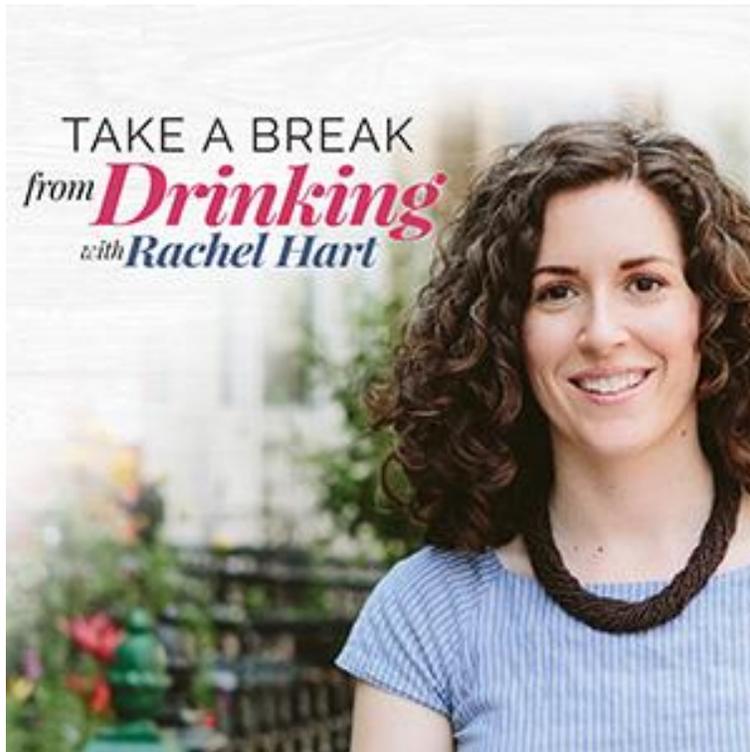


## Ep #6: Indecision



### **Full Episode Transcript**

**With Your Host**

**Rachel Hart**

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

## Ep #6: Indecision

Welcome to the *Take A Break* podcast with Rachel Hart. If you are an alcoholic or an addict, this is not the show for you, but if you are someone who has a highly functioning life, doing very well, but just drinking a bit too much and wants to take a break, then welcome to the show. Let's get started.

Hello everyone. Welcome today. Welcome to today's episode on indecision. I am going to be talking about why you are experiencing indecision, what it is costing you and how to move past it. In the previous episodes, I know I have given you a lot of things to think about. I have given you information about what your desire really is, how to unwind, how to start unwinding without having a glass in your hand, how to feel more confident in social situations without drinking, what's creating your feelings, how to handle other people, but I know that many of you are still in a place where you are trying to decide if taking a break from drinking is something you want to do.

Now, it's so common to be unsure. I know that I was in this position for such a long time. I took my first break when I was 22 and I didn't drink for a year. I started again when I was 23 and from 23 onwards I just flip-flopped. I kept going through my 20s and into a little bit of my early 30s where I just didn't know what to do and I would occasionally take a break or cut back but then I would start again and I was so undecided. I had all this indecision about what I should be doing.

Here's the problem with indecision. It zaps so much time and energy. You are endlessly weighing the pros and cons. Often not just the pros and cons of right now, but the pros and cons of a future that you envision and I will tell you that that future is usually negative and so you stay stuck. Nothing is changing. You just keep repeating the same habits over and over again like you are anguishing over what to do but nothing is changing. It can feel like you are being productive because you are thinking about it. It feels like you are doing something, but you are really not being productive. You are really staying in place.

Here's the problem. You are not moving any closer to feeling better. In fact, I think for most people being stuck in indecision is one of the most painful things. You have all this energy that you are devoting to trying to

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

## Ep #6: Indecision

figure out something in your life, but nothing is changing and that uncertainty and that indecision, it doesn't feel great and I think a lot of people really hate being in a place of indecision, but they don't know how to get out of it.

