

Ep #408: Interview with Sobriety Coach Adriana Cloud



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With Your Host

Rachel Hart

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Ep #408: Interview with Sobriety Coach Adriana Cloud

Does it ever feel like your drinking just happens to you? One minute you're cooking dinner and the next minute you're sipping a glass of wine and you have no idea how it happened? Or maybe you don't understand why some nights you stop while you're ahead and other nights you go really overboard. This is episode 408 and I'm talking with sobriety coach and hypnotist Adriana Cloud about the think-feel-act cycle and the power of the unconscious mind.

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.

Rachel Hart: Alright everybody, welcome back. So I am so excited today to have with you Adriana Cloud. So Adriana joined Take a Break as a coach last June, and I have to say that I really quickly fell in love with her, not just because she's an amazing coach, but because it's so rare for me to find someone who approaches the work of helping people with their drinking from a place of non-judgment.

So we're going to talk a lot about her story with alcohol and how she became a coach, but I will say, you know, she was a daily drinker for over a decade. And like me, she never identified as an alcoholic or an addict, but she knew that something about her drinking felt off.

She knew that she was drinking more than was healthy and more than felt good. And all of that took her on a path not only to completely change her relationship with alcohol, but a path of personal development and ultimately led to her becoming a sobriety coach and helping people also inside of Take a Break. But she also works with people one-on-one. So, without further ado, Adriana, thank you so much for joining us.

Ep #408: Interview with Sobriety Coach Adriana Cloud

Adriana Cloud: Thank you, Rachel. I'm so excited to be here and talk to you today about alcohol, which is my favorite topic.

Rachel Hart: We always joke about this. You know, one of the reasons why I wanted to have Adriana on, not only because she's amazing, but because when we get on our Zoom calls to kind of check in with how things are going, we just love chatting. We love really talking about relationships with alcohol and the habit and cravings and all of this. So we really are serious and we're like, yeah, like this is our jam. We love talking about this.

Adriana Cloud: It's just so funny. That's the case now. I was just thinking about it today because in the past I spent so much time trying to pretend alcohol was not an issue and so ashamed to talk about anything to do with my drinking. And now I could talk about it for hours and hours. It was just funny how the tables have turned.

Rachel Hart: Yeah, it's wild. I haven't really thought about that before. But I also spent so much time, so much kind of mental drama, just, oh God, am I ever going to figure this out and what's wrong with me? And feeling like it was the worst thing in my life, right? That everything in my life would be solved if only I could figure out my drinking.

And yeah, to now have gone 180 degrees and it's like, oh my God, let's talk more about this. We love this. And I always kind of joke that – and I joke, but I'm serious that everything that I teach and that people really learn when they're learning how to change their relationship and change how they respond to their cravings, it really is a meta skill. It really is a skill that you apply to everything in your life.

And so in so many ways, I feel like my own journey with alcohol truly was a blessing even though there was so much pain and so much suffering and

Ep #408: Interview with Sobriety Coach Adriana Cloud

so much drama that I had about it because it really helped me get to know myself and become more of who I wanted to be.

So you know, but enough about me. Let's talk about you. And will you tell us a little bit about your experience and what your drinking looked like and kind of how you got to a place of deciding, you know what, I need to do something about this.

Rachel Hart: Sure, yes. So I started drinking in my teenage years. And of course in the beginning it was like I didn't like the taste, but you kind of learn to like the taste, you make yourself like the taste. And I was, I guess, a normal drinker into my early 20s, I would say. But I then was with someone and married to someone who was a heavy drinker.

And just the environment that we were in, there was just a lot of drinking around me. And so I fell into that very easily because it was the thing that we did together. We went out, we had people in the house and we were drinking and so it just became kind of a nightly thing to have a few drinks. And it wasn't really a problem until it was. But you know how it is, it's just over time you need more and more to have the same effect and it just becomes a daily ritual.

It becomes the thing that you need at the end of the night to unwind. And so that continued into my mid-30s and my ex-husband, he was a heavy drinker. And so through that, I also became a heavier drinker. Not to blame him, of course. I don't want to blame him for this.

Rachel Hart: No, but the relationships in our life, they definitely influence our own drinking. And we'll talk more about, we're gonna talk more about the think-feel-act cycle. But yeah, I mean, I definitely had an experience where I was at one point dating someone who, you know, he really liked to

Ep #408: Interview with Sobriety Coach Adriana Cloud

drink, I really liked to drink, he'd bring the two of us together and we were drinking a lot.

