

## Ep #397: The Ultimate Guide to Drinking Less



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Rachel Hart**

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## Ep #397: The Ultimate Guide to Drinking Less

You are listening to the *Take a Break* podcast with Rachel Hart, Episode 397.

Whether you want to drink less or stop drinking, this podcast will help you change the habit from the inside out. We're challenging conventional wisdom about why people drink and why it can be hard to resist temptation. No labels, no judgment, just practical tools to take control of your desire and stop worrying about your drinking. Now, here's your host, Rachel Hart.

Hey, everybody. I have to tell you, I'm so excited for this episode. Because I am finally, finally, finally sharing something that I have been hard at work on for most of 2024. This has totally been a labor of love. It has taken up so many nights and weekends and part of my summer vacation, but I am so proud that it is officially here.

It's called *The Ultimate Guide to Drinking Less*. If you work with me inside the *Take a Break* membership, you've already gotten your copy. You've gotten a sneak peek into the guide; we're already using it in there. But for everyone else, for everyone listening to the podcast, this is your first chance to get your hands on something that not only am I proud of, but it truly is going to change your drinking.

It's going to change how you understand your relationship with alcohol, and it's going to change your life for the better. I will tell you, I have pages and pages of journal entries from my 20s and my early 30s where I would just spin. I would go around in circles wondering, "Why is it so hard for me to moderate? Why can't I learn my lesson when it comes to drinking? Why can't I just do what is good for me?"

I was so desperate back then for someone to just explain what was going on, that didn't leave me feeling like, "Well, something's wrong with me," or that I had to commit to never drinking again for the rest of my life.

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In 2016, when I published my first book *Why Can't I Drink Like Everyone Else?*, one of my goals with that book, was to help people see that, yeah, you know what? There's an unconscious framework that influences your drinking. So that book was really all about introducing people to the think-feel-act cycle and to show them how to use it. Not only to understand and make sense of their drinking, but also to start to say no.

I will tell you, when I learned about think-feel-act, and it's something that I have been talking about on the podcast for the last seven years, but when I learned about it, it was so mind-blowing for me because it helped me make sense of something that often felt so confusing.

I really was so perplexed why sometimes I could go out with friends, I could have a couple of drinks, and then I would call it a night. And other times, I would end up stumbling home at 2 a.m. It was just so unpredictable. And because it was unpredictable, or it felt incredibly unpredictable, it also felt almost impossible to manage.

It was kind of like, well, you never knew, was I going to be good tonight or was I going to be bad? Who could tell? And there's so much power in having a logical framework to help you understand your behaviors that you want to change. And it's especially powerful to have a logical framework when you're trying to change something that can at times feel illogical.

Because to me, it's way more powerful to be in the position and say, "Okay, how much I drink isn't just about the fact that alcohol impairs your judgment," which of course is true, "but to really recognize there's more going on there." And I think it's also much more powerful to be in the position where you can realize how much you drank, it's also not just a matter of how alcohol interacts with your brain.

And so I talk about this all the time. Yes, some people may be more sensitive to dopamine, or they may respond more strongly to certain

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rewards. But I think that society spends way too much time either pathologizing the brain or making the brain the problem.

And I will just say this, even if we could know, even if we could do a test and know for certainty that this was true for you, that you were more sensitive to dopamine or that you responded to the reward of alcohol more strongly than, say, your best friend... Even if we can know that that was true, then what? It wouldn't magically make your desire go away.

Part of the problem is that when we focus on pathologizing the brain, it leaves you in the position, which is how I felt for a very long time, which is "Okay, just my damn bad luck that I have the brain that I have." And feeling at odds with part of yourself sucks. It is no fun, especially when you need your brain to help you change your habits, right? If you need your brain to help you change, and you also feel that it is a part of you that is letting you down, that's not a good position to be in.

So explaining away people's drinking or people's difficulty in saying no with the explanation of, well, some people's brains are just different, or some people just can't handle alcohol, that for me, it just created more shame.

Now, I know for some people that sentiment might be empowering, but for me. and for so many of the people that I work with, it has the opposite effect. It creates shame. It "other's" you. It makes you feel different. And shame is not your friend when it comes to changing your behaviors, it really isn't.

You may be able to shame yourself into changing your behavior for a little while, but you already know, this, it doesn't work forever. The truth is, your drinking is influenced by so many factors. And chalking up over-drinking to, 'well, some people just can't handle alcohol,' it just doesn't capture everything that goes into your relationship with alcohol.

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And it also, it really ignores and doesn't give you credit for how much influence you have when it comes to change. I've talked about this on the podcast. I've talked about this tendency to pathologize and to moralize our drinking. In other words, to make the brain the problem, or to make the person the problem. I've talked about how, in my opinion, it does more harm than good.

It leads to this kind of one-size-fits-all approach of telling people who struggle that they need to stop drinking forever. And I don't believe that's the right approach for everyone. In fact, I think when we tell people there is only one solution, what ends up happening is it scares a lot of people off from getting the help that they need and the support that they need earlier on.

