

Ep #119: The Opposite of Addiction Isn't Sobriety



Full Episode Transcript

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 119.

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 lovely ladies, Happy New Year to you. Actually as I'm recording this it is still 2022. And as know if you've been following me for a while that at the end of the month, at the end of the quarter, and especially at the end of the year I like to reflect on all the things that I've accomplished, what went well, what I still want to achieve, where I want to improve, where I want things to change. And so I've been really reflecting on the past year.

If you've listened to my podcast at the beginning of the year you know my word of the year was powerful. And I'm really looking at all the powerful things that I did in this past year. If you've been following me you know that I've revamped my programs. I went from having the Drink Less Lifestyle program, and EpicYOU was a separate program. And How to Get your Off Button Back, which I didn't market all that much, and that was a separate program. And what I did is I combined all of the information, all of the programs, everything that I have created and put it into one program called EpicYOU.

And that was pretty epic. It took a lot of effort, a lot of work. And not only that, I have also built 30 plus courses inside of EpicYOU. So I was a creating machine this past year, creating content in all the areas where women struggle or that they find are triggering for their drinking. And I love it that it's just on demand. You login when you're feeling triggered in this area or you have a certain issue going on. You know exactly where to go in the program. It's all available at your fingertips and the best thing, none of it is locked.

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

Ep #119: The Opposite of Addiction Isn't Sobriety

I've been in programs myself, in coaching programs, in training programs where you have to do a certain module before the next one is available to you, or the next one is unlocked, or you've got to win points, or you've got to be in a certain amount of time. None of that, I didn't want any of that. I wanted all my ladies to have access to anything that they needed right then and there. I wanted you to know that you are supported with anything that I've created and everything that I've created right from day one.

And so I've created all these workbooks, all these worksheets, all these tools that help you overcome drinking and really learn self-mastery. But one of the best parts that I really invested a lot of time and energy into was creating a healthy vibrant community of women that's not on social media, that's not discoverable by algorithms and employers. It's really this private intimate community where we can come and be together and be radically honest because that's what it takes to get transformation.

And in that group we are building such connection, and trust where you are able to shed old things so you can become that new version of yourself which doesn't need much alcohol or any. There is no judgment, there is no shame, there's no pointing fingers. There's just really support, connection and love. And so this is some of the best work I've done and I'm so proud of it because it's powerful and it's changing women's lives. The women will tell you in the program that they are radically different than when they first started.

They see the gains that they have accomplished and it blows their mind. And the reason I want to create that, because I feel so many times when we struggle with drinking we don't get love and support from people around us. They start judging us. They start saying, "When are you going to conquer this?" Or, "When are you going to get over this." Or, "We don't feel safe to be radically honest in our relationships." Or maybe we just don't want to address it with others because we are embarrassed of it ourselves. But as they say in typical 12 step programs, "You are only as sick as your secrets."

Ep #119: The Opposite of Addiction Isn't Sobriety

So just think about that, you are only as sick as your secrets. So the more secrets you keep the more you feel shame or embarrassment about yourself. It's through radical honesty that you begin to change. It's by letting your darkness into light that you begin to see it from a new fashion and a new way so that you're able to solve it. And we're going to come back to this concept but you know what grows embarrassment and shame? Secrecy. So shame grows in the darkness of secrecy and then you start feeling alone. You start feeling like you're the only one with this problem.

And not only that, your brain will start telling you that, "This is a bad feeling to have." And then you start internalizing that to mean that you are a bad person for doing this, or that people just don't understand what you're going through. And when you can't break it on your own and you keep doing something you don't want to be doing you feel like damaged goods. You feel like when am I ever going to get a hold of this?

A concept we talk a lot about inside EpicYOU with the ladies is they all feel this, I should be happier because I have all these good blessings in my life. My life is relatively good, 90% of it's going amazing. Why do I keep doing this? And why do I keep doing this is a form of shame. It is a form of an embarrassment. So we can't experience freedom and drop the shame and the embarrassment from a place of secrecy or telling ourselves, "I don't know why I keep doing this." And that's why we need radical honesty. We need to dive into why are we doing that?

And that's not even the right question. And I will tell the ladies all the time, "That's not the right question to be asking." Because you'll get nowhere with that question. And so it's really hard to feel powerful if you've got to go through a blanket of shame and embarrassment on yourself, it's just not going to stick and stay. So part of feeling powerful is embracing who you are, and all your strengths, and all your uniqueness.