Adriana Cloud: Right, that's what happens. We just fall into that kind of pattern with the people around us and it just becomes the normal thing that you do when other people around you are doing it also. And so what happened at the end of our relationship was that he identified as an alcoholic and went to get help and went to rehab.

And when we separated, I continued drinking. And for a while, I used that as an excuse. Like, oh, I had this difficult thing happen. It was a very difficult time in my life. It was just traumatizing, this separation. And so I used that as an excuse of like, well, my life is a mess, like, look at what, like my marriage is over. And so I continued drinking.

And again, I never called myself an alcoholic and I didn't identify as an addict, but it was definitely a daily thing that I did. And on the outside, my life was okay. You know, I was paying my bills, I had my job, like I was kind of managing things okay. But on the inside, it was just such a complete mess. I felt very lost and it felt like alcohol was the thing that kind of allowed me to keep myself together. It was definitely an escape that it was offering me.

And this continued until 2020, the pandemic, and I was living alone at the time. And it just became this thing where I just started drinking even more because there was nowhere to go, nothing to do, nowhere to be, no one to tell me that I'm drinking too much. You couldn't tell how hungover I was on Zoom. So it just became even easier to drink even more.

And I had known, by that point I had known for a while that I was drinking too much, but there was just never an impetus to do anything because there wasn't any dramatic rock bottom or any moment like that. But for me

Ep #408: Interview with Sobriety Coach Adriana Cloud

what happened was this accumulation of waking up every day feeling disappointed in myself.

And just the amount of time I was spending thinking about alcohol just was really depressing because I was worried about, am I drinking too much? Will I have to quit for good? What if I cannot quit? What if it's too difficult to quit? Are people noticing how much I'm drinking? Will they still be my friends if I quit?

And all of this mental chatter was just occupying so much brain space and it was just exhausting. And so at some point, somewhere in 2020, I decided that I really wanted to do something about it. And so, I started trying to moderate and started making deals with myself about, oh, well, if I drink on Tuesday and Saturday, then I can drink then. And then if I manage to not drink the rest of the days, I could drink as much as I want to on those days. So that kind of bargaining with myself of when I was allowed to drink and how much. And that math was exhausting also.

And in the meantime, I started reading books about alcohol and what alcohol does to our bodies and our brains and reading memoirs from people who had quit drinking. And it helped me to feel less alone and to really understand that there wasn't anything wrong with me because I'd spent so much time like shaming myself and thinking, oh, I don't have the willpower, there must be something wrong that I can't control how much I'm drinking, don't I know any better, this kind of like self-judgment.

And to hear the stories of other people really helped me to see that no, actually this is quite normal. Alcohol is an addictive substance and it makes sense that if I continue drinking and reinforcing the old patterns, that I will continue drinking and wanting to drink.

Ep #408: Interview with Sobriety Coach Adriana Cloud

Rachel Hart: One of the things that I love about your story, and I love, I want people to recognize more of is that I think we're often under this assumption that when someone has a "unhealthy relationship" with alcohol, it's all going to look the same, right? And it's going to be very kind of obvious from the get-go. And when I hear you describe your story, I think about how, you know, for me, very early on from when I was drinking, I could see that I was like, I was going for it. I was like all in doing the binge drinking. I started drinking in college.

And I don't really believe that I ever looked at my relationship with alcohol as normal. I think that I maybe would have been like, everybody does it. But there was a part of me from the get-go that was like, I feel like I want this more than my friends. I feel like I'm more interested, you know, right from the beginning, even when I too was not really enjoying the taste, but I was like, ooh, this is good. I like this thing.

And what I hear you describing is something very different, right? Where it's kind of like a gradual increase, right? In a way that I think a lot of times when I work with people, they will be surprised. They're like, I never looked at my drinking as something that was a problem. I never had a lot of thought about it, whereas I had a ton of thought from the get-go about it.

But then slowly over time, it starts to creep up or something happens, often major life events like you're talking about, something will often be a trigger. And you'll start to be, it's like you kind of wake up and you're like, hey, what happened, right? Like what's going on here? How am I consuming this much? And so I just think it's really important to point out that people's experience can look very different.

And then at the same time, that think-feel-act-cycle, it's still operating underneath, you know, and is what is kind of creating the unhealthy relationship that we have.

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

Ep #408: Interview with Sobriety Coach Adriana Cloud

Adriana Cloud: Yeah, it's so, I'm so glad you point this out because what often comes up is people are so focused on how much they're drinking or how often they're drinking. But that is just such a small part of the whole equation is how do we feel after we drink? And how do we feel about our drinking? Like what are we thinking about our drinking the next day? You know, what is the story we're telling ourselves?

