your belief system around dating, or about work. All of those belief systems have been

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influenced by what society has shown you or told you people like you are supposed to be like, or are valuable, or worth. For example, women and men get socialized very differently around, "How important is it to be married? What is the role of romantic love in your life? What should your role in a romantic relationship be?" And all of that filters down or rather gets absorbed into our brains and it comes out just like our own thoughts. It's just our own thoughts saying, "Oh, first dates are so awkward because I don't know if they're gonna be attracted to me and I don't know if they're gonna like me and then I feel really anxious and then I end up drinking to deal with my anxiety." Like all that started with like the cartoon you watched when you were five and how it depicted like the prince and princess meeting each other. It's like those things show up so much later. So understanding those influences makes a huge difference in our ability to understand what's driving my behavior today.

**Rachel Hart:** Yeah and you talk about something in the book and in your work called, "The Brain Gap", which I think connects to this. Can you talk more about this? Because when you first started talking to me about The Brain Gap, I could see how it actually influenced a lot of my early behaviors around alcohol.

**Kara Loewentheil:** Yeah. So The Brain Gap is the sort of gap between how women want to think and feel and how they actually think and feel. Men are more socialized to base their worth and value on their accomplishments, or they're just assumed to have some for existing, right? More men just assume that their opinion on something is relevant or worthwhile, right? Without even any accomplishment or credential. Women are socialized to believe that their value comes from how others perceive them essentially. Mostly sort of other people's opinions of them and how well they live up to the social expectations for them. And so that produces this sort of brain gap that we experience as almost like a split brain where

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we want to think something, but we feel something different. So we might hear a woman saying something like, "I know I should be confident because I have been a senior director for five years now and I've run this whole team in my company and we've created these outcomes. So like I should be confident, but I still feel insecure every time I go to a pitch meeting or I still worry that my boss is going to figure out that I don't know what I'm doing." There's this gap between what we can see we want to believe or even seems like objectively true and the insecurity or the inadequacy that we feel. And that's because we've been socialized to think this way about ourselves. And when we talk about it, we tend to say, "I think this, but I feel this intellectually know this, but I still feel this." When you frame it that way, you're just stuck because what, how are you supposed to bridge that gap? There's nowhere to go with that.

**Rachel Hart:** Yeah.

**Kara Loewentheil:** What I really want people to understand is those are just two thought patterns. And so we can close the brain gap by bringing those thought patterns together so that you actually believe what you want to believe.

**Rachel Hart:** Yeah. So I'm thinking about how this kind of showed up in my own life and especially in connection to my drinking. I was from a very young age really identified as a feminist. And it was very important to me that I not think that my most valuable contribution to the world was my appearance. I remember being a teenager and getting magazines like 17 and YM, where I don't want to be so fixated on how I look and also, I can't stop reading the magazine, like the thing that's going to fix my skin. What's the thing that's going to fix my hair? And fix my weight. All of these. All of these things. And for me, college was a time where that really came to a head where all of a sudden that was my kind of first experience with, "Oh,

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like the way that I can stop caring about how I look and feeling insecure when on the weekends and when I'm hanging out with people is by drinking." And so I feel like I was drinking over that brain gap. I talk about this in the Drink Archetypes, The Mask Archetype and having that social anxiety and so much of that anxiety that I had, a lot of it had to do with just feeling, feeling like I wasn't at home in my body and didn't like my body and had a very kind of antagonistic relationship with my body. And so I was just like, "But I want to have fun. I want to have a good time. So like where's the punch." What's the thing that's going to make me stop being so up in my head and worried about my appearance, which I felt like I was just like a bad feminist for even having those thoughts.

