

Ep #104: Managing Triggers



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With Your Host

Dr. Sherry Price

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You are listening to the *Drink Less Lifestyle Podcast* with Dr. Sherry Price, episode number 104.

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.

Hello my beautiful friends. I am so excited over my new website. Have you seen it? If you haven't, I invite you to come check it out because there is something new there waiting for you. It is my new free guide on the five steps to become a woman who can take it or leave it. I am so excited about this guide because I want to help every woman who wants to change their relationship with alcohol, with sugar, with food, with whatever to become someone who can take it or leave it.

And the reason being, because when you do you create and have so much more in your life. When you are not putting these substances and chemicals into your body you feel better, you have less anxiety, you have less depression. You are able to show up in your life more powerfully. You are able to make better decisions for yourself and for others. You sleep better, the relationships in your life improve, everything really elevates in your life and that's why I created EpicYOU and that's why I created this new free guide for you to have so you can start elevating your life.

Look, friends, as I talk about on this podcast over and over again, drinking is just a small piece of the overall problem. And in fact, on today's podcast, we are going to dive deep into actually what the problem is because without knowing this information we are chasing the wrong issue in our lives. We are trying to manage the wrong thing and wondering why we're not making consistent lasting results.

And so, I invite you to get that new free guide on my website and download it as you are listening to this podcast because I'm going to be diving deep into one of the steps in that free guide. So, with that let's get started.

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So, as I mentioned there are five steps to becoming a woman who can take it or leave it. And I really want to dive into step number two. And that is our triggers. What triggers us to drink? What triggers us to overconsume? So, if you're applying this to alcohol you can, you can also apply this to sugar, you can also apply this to excess snacking, or excess eating, or excess working, or excess spending. All of those are manifestations of doing something too much that we want to be able to cut back on in our life.

And so, we have to know, we absolutely have to know what triggers us to do those things. Because let's look at the definition of a trigger. A trigger is the cause of something else to happen. Now, let's take this into a different context with a different example and you will see it very clearly.

So, if you are someone who has celiac disease you probably know that gluten is something your body can't tolerate. If you have gluten in your products it will trigger your body to have a certain response. GI distress, diarrhea, bloating, other complications or other symptoms that come from your body not being able to process gluten. So, gluten is the trigger that causes the other downstream effects. So, our triggers are what leads us to want the drink, to feel like we need the drink or to cause us to overdrink.

And I've said so many times on this podcast, drinking is not the real problem. Yes, it's a problem, and yes it causes more problems, so I'm not saying it's not a problem. But if you're overdrinking your brain does not see drinking as the problem. It sees drinking as a solution to the trigger. So, there is something that sets you off or that triggers you to want to drink. Maybe it's stepping into your favorite bar on a Friday or Saturday night, that's a trigger.

Maybe it's feeling spent at the end of the day and saying, "I gave everybody else my best and now I'm just spent." Maybe your trigger is you're bored to tears, you have so much free time or a lot of free time and you don't know what to do with it. Maybe your trigger is loneliness, you're not in a relationship that's fulfilling to you or you're not in a relationship at all and you want to be in one.

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Maybe it's your anxiety, you're buzzing around doing all the things and your anxiety is ranging at a 9 or a 10. And you just don't know how to bring it down. So, alcohol becomes your solution. Maybe it's your kids, maybe it's your job, maybe it's your spouse. Whatever your triggers are, you have triggers that lead or cause your drinking. And that my friends, when you discover that, that is where the work comes in. That is the real issue we need to solve because what happens when you solve for your triggers, you no longer want the drink.

You no longer feel like you need the drinks. Now, I'm not saying you shouldn't have one or you can't have one. I'm just saying, if you do imbibe in that form where you're not doing it because you're triggered, you'll be able to be someone who can take it or leave it. And I know for so many of you, that's why you listen to this podcast, you want not to totally abstain. You just want to have it every now and again and you want to trust yourself around alcohol.

And you want to know that you have the ability to stop and feel elegantly satisfied and know that that one drink is not going to lead to a plethora of more. I hear this from you. I hear, "I want to be a normal drinker. I want to be someone who can take it or leave it. I don't want to be somebody who abstains forever. I just want to really limit it in how much I depend on it for my comfort and my joy." So, we have to work on getting to the root cause causing the drinking, triggering wanting more drinks.