And what are we making it mean that we had X number of drinks? And so for me, it was certainly, it was definitely gradual. In the beginning, it wasn't any big deal at all, but then noticing how it just became daily and then that slight anxiety when, oh, what if I don't have a drink tonight? And just noticing that made me feel a bit anxious if I was thinking of not having it.

Rachel Hart: Like not knowing if an invitation included drinks. So are we getting drinks? What is this? I remember having a lot of that anxiety too, Like, is alcohol involved or not involved? What's going on here?

Adriana Cloud: Yeah, for sure, yes. So back in 2020, yes. So I just started to really learn more about how different people respond to alcohol, how different people's stories unfold with alcohol, and to really start to normalize what I was experiencing and to realize, oh no, it's completely normal. It's not just me, it happens to other people. And it is possible to change that relationship with alcohol and not be miserable. Because I also had this story of, well, if I quit drinking, I'll just be miserable for the rest of my life. I'll just be bored for the rest.

Rachel Hart: Well, never have sex again. I was like, well, that's it. That was a good ride while it lasted, but that's over. Like that's never going to happen. I'm just going to be this very healthy, you know, but very lonely person by herself.

Ep #408: Interview with Sobriety Coach Adriana Cloud

I mean, we have such stories. And I think the beautiful part of it too is that we both drastically changed our relationship with alcohol, but we haven't landed in the exact same space with it. Right. So we haven't, so you don't drink anymore.

Adriana Cloud: No.

Rachel Hart: I sometimes, but it's quite rarely. But I think like that's the other thing too, is we don't all have to end up in the exact same spot. It doesn't have to look the same. A lot of times I feel like that really frustrates me, this idea that everyone's kind of journey has to look the same and everybody has to end up in the same point. It just isn't, it's not realistic.

Adriana Cloud: I agree, yes. And for me, you know, this is my story, but I'm certainly not telling everyone that you should follow my path and my way is the only way to do it. But for me, I landed at this place where I could take it or leave it. And then I was like, well, if I could leave it, why would I take it? What is it giving me?

Clearly, I'm fine without it on the days when I don't have it. So what does it possibly offer me? And I came up at some point with the answer nothing. And it felt really good to get to that answer. I didn't have to, of course at the beginning I had to, like, I didn't believe that, but I did get to a point where I actually firmly believe that.

And so from then on it was very easy to not want to drink because when I didn't think it was giving me something, why would I want it? And so I have alcohol in my house. I cook with wine sometimes, but it never even occurs to me to want it. And I'm not here saying, oh, I will never drink again. I just, at the moment, I can't ever foresee why I would want it. I mean, it might change, but at the moment, I'm just completely uninterested in ever having it again.

Ep #408: Interview with Sobriety Coach Adriana Cloud

Rachel Hart: I just want to pause right there, because I think that's the piece of being uninterested. Because again, I certainly thought, if I'm saying no, it's just going to be like a battle of will, right? And I'm just going to be fighting my desire and I'm always going to feel like I'm missing out. I'm always going to be feeling like I could be having more fun.

But to get to that place of just being like, meh, you know, like just kind of uninterested, that to me is very mind blowing because I think a lot of times what is out there and something that I really talk a lot about is kind of going to the other extreme, which is I'm not uninterested. I hate it. It's awful. It's poison. It's a scourge on humanity, right? Like going to that place, and that's not an uninterested place.

You may not be drinking from that place, but you're very interested in how much you dislike it and how bad and evil you think it is. And so really to like land in this spot of like, yeah, I don't know. People can't see me, but I'm just kind of like shrugging my shoulders right now. Just like, yeah, I don't know. I mean, like it is, right?

Like that to me is what I think is so wild about not only where you can land, but also where it is possible to bring your brain to, right? To go from a place where, you know, I had so much desire and believed it was so essential to so many things to go to this place of like, I just don't have like a lot of interest in it. That really is wild to me.

And I think that is also something that most people don't think is possible because we tend to talk about, you know, abuse of alcohol and unhealthy relationships with alcohol as if it is purely a problem of the brain, right? And if it's a problem of the brain, then of course you can never get to this place of like, huh, uninterested about it.