**Kara Loewentheil:** Yeah, and I think a lot of women drink or use something, numb out, but in the book I talk about numbing out and we know people use Netflix or shopping or food or Instagram or just, anything that is dopamine producing and distracting. And I do think that women are more mentally exhausted, not just because we're dealing with external oppressive systems that we have to navigate, but because we have this split brain all the time. So it's not even just that you, let's say, feel bad about how you look, then you feel bad about yourself for feeling bad about how you look because you're supposed to be a feminist, or you're just supposed to be more mature than that, or you're supposed to be past that. You don't even have to be a feminist, like I hear all the time, "I just should be over this. I should be past this. I've been to therapy, or I've had coaching before, or I should be more mature than caring about this." So we just are layering on like layer after layer of self-criticism. And then of course we're exhausted and just want to numb those voices out. My example is always more in dating, where intellectually I was aware that somebody who was ghosting me after one Tinder date was not my soulmate.

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And that person probably shouldn't be in charge of my self-esteem, but intellectually understanding that did zero to keep me from constantly like checking my texts to see if they texted back or like waiting to hear that sound, right? Like a little Pavlovian dog. I've coached so many people who experienced that in dating. So there's so many areas of life in which this kind of shows up, this like split between how we want to think and feel, how we actually think and feel. And I think before Feminist Thoughtwork, it was that's just being a woman, you just get to live with that for the rest of your life. But in this book, I really try to teach you very concrete thought change tools to close that gap. It is unfortunate. It is funny that the tools, a thought ladder, I guess you like bridge a gap, but let's say you use a ladder from one side of a gap to the other, but to really bring those in line, because what you're doing right now, which is saying to yourself, I just, I should feel more confident is not working.

**Rachel Hart:** Yeah. Yeah, exactly. It was I desperately want to feel confident and I don't. And I feel like having these insecurities, just the fact that I even have them, isn't aligning with this identity, right? And supposed to believe that my looks are not the most important thing. And yet I just want to have fun. Like I would just like to be able to have a good time. And so of course I didn't have thought work. I didn't have anyone explaining this. I had like red solo cups filled with terrible concoctions meant to get you drunk as quickly as possible. I want to talk about productivity too and how this comes up in your work. I coach people on this all the time in my own work and the connection between, productivity and then seeing, "The drink is okay. This is my sign that I'm off the clock. I have permission to stop working." It showed up different ways in my own life. Certainly after college, when I was in the working world. And I was very obsessed with, "I can't make any mistakes and I have to, I've got to work really hard." And, my value is, "I'm not the smartest person in the world, or in the room, but I'll outwork anybody."

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**Kara Loewentheil:** And every woman thinks that, like the amount of coaching I have done with women who all say their success is due to working hard. Like I'm waiting to coach a woman who says, "Yeah, I'm brilliant. I got the best strategy in the game. That's why I'm a success. And I work less than everybody else. I'm so smart." I have never heard that.

**Rachel Hart:** So for me, I had put so much pressure on myself. And I had a real intolerance for making mistakes or also a real discomfort with saying no to people so I would take on a lot of work more work that was probably, it was outside of my actual scope of my job. Drinking then for me was really my way to just be like, "God, I just want like a release from this all. I just want to stop worrying about everybody else and stop worrying about everything on my to do list and just have some freedom." And for me in my twenties, that looked like Friday night finally rolls around and then it's just like, all bets are off, right? I just get to drink as much as I want. I work with a lot of people who look more like, "All right, finally, like the day is done. I've done everything now I need to do with the kids and they're finally in bed and opening up a bottle of wine is my way to just be like, I don't have to work anymore. It's that kind of that signal that I'm done." But I think this piece that you talk about with productivity is really powerful because so many people feel like they're never really going to be able to shake this idea that "I have to do everything right. And I have to be productive all the time and I can't let people down." And so I want to hear more about how you work with and how you think of this.

**Kara Loewentheil:** Yeah. So I actually want to work backwards from that moment because I totally get the idea of "Oh, this is my signal that it's my time off." It's also a hit of dopamine. If you have been like, not basically, if you have been in a state of stress all day, it's like pleasure. But I think that particularly for things that are about numbing out, we're choosing that thing on purpose. We're not like, "Oh, lying on the floor and breathing or like