I think a lot of people, in fact, I would venture to say most people, would be a lot more willing to listen to their intuition around their drinking, that little niggling inside of 'something about my drinking doesn't feel right, doesn't feel good. I feel like I'm drinking too much. I feel like I can't totally control myself.'

That little intuition that bubbles up for so many people, that so often gets ignored, more people would be willing to listen to it. They'd listen to this intuition, and they'd do something about it if they knew, if they could be sure, that the result of listening to the intuition and acknowledging it wasn't, 'okay, well, that's just sending you down the path of you're never going to be able to drink again.'

There's just so much more going on when it comes to how much you drink than alcohol's intoxicating effects, or what's going on in your brain. There's everything you've been socialized to believe about alcohol, and what it means to drink, and what it means if you don't drink, or if you struggle with your drinking.

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And because there's so much more going on, I also think we have to make room for more solutions, more approaches. There's also what you saw growing up. Yes, there's how adults in your life used or didn't use alcohol or other substances. But there's also how adults in your life related to their feelings and their emotions, and how they handled stress and anxiety.

And then there's also everything that your brain learns from alcohol and all the benefits of drinking. This is something that we don't talk about enough. We're too much in a culture of demonizing behaviors that we want to change or stop. And we don't just do it with alcohol, we do it with food. We do it with technology. We do it with money, right? So many things.

When there's an effort or a desire to stop or change a behavior, we go right to the place of making it “bad”. And yes, of course, there are downsides to drinking, but there are also upsides. If there were no upsides, there would be no reason to drink. And either ignoring the benefits or trying to talk yourself out of the benefits, that creates its own set of problems and issues and obstacles.

Because it's very normal for there to be part of you that wants to drink and part of you that doesn't. Part of you that wants to say yes or have another, and then part of you that would rather say no. But what happens is when you spend all of your time focusing on the downsides, you will start to think that this internal conflict is a sign that something is wrong with you, when truly, it's not.

When, in fact, the internal conflict that you feel, not only is it there for a reason, but it's something that can actually be very, very helpful on your journey. But you're not going to look at it, you're not going to acknowledge it, if you believe that it's a problem or you believe that it's only going to get in the way.

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So the first book, *Why Can't I Drink Like Everyone Else?* that was really about introducing the think-feel-act cycle. The latest book, which I just released on my website... I'm so excited about it... it's called *The Ultimate Guide To Drinking Less*.

It's all about giving you tools. Not only tools that are going to set you up for success, but also acknowledging that we just cannot treat everyone's drinking the same way. We cannot use this one-size-fits-all solution. You need, people need, an individualized approach.

Because someone who tends to drink more than they want in social situations is having a very different experience and a different relationship with alcohol than someone who tends to drink more than they want at home.

Or drinking to elevate a situation or make the situation more special is not the same as drinking to drown your sorrows. I could go on and on, because this really gets into the Drink Archetypes™. But what you need to understand is that different situations, when different archetypes are activated, they require a different approach.

So my goal with the guide was to take everything that I've learned and distill it down into a digestible, actionable workbook for you to make this less about theory and more about the practical ins-and-outs of how exactly do I change my drinking? Or how exactly do I figure out what I want my drinking to look like? Or if I want to drink at all? How do I actually set the stage to figure out and to pursue my own journey and decide what that is going to look like?

Inside the guide, I start by covering the basics, right? So you don't have to listen to seven years of this podcast to get up to speed with my approach. But I also really go deep into best practices, and this includes some of the foundational tools that I use with everyone.

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I teach these on the podcast as well, but this really kind of distills it down for you. And these tools apply no matter your archetype, but also the best practices when you're drinking, best practices when you're not drinking, and best practices after having too much to drink. This is a really, really overlooked area, right? That it's kind of like, "I don't know, just let that hangover remind you how stupid you were."

We really need to be set up to have best practices that help us in all three of these areas. If you want to create change, you've got to look at all three" when you're drinking, when you're not, and when you've had too much to drink.

And one of the things I've done with this podcast, and with my work in general, is I really have tried to create a big tent. I've tried to create a space where a lot of people can feel welcome. You can listen to this podcast. You can engage with my work.

You don't need to know where you're going to end up. You don't have to declare what you're going to do for the rest of your life. You don't have to convince yourself of all the downsides of drinking. I wanted to create a space where a lot of people were welcome to examine their drinking, examine their relationship with alcohol, and have that space be free from judgment and shame and scare tactics.

But also free from this underlying, 'here's what I think you should do. Here's what is the best thing for you to do.' I really believe that everyone has to discover the right solution for themselves. And by the way, I think the right solution can change over time. It certainly has for me.

