

# Ep #409: What You Get Wrong About Your Cravings



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With Your Host

**Rachel Hart**

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## Ep #409: What You Get Wrong About Your Cravings

Do you feel like you're someone who likes drinking a bit too much, has too much desire or too many cravings? Yeah, me too. I definitely used to feel this way. So join me for a discussion on how your relationship with cravings can go from something that you wish would leave you alone and just go away to something you actually love. And by making this shift, you'll discover how much easier it is to say no to a drink. This is episode 409, and I'm sharing a very simple trick that will totally change how you approach your cravings.

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: All right, welcome back, everybody. So we had Adriana Cloud on last week, and we were having so much fun talking and chatting so much that we didn't get to talk about so many of the things that I wanted to talk with her about. So we're doing a part two to this episode. You can go check out our previous episode where we talk all about not only her story, but also the work that she does with people around changing their relationship with alcohol and hypnosis, which is totally fascinating.

But I really wanted to make sure that we got a chance to talk about cravings because you and I love talking about cravings. I think cravings are totally fascinating. And that has been such a transformation for me to go from seeing my cravings as something that I hated and believed that I had too much of and something that I was kind of saddled with, like why do I have all of this desire, to really being very fascinated when I have cravings and to view them and approach them as kind of a source of wisdom and inner intelligence and to see it as a moment to really understand, hey, what's happening at a deeper level.

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

## Ep #409: What You Get Wrong About Your Cravings

One of the reasons why I wanted to have Adriana here to talk with us is because she was leading a workshop or a coaching call inside of Take a Break a couple months ago that I ended up watching and taking – I was like writing notes very quickly. I was like, this is amazing. I love it. Because, you know, people describe things in a different way. But you were talking about viewing your craving as if it was someone on like the side of the road holding up a sign or someone kind of slipping you a Post-It note.

And I thought it was so genius and so amazing and so I just wanted to bring you on and talk about it with you and share this with everyone on the podcast because I think it really can be a really fun way to approach your cravings, instead of just going immediately to like, stop, don't, you can't, you're not allowed to. So will you tell us a little bit about that analogy?

Adriana Cloud: Yes, absolutely. Thank you for having me on again. I love talking about cravings, and I, like you, had that period of time when I just hated cravings and I was so troubled by them and just annoyed and thought oh will they ever stop? Why do I keep having them doesn't my brain know that I've decided not to drink?

To get into this place where I'm just amused by them. And I rarely have them anymore, but they do sometimes appear. And it's just fascinating to really say, ooh, a craving out of nowhere. How fascinating. Let's spend more time here looking at it.

Rachel Hart: That is so wild for everyone hearing, right? To go long periods of time and then have like a random, like, oh, a drink could be like good right now, right? Or a random like desire to drink and to feel fascinated by it instead of afraid of it. Or instead of, this is what I will see a lot of times with people, they will immediately want to shame themselves about it. They will immediately want to make it mean, oh, so I really haven't changed, right?

## Ep #409: What You Get Wrong About Your Cravings

I thought I had changed. I thought I had changed my relationship, but clearly I was mistaken. So I just wanted to slow down that moment just for everyone to take that in because so often we really do use cravings, especially when you are further along in this work, as a way to either scare ourselves or shame ourselves. And so to be in a place of fascination is really amazing and wild.

Adriana Cloud: Oh yeah, it was really just fascinating. It was just a few weeks ago, maybe like two months ago, I was reading a book and there was a description of someone pouring a neat bourbon and just swirling the glass and smelling it and inhaling it. And I used to drink neat bourbon. And so I just immediately had that recollection of what that smelled like, what that looked like in the glass, what it would feel like as I was drinking it. And I kind of wanted it.

I wanted it in that moment. And of course, I would never have it. Like I just didn't even then occur to me to think, oh, I could have it. But just to sit with that wanting it was really fascinating. And yes, as you were saying, it was such a moment of recognizing how far I had come and how I think about cravings.

Because initially, one of the problems with how we think about cravings is that we think of them as, oh, I have a craving, I must do something about it. We take it as a call to action. And it was such an important lesson for me to learn that just because I have the craving doesn't mean I have to act on it. And that's why I think I came up with this analogy of thinking of it as just a sentence that's outside of you, that someone is holding on a sign on the side of the road.

Rachel Hart: I love it so much. I love this idea that someone on the side of the road is just like, one won't hurt, right? Like holding up that sign.

