

## Ep #101: Breaking Bad Habits



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With Your Host

**Dr. Sherry Price**

[Drink Less Lifestyle](#) with Dr. Sherry Price

## Ep #101: Breaking Bad Habits

You are listening to the *Drink Less Lifestyle Podcast* with Dr. Sherry Price, episode number 101.

Welcome to *Drink Less Lifestyle*, a podcast for successful women who want to change their relationship with alcohol. If you want to drink less, feel healthier and start loving life again you're in the right place. Please remember that the information in this podcast does not constitute medical advice. Now, here's your host, Dr. Sherry Price.

Well, hello my beautiful friends. I am excited to be with you on the podcast today. And today we're going to talk about breaking bad habits. I know as we move into this time of year many of us are going back to normal routines. Kids are back in school. The summer is over. The summer vacations have come to an end and so we are looking at getting back into our routines. And for a lot of us that may mean breaking up with some bad habits we formed along the way.

And this is exactly the work that we are doing inside EpicYOU this month of September. So, you know I have created this epic program called EpicYOU, it's all of the content and my life's work that I have developed over the last several years. And we've put it into this container called EpicYOU. So inside there you will find all of my work inside the Drink Less Lifestyle program, all of my work in the How to Get the Off Button Back program. All of my work that I have been talking about on this podcast is now contained inside of EpicYOU.

And I am just having so much fun with the ladies in there. Just recently I read this book that came out in June of this year and it rocked my world. So, I said to all the ladies inside EpicYOU, "Hey, if you want a copy of this I'd love to have you read this book. Let's discuss it because this book really goes hand in hand with the work that we are doing inside the program." And the way the author presents it is so powerful. And many of the concepts that he reviews are concepts that we use in the program.

And he has a different way of presenting that which is really useful for getting your brain to move along to breaking up with bad habits. So, ladies,

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if you are in EpicYOU and you didn't see that announcement and you want a free copy of this book, please let me know and I will mail one out to you because it is fantastic. And I don't want you to miss out. And if you're not in EpicYOU come and join us. It is so much fun. It's such a great community to be a part of to get the life of your dreams and to break up with habits that are getting in the way of living your best life.

And so that's what I want to talk about today. One of the things that trips people up from living their best life is some bad habits. Maybe their life is, they would say, "It's 85% good or 90% good", or whatever. It's I'm good most of the time but then I have this bad habit I default to. Maybe it's a daily habit. Maybe it's a nightly habit. Maybe it's a once a week habit. Maybe it's just a habit you're tired of talking about and you really want to rid it out of your life.

So, what I want to talk about is really the difference in terms of adding on a habit which is what I call developing a new habit, that's basically adding in a habit to your life. Versus what it takes to break up from a current habit in your life. So, when we look at the research on breaking a bad habit like overdrinking, overeating or maybe you taught your nervous system to have this emotional response all the time, maybe you have an anger habit, maybe you have an anxiety habit, anxiety keeps showing up and it keeps progressing and it's your default way of being.

I know for some people, complaining has become their way or their default way and they've been building that habit ever since the pandemic has happened. And what I really want to dive into is how the research is so clear that there is a totally different pathway to starting a new habit which is completely different than the process of breaking up with a current habit or with alcohol a bad habit. We only want to break up with the habit if we find that it's no longer serving us. So, let's just call that bad.

We'll just say a habit that we no longer want to do. A habit that's not serving us and so we'll just say that's a bad habit. And what the research tells us is it's so much harder, so much more difficult to give up a bad habit than it is to develop a new one. So, let's consider developing a new habit.

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Maybe you want to eat more vegetables. Maybe you want to get in the habit of walking or doing some form of movement or exercise. When we take on a new habit, I want to tell you, the brain is excited.

The brain sees this as a chance to improve something in your life. It knows it'll feel better, it'll be healthier, maybe you'll lose weight. Whatever the gain is that you're going to get, the brain desires that. Now, when you're developing a new habit or adding in a habit there is also that sense of novelty. And the brain looks at that novelty as something new, something fresh, something to get excited over. And I'll tell you, the novelty piece really isn't there when you're looking at breaking a habit, a current habit.