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looking at the flowers is the signal that's off." Like we're choosing a thing that distracts us from our own mind because I think that women especially are socialized to not feel that they are ever allowed to rest. And especially because women are so socialized around the importance of the home looking a certain way and the domesticity aspect of it. Like, where are you when it's time to relax at the end of the night? You're in your house. But if you, if when you look around, all is the things that are wrong "Oh, the kid's toys on the floor. I haven't deep clean the rug and like maybe the table's sticky", whatever. You don't feel like you're allowed to rest if there's ever any labor you could be doing. And this is like this intersection of patriarchy, but also like Christianity and capitalism all converge in this knot, right? Where Christianity has influenced our culture with the beliefs that sloth is one of the seven deadly sins. Like productivity, doing things is virtuous and rest, what is that phrase? Like "Idle hands are the devil's little ground" or something. Yeah. That's pretty intense. Like we don't really say that to each other with a straight face anymore, but like that ethos is still with us. So you have that then you have capitalism, which I think has influenced this in a variety of ways. Like number one, it has made us believe that the measure of our worth is our productivity. And then that interest is a great example of an intersection. Okay, men may get that socialization too, but then when they go home, they're done because they're not at work anymore. But women are always at work because women either eat, if they have a job outside the home, then when they're home, they have the second job of the home. And if they are stay at home mothers are just partners or whatever, then that house is their job. But so you're like never off your job site. So you're always in this place where you have this association with, "I'm supposed to be working and that's what makes me productive. And if I'm ever resting, I'm slacking off." and so I think that the drink at the end of the night or the TV at the end of whatever it is that we turn to when we're like, "Okay, I'm done now I get to disassociate basically. Because if we do something where we're more present with ourselves, like whatever that

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would be, even reading a book, it's then you just are going to have this cacophony of thoughts of all the things you could or should be doing that are undone. And so it's no wonder that we choose to just numb out a little bit and not have to have those thoughts all the time.

**Rachel Hart:** Yeah. How do you also talk about the kind of not wanting to let people down. This obviously will show up in, in lots of different ways, but where I usually first talk about this with people is, not wanting to be the buzzkill, not wanting to be the person, "Oh, let's get a bottle of wine. Let's share a bottle of wine." And not wanting to hear, "If you say no to that, there's no point in opening a bottle if you're not going to have some, or I'm not going to have a drink if you're not going to have a drink." When I talk about this with people, what often happens is like you see how this behavior of not wanting to let people down it's like concentric circles, right? Expanding into other areas of their life. And so maybe they're not just. Not wanting to let people down around their drinking. Maybe it's also happening at work. Maybe it's happening with their kids. Maybe it's happening with their family. But how does that play a role in what you're talking about with the brain gap.

**Kara Loewentheil:** I would call it something different because to me, not wanting to let people down implies that you can let people down. And then I think that it's almost validates that. So to me, I would just call this like people-pleasing, which is really just lie. I generally call it trying to control what other people think about you. Because that's just actually what you're doing. It's not fear of letting someone down, which like sounds so noble. It's not even people-pleasing has become people like, "Yeah, I'm just the biggest people-pleaser. I just, don't want anyone to be upset with me." It's almost like a badge of pride or something, and that sounds like a nice thing to do, pleasing other people. And no, what you are trying to do is control the thoughts that other people have about you. You are intolerant of

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someone else having a thought about you that you have not pre-approved and you want to control what everyone else thinks about you. That's not because you're a bad person or a control freak. There's nothing wrong with being a control freak. You and I are pretty controlly in some areas of our lives but women are socialized to believe that our value and our worth are dependent on what other people think about us. And so that's exhausting because it's like being a human stock market. It's like up or down all the time depending on what you think other people might be thinking about you. And it's impossible to ever feel okay because someone somewhere might be having a negative thought about you. Like that person from third grade. Like why are you up at night thinking about the thing that happened in third grade? Because your brain is like, "What if Betty's still thinking about me and she thinks that I'm lame?" Like that is what your brain is doing because that's what it's been programmed to believe. I think all of this letting people down, people-pleasing, trying to control their brains, whatever we call it, it all comes from not having a grounded relationship with yourself and it all comes from tying your worth to what other people think about you, which I know for sure with drinking, because I don't drink at all and I don't ever care that I say I'm not have some of the wine or whatever. And I've never had a friend ever say anything about it to me, right? Because like it's, and I'm not saying other people's friends won't say that, but it just is not an issue if somebody says something that I'm like, "Okay, yeah I guess you're gonna have to drink it yourself or drink half of it and pour the rest down the drain." I don't care what you do with it. Because drinking is not my thing. I have my own areas. But my point is like, we only worry about that because of our thinking about ourselves, right? It's what we fear. What we think about ourselves is what we fear other people think about us.