We're so wedded to this idea that you have to make a decision around alcohol forever. And frankly, I think that that gets in the way. Instead of allowing there to be freedom and exploration, and a sense of ownership that this is your decision and you call the shots, and you get to decide to do

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something different tomorrow or next week or next month or next year. And that if you decide to do something different, it isn't a failure. And when you hit an obstacle or you have a misstep, that isn't a failure either.

So I cover all the best practices and then I go really deep into the eight Drink Archetypes. The archetypes are really all about helping you understand the different meanings that the human brain assigns to alcohol, and really using this to understand and see how it influences not only how often you drink, but how much you drink.

The archetypes can make it hard to abstain or moderate your drinking. And they are really the reason why rules and drink plans and dry January's so often are hit or miss, right? You might have that experience that they work for a little bit, but eventually you go back to the same patterns. It's not because there's something wrong with you, it's because you're not working with your archetypes.

Working with your archetypes, it really is how you get to the root cause of your over-drinking. Again, you're not getting to the root cause of there being something wrong with you, you're getting to the root cause of finally being able to see this unconscious pattern.

In the guide, I break down the eight archetypes, but I also give you specific tools that will help you drink less or say no when different archetypes are activated. So that's one of the most exciting pieces for me, because it really allows people to create this individualized approach.

Because, of course, most people find that multiple archetypes will show up for them depending on the situation. So you really do need an approach that can change and is flexible.

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I will just say, I'm so excited to offer the *Ultimate Guide To Drinking Less* to all of you. It truly is the thing that I wished someone would have written for me back when I was waking up in the morning and beating myself up about how much I drank or why I couldn't learn my lesson or keep my commitment.

I really just wanted something to help me feel like I could make sense of what was going on, and to help me feel like I was in charge and I was empowered. And by the way, I didn't need to feel like a bad person. Or I didn't need to keep believing that something was wrong with me. I will tell you, there is nothing wrong with you if you're struggling with your drinking. You just haven't been given the full picture.

So here's the deal. *The Ultimate Guide* is for sale on my website, RachelHart.com. You can get it for \$37. It will be delivered to you as an e-book, so you can read it on Kindle, on Apple Books, on Google Play Books. You can read it in a PDF reader like Notability, if you love kind of marking things up and taking notes while you're reading. I wanted this to be an e-book so you could read it wherever you are.

But also because there are so many best practices, so many tools for you to use, I wanted you to have those at your fingertips as long as you have your phone with you. The e-book is over 200 pages, but I will tell you, it really is very easy to use because it's built around these discrete practices and exercises so you can really immediately start getting to work.

It truly is the most comprehensive, up-to-date, and concise version of everything that I teach. Now, I designed it to be a do-it-yourself guide because I know that there are so many of you out there that don't have the means to join the membership and work with me one on one in there. So I wanted a resource that would be broadly accessible.

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So for \$37, you're really kind of downloading my brain; all of my ideas about the archetypes, about the think-fill-act cycle, about how to work with your cravings and see that there's a wisdom inside of them and not just something that you have to fight against, and all of the tools, everything that I teach to help you change your drinking.

Now through the end of the year, I'm also going to host a monthly call for everyone who purchases the guide. There is no extra cost for this. If you purchase a guide between now and the end of the year, you will get notifications for these calls.

I really just wanted to be able to connect with all of you and answer your questions and offer coaching and help you get unstuck, because I know what it's like to be in your shoes. I know what it's like to believe and worry that your drinking is never going to change. And it really is easier than you think if you have the right tools. But also, when you have an approach that isn't about making you the problem.

So if you're interested in taking part in these calls, I'm going to be doing them once a month through the end of the year. All you have to do is purchase a guide and we will send you the information prior to the first call. You also don't have to attend live. You can send your questions ahead of time. You can watch the replay.

But this is something that I really wanted for all of you who are interested in this work to be able to connect with me as well. Okay? So if you feel frustrated by your drinking, you need the *Ultimate Guide To Drinking Less*. It really is the answer. It has the individualized approach that you need.

You can go to [RachelHart.com/guide](https://RachelHart.com/guide) right now. You can learn more about it. You can read a sample. You can look inside. And for everyone who joins me between now and the end of the year, I cannot wait to connect with all

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of you and answer your questions and offer coaching on the monthly *free* calls.

All right, that is it for today. I will see you all next week.

Hey guys, you already know that drinking less has plenty of health benefits. But did you know that the work you do to change your relationship with alcohol will help you become more of the person you want to be in every part of your life?

Learning how to manage your brain and your cravings is an investment in your physical, emotional and personal wellbeing. And that's exactly what's waiting for you when you join my membership *Take a Break*. Whether you want to drink less, drink rarely, or not at all, we'll help you figure out a relationship with alcohol that works for you. We'll show you why rules, drink plans, and Dry January so often fail, and give you the tools you need to feel in control and trust yourself.

So, head on over to [RachelHart.com](http://RachelHart.com) and sign up today, because changing the habit is so much easier when you stop trying to go it alone.

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