So, it's different, so you get this novelty piece which the brain then becomes even more excited, more enticed to take that action, more excited about eating a few more carrots or some broccoli, or taking that five or ten minute walk. And so, you'll see that the brain really is not about pushing away that change. It's embracing it. It's like, hey, I want that because I know I'll feel better after the walk, I'll feel better once I eat this way. And so, your brain essentially embraces the concept of adding in a new habit. It feels good.

There's reward in choosing this behavior, the brain senses it, the brain feels it, your body feels it and so it fuels you to keep taking that same action in the future. And what the research shows is when you add in a new habit it doesn't take a very long period of time to form a new habit. Now for me that's what I'm doing right now with exercise. I started the process a few weeks ago and now I'm embedding it into my weekly habits. I'm upping the amount of exercise that I do each week and it feels so good. There is an immediate reward that I get.

And you begin enjoying it more and more the more times you do it. I want to point out that there's very little resistance when you truly want that new habit. And I'll also say, when you add on something even if it's just a five, ten minute walk, even if it's just a few more carrots or a few more bunches of broccoli, your brain most of the time will count that as a win. That'll count towards you're moving towards your goals. Now, the brain doesn't use that

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same type of methodology when it comes to breaking or removing a habit. It's not the same.

The research tells us so, there is a different path to follow. There is different consequences that come, there is different psychology that's involved so the process is not the same. So just pointing out what we all know, when you have a bad habit like overdrinking or overeating, we have it because it feels good. We have it because we like it on some level. It gives us a reward of some sort. And so now the brain's going to say, "Wait a second, you're going to take that away from me?" Do you think the brain gets really excited about that?

It may be exciting to think about the possibility of achieving it, I don't need alcohol, I'm already a woman who can take it or leave it. And having that lifestyle where you don't default to that behavior or to that habit, yes, it gets excited about that but I'm talking about when it comes to the time to carry out the action of not drinking or drinking less and how does that make you feel? I'll tell you what, your brain is probably not excited in the moment. Your brain will say, "No, it's a bad idea, let's put that off till tomorrow. That won't be fun, let's not do that."

It won't be as enjoyable of an evening, what am I thinking? Of course, I'm not going to do that action. And for many people it doesn't even feel safe. They'll think, oh my gosh, how will I get through the night? How will I cope? How will I deal with my anger? How will I deal with my kids? How will I deal with all this mental chatter? How will I get to sleep? How will, how will, how will, how will, all the how's come up. So, when you remove something it causes a lot of fear and a lot more resistance than adding something.

And so, this is very similar to a concept in psychology called loss aversion. The brain does not like it when things are removed from our life, when we lose things from our life. We really become accustomed to having those things in our life. And so, when they are removed there is a much more emotional attachment to that. And it will feel like a loss. There will feel like there is a missing out or I don't know who I will be if I don't do this. I don't

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know what I will do if I don't do this. There is this sense of grieving, loss and fear of missing out on the benefit that this habit provided.

And if you think about it, that's why some people stay in marriages that are abusive. They're afraid of walking away even though they know it'll be better for them. Because nobody likes losing things, we all like gaining things. We just don't like losing things. So, the brain will be reluctant to give up that feeling of comfort or that behavior that brought us some form of pleasure even when we didn't feel pleasure about it the next day. And so, this is why addictions are so hard to break. This is why breaking up with our bad habits is so much more difficult than just tacking on a new habit.

And it's because there is no reward initially there. Actually, we have to learn to do without the reward initially. And so, if there is no reward coming from the alcohol, from eating ice-cream, from doing whatever, we will feel worse before we are able to feel better. And so, there is a layer of resistance and a layer of emotional stress that comes that we need to be prepared for.

