

**Ep #444: A drink makes everything better
[Thought Swap]**



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With Your Host

Rachel Hart

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A drink makes everything better. I used to be fully on board with this thought. Parties were better with a drink. Watching baseball, better with a drink. First dates were definitely better with a drink. The list in my head of things that were made better by drinking went on and on. Which is why cutting back or, God forbid, not drinking seemed so daunting to me for so long. This is episode 444, and I'm going to give you ideas on how to start questioning the story that a drink makes everything better in a believable way because that piece is key.

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.

Today I'm going to give you some thought swaps, ideas for how to start poking holes in the story that a drink makes everything better. I long believed this story, and so do many of my clients. But here's the problem. If a drink makes everything better, then isn't the reverse true as well that not drinking makes everything worse? And if so, how are you ever going to learn how to say no or to stop before you go overboard without feeling like you're always missing out?

So, I'm going to give you some ideas for how to counter this story in a believable, non-judgmental way. This part is really, really important. Because most people do what I did when I first started to try to cut back. We try to force ourselves to be good or to be more responsible by focusing on all the harms of drinking or the parts of it that we don't like or that we feel awful about or that we regret the next day. I spent so many years trying to force change by constantly reminding myself of how it was bad for my health or all the moments that I wish I could take back. And while that was partly true, it didn't capture the whole story. And what? It wasn't very

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convincing for me in the moment when I really wanted that drink or I really wanted another round.

What I've learned over the years as a coach, working with so many people, is that trying to scare yourself into good behavior or constantly telling yourself that you can't have the thing that you really want, it often backfires because it adds all this guilt, shame, and fear into the mix. And frankly, the more I told myself no, the more I really wanted to rebel sometimes. Sometimes pouring a drink was my way of saying F you to all these restrictions that I was making for myself.

This is why learning the right way to talk back to your excuses matters so much. I work on this skill at a very deep level with people because if you want to truly shift your relationship with alcohol, it's not just about getting really good at saying no or having an iron will, it's about challenging the stories and excuses that fuel the habit. So I'm going to give you 3 swaps today for the thought a drink makes everything better, just to get things marinating in your brain.

By the way, this excuse often shows up with the upgrade archetype. If you're new to the Drink Archetypes, there are 8 different ones, and they help explain the underlying patterns behind your drinking and why it's hard to say no. The Upgrade Archetype, it's all about using alcohol as a way to elevate your experience. And when this archetype is activated, saying no to a drink interferes with your desire for things to feel special, which is going to make it harder to say no. If you want to find out your top 2 archetypes and where you rank with all 8, you can take the free quiz at DrinkType.com

So here are 3 swaps to help you start to poke holes in this story. Swap number one: If alcohol is so good at making everything better, why am I always wanting more? Doesn't that suggest that rather than making everything better, drinking is actually leaving me feeling unsatisfied? This was so mind-bending for me when I first reframed it in this way because I

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realized that my more-is-better mindset when it came to drinking was partly about not feeling satisfied. I felt good, but I wanted to feel better.

So while I told myself that I was enjoying the feeling and I just wanted more of it, part of me was also dissatisfied with that feeling, believing that it could be better, believing that it wasn't enough. I wanted to feel buzzier, looser, wilder, which meant how I was currently feeling in that moment wasn't doing it for me. I was constantly unsatisfied, chasing a better feeling, or so I thought. And more often than not, feeling unsatisfied was actually the name of the game with my drinking. I was unsatisfied if I said no. I was unsatisfied if I stopped after 2 drinks, and I felt unsatisfied if I drank way too much. Alcohol wasn't making everything better. It was fueling a current of dissatisfaction in my life.

Here's swap number 2. If a drink makes everything better, why am I constantly distracted when I'm drinking? Because when you're truly enjoying something, you are fully present, fully in the moment. I think about all the times that I would be out with friends having fun, but not fully in the moment because I was often thinking, when is the waiter going to get here with my drink order? Or how long is she going to take to finish her drink so we can order another? Or is it going to be weird if I suggest that we hit up a bar after leaving this restaurant?

When you are truly enjoying yourself, you're fully in the moment. But alcohol often has a way to pull you out of that enjoyment. Because it's a high-value reward for the brain, it narrows your field of vision, and it has a way of stealing your attention from everything else around you there is to enjoy. I talk about this in the Upgrade Archetype as this kind of hyper-fixation on alcohol where everything else that is enjoyable around you kind of recedes to the background. And you end up having all this chatter, all this fixation on drinking, which gets in the way of fully enjoying yourself.

And here's swap number 3. If a drink makes everything better, why are activities I used to fully enjoy before I ever started drinking now lacking if

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alcohol isn't involved? Before I ever started drinking, I totally enjoyed birthdays and baseball games and holidays and vacation and the weekend. So shouldn't I still find these things at least somewhat enjoyable if you remove alcohol from the equation? But I'll tell you, that wasn't my experience. When I removed alcohol from the equation, things that I previously enjoyed didn't become a little less enjoyable; they became unenjoyable. It often felt like to me, what's the point? What's the point of going on vacation if you're not going to drink?

How on earth am I supposed to enjoy this thing, something that, by the way, I used to love, without a drink in my hand? The previous enjoyment I had for all of these activities was almost impossible to find. So, was drinking really making it better, or was it making previously enjoyable activities now lacking?

So, these are just 3 swaps for you to start playing with. Again, notice how the goal here isn't focusing on the harms of drinking or how it's bad for you, but rather poking holes in the stories that can feel so intensely true. If you want to understand more about how the Upgrade works, how it relies on stories like a drink makes everything better and what your brain learns from this archetype when it's activated, take the quiz at DrinkType.com or check out [The Ultimate Guide to Drinking Less](http://TheUltimateGuideToDrinkingLess.com) at RachelHart.com.

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

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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 and sign up today, because changing the habit is so much easier when you stop trying to go it alone.