So that's why step two in this free guide will help you. There is a worksheet in here and I walk you through the process of how to identify the triggers. And I say triggers because there will always be more than just one. So, identifying your triggers, all of them is the most fundamental step you must do if you want to change your drinking habit permanently. You can go on fasts. You can go on cleansers. You can take a 30 day abstinence. You can do all of that.

But I will tell you, if you don't look at what triggers your drinking none of that will change your drinking permanently. None of that will get you to a lifestyle where you just don't require alcohol. You can have it for fun, you

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can have it for pleasure. You can have it in a way where you don't feel you overdo it. So, I stress that without this part my friends, you will not be able to change your drinking for good. And here is what those other ways focus on. They focus on the drink, when the drink is not the real problem. It's a subsequent problem.

And this is where the brain gets really confused. Because if you're telling yourself your drinking is the problem, but your body is telling you, no, it's the solution, I feel so much better when I drink, are you kidding me? It's not the problem, it's the solution. You're always going to have the devil and angel on your shoulder. Should I drink? No, I shouldn't drink. I'm bad if I drink. I'm a bad person if I drink. I'm a good person if I don't drink and I don't want it. And then you're fighting with yourself.

You have that constant mental chatter going on inside of your head because your brain says one thing and your body says another. They are not aligned. So, you will constantly feel like you're fighting with yourself. And that becomes exhausting. And then you get exhausted, and you're like, "I'm done with this fighting. I just want to feel better. I want to feel better and what makes me feel better? Let's turn to alcohol." Because your brain is like, "I want a solution."

So, when your brain sees alcohol as the solution it's always going to want a solution. So essentially what has happened is drinking has become your maladaptive behavior that you've trained your body to do when it engages with a certain trigger or certain triggers. So maybe you come home from work and you have additional charting to do. So, you open up the clinic notes at home after work and this triggers you to drink. Why? Because you don't want to do these administrative tasks. You find them boring. You find them monotonous.

You find them beneath you. You find them just to be something you don't want to do and so what you've trained your body to do is now I reward myself with a drink because I don't want to manage the emotions when I'm charting, when I'm working out, when I'm working hours after work. Or maybe the trigger is that you're grading papers and you don't want to be

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doing it. You want to feel better doing it and so your triggers become when I grade papers, therefore I have a drink.

Or you're preparing dinner, and because you got into a habit and a pattern of having a drink when you start dinner, that becomes your trigger. So charting, clinic notes, drink. Grading student papers, trigger, drink. Preparing dinner, trigger, drink. For some people it's their anxiety, it's their stress level, that's the trigger that's causing them to want to want to drink. And so, this is valuable information.

It's why inside EpicYOU and all my programs I have women fill out a worksheet to identify their triggers because we really want to get to the real problem, not the subsequent problem, the drinking. We want to get to the real problem and solve for that because once we can solve for those triggers and manage those triggers, then you can do the next steps. Then you can modify and change the trigger or change your conditioned response to the trigger so you no longer overdrink.

And since I want you to be able to do this work, I've put it in my free guide on my website. Again, that's step two inside that workbook and I highly encourage you to download it and fill it out. Now, here's what a lot of people will do, they'll just download it and read it but information doesn't change you. It's not the information that gets the transformation. It's applying it to your life. It's discovering why you do what you do and learning tools so you don't have this maladaptive behavior. So, you can get the life that you want.

This is not just changing your drinking my friends, this is not just changing your eating, it is changing how you feel about yourself and how you show up in your life. This is so much bigger and better. And you must do that inner work if you want the change. If you've watched my masterclasses and some of the free resources I have on my website, you know I talk about changing the external does not necessarily change the internal.

So, putting rules around your drinking, doing a drink plan, yes they can be tools but if they don't change the triggers and what's going on inside of you

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they may not work long term. You have to be doing the inner work along with the external work for you to get lasting transformational change. And I'll be honest, I did not know how to do this. I was not skilled. I was not trained. I was trained on how to help others throughout life. Whatever environment I went into it was always talking about helping others.

It could have been church, it could have been college, it could have been my role as a pharmacist. These pills are going to help others. Nobody taught me how to change myself. That's why I needed a coach. I needed to learn how to do this for myself. And I want to teach you how to do this for you which is why I created EpicYOU. And I wanted this incredible community of women doing this exact work to uplevel their lives.

Because here's what happens a lot of times when we try to do it on our own. Our brain will say, "That's too hard. I'm not going to stick to this. I don't want to fill out this worksheet. What is this worksheet going to tell me anyway?" Well, I'll tell you. When you do the work, the quantity and the quality of your life depends on it. The quality of your relationships and particularly the most important relationship of all, the relationship you have with yourself.