When you give up something like alcohol your body if it's been getting it every day like I'd been feeding my body alcohol every day for years and then I decide not to, there is going to be a reset that my body needs to go through, it's physiologic. My receptors have to reregulate. They're used to getting all the secretion of all these neurotransmitters, more dopamine then less dopamine. And then the interruptions of other neurotransmitters that that cascade causes.

And so those neurotransmitters and those receptors need time to readjust. And what happens during this time, guess what? You're left without the reward and you're left with these negative feelings inside. Some people say, "I feel at a loss. I feel like I'm missing out. There is more sadness. I'm feeling restless. I'm feeling anxiety. I'm feeling depressed. I'm feeling more stressed because this was the way I coped with my stress." And so now they don't know how to process these negative emotions. So, I want to point out that this part of the process is known. We know it from science.

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We know it from the research. We know that this will happen. But what happens for a lot of people is they start second guessing themselves and thinking that this part of the process shouldn't be happening. I should be able to feel good without alcohol. Something's wrong with me now that I'm not feeling good without alcohol or another tub of ice-cream. And what we know about our bodies is they need time to reset and readjust.

And if we're not feeding them these substances externally we're not going to get the reward and we have to be okay without receiving that reward for a bit of time until our bodies readjust. Now, if this process didn't happen, all these negative emotions swarming, we'd be able to cure addictions much easier, wouldn't we? Because who really wants to go through this process of I'm going to have to feel terrible for a couple of days because I'm going to have to feel my emotions and I really don't want to.

So, most people don't know how to navigate this messy middle or this messy initial phase. And so, they give up because they want that immediate relief. Now, if you do get through this messy initial part which many people do by taking a break, they take a break for five days, 10 days, 12 days, a month, whatever it is. And if they're not doing the right work to make it sustainable, guess what happens? Then they set themselves up for failure after this period of time.

And the only reason they're able to make it through that period of time is because they are generating their own willpower and white knuckling it to get through, to make sure that they don't drink, or they don't eat the half gallon of ice-cream, or the extra sleeve of cookies, or whatever it is that they do. And so, when they get to 30 days then they say, "Woohoo, I'm changed." Or 60 days, "I'm changed."

And they think they're changed because they look at their behavior and they haven't been doing that behavior for 30 or 60 days. But did they really change mentally, did they really change emotionally inside? And oftentimes if they're not doing that work along the way the answer is no, and that's why they go back to doing the substance again. And it's because they didn't follow the right steps, that it's not sustainable. But what do most

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people say? Is, “I’m broken. It’s the alcohol, it’s calling my name. It’s the pint of ice-cream, it’s calling my name.”

They’re not looking at it from really breaking the habit for good. They’re just looking at controlling the behavior. This is so common. It’s what I experienced in my drinking story, my drinking career, that played out for years. I took hiatuses, I took breaks, I did juice cleanses, I did fasts, I did diets, all the things to say, “Hey, no for alcohol for this period of time.” But then I never really had a plan when I broke from that. I just thought I would be cured or I would not want it which never was the case.

But it wasn’t until I did the research and looked into, okay, what really causes habit to break for good? I didn’t really understand the science on how to effectively break a habit. I was just using commonsense, or what the internet told me. It wasn’t until I understood loss aversion and hey, I’d have to really understand these emotions that I’m going to be going through and then also heal all the triggers that I have for that substance or that action and really understand all of that.

It’s how I gave up my QVC addiction, the addiction of wanting new boxes and new purchases showing up at my doorstep. It was how I understood and gave up my nightly drinking habit. And yes, there was a sense of loss. There was a sense of grieving. It’s like, I’m no longer getting my reward this way. I’m no longer getting my stress relief this way. I’m no longer getting joy this way. And so, this is the hard part for people, they don’t know how to navigate this messy initial place and then they don’t know what to do once they get to their, hey, 30 days, or hey, 60 days and that phase.

So, they’re not understanding the whole picture of breaking a bad habit. And so that’s why I’m pulling these pieces in this month inside EpicYOU to really show you the whole roadmap, what it looks like to break a bad habit because for some people it might be identity shaking. I lost a part of me. I was no longer the lady who bellied up to the bar every time we went out. That was a sense that my identity was shifting. I was no longer the woman who at the end of my day cracked open a bottle of chardonnay.