I am going to talk to you today about the four reasons why you get stuck in indecision, why this happens and how to try to move away from it because you can and moving away from indecision will be one of the best and most powerful things that you can do. The very first reason that people are stuck in indecision is all about the stories that they have about what it will mean not to drink, what it will mean to take a break and I will promise you that those stories are negative, right? If the stories were positive, if they were seeing a better future, they wouldn't be stuck in indecision. They would be making a decision, they would be going after that future, but they are predicting a future that looks kind of bleak. They are predicting a future where they are not having fun, where they are always an outsider, where they can't join in, right?

They have a lot of negative stories and you may be able to relate to this when you sort of think of a future when you are taking a break from drinking. What does that look like? Most people when I start working with them will say that, "Well, it looks nice not to have hangovers and it looks nice to wake up clear headed and not feel embarrassed because you are wondering what you did last night." Right, and it looks good to spend time and energy in the evenings on something other than drinking, that looks good, but the whole rest of it looks kind of bleak. People would tell me, I know that I can survive without it, I don't need to drink, that's not my problem and I would say this too. I didn't need to drink.

It's just that the future didn't look like it was going to be any fun and you have to pay attention to this if all your stories about what it means not to drink are pointing you in a negative direction, well then I promise you that you are going to continue to be stuck in indecision.

We also get stuck in this idea that we have to make a decision for the rest of our life. That for me was so incredibly daunting. It was really daunting to say at 32 years old, oh, gosh, I am making a decision that is going to apply when I am 82 as well. I think that is too daunting for people. I will tell you even today, I have not made a decision about what I am doing for the rest of my life. I know what I am doing right now and right now

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

## Ep #6: Indecision

because I have done this work and I truly don't desire alcohol anymore, it doesn't have that much appeal to me, but I think this idea that you have to make a decision forever that if you are going to stop, you have to stop forever, I think it is too daunting for too many people.

I think a lot can be learned and a lot can be gained by just taking a break and just taking a break where you are starting to learn some different tools and not just a break where you are just counting days, not just I am not going to drink for 30 days or 60 days, right? Then your focus is totally on just making it through day-to-day, but really thinking about I am going to take a break because I want to be able to unwind without needing a drink at the end of the day. I want to be able to feel confident and feel at ease without needing to have a drink in a social situation, right? So paying attention to learning those tools and that may help you develop stories for what it will mean to take a break, what it will mean not to drink for a period in your future that maybe don't look so bleak.

The second thing that holds people back and holds people or keeps people stuck in indecision is looking to our past to predict our future success, right? It's this idea of while I failed before, I have tried before and it didn't work, so obviously I am going to fail again. This is the absolute worst thing that you can do to look at your past for evidence of your future and for evidence of your chances of success. It seems completely logical. It seems logical that I would just look into the past to understand my future capabilities but here's the problem is that most people see failure as a sign that they cannot do something. Most people do not understand failure for what it is which is part of the learning process. So we look at past attempts and we see that we didn't succeed and we make that mean that we won't succeed. We make that mean that we are going to fail again instead of understanding failure as part of learning.

Any skill that you want to learn, any new skill including how to decrease your desire, how not to cover up your emotions, how our thoughts create our emotions, but also any skill in the world driving a car, riding a bike, whatever it is, it takes practice. It takes practice and what it means is that you will not get it right on the first try. You will fail. That is part of learning.

Otherwise, it wouldn't be learning, right? That's really part of it, but most people take the failures and mean that they won't succeed instead of

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

## Ep #6: Indecision

seeing them as part of the learning process and I will tell you, I cannot even count the number of times that I had taken a break from drinking during my 20s. It was a lot. I had that one year when I was 22, that was the longest I ever did it and then in between, you know, for the next decade, my breaks were all over the place, they really were and if I had used the past as an indicator of my success, I would have decided, well, it's not possible because I tried a lot and I failed a lot and my past is telling me that I can't do it, but you really have to shift away from that mindset and you really have to start to look at your failures as part of the learning process. You have to start to expect them. You have to expect that there is going to be struggle. There is going to be setback that is normal, that is part of learning.