Ep #408: Interview with Sobriety Coach Adriana Cloud

Adriana Cloud: Yeah, and this is why, there are a couple of things I wanna say here, but this is why like the think-feel-act cycle, this is such a good illustration of it because I, first of all, I didn't think I could get to this point. When I started to do this work, it was because I knew that I didn't want to continue down the path I was going. And I had made peace with this idea that I would just be bored the rest of my life. Like, that's it. It's just going to be boring from here on out.

And I guess I was okay with that because the alternative was I kept drinking and that would just not end well. And it wasn't until I changed my thoughts about alcohol that I could get to this place where I was not interested. But the thoughts I started from was alcohol gives me so much and to get to it has nothing to offer me that I want or need. And that is a huge shift and I didn't know this shift was possible, but I was, I guess, kind of fumbling my way forward. And that's where I landed.

But that's why I see now that is the thought I have, and that's what allows me to feel uninterested in it. But it is completely that thought, which is not available to everyone. And I know that I didn't think it was possible to get there and fully believe it. Yeah.

Rachel Hart: I mean, so, you know, for people who are brand new to the podcast and may not be familiar with the think-feel-act cycle, so, you know, it's the idea that your body doesn't make a move towards a drink without something unfolding first in your mind. And this is true of the decision to go to the liquor store and pour yourself a glass and pour yourself another, but it's true of all actions, right? That we don't take action without a thought and a feeling first.

And was that your light bulb moment for you with the think-feel-act cycle or was it when you were introduced to it? Because I mean, I definitely had my own kind of mind-blowing experience when this was introduced to me and I

Ep #408: Interview with Sobriety Coach Adriana Cloud

was like, oh wait, there's like something that explains my drinking because it felt just unknowable to me in a sense because, you know, even though I personally knew that I had a tendency to like really go hard and drink a lot, I didn't always do that, right?

And I couldn't really make sense of why sometimes I would, you know, go out for drinks with coworkers and after work, and then I'd go home by nine and other times it would be like two a.m. at the kebab truck, right? And I was like, I don't know, like it does not make any sense for me. And, you know, the think-feel-act cycle is what explained that to me and helped me understand, oh, I'm having like a totally different set of thoughts and feelings, and that is making the decision, do I keep going or do I go home?

Adriana Cloud: That's so funny because I had a very different experience. So I didn't find coaching in the think-feel-act cycle until I was a year and a half into sobriety. And so what happened was when I found that, it explained my sobriety to me. Because before that, what had happened was I just had this idea that desire just somehow existed outside of me and I had no control over whether I want alcohol or not. So it was a bit of a mystery to me how I had managed to stop drinking.

And so when I got to the point where I was a year and a half in, and then I heard about the think-feel-act cycle, I was like, oh, that's what I did. I changed my thoughts, which allowed me to feel indifferent about alcohol, and which allowed me to not drink. And so that was a light bulb moment for me, how it explained how I was able to stop drinking.

Rachel Hart: Yeah. And that's wild because, you know, one of the things when I hear you say that, when I'm working with people, one of the things that I notice is, you know, we're not just hard on ourselves when we fail. We tend to be very hard on ourselves even when we have accomplishments,

Ep #408: Interview with Sobriety Coach Adriana Cloud

right? So we don't, we want to not acknowledge the accomplishment or dismiss it. Or it was a fluke, right?

And if something's a fluke, like how can I ever be sure that it's gonna last and it's gonna stay around? Or I'm not going to actually acknowledge that I've made any progress until I get to my end goal, right? So it's that kind of idea of, well, it's not worth celebrating yet.

You know, this is why I think the think-feel-act-cycle is so powerful, because instead of you just being in that spot of like, I don't really know how I stopped, because if you don't know, how are you going to replicate it in the future?

Adriana Cloud: Exactly.

Rachel Hart: How are you going to hang on to it? It can feel so scary when, you know, we make changes and we don't even recognize what's happening beneath the surface. We don't even recognize that we decided to say no because of a thought and a feeling. It just feels like this mystical thing that happened to us.

So it's as important both for, okay, let's understand why I'm saying yes, right? Let's understand why I'm continuing to have another drink and have another drink and why I'm giving in to my excuses. It's hugely important there, but then it's so important for actually feeling secure in the success that we're making and the change that we're making and not being in this place of like, I don't know, it was a fluke, who knows how it happened. Because that is a very scary place for people to be in when they feel like, I don't know that I can replicate this. Or what if something happens in the future and then, you know, poof, it's all gone.