But what I find is a lot of us don't know how to do that. A lot of us aren't taught that. A lot of us don't really know how to tap into that. And I'll tell you what, when you keep drinking you can't tap into that. Alcohol keeps you

Ep #119: The Opposite of Addiction Isn't Sobriety

from being connected to yourself. Alcohol keeps you in the dark and in the secrets. And this is what I want to talk about today, is how to shed that layer so you can connect to yourself. You can tap into your inner wisdom. You can tap into that smart, successful part of you. You've done it in other areas of your life, you can do it in this one as well.

And this is what I'm going to urge you to do is to become connected to yourself. What alcohol does is it numbs the brain, it numbs our feelings and then we can't connect to who we are. We become disconnected. It's a form of escape. It takes us further away from our actual self. It puts us in a numbed state. It numbs our brain. It numbs our feelings. And from a place of numbing we cannot access true connection to what we want for our lives.

And then the more you do it the more you'll start thinking, I deserve to drink. I deserve wine. I deserve this. But the truth is, you deserve so much more than that. Yes, you can have some wine, some alcohol but you deserve a life that's so much better, so much bigger than what alcohol can give you. And the more you drink the more you think you need it. And then you get tunnel vision. And then you think, oh my gosh, my happiness only comes from the drink. I'm only happy when I'm drinking. If I'm at home in my life and I'm not drinking it's just kind of meh.

If I'm out with friends and I'm not drinking it's just kind of meh. Alcohol gives us that tunnel vision where it keeps us wanting it. It keeps us needing it. And then we become attached to it. We become addicted to it. We want it all the time, or we want it at the prescribed times we're used to getting it. Now, if this is going on I'll tell you what else is happening, because your desire is going up for the alcohol you start losing interest in other things in your life. And this is what causes you to disconnect from your life too. You disconnect from other joys, other people.

And the worst part is you disconnect from yourself. And I actually see this a lot, it's quite common. I can ask women, "What do they want for their lives?" And some of them have no idea. They have a blank stare. They're like, "I

Ep #119: The Opposite of Addiction Isn't Sobriety

don't know. I don't know what would create joy for me, or a purpose, or what would be for fulfilling.” Or, “I don't have my own definition of success. I have society's definition of success. And whenever I pursue it I get a little bit of happiness but it's not sustainable.” That's because you're disconnected from who you are.

You're disconnected from the essence of what you're put on this Earth to do. You're disconnected from yourself. And notice, you will feel that way when you have these self-sabotaging behaviors and you're not showing up as the woman you want to be in the world. And so then you perpetuate this false thinking that you can't have it. You'll never discover it. You can't get what you want so why even try. And let me just tolerate my life and go on with this drinking thing.

Again that keeps us living small and it also keeps us attached to the alcohol even more or other attachments like overworking, overdrinking, watching Netflix on end season after season, going through all the episodes, starting another binge watching opportunity. Maybe being too attached to the emails, it's the first thing you do when you wake up or the last thing you do right before bed. and constantly seeking these ways for pleasure or fulfillment. Now, I'm bringing all this up for several reasons.

First, I just rewatched the famous TED Talk on addiction. Have you seen that TED Talk by Johann Hari on addiction? It is so good. It has over 20 million views. And in it he talks about the research on what hasn't helped addiction, very similar to what Maia Szalavitz and I talked about on the podcast a few weeks ago. If you want to watch this great TED Talk I will link it in the show notes. And I urge you, when you do listen to it, listen to the research that he talks about, especially about Rat Park. Have you heard about that famous experiment?

Now, you could go read more on it but essentially when you put a mouse in a cage and you give it water or water that's laced with morphine, what will that mouse drink? It will drink the water laced with morphine. And we've seen this over and over, and this supported the whole addiction model that

Ep #119: The Opposite of Addiction Isn't Sobriety

you can't be given any amounts of it because you just become addicted to it.

But what they did in Rat Park was quite different. They took rats and they gave them this epic experience. Inside Rat Park they gave food, balls, wheels for play, males and females, enough space for mating. It was basically like an amusement park for mice. And what they found in Rat Park is if you put just plain water or water laced with morphine, most of the rats were choosing just the water because they were fulfilled in their life. They were fulfilled by their environment. Yes, some of the rats tasted the morphine water occasionally but they didn't become addicted to it.