The third piece that keeps people stuck in indecision is the idea that you have to feel a 100% certain. A 100% certain that this is what you want to do, this is the right decision and it's going to be the best thing you ever did before you can actually test it out. I think that keeps so many people stuck to this idea that, well, I have to be completely certain that this is what I want to do because here is what is happening. Most people are in a tug of war. Most people feel like I really do not like the consequences of drinking too much. I really don't like the hangovers, I don't like how I feel, I don't like waking up the next morning and regretting what I did or said, I don't like any of that, I am embarrassed by my behavior, I don't like feeling out of control. There are all these things that I don't like, but on the other side, there are a lot of things that you do like.

You do like the way you feel when you drink, you do like feeling that you can unwind, you do like feeling more at ease, you do like feeling that you can blow off steam, you do like feeling that you are more confident in social situations, right? So you have this tug of war and people say well, I can't do anything until I am a 100% certain and it's not true. You can be in a place where you are still feeling like you are not totally certain and still take action.

The problem is I think that people will tell themselves that they can't take any action, they can't take any steps towards what they want until they feel a 100% certain and that will keep you stuck.

So, the fourth piece that keeps people stuck in indecision and this one I think is so crucial and this is what helped me back for so long is that you haven't yet found a compelling reason and that compelling reason is

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

## Ep #6: Indecision

what is going to sustain you when you are taking a break, and the reason that you have not found a compelling reason to take a break is this. You are ignoring the benefits that you get from drinking. I did this too for a long time. I didn't want to pay attention to the benefits, I didn't want to look at the benefits. I thought if I focused on the positive things, the things that drinking was helping me with, right, and for me it was helping a lot with anxiety, it was helping with insecurity, it was helping with a lot of the negative chatter that I had in my mind. I thought if I focus on the positives that will be bad. I shouldn't think that there was anything positive. I should only pay attention to all the bad things. I should only pay attention to the regrets. I should only pay attention to the hangovers. I should only pay attention to doing things I didn't want to do when I was drunk. That's what I thought, but it doesn't work like that.

We can't ignore that you are getting a benefit. You can't ignore that piece and when you ignore that piece, you are going to really struggle to come up with a compelling reason that's going to sustain you when you are trying out a break. So, I would use all the negative effects. I would well I commitment is going to be fueled by all the negative effects that I get from drinking. That's what's going to fuel my commitment and it might work for a little bit because sure I would enjoy waking up on the weekends and feeling clear headed and I would enjoy being really productive and I would enjoy that I didn't have to worry about what I did the night before but there was no break from me, right?

That's what alcohol was for me. It was a break from myself, it was a break from my insecurity and my anxiety and feeling like I didn't fit in. it was a break from all the chatter in my head that told me I wasn't smart enough or good enough or pretty enough, right? It was a break from all of that and I had no break from that and so after a while, I just wanted my Friday nights to go back to being an excuse to cut loose and stop feeling stressed out and stop feeling so unsure of myself and just have fun and the problem was I kept thinking that not having a hangover, not having any regrets, not worrying about what I did or said, I kept thinking that that was going to be the compelling reason, but the other piece of it was that drinking was helping me tune out this really negative self-critic.

Drinking for me for a long time was a perfect remedy to fix how I felt on the inside and I didn't realize this because I wasn't looking at my reason for why I wanted to keep drinking and why I wanted to take a break. I

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

## Ep #6: Indecision

wasn't looking at those reasons side-by-side because when I put them down on paper and I looked at them side-by-side, all of a sudden it made sense. It made sense why the reason I wanted to take a break could not stand up to the reason that I wanted to keep drinking and it was because my reason to take a break was just focusing on the negatives. It was, I am sick of the hangovers and doing things that I am embarrassed about or regret.

Now that seems like a pretty good reason on the face of it, it doesn't seem bad; it seems like it could be compelling, but it wasn't paying any attention to the reason why I wanted to keep drinking, and for me the reason why I wanted to keep drinking was because I wanted to fit in and be normal and I thought that drinking allowed me to do that because it was a perfect remedy to fix how I felt on the inside. When I looked at my answers head-to-head, it all of a sudden made sense to me. It made sense why my commitment was so flimsy. My motivation to stop seemed pretty good because I truly didn't like how I felt the next day, I truly didn't like some of the things that I did, but it could not compete with my reason to keep drinking because for me fitting in and being normal was the trump card; it really was. It was something that I had struggled with for so long in my life and feeling like I was an outsider and I didn't belong and I didn't fit in and I was just kind of weird and so the idea that when I drink, I would fit in and I was normal and I didn't have to listen to any of those thoughts, why do I want to let go of that.