Ep #408: Interview with Sobriety Coach Adriana Cloud

Adriana Cloud: Absolutely, yes. And that was me the first few months into sobriety for sure because I didn't quite know what had happened. It felt good not to drink and I was excited about that, but I couldn't trust it to last because I didn't know how I got there. And so there was always like, well, the desire might return. I don't want to drink today, but I don't know.

What about tomorrow? I'm just not sure. And so the beginning of my sobriety was a little bit like that kind of walking on tenterhooks and what happens tomorrow? We don't know because we don't know how we got here.

So I completely agree that it's so important to just understand whatever the state we are in to understand what thoughts helped us to feel that way and create that reality, whatever that current reality is in the moment, whether it's drinking or not drinking or drinking sometimes or whatever it is, to be able to really link back to, oh, this is the thought I have and that's why I feel this way, and that's why I'm able to act this way or not act this way. So important.

Rachel Hart: I mean, again, I think that this goes back to something that I teach about the different drink archetypes and really understanding, hey, what is happening beneath the surface? Because again, most people approach their drinking purely from a place of quantity. How much? Am I drinking too much? I want to drink less.

And yes, quantity is a piece of the equation that we need to pay attention to, but I think this is where people will get stuck because they will have periods of time where they're like, okay, I'm not drinking too much. But then all of a sudden it's like they wake up and what happened? They look around. I don't understand how now, you know, I was doing fine and now I'm polishing off a bottle of wine every night. What gives?

Ep #408: Interview with Sobriety Coach Adriana Cloud

So it's not just, you know, understanding the think-feel-act cycle, like yes, your thoughts and your feelings are leading to a different action, to different behaviors, but really understanding, hey guys, the wine is not just wine or the beer is not just beer, right? Your brain is not relating to it purely as alcohol.

It's relating to it with all of these layers of meaning and story and what the drink represents and what you believe you are going to get from drinking. And so understanding that piece of the archetypes is so, so important to just help people make sense of their drinking.

Adriana Cloud: Yeah, and I had not done any of that work while I was still drinking. So what happened for me was I somehow was able to stop. And that's when I started to really realize, oh, the alcohol was doing something for me. But I had not articulated that. And so I found myself in this place where I was just so focused on, I just have to not drink.

I just have to focus on the action of drinking without really understanding any of what came before that, the thoughts or the feelings that precipitated me reaching for the drink. And because I had not done any of that work beforehand, I found myself not drinking and still kind of feeling not great a lot of the time in those situations where before I have been drinking, I didn't understand why I wasn't feeling better. But of course, I wasn't feeling any better because I had not changed my thoughts.

So I then had to really do that work of, oh, I was drinking to escape my feelings. So that was my main archetype was the escape archetype because, again, there was a lot of just difficult emotions in the beginning after the divorce, and then just feeling kind of lost in my life, not sure what to do, having low self-esteem, a lot of perfectionism, like my inner critic, so the mask was coming up as well too. But just that think of, oh, I have a feeling, oh, I must drink at it, like I just, no, no feelings here.

Ep #408: Interview with Sobriety Coach Adriana Cloud

Rachel Hart: You know, we don't do feelings here, sorry.

Adriana Cloud: We don't do feelings. And so suddenly when I wasn't drinking anymore, it's like, oh my God, this is a feeling. What is it? This is scary. What do I do with it?

So that's when I really had to do that work of what was the alcohol providing? What were those moments when I was reaching for it? What was the story I was telling myself that it would give me? And then try to work backwards and understand where I actually needed to look at my life, you know, underneath those feelings I was trying to avoid.

Rachel Hart: I think that this is why, and it's interesting because we're in January right now, and this is why I think that dry January can sometimes backfire for people because, again, so much focus is on quantity and so much focus is on the ways in which alcohol is harming the body and how you're going to feel better without it. And there's no question, right? There's no question that your body is physically going to feel better, right? But you're also going to meet you, right? You're going to meet yourself.

And I was definitely, you know, for me when I was kind of in my lowest point and struggling the most, I was very deep in the mask and the release archetype. And so it was this sense of, I have all of this anxiety and I have no idea how to manage it, right?

And so much of that anxiety was connected to a really overactive inner critic. And so you remove the alcohol from that, the anxiety, there's still anxiety and I still have an overactive inner critic, right? So then I'm like, okay, I gotta figure that out.

And then I had the release as well. So this idea of, you know, I had to live up to certain expectations and I had to behave a certain way and I had to

Ep #408: Interview with Sobriety Coach Adriana Cloud

kind of put on this presentation for the world. Again, you remove alcohol, which for me, my brain believed for the longest time, like, oh, that's my freedom. That's my way to not have to care. That's my way to just kind of, you know, let myself just kind of cut loose and be silly and be wild and not have to be, you know, like the perfect Rachel that does everything right.