**Rachel Hart:** And so often, I think it's both what you're saying it's not wanting the person to have a thought, that we haven't approved about

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them having a thought about us. But it's, "I would talk a lot about it being a mirror for something's wrong with me, or I have a problem or I'm the buzzkill" or whatever it is. I talk about it too, a lot, an idea of just having safety with other people's emotions because people are going to have thoughts and feelings about the choices that we make, right? And what we decide, whether it is to drink or to eat or how we spend our time. And we when you don't have safety in your body with other people having emotions. We get into a lot of this kind of trying to people please. And I like how you're saying it framing it as, "Oh, I just don't want to let people down." When really I just don't feel safe in my body when I perceive other people are having this emotional experience that I'm thinking that I'm in control of.

**Kara Loewentheil:** But I think it is particular to your own thoughts about yourself, because there are probably you can think of a time, an experience, a situation in which somebody else might have an upset emotion about you not participating in something and you would feel totally safe in your body. If somebody was like, "Hey, let's go bungee jumping without helmets or something. We're just, let's ride motorcycles without helmets." Like you probably wouldn't be like, "Oh, I don't want to let them down because they really want us to die. And I feel I don't want to be a buzzkill." But there are things that you don't worry about, because you totally have your own back with that. You're like, yes, I'm absolutely not like jumping off a bridge without a bungee cord. Or I'm absolutely not riding a motorcycle without a helmet or I have a peanut allergy. So no, I'm not going to get the peanut sauce dish and share it with you. I don't worry about that, like letting you down. So it's just a signal to me. It's just like a flashing signal of, "Where do you still have work to do on having your own back?" And that is because it all comes back to our socialization because women are socialized and taught to believe that we should please everybody else before ourselves. We owe everybody else our time and attention and money and all of our resources. We're supposed to be like the giving tree

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and that we can't trust ourselves. We can't trust our own judgment, we can't trust our own authority, we can't trust our own decisions, and we have to move with the herd, and it's dangerous to stand out, and historically, it has been dangerous to stand out for women, so there's a lot of historical and probably epigenetic trauma that comes up, which is why sometimes people-pleasing can feel so life or death. But it isn't actually most of the time for most of us. And we can change the way we think to, however you phrase it, like create more safety with yourself, create more of a grounded relationship with yourself in that moment, so that it's not about like withstanding the distress of letting someone down. It just, you stop thinking about it that way.

**Rachel Hart:** Yeah and just even recognizing "Oh, this is the thought that I have about me. This is a me thought." And when I'm doing the work with people, sometimes it's can feel a little uncomfortable at first to be like, "This is what I'm thinking about myself." But that really is the most powerful place to start from. Because when you see that then it's, "Okay this is what I'm thinking about me and what I'm making it mean. If I say no I have the power to make it mean something else." You do talk about numbing in your book. I found in my own kind of journey, it incredibly powerful to understand my relationship with alcohol, not really just about alcohol, but about the ways that I was trying to avoid my thoughts to avoid how I was feeling, to find some sort of distraction. I remember thinking that I just had a multitude of problems. There were so many problems that I needed to address and alcohol was just one of them. And it was actually very freeing for me to see "Oh no there's actually one thing that needs my attention here" and it will show up with alcohol, it will show up with food, it will show up in how I work, it will show up in people-pleasing, it will show up in so many areas. And it is just "Oh I just don't want to be present with myself right now." How do you work with people around numbing? How do you talk about it? What do you think is the first step when someone recognizes like, "Oh, I might be

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reaching for this drink or I might be doing this thing because I'm trying to check out or because I'm trying to avoid this feeling."