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Whether I had a good day or a bad day I always sleighed the chardonnay. Woo-hoo. And so initially I felt wobbly, who am I? This feels weird. This feels good but not really that good. I kind of feel bad. I kind of really miss the chardonnay. And in the back of my head, I'm like, well, this doesn't really make sense because I'm wanting this healthier lifestyle and I'm wanting to be happier but deep down that's not how I felt. And this is what I see throw so many others off. It may be throwing you off.

And I just want you to know that your brain finds it harder to part with something that it's used to, even when parting with that something will make us happier, healthier and more fulfilled. I put that exact sentence in the workbook that you will be receiving inside EpicYOU in September because I think that's so important for you to see, and to know, and to listen to, and to understand as part of this journey, as part of this roadmap where you will be breaking up with your bad habits.

And so, it's really hard for us to get our mind wrapped around that because we think we should be happy being happier, healthier, and more fulfilled and we will be. It just won't come initially. Another aspect to this workbook that I love is that you will be getting a breaking a bad habit worksheet where you will be able to list out all of the criteria that's happening in your life and this will serve as your individualized roadmap plan for breaking up with your bad habits. Because you can apply this to so many other things besides overeating and overdrinking.

I know the women in the program are working on all kinds of things. So, it could be overdrinking. Some people are trying to break up from trying to please everybody in their family because what may make their kid happy makes their husband unhappy and there's no way we can please everybody all of the time. Some are the women are noticing that they just fear change, change just feels really uncomfortable for them and so they feel like they've been avoiding a change that they've wanted to embrace for so long. And so that's the bad habit that they want to conquer.

We also can have bad habits like living in the past so much, thinking the best days are behind us and there's nothing to look forward to. That our life

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is just empty for days to come and that our best lives are in the past. And we just keep thinking about the past and keep thinking about the past which is suffocating some women. Some people are done procrastinating on their goals. They're sick of not going after their dreams and holding themselves back.

And some people are just done with perfectionism. They've tried it, it's not working. They're miserable, they're complaining all the time. And they don't feel good. So, you can apply this roadmap and these worksheets and tools to all of that. So, when we're breaking up with that bad habit we know that there's going to be resistance. We know that the brain is not going to be as excited as starting a new habit. We know that this is going to happen. This is documented. We know the emotions that are going to come up.

So, if we can know that ahead of time, guess what? We can plan for it which makes going through the process easier if we can plan for it ahead of time. We don't have to interpret these emotions to mean that this means something's wrong. This means something bad about me. No, everybody's going to experience these emotions. We don't have to say, "I should be feeling better." And we don't have to listen to all the brain chatter that we have. What's better is to keep your brain focused on where we're going.

And I want to help you keep your brain focused on where it's going. That's why I created this workbook this month, because I wanted to outline the process for you so you can stay focused because you have to know that this is normal. It's biologic, it's physiologic and we know the emotional response that our bodies will have and we know that our brains will kick back like toddlers having a tantrum when something is removed that we're used to having in our lives.

And when you know that this process is normal and how to navigate it, it just becomes so much easier. You no longer cause your own suffering by fighting with yourself. You no longer have that, oh my gosh, I'm drinking and I know I shouldn't be, that dual conversation in your head, the angel saying, "You really shouldn't be drinking." And the devil says, "Just drink

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more, it's fine, we'll start tomorrow." That's when we become double minded. And when we're double minded we drive ourselves crazy.

We don't feel good about ourselves. There is a whole conversation gone on in the head that is not even based on reality, it's just one conversation over here, one conversation over here and it drives us nuts. That's that mental chatter people want to get away from. And I'm with you, I used to have it. Now when I drink I just want to drink and just have one chatter in my head. I'm enjoying this drink, it's delightful and I'll be elegantly satisfied when I'm done. And most days I don't even want the drink, I don't want it as part of my lifestyle. It's not the woman I want to be.