How do you view yourself in the morning when you look into the mirror? Are you proud of that woman on the other side staring back at you? And I'll tell you, I wasn't because I was in the category of a heavy drinker and I didn't want to be a heavy drinker. And just to define that for you, I have the definitions on my website. But for women a heavy drinker is someone who consumes more than three drinks on any given day or more than seven drinks in a week.

And you know my story, I was up to 35 to 42 drinks a week. I wasn't just pushing the limits on that definition. I was blasting through it. I was way in the heavy drinking category. And again, if you want the definition of a moderate drinker, a heavy drinker, a binge drinker, all of that is on my website for free underneath the resources tab. If you are new to this podcast you may not realize all the free resources you have access to on my website.

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So, when I looked at that woman I was like, “Your life is so good. If we could just get rid of this drinking thing. If we could just rein it back in. If we could just be like a woman who can take it or leave it, life would be so much better.” And it’s true, life is so much better when you’re not dependent on alcohol for your emotional state. Because it never takes you to an emotional place you’re happy about. You may be happy with the first drink but I’ll tell you, it’s a law of diminishing returns after that.

And then your body has to process this chemical that is not natural and quite toxic to it. So therefore, you have all these negative side-effects that come from it and these negative consequences that show up in your life because of it. You don’t feel good. You’ve brain fog. You don’t have the energy you do normally. You’re forgetful that night and even the next day and it’s just taking away from your mental and emotional stability. And I say this not to make you feel bad. I say this to say, “Hey, this is bigger than just a drinking problem.”

And calling it a drinking problem is glossing over the root cause of the problem. Maybe you don’t know how to handle certain emotions. Maybe you’ve never discovered ways to handle anxiety differently than medication or a substance like alcohol which basically is a drug in a bottle. It just comes in a liquid form back to when we were toddlers and took our medicines in a liquid form.

And I also point this out because I know so many people get discouraged, they keep focusing on the drink. They keep focusing on rules around their drink. They keep focusing on the drinking even more, even more, even more and that only creates more desire for more alcohol because what your mind focuses on expands.

Maybe you’re mad at your husband. Maybe the two of you can’t come to a solution on something, maybe it’s raising the kids or some other aspect of your life. And so, you just keep tolerating this mad anger in your life. And the way you deal with it is to drink, that’s your solution. Your brain says, “This works, I’m just going to do this.” So, if we just cut out that drinking, what happens? Your anger is there.

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And if you don't know other ways to manage that trigger, that anger, you'll just eventually go back to drinking, your body, your brain, your mind, it will just be like, I can't do this anger anymore. I've done five, six days without alcohol and bam, I'm going to go right back to it, or 50 days. It doesn't matter the length of time. If you go back right to it, notice the trigger that caused you to do that because that's what you need to change and solve for.

I know for many women and a lot of the women inside EpicYOU, it's that nagging voice in their head, whether it's a form of perfectionism, whether it's, I don't know if I should be having this kind of life because it doesn't feel good but yet I have fear of changing it. Whether it's anxiety or stress coming from the world, their job, their kids. Bring it because I've got tools for you. You learn how to manage stress. You learn how to manage anxiety without needing pills, or alcohol, or food, or overspending.

And if you learn nothing else, because this boggles my mind so much because I feel I talk about this almost on every podcast, is that drinking is not the main source of your problem. For so many women, I talked about on the episode, emotional drinking, for so many women it's that they don't know how to manage these emotions when they arise. Many of us have been told not to feel them. We got yelled at in our households if we cried, or children are supposed to be seen and not heard.

And given all of these socialization that we've become fearful of our own emotions. And I know anxiety is a big one for a lot of people. And if you have learned that you drink when your anxiety is sky high, well, that's a maladaptive way to handle your anxiety. So, when you cut back on alcohol, what happens to your anxiety? It goes sky high. You still have the anxiety. But in your mind you're just thinking, I just need to avoid alcohol. And you have all the willpower and you're just grinding through it each night and white knuckling it.

And after a while you get drained and then boof, you're back to a drink and you tell yourself it'll just be one. But it feels so good, you keep going. But your habit won't change with this type of gritting your teeth, trying to get

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through it and hoping your anxiety, which is the main problem, just magically changes or disappears. I love the quote that you can't solve a problem with the wrong diagnosis. So, if your diagnosis is I have a drinking problem, instead of the true diagnosis, I have an anxiety problem, you're going after the wrong problem.