**Kara Loewentheil:** I think the first step, which I know we agree on, is just like the destigmatization of it. So I'm always telling people like, "Listen, horses eat fermented hay to get high." I'm not somebody who likes using substances particularly, but like animals do this. Humans have done it for millions of years. Anyway, obviously we are not evolutionary biologists. Point being, animals of all kinds do this. And so there's nothing inherently wrong with it. And I don't think the goal is to never numb out. I end up often with more people who have like emotional eating or have been through diet culture. And I'm like, "Emotional eating is fine sometimes. It's fine to use food sometimes for your emotions. It's fine to drink sometimes for your emotions." Like to me, it's not about a quest for purity or like a puritanical standard. It's about having more than one tool, so you don't want booze or food or Netflix or whatever to be your only coping tool, the only way you know how to deal. And it's about how compulsive it feels. Like how much does it feel like you can't make a choice, like you're unconscious as making the choice for you. Honestly to me that is I don't know, 40 percent of the battle at least is there's so much drama on top of it. There's so much like shame and so much sure that you see this with your clients too. What I often see is you're absolutely blocking yourself from actually being able to deal with whatever you're doing because you are shaming yourself so hard about it that you can't get curious about it. So you can't even find out what's going on. And then you come to coaching and you're in such a rush to change the behavior. So that you no longer have to feel shame about it, right? So you come to coach and you're like, "I need help stopping drinking because I say the worst things on earth to myself about my drinking. And I want to stop doing that. So the way to do that is to stop the activity. So then I can stop being mean to myself." And so I feel like I spend a lot of time when I work with people on any kind of numbing. No, honey, that's

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backwards. We have to like, start with the way you're talking to yourself. And I do think that actually solves both levels of the problem in a lot of cases, because the reason we're unable to be alone with ourselves is because of the mean shit we say to ourselves. You rarely say to yourself, "I just don't want to be around my best friend, because she, she's so mean to me." We're so mean to ourselves. I think the thoughts that I'm often looking at helping people change are like, number one, What are your thoughts about the fact that you do this? About the fact that you drink, or you emotionally eat, or you shop, whatever it is. We gotta clean up what are you thinking about yourself for doing this? And then it usually ends up being like, how are you speaking to yourself in general? If something hard is happening, And hard is all relative. It might be sometimes it's like a big thing in your life. And sometimes it's like your kid was just on that setting that day that like, by the end of the day, you're just like, "I'm just going to leave home and never return." Like when you're in that space, how do you talk to yourself? Do you say to yourself, "Phew, that was a lot, that was hard. And even though you yelled a couple of times, I'm really proud of you for not leaving home forever. And for doing this hard job." Are you nice yourself? Or are you like, "Oh my god, I have totally failed in raising that kid. They are completely out of control, and I am a terrible mom, and I cannot believe that I yelled. That's even worse. I'm just turning into my parents that I never wanted to be. I'm going to traumatize my child." That is how you're talking to yourself. No wonder you don't want to be alone with yourself, right? With so much of this work, I feel like you and I talk about this all the time. People come to coaching often having a lot of these phrases that they've gotten from therapy or Instagram or whatever, and they don't know what they mean what does it mean to feel your feelings? What does it mean to not be safe or not be, not know how to be alone with yourself? It's they feel like these abstract concepts and it's often very helpful to be like, it just means what are the words you are saying to yourself in your brain? If we look at those words, it's going to stop being

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mysterious. It's going to become really clear. Why you feel like you need to numb out. It's not going to be confusing.

**Rachel Hart:** Yeah.

**Kara Loewentheil:** You're going to be like, "Oh, I'm saying the worst things that I've never said to another human, to myself all the time."