Adriana Cloud: Or like, Janet was so annoying today, you deserve a drink.

## Ep #409: What You Get Wrong About Your Cravings

Rachel Hart: Right? Janet was so annoying, you deserve a drink. But there is also something, I think because the idea of them, you know, standing on the side of the road and you're driving by that you're like, okay, like I don't have to just like get out of the car and stand in front of the sign, right? And like keep reading it and keep reading it and keep reading it. My brain offered me a sentence, right?

And like, okay, and now that moment has passed. But I do think sometimes that we like get out of the car, we're like, pull over. They said that Janet was annoying and I deserve a drink. So like, I'm going to go over there and I'm going to reread that sign many times, right? And like strike up a conversation with this person and like, start, you know, talking about how annoying Janet is.

Sorry, Janet's out there. You know? And that's really like what we do. Like, we take it as if it's like the gospel. Like, oh, okay. Well, that person holding up the sign, I mean, they said I deserve it, therefore it's the truth.

Adriana Cloud: Yeah, yeah. And also I think similarly with the idea of, imagine it as a sentence written on a Post-It and someone is just sending you, giving you this Post-It and then you get to hold it. Okay, you're just holding a piece of paper with some words written on it. And that's what it's like when you have a craving. It's like your brain is telling you some words, but you're the one holding the Post-It. You get to decide if you can continue holding it or if you can just crumple it up and put it aside and just move on.

Rachel Hart: Yeah, and I think that really was one of the things when I discovered thought work, you know, before I became a coach, just to realize, oh, I don't have to treat every sentence that my brain offers me as if it is true. And I don't have to treat it as like, oh, well, I thought this, therefore, not only is it true, but I must act on it.

## Ep #409: What You Get Wrong About Your Cravings

And I'm always, I like to share a lot inside the membership. I really like to share with people some of the thoughts that I have, because I think that we have this misconception that people, when they teach the think-feel-act cycle and they're teaching thought work, that it's like we only have these amazing, beautiful, super positive thoughts all the time. And I'm like, no, my brain still spits out some like wacky sentences and unhelpful and unsupportive and like, hey, yeah, you know, the kids are really pissing you off so obviously a beer is going to make you feel better.

And so to just have that image of someone holding up a sign or someone slipping you a Post-It note, it's so useful and also, I think, funny, especially when you're in the place of believing all of the sentences that your brain offers you and believing all of your excuses and really feeling like, oh, if I have a craving, it has to be acted upon. Otherwise, I'm just going to be in this state of suffering.

Adriana Cloud: Yeah. And I do think it's helpful to add a bit of humor because we tend to take our thoughts so seriously, especially when we are working on changing a habit. And if we've been at it for a while it can feel like we're getting nowhere, you know, we start the judgment, we start to feel like we're not making any progress and so we're just super focused on those thoughts and every word that passes through our minds we take as gospel and say, oh this is the truth, I thought it so it must be true.

And we don't think that way about other things in our lives, I'm sure, but because we're so focused on all of our thoughts about alcohol and drinking when that's what we're working on, it can seem a bit heavy. And so to introduce a bit of humor and to really just think, oh yeah, my brain just offered me this Post-It.

What do I want to do with it? It puts you back in control and gives you back all of that power to decide, am I going to keep reading it? Am I going to memorize it and repeat it to myself and then go to the fridge and do what it

## Ep #409: What You Get Wrong About Your Cravings

says on the Post-It? Or do I just then take a breath, look at the Post-It, and decide, okay, this is just a sentence my brain offered me, and I am in control here, and I get to decide what to do with this sentence?

Rachel Hart: Yeah, and I can decide to actually use the sentence to check in with myself and understand, hey, what's really going on? Why am I having this desire? What is this about? So yeah, we can laugh about it, but then we can also use it as a stepping stone to really understand deeper.

I think that's the other piece of it, that we can say, okay, well, so yeah, Janet was really frustrating at work today. What's going on there? And again, so often, this takes you into the archetypes. It takes you into all of the ways that your brain has learned to use a drink and the meanings associated with it.

But yeah, I just, I really love, I love that so much. I remember I was just in my office watching you give that analogy and I was like, yes, this is so good. Because the idea that someone's just, you know, I'm thinking of like Veep, if you guys have watched that show.

