Ep #495: Challenging the F-It Mindset



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Rachel Hart

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How many times have you given yourself permission to keep drinking because you've already blown your plan, so what difference will it make if you have another drink? I used to fall into this trap all the time and it was the reason why I kept going in circles with my drinking. This is episode 495 and I'm going to show you what's really happening when you tell yourself F it and a simple question you can ask yourself that will help you break this pattern.

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.

I've talked about the F-it mindset on this podcast before. But in part because the holidays are right around the corner and this is a time when it's really easy to slip into that kind of thinking, I thought that I would revisit this topic again. It is so easy to find yourself in the position of making one decision that you wish you hadn't and then using that decision to justify continuing on, to keep going, keep drinking, keep eating and tell yourself, ugh, who cares? There's no point in reining myself in now because I've already blown it.

Maybe you're at a party and you promised yourself that you're only going to have a couple drinks and all of a sudden you find yourself there drinking your third. And you think to yourself, what difference does another drink make? Or maybe you weren't planning to drink at all, but then somebody offers you a glass of wine and you say yes. And now you're thinking, okay, well, I already broke my promise to myself, so I might as well just enjoy the night and anyway, I'll be good tomorrow.

And of course, this mindset doesn't just happen with drinking. You see it happen with food. Maybe you eat a lot on Friday night and then you decide that the rest of the weekend is a wash and you'll return to your diet on Monday. Or you miss a few workouts during the week and decide that

there's no point in exercising today because you missed all those earlier workouts in the week.

This belief that we've crossed over some sort of imaginary point of no return, which makes any future decisions that we make irrelevant, it really can show up in so many areas of life. But I want to talk to you about what's happening in these moments because I think it's really important to understand not only if you want to change your relationship with alcohol, if you want to drink less, but honestly, with whatever you want to change in life.

Just because you've made one decision that you wish you hadn't, doesn't mean that your following decisions no longer matter. But that's exactly how we often act when we slip into that F-it mindset. Again, I call this the imaginary point of no return. The moment when your brain decides because you've already taken a step in one direction, there's just no point in trying to change course. All of the moments when you think to yourself, well, I already bought the beer, so I might as well drink it. I already had more than I said I would, so there's no point in not having another. I already forgot to slow down and practice pausing, so it's too late to start practicing now. I'll just be good tomorrow.

The imaginary point of no return often includes phrases like, F it, screw it, who cares, it doesn't matter. And sometimes we say these things to end an internal tug of war that you may be having with yourself. So part of you wants to drink or you want to keep drinking and another part of you thinks that you shouldn't. You're tired of going back and forth and debating what to do and so finally you just say to yourself, screw it, I'm going to have it.

What I'm discussing here is less about those moments, less about that internal tug of war and more about the moments when we just stop trying. So maybe you made a promise to yourself that you weren't going to drink today or that you were only going to have a certain amount and the moment you break that promise, you use that decision as evidence that there's no point in trying to do anything different. And then you justify it by

thinking, I've already messed up, I've already blown it, the damage is already done.

Again, in that moment, that point of no return can feel very real. It certainly did for me, but I call it imaginary for a reason because it is. It doesn't actually exist. There is no actual point of no return that prevents you from making a different decision. And sometimes you really have to question the logic of why am I telling myself that the next decision I make doesn't matter?

Let's say that you plan to have two drinks, but now you're on your third. Of course, you can't go back and undo that third drink. We can't step into a time machine and change the past, but why do we act as if stopping at three is no different from stopping at six? Because that's what happens so often with this mindset. It gives us permission to just say, well, it's all a wash. And it doesn't matter how much I drink now. This is the mindset that for so many people leads to going overboard and drinking way more than you wanted to.

Think about it. Why would the fact that you've already had more than you intended mean that there's nothing to gain from stopping yourself now? I think this is a place where it's really easy for us to get lost. We think that the goal is to make a plan and then follow the plan perfectly. And then anytime we deviate from that plan that we made, it's really easy to slip into, well, I messed up and all is lost. There's no point in stopping myself now. It's like the idea that if I've made one bad decision that none of my subsequent decisions are going to matter.

But what if the work here isn't making a plan and following it perfectly 100% of the time? What if the work is to teach your brain that no matter what, you can change direction at any point? Because when you tell yourself, I've already blown it, what does one more matter, you're essentially deciding that once you've deviated from your plan, all the decisions that follow just don't make a difference, that they're irrelevant.

But of course, we can step back and understand that's just not true. Stopping at three drinks is meaningfully different than stopping at six drinks, even if your plan was to only have two. Or even if your plan was to not drink at all. And it's okay for you to feel disappointed in yourself that you didn't follow the plan that you made. That's okay. I'm not saying that you have to be happy about it. I just want you to realize that regretting a decision that has already happened and cannot be undone and giving up on all subsequent decisions as if they no longer matter, those are two very different things.