And so, if that's what you want, I want to help get you there. I don't want your brain acting like a toddler whose had its pacifier taken away. Now, initially it may do that. And we know that that's going to be a normal part of the process. But how will you navigate that? How will you have your own back so you're going to stay committed to your goal? Because I want you to stand firm for what you believe in and be able to execute that in your life. I want you to stand by your word, when you say something you're going to do it, not for anybody else but for the benefit of you.

And when I understood scientifically how to break a habit it made all the sense to me because that's how my brain is wired. I'm a very scientific minded person. You show me the research, you show me the diagrams and boom, my brain gets it. That is the language of my neurons. My neurons really gravitate towards that type of linear process. And I love that, that I know that about my brain. I know how my brain needs to be carried along to get to the goal that I want. And so, I'm going to use that to my advantage.

And all is that means is I'm using it to serve me. I'm using what works for my brain to give it the power it needs so that it can carry out what I want it to do. Because if I say to myself, I want to be healthy, that's part of the journey. But then I have to define for myself, what does healthy look like for me? It may not be how an athlete describes being healthy, it may not be how an Olympian describes their best self and their healthy. It may not be

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how an NBA or an NFL player describes their level of healthy. But I have defined what healthy feels like for me and when my body feels good.

And sure enough, we know, our bodies will tell us when they don't feel good. The next day after drinking too much it tells you, hey, that doesn't feel good. So, I will implement practices that help me stay towards my goals. And that's my roadmap. And that's what I want to help each one of you do is find your roadmap that gets you towards your long term goals. And for many people those long term goals include inner peace, joy, contentment, love, connection in our relationships, getting along with others.

It also includes the size of our waistlines if we want those to shrink. It may include a number on the scale, it may include how much you can lift at the gym, how often you go to the gym, how much you work out, how much you connect with others. And looking at those key relationships and what is their health like, the health of the relationship between you and your children, you and your mother, father, you and your spouse, partner, significant other.

So, where I'll have you all start is really looking at what bad habits you want to give up, what bad habits do you want to remove from your life. And really accept where these habits aren't serving you anymore, where copious amounts of alcohol make you feel worse physically, emotionally, mentally, especially if you go overboard. Because we have to start there. It really begins when we can accept where we're at to open us up to the possibility of change.

Open up ourselves to say, "Hey, this what I'm doing here doesn't feel good. So let me open up myself to feeling some discomfort as I'm going through that initial phase of change because I'll feel so much better on the other side." Because we know that's part of the process of breaking up with a bad habit. If it wasn't, it would be easy to do and we'd all be able to accomplish it. But then that pain goes away, it's not permanent. And just think about the current pain you have now. If you're overdrinking, you're probably thinking about alcohol before you even consume it.

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Maybe it's coming into your thoughts at 2:00pm, 3:00pm, maybe you don't keep it in your house and you're like, "Am I going to go get it? Am I not going to get it?" Or if you work outside the home you're going to be like, "Am I going to stop at the grocery store on the way home?" These thoughts are coming into your mind before you even consume it. You're having mental anguish, emotional anguish over it before you even consume it. And then you're consuming it and for how many hours that lasts, I'm uncertain.

For me it was at least three hours of constant slow drip consumption, maybe the first was [inaudible] I'd give myself, just swallow that whole glass. And then a steady pour the rest of the night. And yeah, I knew I shouldn't be doing it, and there was some pain in that too. And then going to bed, getting up the next day and thinking about how much I drank after I've consumed it. So, the next morning thinking about, this is what I did, okay, just forgive yourself, move on, today's a new day. And then I would just repeat that same cycle.

So even though my drinking only lasted three hours of actually physically consuming it, the mental and emotional anguish lasted so much longer. And that added extra stress to my life because I wasn't happy about it. I knew it wasn't healthy. I knew it was contributing to my expanding waistline. I knew it made me want to tune out of my life and procrastinate on things. And it made me less likely to exercise and do other healthy things. And it made me more likely to snack, and overeat, and eat stuff that I really wouldn't put in my body had I been totally sober.