And so in this TED Talk he goes on to say, "Okay, that's the rat model. Let's look at this in humans." And he brings in the experience of the Vietnam war, many of the men over in the Vietnam war became depressed, they started doing heroin, and there was such an addiction to heroin that they were worried when these people came back that we would have a significant heroin drug problem in these vets. But what actually happened when these men came back after being in the Vietnam war is that most of them didn't carry on their heroin addiction. They didn't want to do it.

They were satisfied in their life. So the extent of the addiction never played out like we thought it would. And I have to tell you when you see this TED Talk it really makes sense. And I love the way he ends the TED Talk. He says, "The opposite of addiction is not sobriety. The opposite of addiction is connection." Think about when you are truly connected to yourself. Some people will call that, that they are in a state of flow. They are really focused on doing something they love. It could be a hobby. It could be painting. It could be gardening.

It could be some people really love the work that they do in the world. They're connected to what gives them energy, to what gives them life. And when you're in these states, notice that people generally aren't drinking. When you're water coloring or doing the things that you really enjoy, you're not thinking about alcohol. You have no desire for alcohol. And if you think

Ep #119: The Opposite of Addiction Isn't Sobriety

about it, it's quite true. When you're connected to yourself you don't need something to alter your mind so you disconnect from the world, or from what you're feeling, or what you're thinking.

You don't need to self-medicate, and if you do the more times you do it, the more times you lose yourself. And for some people it's really hard to find themselves again. You lose interest in improving yourself. You lose interest in yourself in general and you start thinking terrible things about yourself, that you're not enough, you're not worthy, you're never going to get over this. All of these are not true. They may feel true but how something feels is important but it's not as important as is it the truth. Because if it's not the truth then we know we can change how you feel about it.

So any chemical that can alter your mind will just disconnect you from yourself. And I've seen it over and over, not just with alcohol but with other substances, even marijuana. There can be this level of apathy that takes over. And there's subclinical depression. Yeah, I'm depressed but it's not that severe. I still do activities of daily living. I still find some joy in things. I don't feel super depressed or I don't want to go on antidepressant medications. Fine, but let's have a life where you even get rid of the subclinical depression.

Let's have a life that you're not apathetic about, a life where you're connected. And when you're connected it means you're connected to yourself and you're connected to others. This is what creates a fulfilling life. And so think about for you, when things don't go well, what's your default? I know in the past mine used to be to isolate. I didn't want anybody to know or burden anybody with my emotions, or burden anybody with my problems.

My friends would be calling and I didn't feel like returning their phone calls because I felt like if I got on the phone I'd just be this Debbie downer. I was worried that they would judge me and I just didn't want to be an emotional burden to anybody. Now, I'm not saying I want to be an emotional burden to anybody but I know when I isolate and when I pull back and I disconnect

Ep #119: The Opposite of Addiction Isn't Sobriety

it doesn't feel good. And you know what also? Not only doesn't feel good, I stay there for a lot longer. It's like I'm hiding something. I'm in my secret. I have something I'm not sharing.

And I'm not saying share all your stuff with all the world. No, but you find a space, you find your tribe, you find your community, you find your people where you do share that stuff so you come out of it, so you grow, so you don't let that remain as a hurt for a super long time. Because one thing we do know is that connection is needed for human growth and that it is a basic human need. And so that's why for 2023 I am choosing connection as my word of the year. I used to want what society expected of me. I used to want what other people wanted for my life.

And I used to let society determine what success looked like for me but now I want to determine all of that for me and I want to take it deeper. I want to go to the next level with myself this year, with myself and with others. So I am bringing more intention on connecting this year. I am almost done with my vision board, which if you know me, I'm a visual learner. And so I love the pictures and I have all these ways that I'm going to be connecting more with myself and with others this year. I hang it in my office so I'm always looking at it when I work.

I'm always reminding myself what's my next epic version of me. And I find that when I am in nature, it's a great way to connect with myself, just being in nature. I feel connected to the Earth. I feel connected to others and I feel connected to my soul. Sometimes I will hear things come from within. I will hear my inner voice, or I'll hear God speaking with me when I'm in nature. And sometimes I get these messages from other people as well, don't take it by chance if I hear one person tell me something and then a couple of hours later or a day later I hear it said another way but the similar message from somebody else.