Where, you know, she's in like a very important meeting and like someone's coming in and like slipping her a note. And I'm like, oh, that's like what my lower brain is doing. It's like, excuse me, we have a very important interruption here that you might need to pay attention to. And it's like, no, it's just Gary, her crazy assistant. It's okay.

Adriana Cloud: Yeah. And the other thing is coming back to this, what we make of cravings. What do we tell ourselves about the fact of having a craving. Oh, I had a craving. What do I make this mean?

And often when we're telling ourselves, well, I shouldn't be having cravings, why am I still having cravings? When we go into that resisting the craving being there in the first place, we then don't ask those questions. Well, why

## Ep #409: What You Get Wrong About Your Cravings

am I thinking about Janet? And what does it mean that my brain is telling me that right now I really need a drink? Why?

What archetype is at play? What am I trying to escape? What am I trying to avoid? We don't sit with that because we're so busy. Oh, I need to run away from this craving. This craving is bad, why am I having it? And we just don't allow ourselves that space to sit with, unpack, what is really going on here? What does this drink represent? What does this craving have to teach me? And that's why I love cravings so much, because the more cravings you have, the better. Because that's how you get to learn.

Rachel Hart: That is a wild sentence to say, and I really want everyone to hear it. I love cravings so much. That is wild. Because guys, think about it. Think about how you currently relate to the cravings that you have for behaviors that you are trying to change, whether it is with alcohol, or it is with food, or it is with your phone.

Imagine a thought like, I love my cravings so much. That's, again, that's like a total 180 shift to see them as like, yeah, they're like something that I love and they can be kind of funny and I don't have to believe them and I can also use them to understand and to get to know myself better.

That's really wild because I really, I truly believe that I was just saddled with too many cravings. I was just had too much desire. I wanted things too much. Again, my brain was different. And so to shift into that place of seeing them as something that you love, I think that's a place where you know that transformation has really taken root.

Adriana Cloud: Yeah, and I have to be honest, I didn't start there.

Rachel Hart: No, of course not.



## Ep #409: What You Get Wrong About Your Cravings

Adriana Cloud: Yeah, It took me a while to get to here, but I think why I love them so much is because you get to learn so much, and I'm a little nerd, and I love learning. And so every craving has some interesting information or some funny information. There's something there, some kernel of self-knowledge that I'm just really interested in.

And so that's like, ooh, a craving. Like I hadn't had one in months and months. And so when I had that recent craving for bourbon, it was like, ooh, okay, that's kind of cool. What is this doing here?

Rachel Hart: And what is this about? And what does my brain think that it means? And yes, there's so much value to shifting from a place of seeing the benefits of cravings and even the upside of your drinking. And that was something for me that I did very early on, which was not just write a list. I had done this so many times.

I would write a list of all the ways that drinking too much was ruining my life, right? And how I like felt physically and I did embarrassing things and I was very good at making those lists about how it was bad, and it was ruining my life, and it was ruining my liver, and, right, like only bad things came from it. And it was such a transformative shift when I decided to see how it was helping me.

And it's funny, because I will ask people this question a lot, and the assumption is always that it's a trick question, like, oh, of course it's not helping me at all. But to see, no, listen, I wouldn't be desiring something. I wouldn't have this desire unless part of me thought that it was beneficial or thought that it was helpful.

And so for me, I remember the first time I made that list blew my mind because then all of a sudden I could see, oh, it's how I feel comfortable in social settings, it's how I deal with my anxiety, it's how I let go of all of my shoulds. When I did that list, it became very clear to me of like, okay, yes, I

## Ep #409: What You Get Wrong About Your Cravings

need to do the work to figure out how to say no. I need to do the work to figure out how to not just, you know, say yes to every craving. But there's also this work here of, well, how do I actually start to feel comfortable in social situations if my go-to is always make a beeline for the bar? And how do I actually deal with anxiety or how do I blow off steam if my knee-jerk has always been, well, we do that with alcohol?

So it gave me a very different place to focus, to say like, oh, I want to become someone who knows how to blow off steam without drinking. And that felt, it was so much less scary than the idea of, well, I just have to stop drinking for the rest of my life. Like I have to make a decision right now at, I don't know how old I was, 31 or something, that's gonna, I'm gonna keep this decision, right, until my deathbed. And I was like, no, I just need to figure out how to find this upside that right now I believe only exists if I'm drinking.