**Rachel Hart:** Yeah. I think it's so important. One of the things I talk about a lot when I'm working with people is that the goal is not to never numb again. And in fact if that is your goal then you're really heading towards a world of hurt. I see it more of like a spectrum of, "I'm numbing and I'm unconscious and I'm not able to whatever, be present. And then I like come back to this place of clarity or being present and then I'm going to. Like maybe I'm going to numb again." I always think like my goal is just to know where I am. Like on that spectrum, because I'm always going to be going between those two poles and to also, like you said, have the tools, right? So for so long, I feel like I would have like just like months at a time where I was just like, "Ooh, this is just like too big. We were just like full on checking out." I didn't know. I didn't, wasn't even aware that I was doing it to be in the space of "Oh that's what I was doing last night." Like I didn't realize it at the time, but I was checking out, "Okay, that's normal. That doesn't mean I'm doing anything wrong. It doesn't mean that I failed" and I can recognize that I was doing it and then I can get curious why what was it that led me to do that? And then what tools do I have available? So if I feel like I need more support, that it's not just "Okay, let me find the thing that I can immediately shut off my brain. And why do I even want to shut off my brain?" I think that just taking away the stigma of that numbing is a bad thing that humans should never do. And we should always be like a hundred percent like entirely pure.

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**Kara Loewentheil:** I'm like giving yourself permission. As far as I'm concerned, if what you said to yourself is, "Wow, I really can't cope with this feeling right now and I'm gonna have a snack instead." At least you know what you're doing and then we can try to work on it. But I totally agree, I think there's sometimes you're going to check out unconsciously and sometimes you're going to consciously check out, but also if you consciously check out and you're truly fine with it, like what happens, for instance, with binges is like people emotionally eat, which I don't think is necessarily a problem all the time, but then there's all the shame, all the judgment, all the fucking mentality. Now we're on like a whole weekend binge and now we're, or we're bingeing and purging. It's the first thing was 10 percent and then 90 percent is the reaction to it. If you give yourself permission. Yeah, I like that sound. People find that wild, but like when I, especially when I used to do a lot more like body image and emotional eating stuff, it's like giving yourself permission to binge, giving yourself permission to like, you're doing it anyway. We can see that's happening, right? So if we take control of it and you give yourself permission, you actually, it will be smaller. It will be shorter. It will not cascade into now three weeks of this because you're not then just beating yourself up when you're down. That's what happens, right? It's if you binge or you drink or whatever you do, because you are having a hard time coping, it's if you found your child doing that, and then your reaction to it is to scream about that at them about how deficient and messed up they are and how they don't, deserve anything nice and they may as well just do it now for three, it's like punching yourself when you're already down.

**Rachel Hart:** I think like this idea of destigmatizing it can be the scariest thing for so many people because it goes back to what you're saying about, So many people really feeling like they can't trust themselves, right? So it's if I'm not really mean to myself. I can't trust myself. That's a huge piece that I work on because so often what happens the next day is that there's no

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actual kind of insight for why did that happen? There's no learning. We're just totally in the space. And I was for so long was totally in the space of so deep in shame. I just want to hide under the covers.

**Kara Loewentheil:** Here's my perfect plan for how it'll never happen again. Yeah, I just did a whole podcast on how we have a rule in my relationship and I have a rule in my life that we never say, I'll just do better next time, because that is people were going through our whole lives, people going through their whole lives with no reflection, no learning, no evolution, just, "Oh, it happened again. I did it again. Okay, I'm totally gonna do it better next time." Why is it going to get better? What's going to happen? Like your brain hasn't changed. I've had this with my partner and we've talked about this, I think, on my podcast where we first met. It's if we had a fight or he wanted to change something, it's that's what he would always be like, "I'll do it better next time." We really had to work on being like, "Let's figure out why it happened this time. What was the thought that drove the behavior?" You're totally right that when we're in stigma and shame, there's no learning, there's no evaluation, there's no kind of like deconstructions. The curiosity and judgment are complete opposites. But women are socialized to judge themselves constantly about everything. You're talking about those like teen magazines. I want to do like an art project someday. That's just somebody reading headlines aimed at women that go chronologically through their day. It's like you wake up and yeah, Rachel just made this amazing face, which is just "Oh, I'm gonna throw up" because it really makes you think about like the scale and scope of the 'advice' women get because it is just assumed that we can't do anything for ourselves. We don't know, what's the right sleep hygiene? Or how should you sleep? Or what time should you wake up? And what is the first thing you should do when you wake up? And what should your morning routine be? And like, when should you shower? And when should you work out? And what should you work out? And what clothes are okay for your figure? And then

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what creams do you need for your face? Of course we don't think that we can trust ourselves with anything because there's so many huge industries worth hundreds of billions of dollars a year that are designed to tell us that we don't know the first thing about ourselves or taking care of ourselves or making decisions and we need to pay these experts to do it for us and also all their advice conflicts with it each other so if it doesn't go right you probably just picked the wrong one try again.