When push came to shove, that compelling reason to keep drinking would always win and so my commitment to taking a break for so long in my 20s was really flimsy and I just had no idea because I had never looked at these two reasons side-by-side. I would ultimately choose being normal and fitting in over being hungover and regretful. It seems crazy to me now but back then it made a lot of sense in my mind. Being normal was the biggest prize of all, fitting in was the biggest prize of all, how could I give up on that?

So the strength of your motivation and commitment and comes down to this, can your reason for taking a break compete with your reason for keeping the status quo and it works like this for everything. It's not just our decision to take a break from drinking. It really is our commitment for anything. We have to look at the reason for why we are doing it versus the reason why we are keeping things the same and if that reason to take a

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

## Ep #6: Indecision

break can't stand up to the reason for continuing to drink, then it's going to be very difficult to stick with your commitment because it won't be important enough to you.

You have to believe that you are getting more from taking a break than from keeping things the same and that is why when I work with people, I really encourage people not to focus on just counting days. I think that is such a fallacy this idea of I just need to get a certain number of days. The problem is that most people after a while, the days are not motivating, right? You get a certain number of days and you are just saying, okay, just one day to the next, one day to the next. There has to be something bigger fueling it. After a while, it is not exciting to cross days off a calendar.

For me, when I finally put these two reasons, the reason that I want to keep drinking and the reason why I want to take a break, when I finally put them on paper and I looked at them side-by-side and I realized that my reason for taking a break just couldn't stand up. I started to really have to search and really have to dig and brainstorm and figure out, okay, what is it going to be, what will it be for me that is going to be compelling enough and what I finally landed on what worked for me is that I really wanted to be proud of who I was. That was actually very important for me and I felt like learning these skills, learning how not to use alcohol as a crutch, learning how to rely on myself instead of covering up my emotions that felt very connected to being proud about who I was and that actually felt compelling.

Now, the reason for you is probably going to be totally different and the reasons for all of my clients are usually very different. It might be that they are really interested in growing as a person. It might be that their compelling reason to take a break is that they want to start to model the behaviors that they want to teach their children.

For some people, they really feel like they have a spiritual connection that they want to deepen. They want to deepen a spiritual connection with themselves. It doesn't matter what it is, it just has to be compelling to you. If it's not compelling to you, if it's not more compelling than to continue drinking, then guess what? You are going to keep drinking.

Okay, I know that was a lot today on indecision. I just want to recap. The very best thing that you can do is make a decision either way. Really. Make a decision that you are going to take a break or make a decision that

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

## Ep #6: Indecision

you are not and that's fine too, but if you make a decision either way, I promise you it will just save you so much mental energy. Really. You can just stop going back and forth and stop doing the pros and cons and just use that mental energy for something else.

Also stop using your past to predict your future. It really is a terrible, terrible way to predict your capabilities in the future, especially because so many of us have a really unfortunate interpretation of what failure means. We think it means that we are not going to succeed and actually failure is part of the process, setbacks are part of the process.

Also stop waiting to take action by telling yourself that you need to be a 100% certain. You can take action before you are 100% certain. Waiting to be 100% certain will keep you stuck, but the biggest thing is really be honest about how your drinking is helping you. What is it doing for you? What are the benefits? What are you getting from it? Because when you are really honest about how your drinking is helping you, then and only then can you find a truly compelling reason for why you might want to take a break and try learning something new only then?

Okay, that's it for today's episode. I would love to hear from you guys if you want to email me, you can always email me at [podcast@rachelhart.com](mailto:podcast@rachelhart.com) and if you thought this episode was useful, if you liked what you heard today, I would really appreciate it if you would rate me on iTunes and leave some feedback. Thanks for listening. I will see you next week.

Thanks for listening to this episode of TakeABreak from drinking. If you like what was offered in today's show and want more, please come over to [www.rachelhart.com](http://www.rachelhart.com) where you can sign up for weekly updates to learn more about the tools that will help you take a break.