So again, you take alcohol out, well, there I was with all of these crazy expectations and beliefs that I had to be perfect and I couldn't make a mistake and mistakes were, you know, it wasn't just that they were wrong, but they were shameful. And it's a piece that I feel like so often, yes, I mean, you will do your body and mind so much benefit by, you know, taking periods away from alcohol. But it's like we kind of drop people into the deep end a little bit. They're then like, okay, but now here I am. Like here's me.

And there were all these reasons why I may have had the desire to drink that go beyond I just really love wine or I just really love craft cocktails. And then that's a piece where I think a lot of times people feel like, well, I wasn't happy when I, you know, I wasn't happy when I was drinking, but I'm also not really happy when I'm not drinking. And then you end up feeling like you're in no man's land and you don't have to be in that place, right?

But you do need the tools to then deal with, hey, what's going on here? And again, this is not to say that every time it's like you're going to uncover some sort of, you know, deep, dark, bad thing about yourself, but to just really be honest and realistic that, yeah, you're going to meet yourself in a different way. You're going to meet yourself when you remove the substances that help separate you from yourself. And for a lot of people, meeting yourself can feel a little uncomfortable. We don't really like it.

Adriana Cloud: No, and I'm a prime example of how to not do dry January. Because before I got sober, I did attempt a couple of years to do dry January. But it was very much this idea of, I'm going to take this month off

Ep #408: Interview with Sobriety Coach Adriana Cloud

so I can prove to myself that I don't have a drinking problem. Because surely, if I can take a month off drinking, I'm fine. But I was not interested in doing any other work besides I would just not drink.

And so as a consequence, first of all, I was completely miserable the whole month. I don't think I even made it. The first time, I don't think I made it to day 31. I think somewhere in the January 20th or something, I gave up because I was just miserable the whole time. I was cranky, I still really wanted it, I wasn't really questioning what it was giving me, I just knew that I really still wanted it and I felt just kind of annoyed that I couldn't have it while other people were having it.

And then of course once I went back to drinking, because I had not done any of that work of meeting myself, getting curious about what was coming up and why this was so uncomfortable, I was just so not interested in asking myself that question. And so what happened when I went back to drinking is I drank the same way I had been. So yes, it did my body some good to take that break, but I learned nothing from the whole experience. Nothing. Zilch.

Rachel Hart: Yes. And so, I mean, I think all of this is to say, you know, if you're in the middle of doing a dry January right now, just bringing some additional curiosity. If you notice that it's all about, okay, I got to make it to the end of the month, right? If your focus is totally on like, I got to make it to the end of January and I'm doing this to just prove that I can not drink for a month. First off, that's very normal, right?

It's very normal. I've had that approach myself in the past because that's, again, what we're taught to do because we're taught to really focus on quantity. We're taught to focus on using willpower and distraction as our primary tools to say no. And so we think we're doing the right thing when

Ep #408: Interview with Sobriety Coach Adriana Cloud

we're just gritting it out, right? Or, you know, for me it was just avoiding, right?

I mean, the mask was such a strong archetype for me that I was like, okay, I can like hide at home in my apartment for a month. Like, I can do that. So just wake up, go to work, work extra long, right? I'll just do, you know, lots of late nights at work and then go straight home. Like, I can do that for a month.

You know, not so fun, but I can do it. So to just notice if you kind of have that focus on the end date, have a focus on kind of just using willpower and distraction and get really curious and start to ask yourself, hey, what else is going on here? How do I use alcohol? What do I think it's necessary for? What kind of meaning has my brain attached to it?

Even the smallest dose of curiosity can lead to such transformation when it comes to really understanding the habit and also really understanding what do I actually need to do if I'm gonna sustainably change it?

Adriana Cloud: Yeah, and I think this is where we come back to that idea of not demonizing alcohol. It's like, oh, it's terrible, it's toxic, it's so horrible to me and to my health and my body, because when that's the only story we're telling ourselves, we're blocking ourselves from really getting curious about, hey, what is it doing for me? What was the positive intention that was making me reach for that drink? What was it providing? Because there was always some benefit, real or imagined.