Adriana Cloud: Yeah, that's, there's so much to unpack here. And as I was saying in the last episode, I didn't do any of this work until after. So it was very challenging to find myself sober and uncomfortable and not able to recognize and sit with my feelings and have to figure out how to then do that work after the fact a little bit to try to backtrack and see, oh, I was using alcohol in these situations because dot.

Adriana Cloud: And try to then be, okay, well, here I am now, now what? I'm not drinking, I've decided I'm not going to drink, so how do I make myself more comfortable with strangers? Or how do I get in the mood for sex if I'm not drinking? And before that used to be the thing that I would do. And to sit with all of that and start to unpack it.

And I think also one of the reasons why I love cravings now is because I get to learn something about myself and for a long time I did not know myself because I was so used to drinking. I was masking everything, the

## Ep #409: What You Get Wrong About Your Cravings

good, the bad, the indifferent, the sort of mediocre. And so when I stopped drinking, I realized I did not know myself.

And so there was a lot of that work to get to know myself. Okay, why am I having this reaction? What even is this reaction? What am I responding to? What do I like? What do I not like? Because I had been masking all of that. Because when we numb the bad, we numb the good as well.

And so it was just such a profound moment of realizing, oh my God, I have no idea who I am. I don't know myself, let alone like myself. So to start building that work of self-knowledge and that process of really sitting with myself to see who am I, what do I like, what are my experiences when I'm by myself, around other people, in different situations.

And then to do the next level of that work, which is, who do I want to be? What do I already like about myself? And what do I want to continue working on to become more of the person I like? And self-knowledge is so important to this process. And yeah, I got to do it a little bit later.

And I think that's why the work that you do is so important in *Take a Break* with helping people to start that work earlier as they're changing their relationship with alcohol, to start identifying what are those archetypes, what are you looking for alcohol to give you, how are you using it to hide parts of yourself from yourself, and to start bringing curiosity to those parts and sitting with them and asking more questions and naming what is happening and listening to what comes up. All of that work is so important. And that's why it's so crucial to be mindful of what archetypes are coming up when we drink.

Rachel Hart: Yeah, I mean, I think about, I thought I knew myself. I thought I knew myself, but what I knew was just a very crappy story about myself. And so, again, we're all going to have our different journeys here. But for me, it was realizing that who I believed or who I thought that I wasn't

## Ep #409: What You Get Wrong About Your Cravings

actually real, it wasn't actually true. And so that's the thing, I was like, I have so much self-awareness and that is the problem because all of my self-awareness has shown me how flawed and messed up I am. And I was like, or maybe that is just a bunch of sentences being held up on the side of the road and we are taking them at face value when we don't need to.

Adriana Cloud: Yeah, and that's why, again, it's just the perfect image, isn't it?

Rachel Hart: I love it so much. I hope all of you guys at home, I hope that you're going to try this out and use it. Again, I always say this when I'm teaching, when we give you these tools and analogies, you have to try them out, right? And it's one thing to listen to it, but to try it out and see what it's like, see what it's like to conjure up the image of someone handing you a Post-It when your brain's like, ah, screw it, right? And it's just like, screw it, it was written on that Post-It and you're like, well, this Post-It, that's the God's honest truth, so we're gonna abide by it.

But so try it out and see what it's like. But yeah, I love this image and this analogy so much. And I just wanted to share it with everyone because it blew my mind when I heard you describe it this way.

Adriana Cloud: Yeah, and if you think about the other one, which is like, if you're driving down the road and you see someone holding a sign or like if there's a billboard and it says you deserve this drink today, if it was any other billboard like you're not counting how many billboards you encounter so you're not going to make it mean anything how many of them there are and yet if you have two cravings in a day or two cravings in an hour, you start to make that mean something about, oh, I'm having too many cravings. Like one is okay, but now two, that's too many. Something is going wrong here. Versus, I'm just driving past these signs and they don't concern me.

## Ep #409: What You Get Wrong About Your Cravings

Rachel Hart: Yeah, there's like 10 billboards. It's not a problem, right? We're not going to stress out about the number of billboards.

Adriana Cloud: Yep.

Rachel Hart: All right, amazing. Well, we will include in the show notes where people can find you because you do work inside of Take a Break, but you also work with people one-on-one as well. And this was so great. I loved having you on. Again, we just loved talking about this work and hopefully it's given you guys some ideas and a new way to think about your cravings and how you approach them. All right, everybody, we'll see you next week.

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