And so, all that extra disappointment on top, again the emotional baggage that comes with this, of not achieving the goal of being able to be a woman who can take it or leave it, felt so heavy. It was the extra burden on my life that I'm like, "I don't want this. I feel like I'm carrying two pieces of luggage in each hand." And that heavy weight it wasn't good for my soul. And so that's why I created this topic, this workbook this month so it can serve as your roadmap designed for you to break the bad habit.

Because I want to walk you down this path that's research backed that breaks the habit long term. I don't want you to suffer anymore and I don't

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want you thinking that this has to be the way it has to be forever. You can learn to break the habit, any bad habit. And here's the thing, if you've tuned out, come back in and listen to this key, key point, it is very important. Most people try to remove a bad habit by focusing on the habit.

I'm going to remove these Oreos, remove this chardonnay from my life by focusing more on the Oreos and on the chardonnay. It does not work that way my friends. If you look at the research that is the least effective way to remove a bad habit, the least effective way. If you're wondering why I'm putting rules around things and rules around my drinking, and rules around the Oreos, and rules around the ice-cream, and it's not working, that's why. You're only focusing on the action and the behavior piece, it does not work long term.

If you try to break a drinking habit by focusing only on the drinking, most likely you will fail. That's what the research shows. I didn't make this up my friends, this is well supported. And that's another statement in bold in the workbook because I don't want anybody just focusing on the behavior. That's just a small portion of the entire roadmap. When you're filling out your workbook, and you're filling out your one pager, you will notice that is such a small piece on your roadmap.

Because when you focus on that action, when you focus on your drink, think about your favorite drink, your favorite wine, your favorite beer, your favorite cocktail. Notice how your desire for it goes up. You might even start salivating as I'm talking about it. And when you do that, guess what you're doing? You're fueling the habit even though you're not taking the action of drinking. You are mentally fueling the habit. Now, you may not even realize that you're doing that. You may not even realize that's part of the research that says, "Hey, the more you think about it the more you're going to want it."

And then if I tell you not to think about it, you'll still think about it. If you say, "Don't think about a pink elephant in the room", what will your brain do? It will instantly give you an image of a pink elephant. And these are the tactics that don't work so we are not going to be using them. We are going

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to be using the tactics that work. And so, my process is research backed, science based and it can help you break this drinking habit for good. There is no shame in having a bad habit, we all develop them and having shame means you just feel bad about you.

We're done with that, we're done feeling bad about you, we are here to break a bad habit. And this process has worked for me and hundreds of my clients. So, this is the process I will be teaching inside EpicYOU this month. And my dear friends, please know that the process of breaking a bad habit is so much different and so much harder than starting a new habit. So, if you're thinking that the process should be the same and it should be the same amount of struggle or ease, you are wrong.

There is a huge emotional component to breaking up with a bad habit that serves as resistance for most people and this is why they don't go on to be successful and don't do it. So, if you want to learn this process I encourage you to come join EpicYOU this month. You'll get the handout, and access to all the live coaching calls and our community page which I will be providing support, tips, and advice on how to make this process sustainable and easier as you go through it.

I'll be sharing with you my stories from my own life and how it's worked and what I did wrong so you can avoid those pitfalls. So whatever way works best for you my friends, I am here for you. Information on how to join EpicYOU, at [www.epicyou.com](http://www.epicyou.com). I want to help you break your bad habits for good. And I'll do that by walking you through this roadmap where you won't have any questions and any doubts on how to get it done.

So, if you're ready to break your bad habits and you want my help, come join me. Again, join me at [www.epicyou.com](http://www.epicyou.com). And I can't wait to see you inside. Alright, my friends, go live powerfully, go live epically and I'll see you next week.

Thanks for listening to *Drink Less Lifestyle*. If you're ready to change your relationship with drinking now, check out the free guide, How to Effectively

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Break the Overdrinking Habit at [sherryprice.com/startnow](http://sherryprice.com/startnow). See you next week.