There was something positive, at least in the intention of reaching for the drink. And when we don't allow ourselves to get curious about that, because we're so busy judging ourselves about what we're drinking and how much we're drinking, then we just prevent ourselves from learning what it was doing for us and what archetype was at play, which then

Ep #408: Interview with Sobriety Coach Adriana Cloud

unlocks how to sustain this long-term, how to get to a point where it's not a battle of willpower, but it really is a genuinely believable new thought that feels really good. But we can't arrive at that place to create a new thought unless we know what we're currently thinking and what is driving that behavior right now.

Rachel Hart: Yeah. I want to shift gears a little bit because you do something really interesting that I don't do at all, which is you incorporate hypnosis into your coaching work, the one-on-one work that you do with clients. Can you tell us a little bit about that and how you use that to access the unconscious mind?

Adriana Cloud: Absolutely, yes. Hypnosis is fascinating. And I used to be one of those people who was a little bit scared because I'd only ever seen it in movies. You know, someone is waving something at you and then you think they'll control your mind. But it's really not that. And we all go into hypnosis every day when we read a book, when we're engrossed in a movie, and then we jump when something scary happens on the screen. That's because we are in a state of trance, a light trance, and we've suspended disbelief.

And so what really hypnosis allows us to do is to access that unconscious thinking because what happens with habits like drinking or really anything that we do with repetition, it becomes so habituated that at some point the brain is like, okay, I know how to do this on autopilot. We don't even need to think about it. So it's almost like transcends into this lower level of consciousness where we're not fully aware we're doing it.

So for example, like how we brush our teeth. You don't have to tell yourself, oh, I'm going to unscrew the top of the toothpaste and squeeze some. You do it automatically while you're thinking about your to-do list for tomorrow. And so the same thing can happen with drinking. We get to a point where,

Ep #408: Interview with Sobriety Coach Adriana Cloud

oh, it's 7:00 and I'm making dinner. I open the bottle of wine. I don't pause to ask myself, do I want even a glass of wine? We just do it on autopilot. And so that means it's become an unconscious thing that we do.

And that's why it can be challenging when we decide consciously, oh, I want to drink less. I want to take a break. I want to quit. Yes, consciously we think that, but that message doesn't get down to the unconscious because there is that barrier between the two.

And with hypnosis, we can lower that barrier temporarily to make suggestions to ourselves, to our unconscious mind, and to really go into that unconscious programming and whatever connections have been made there to start on making them and creating new connections. So that if before you had this idea of making dinner linked to the idea of drinking, we can now change that.

We can interrupt that pattern and create a new pattern where you're making dinner and you maybe want to just feel excited or relaxed because you're doing something pleasant that you enjoy or you know you're going to create something delicious. So we can just shift that nuance slightly or the flavor of whatever is going on in your mind so that it's not immediately, oh, I'm making dinner equals wine, but it's, oh, I'm making dinner. Maybe it just equals I'm going to listen to a podcast. I'm going to focus my attention somewhere else. So it's teaching our unconscious mind to create new connections, and that helps us to interrupt habitual behavior a lot faster.

Rachel Hart: So this is, I think what you're talking about is when people will say, I don't even know why I stopped by the liquor store, or I don't even know why I opened up the bottle, or I don't even know why I had that second glass. And one of the things that I'm always teaching when people work with me and on this podcast is that, listen, there is a thought there. And just because it's outside of your conscious awareness doesn't mean

Ep #408: Interview with Sobriety Coach Adriana Cloud

that it doesn't exist, right? The thought is there, but when it's in our unconscious mind, it will seem like it just happens.

And I think that to me was why the think-feel-act cycle, it just created so much freedom for me because I could say, okay, well, something happened and I didn't like it or I wish it hadn't happened. I have a little map that I can use to go back and figure out, hey, what's going on here? It seems to me like what you have with that modality of hypnosis is another way to get into the unconscious mind, right? So there are like multiple ways to do it and using hypnosis is one way to help access that.

Adriana Cloud: Yes, because we absorb information in many different ways and we store information in many different ways. So the totality of your knowledge consists of many different things. So what you can articulate consciously when someone asks you a question, there's only one small percentage of that. And sure, if you keep asking questions, if you keep asking the same question and approaching it from different angles, you will eventually get somewhere deeper and find more awareness.

But with hypnosis, we can, I believe, do that a little quicker because we can access more of that awareness that maybe initially transcends language. And we can get to maybe an image or maybe a feeling or maybe a memory from something that happened in your childhood that now affects how you are today?