It's like a doctor telling somebody, "You're anemic because your hemoglobin and hematocrit, one of those markers or both are low." But that's just a sign of a massive growing cancer inside of someone. If you say you were just going to treat you with some iron or some blood, but we miss the main problem, the cancer that's growing inside of the body. We've put the patient at harm because we didn't solve the main problem. We didn't get at the root of the anemia.

And this is why I love life coaching because my program doesn't just focus on the drinking, we focus on your life so that this way of drinking can become a lifestyle. So, when you have an anxiety problem, there's a whole program with worksheets, tools, numerous tools on how you can lower your anxiety because I have anxiety too. I know it works for me. And my anxiety is a different flavor than my daughter's and I know it works for her. There are different tools.

Because here's what we can't do, ladies, we can't magically make our emotions go away and disappear forever. The anxiety will come back. My frustration, something I dealt with a lot comes back. But I no longer manage it with alcohol. I have different tools which has allowed me to uplevel my life in so many ways and feel proud about the woman in the mirror. Because when you can manage your triggers or even solve for them, some of them we can solve for. They just go away, you no longer feel the pull for alcohol.

And your brain learns, that was a maladaptive strategy. That was a maladaptive behavior but I've got an adaptive behavior that's not bad for me. There are no negative consequences coming from this strategy and from this way to manage my anxiety. Because when we use alcohol to manage our anxiety, what happens? Alcohol actually creates anxiety in the

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body and causes more stress, and it's a depressant so of course it's going to make us more depressed.

So, it's like adding gasoline to the fire. Yes, it may feel like a fire extinguisher being placed on the fire initially with the first drink or two because of the increase in dopamine, the increase in serotonin but the next day that fire has gotten out of control, it's uncontained. It's now humongous.

Now you feel the anxiety evermore, it's bigger. And what does your brain learn? Alcohol, that's the fire extinguisher. That'll help for a few hours. But it just makes the fire worse in the long term until it takes over more and more of your life. And then people get frustrated because they keep thinking it's a drinking problem and they go after the alcohol and they try to give it up and it doesn't work. And they have the anxiety and they're back to it, and it's just this domino effect.

But guess what, if you had the real diagnosis, the real problem and that was the first domino and you identified it's an anxiety issue. And you never pushed down that first domino, it just remained standing then you wouldn't get all the subsequent problems, the drinking, the aftereffects of the drinking, the weight gain, the poor sleep, the poor relationships, not feeling good about the woman in the mirror in the morning. Because when you work on the real problem you can get a real solution and that my friends is lifechanging.

This is what will make a dramatic difference, not only in your drinking but everywhere else in your life. Because now you have the right tools. You have tools that are aligned with your goals and your values finally. Because I know, you want more for your life, you want to get to a place where this problem is totally behind you and start building back relationships that may be went awry, maybe a relationship with your spouse, they're not approving of your drinking or they don't like when you drink or how you act.

Maybe it's with your kids or the grandkids, now you can start working on that without worry because you got to the real problem. And you can have

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a clear mind and a clear conscience. You can feel restored like you really have a reset button, not just an alcohol fast. And you wake up feeling alive and refreshed because I know when I look in the mirror I don't want to see a hypocrite. I don't want to be telling my daughter, don't drink if I'm secretly drinking every night.

The definition of a hypocrite, do what I say, not as I do, because that builds resentment. That's hiding. That's lying. That's being manipulative. I don't want that for myself or for my parenting. And I know you don't want this for you, nobody does. So, my friends, I encourage you to do the worksheet in my new free guide. Do all of the worksheets in the free guide but especially this one. Because when you do, it will not only change your drinking, but your entire life, I guarantee it.

And that's what I want for you, because that's where you get freedom and control, and to be able to be someone who can take it or leave it. Alright my friends, I love you all so much, and I will see you next week.

If you want to change your relationship with alcohol and with yourself, then come check out EpicYOU. It's where you get individualized help mastering the tools so that you can become a woman who can take it or leave it and be in control around alcohol in any situation. EpicYOU is the place for women who want to be healthy, confident, and empowered to accomplish their goals and live their best life. Come join us over at epicyou.com/EpicYOU. That's epicyou.com/ E-P-I-C-Y-O-U. I can't wait to see you there.