I think this is the piece that gets lost when we're telling ourselves, well, I've already messed up, I've already blown it. It's so easy in that moment to act as if there's no point in continuing to try or to deviate from the path that you're on unless you can somehow go back and build a time machine and undo what happened. But that's not how life works. You can't change what you've already done. You can only decide what happens next.

And I see this happen all the time when I'm working with people because so much of what I teach people is about really practicing slowing down and noticing their urges and their cravings and naming what is happening, creating that pause, getting really curious about what information their desire has for them. And so many times people will come to me and they'll say, you know, Rachel, I planned to do that. That was my intention. And then I just forgot. It was like I went on autopilot and I was halfway through my drink before I even realized that I hadn't done any of those things. I hadn't practiced any of those skills. And I hadn't done what I said I was going to do.

And then what happens so often for them, they slip into that mindset of, well, I guess I'll just have to practice tomorrow. And what I always ask them is why? Why does missing one opportunity to practice these skills mean that there's no point in practicing them the moment that you remember? Even if you went on autopilot, even if you had that craving or that urge or that desire and you didn't recognize it, even if you barely realized what you

were doing until you were midway through the drink, why wouldn't practicing in this moment still matter? Because you can still practice before your next sip. You can still slow down to notice what you're thinking and feeling. You can still get curious about what drink archetype might be activated. And you can also still practice wanting another drink and not automatically having it.

The problem isn't that you missed a rep, it's believing that one missed rep means there's no point in doing the next one. And this is where I think we really have to understand what we are teaching our brain with the F-it mindset. Because every time you decide there's no point in stopping because I've already messed up, you're not just giving yourself permission to drink more. You are teaching your brain something really important. You're teaching your brain that the moment things go off track, you might as well stop trying. That unless you follow your plan perfectly, you might as well give up. That once you've made one decision that you regret, none of the other decisions that you make after that moment actually matter. And that if you want to do something different, you have to wait until the slate is perfectly clean.

And this is the problem. This is actually what really needs to change. Because think about what happens when you keep reinforcing all of those lessons with your brain again and again. Every time that things don't go according to your plan, what happens? Your brain just has more and more evidence that the only thing to do is to throw in the towel. And I think that's worth paying attention to at all points in the year, but especially around the holidays when so many of us are operating outside of our normal routine. Because here's the thing. The goal isn't to execute your plan perfectly every single time. The goal is to build your capacity to step off the path that you're on, no matter what happened the moment before and to make an intentional decision even when everything prior didn't go according to the vision you had in your mind.

And that means learning the skill of changing direction when you're already in the middle of a pattern unfolding. If you stop at three drinks instead of continuing on to four or five or six, you're still practicing stopping. If you remember to pause halfway through the glass of wine, even though the first half was just you drinking on autopilot, you're still practicing pausing. And if you have a night where you drank way too much, you don't have to wait until Monday or the first of the month or the new year in order to show up differently today.

Because every time you step off the path, you're teaching your brain something new. You're showing yourself that the moments you go off track don't dictate what happens next. In fact, I would argue that learning how to change directions when things haven't gone according to plan is one of the most important skills that you can develop in life. Not only just to change your relationship with alcohol, but to change anything that you want.

Because if we can only make the right decision or the decisions that serve us or are in our best interest when everything prior has gone exactly as planned, exactly as you intended, then what's going to happen is you're going to continually miss opportunities to teach your brain something new. Not only to learn how to respond differently when things don't unfold according to plan, but also how to create the life that you want even when life is messy.

So here's the question I want you to consider. The next time you find yourself thinking, ugh, screw it. I've already blown it. What difference does it make? I want you to consider this. What am I teaching my brain if every time I go off track, I just throw in the towel?

I really want you to think about your answer to this question. Because the decisions you make after things haven't gone according to plan, they aren't meaningless. In fact, they're some of the most important decisions that you will ever learn how to make. They are the opportunities to practice something different, to teach your brain that just because you were on autopilot doesn't mean you have to stay that way. You don't need to go

back and undo what happened. You don't need to execute everything 100% perfectly, 100% of the time. You don't need a clean slate and you don't need to wait until tomorrow to start over. You can make a different decision right now in the moment regardless of what happened before. And I would argue that is the most important decision you will ever make.

The point of no return that feels like you've crossed over into when you've messed up, it's imaginary. Nothing from that point on is a foregone conclusion, and your next decision always, always matters, perhaps a lot more than you realize.

All right, that's it for today. I will see you next week.

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