And working with the unconscious mind allows us to tap into that awareness and those different kinds of knowledge a lot quicker and just in more interesting ways rather than trying to really trace a direct line like what was that thought, which sometimes is quite challenging to capture it. And we have to repeat the behavior again and keep sitting with it in order to find it. So it's just another way to get to the same place. But yes, I agree. There

Ep #408: Interview with Sobriety Coach Adriana Cloud

is a thought that precipitates then the feeling and the action, and it's just how to get back to whatever that triggering thought was.

Rachel Hart: Yeah. I mean, it's funny because I'm often with myself and with the people that I work with when I'm trying to help people get to, hey, what do we think the thought was, is just to disallow saying, "I don't know." Just take a guess. And it's so funny because I won't let my six-year-old say, "I don't know" either. I mean, he says it.

But I'm like, okay, but if you did know, right? That to me, I mean, there's a lot of different ways we can do it, right? But to just realize, just because something is in your unconscious doesn't mean that we can't bring it to the surface, doesn't mean that we can't create awareness. But I love this idea that there may be a faster route to getting there.

Adriana Cloud: That's how I like to think about it. And yes, I think another way to maybe describe it is we slow it down so much that you notice when was that moment when something changed and told your brain, oh, it's time to ask for the glass of wine. Like something happened. There was a triggering event.

And to be able to get to that, like when we slow it down and we slow it down and we maybe practice it a couple of times and see what happens. Okay, imagine this thing now. What do you notice now? And to be able to identify what that moment is when the thought appeared when there was time to make a choice.

Rachel Hart: I was just going to say that's a huge thing that, you know, when I'm coaching people to really have them go back and describe what happened. And it is always fascinating for me to see how, you know, our initial description, we want to give the least amount of description as possible. And the more that you kind of just prompt people to just like, oh,

Ep #408: Interview with Sobriety Coach Adriana Cloud

tell me more, right? Invariably, they're just uncovering it for themselves. Like, I'm not saying something magical to them.

They're, nine times out of 10, having this moment of like, oh, right? There was this thing that happened or I had this thought or there was this feeling. But it's just that so often as kind of a habit of the brain, we don't like going back and spending a lot of time and energy and attention to recalling what exactly unfolded. And then we just default to, I don't know, I've always been this way. There's something wrong with me. You know, I, people hear me say this on the podcast all the time.

I had this very strong thought and belief about myself that my brain was missing an off switch. So other people had this like magical off switch in their brain that they knew, you know, okay, we gotta turn it off now, we gotta stop drinking, and I just didn't have that switch.

Well, I have to say, we were gonna talk about so much, so I think we're actually gonna do a part two because there's a lot that I wanna talk about with you about cravings, but will you tell people how they can find you, how they can work with you one-on-one? Obviously, you have the benefit inside Take a Break of working with Adriana, but how do you work with people privately?

Adriana Cloud: Yeah, Can I say one more thing about hypnosis though?

Rachel Hart: Yeah, sure.

Adriana Cloud: It just occurred to me like one other way that it is really useful is when we understand the think-feel-act cycle, we can use it to our advantage because yes, we use it first of all to understand what happened in the past, like what led us to drink or not drink. But we can use it when we're trying to change our behavior in the future.

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

Ep #408: Interview with Sobriety Coach Adriana Cloud

So to imagine, well, how do you need to feel in order to say no? How do you need to feel? And what hypnosis allows us to do is to really embody that feeling, really feel it in the body, and then link that feeling to the triggering event. And we can do that in trance, and it just now links those two neural pathways together.

Let's say you want to feel confident when you walk into a room of strangers. So we practice feeling confident in trance, and then we link that confidence to walking into the room. So now you have a new precedent for how to react when you walk into that room. So that's another really cool way that we can use the think-feel-act cycle to teach your brain how you want to feel in that particular situation.

Rachel Hart: I love it. It's like backwards and forwards. Works both ways. Amazing. Right, so how can people find you?

Adriana Cloud: Right, so I think the easiest way would be just to go to my website. It's Adrianacloud.com. So A-D-R-I-A-N-A-C-L-O-U-D.com. And there you can find some cool downloads. You can find my Instagram. You can find a way to email me, book a consult if you're interested in working with me. So that's, I think, the easiest place to begin from.

Rachel Hart: Awesome. Thank you so much. And we're going to keep talking because I want to talk to you all about cravings.

Adriana Cloud: Thank you Rachel, this was so fun. And yes, we could probably talk for another four hours and still have things to cover. This was so fun.

Rachel Hart: Alright everybody, that's it for today. We will be back next week with part two.

Ep #408: Interview with Sobriety Coach Adriana Cloud

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.

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