I wanted to tune in more rather than tune out. I know I tuned out when COVID was rampant because the fear mongering and all of that, I couldn't take it. So yes, I'd still choose to limit certain avenues of news and what I

Ep #119: The Opposite of Addiction Isn't Sobriety

read, and the rabbit holes I go down. But I want to be more intentional about creating connection and that includes connecting with my thoughts, connecting with my feelings, connecting with my body. My body's been telling me recently, let's move. It feels better to get out, move a little bit than just to keep sitting.

And so this is what I invite you into, is connecting with yourself, connecting with others, listening to your inner desires because you have them my friends, we all do. And I believe they are given to us. They are not necessarily chosen, they are given to us. Some of us desire to be moms and we have children, some of us don't. Some of us desire to be working career individuals and some of us choose not to. But I believe that desire is within. And so what do you desire? What do you want to connect to more this year? Deep down what do you want for yourself this year?

And then when you find it surround yourself with others who think like you, who want the same thing as you. If you want to write a book this year, surround yourself with other people on their journey of writing a book, form a writers' club, join a writers' club. And as we're doing the work starting in January on focusing on our impossible goal I will be weaving this word into my impossible goal because the more you turn up the flame on your desire the more it fuels you to get your desire.

What most of us are doing is saying, "That's too big." And turning down the flame and turning down the fuel towards our goal. We have thoughts of, that'll be too hard, that's not enough time, this won't last, this won't stick. And none of that helps you get closer to your goal, takes you further away. But when you can connect, connect with your goal, connect with the path there, that's when you really begin to change and shift your identity, and transform how you see yourself and transform how you operate in the world.

So I am bringing in more connection to my life and I am going to be building more connection around me. And speaking of connection, I want to connect with you, how does that sound, you and me? I want to connect with you. I

Ep #119: The Opposite of Addiction Isn't Sobriety

want to know about you. And so I want to offer you a gift of knowing what you want especially as it relates to alcohol. So to do this, I will be offering a take it or leave it clarity session. I want to help you get really clear on the relationship you want with alcohol and a path to get it.

So I will only be offering a limited amount of these sessions so they will be on a first come first served basis. And because I have only a limited amount I know they are going to go quickly. So let me tell you what you get in this clarity session. In the session we are going to discover the root cause of your drinking and it's likely not what you think. When I work with women they think it's one thing but it's generally not the root cause of their overdrinking.

We're also going to uncover the hidden blocks preventing you from saying, "No, I don't want any more alcohol, I'm good", because that's important for you to know. And finally, we're going to create an action plan so you can start saying, "No, I can take it or leave it." And feel elegantly satisfied. And you'll leave this session feeling reenergized, more connected to your desires and ready to make the choices you want around alcohol. Now, I won't be selling you anything on this call. It's all about you getting the results you want and connecting with that and knowing the path to get there.

Alright, so how are you going to book this call? Here is the details you need to know. The link to book these take it or leave it clarity session calls is going to be in the show notes of this podcast episode. You can find the show notes whatever you listen to your podcast or you can go to my website www.epicyou.com and click the podcast link. And then you will find this podcast episode and the notes will be there with the link to schedule. This is just for a limited time in January.

You want to schedule these spots because I've only opened up a few in my calendar, once they're gone they're gone. And please, if you are going to book one of these calls make sure you are serious about changing your relationship with alcohol. I want you to come prepared to take the steps that

Ep #119: The Opposite of Addiction Isn't Sobriety

we create in that action plan immediately. And this clarity session will help you connect with your desires of becoming a woman who can take it or leave it and know how to get there.

Alright my friends, cheers to an amazing year to you. Make this a year that you stop dreaming about what you want and you start doing and being what you want. And also if you want more connection, come hang out on my Facebook page. Inside the Facebook page, Stop the Overdrinking Habit, we are embracing a dry January and it's always more fun to do this together than to go at it alone. We can learn from each other. We can support each other. We can inspire each other. So come on over to the Facebook page and let's get connected.

Alright my friends, thanks for tuning in, make it an awesome year 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 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/epicyou. I can't wait to see you there.