**Rachel Hart:** You just didn't have the perfect plan.

**Kara Loewentheil:** Yeah. That wasn't the right morning routine. It's not supposed to be lemon water. It's supposed to be alkaline water and greens powder. Now you've got to do the whole thing all over again.

**Rachel Hart:** I'm just like, "Thank God I am no longer in the lemon water." Listen, there's nothing wrong with lemon water people. But like that mindset, I definitely had a place, especially early on in my own journey around changing my relationship with alcohol where I, early on, I really was like, "Ooh, it's a poison. This is a poison and it's very bad." And so I have to go all the way to the other extreme because I've been so negligent and bad and poisoning my body that now I must put only like the most healthy, virtuous things. And this is why I think it's so powerful to be like, listen, alcohol existed before humans, right? Yes, humans, 5-6, 000 years ago figured out how to ferment it in larger quantities, but it's been like a fact of human life, right? It's been a fact of this planet. From before us. And if we can just take it to this place of "What if it's just has no moral value?" And then I was having different negative effects from being in that place of, "I only put the most virtuous things in my body", but I, there was still a lot of drama.

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**Kara Loewentheil:** Yeah. Orthorexia is a mental health condition. There's absolutely too far in the other direction also. And all, part of what's so fascinating about socialization is what did I get taught was morally better or worse in ways that if an alien came to earth and you were like, "Okay, so here's the thing. If you put water with lemons in it, in your body, that's morally good. But if you put water with yeast in it, in your body, that's morally bad." Like what? But this is we're all running around all day acting like this all makes sense and is completely consistent.

**Rachel Hart:** Yeah. All right, so back to the book. I know you have, I know so many people are going to be listening to this and want to get a copy. I can't wait to get my copy, my official copy. And where can people get it? And I know that there's an amazing bonus that you have for people when they buy.

**Kara Loewentheil:** Yeah, so the book is out today. Today is release day, which is amazing. And you can get the book at [takebackyourbrainbook.com](http://takebackyourbrainbook.com) if you want our free bonus. I'm so excited about this. You probably hear this a lot. A lot of what I hear coaching is, "What should I believe instead? I don't know what to think". And coming up with thoughts is hard. It's a skill. We teach it inside my program. You teach inside your program. But I decided for the blowout bonus for this book to create an encyclopedia of new thoughts. 30 pages long, lists and lists of new thoughts. I pulled a Rachel, never written anything like this in my life. It's just they're each one sentence. So it was easy. So there's so many thoughts in there and you can use them as is, you can edit them, you can play around with them, but you will never have to say to yourself, "I don't know what to think instead." So you can get that through the end of this week. You got to order this week through the site to get that bonus. Otherwise, you can also get it anywhere books are sold, but it's the same price with us and we'll give you a present and Amazon won't. So that's where you can get it,

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takebackyourbrainbook.com. And if you are in let's see, it's Tuesday. So if you're in New York, DC, Philly, or Boston, we may still have spots available for book tour parties, which is also on that site.

**Rachel Hart:** Amazing. So I'm so excited for this book. I was just seeing Kara a couple of weeks ago and I was telling her about this children's book that I have for my kids called, "What Do You Do with an Idea?" It's a really lovely book for kids and also for adults. But it talks about at the end, "It's what you do with an idea is you change the world." And I was saying that I feel this about everything that you're teaching and the brain gap and so much of, of what's in the book. It's just that's what you do. You change the world so I'm so excited. I hope you guys will check it out. That bonus sounds amazing. Give it to me. So thank you so much for coming on and we are so excited to all read this book.

**Kara Loewentheil:** Thanks for having me.