

Ep #121: Why You Overdrink: Facts vs Feelings



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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 121.

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. How are you today? I have been having so much fun connecting with the listeners in my audience. Last week, and this week, and a bit of next week, I have opened up my calendar to have discussions with you and been really enjoying meeting you, hearing about your journey with drinking, and helping you on this journey to drink less. As you may know, I opened up my calendar to have these free sessions to connect with you, to give you an action plan for you to be able to implement so that you can solve this drinking issue in your life.

And I'm so excited, I got to meet people like Gwen, and Trish, and Megan, and Cathy, and Sonia, and Amy, and a few of you who I haven't mentioned, and a few of you more to come, so, so good to connect with you. So good to talk with you. It really opens and warms my heart when I hear someone on the other end say, "Gosh, I haven't been able to share this with anybody because I just didn't feel it was a safe environment. I felt I would be judged. And by listening to your podcast and hearing your journey, you've made it a safe space for me to open up and talk about this."

And sometimes there's tears that come, which are so beautiful on these calls because it's so freeing to just walk out of this darkness and the shameful thing. Alcohol in this journey doesn't have to be shameful. We can grow and bring it to the light and really just shed that old identity that really just we want to leave it behind. And I'll already say that I had a call last week, and this week I got an email from one of the ladies saying this.

She said, "You've given me more in one session than I have gotten in years of therapy. I'm feeling more fulfilled than ever before." This is so

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powerful, my friends, when other humans help other humans. We sometimes connect with people in life, and we know when we connect with them, and we are in their presence that they can really help us move on our journey. I'm so excited for those of you I haven't met.

And I believe all the call spots are taken for this month, but if not, you can link to last week's show notes to get the link and see if anybody's canceled or if there's any more availability. But truly, I love connecting with you. And thank you, even if you haven't been on a call with me, thank you for listening to this podcast. Thank you for giving me your time. And thank you for being on this journey.

Now, I do want to talk about another opportunity if you do want to connect with me and learn more about living a drink less lifestyle. I am giving a masterclass near the end of this month. So I want to help you put a cork in your wine habit. And what I'll be talking about at the end of January is how to come off a dry January. You may know that I'm doing dry January myself and that I'm helping ladies in my Facebook group to embrace dry January.

And I want to give you tools that you can use when you come off a dry January because everybody tells us what to do in January but what happens come February 1? That was where I always went off into the abyss, and then, of course I go back to my old ways. So I don't want this to happen to you. So in this masterclass that I'll be doing, I'll be walking you through how to maintain drinking less as a lifestyle without feeling deprived because that is an emotion that comes up especially when we're making change, especially when we're taking things out of our life.

It could feel like there's a missing piece, there's a missing part of us or we feel a bit deprived. Or now that we don't have this substance to go to, what else do we do? So I want to provide you tools to work through that. Also I'll be talking about the common mistakes of coming off a dry January. And I have to tell you, I made them all. There are classic mistakes and pitfalls that we fall into it and I want to share with you the lessons that I have

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learned and what hasn't worked, and so that you don't make these pitfalls and what to do differently.

And then that's exactly what we'll be ending with is a successful path to put a cork in your wine habit for the rest of the year. Making change is so powerful and we want to keep that momentum going way beyond January. Some of you may not want to introduce alcohol back into your life and that's great, and some of you may want to introduce alcohol back into your life. And so I want to give you tools on how to do that.

So this masterclass on what to do after a dry January will be held on Wednesday, January 25th at 4.00pm Pacific Time, 7.00pm Eastern Time and I hope you will join me. I do have to say you have to register for this masterclass though. So how you register, I send out emails to my list every Sunday. So this Sunday there will be an email going out which you can join with the link there. There is also a link in my Facebook group that you can register for it there. If you follow me on Instagram, there is a link in my bio, you can join there.

There is also a link in the show notes of this podcast. We put links everywhere, ladies, we want you there and we want to make it super easy for you to register. A common question that I get is, "Oh my gosh, I can't be there live, I have something going on that night." No worries, it's going to be recorded and the replay will be sent out to anyone who registered for this masterclass. I want you to have the information. I want you to have the tools because I am on a mission to help over a million women live a drink less lifestyle.

And this mission has been bubbling up even more in my gut and in my heart. I recently posted in my Facebook group this article that was published on CNN by Lisa Ling, it was in the section of This is the Life. And in this article that I posted on my Facebook group page, my private Facebook group page is that women are especially sensitive to the effects of alcohol according to the National Institute on Alcohol Use and

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Alcoholism, alcohol related problems appear sooner and at lower drinking levels than in men.

And this has been reported by the US National Institutes of Health. Furthermore women are more susceptible to alcohol related brain damage. Now, ladies, I hear this a lot. I hear, "I can't remember things", or, "I drink until I pass out", or, "I can't remember bits of the conversation", or, "My husband will say I said something and I don't remember or recall saying that." So according to the data women are more susceptible to alcohol related brain damage and heart disease than men.

And studies also show that women who have one drink a day increase their risk of breast cancer by 5-9% compared to those who abstain. And the article then goes on to even say that even an average glass of wine or a pint of beer a day may begin to shrink the overall volume of the brain. I see articles like this. I see statistics like this and it fires me up even more. It puts me more on a mission to say, "Hey, women, let's look at the facts. Let's understand that we need to rein this habit in. We need to pull it back." It has gotten out of control particularly in women because of COVID.

And we know the long term health ramifications. We know that the long term effects of excessively drinking are not good. Over time we know excessive alcohol use can lead to chronic diseases and other serious health complications, that includes the liver, that includes heart disease, that includes strokes, that includes at least 13 types of cancer that we know of. We know it weakens the immune system making us more susceptible to catching disease. We know that it increases our risk of dementia and Alzheimer's. It causes memory loss and loss of recall.

It causes mental health issues. We know it doubles the risk of depression and could triple the risk of anxiety. We know that people who drink a long time and then go to cut back can't handle their depression and can't handle their anxiety, that has been induced by long term drinking. We know that it leads to social problems. We know that it leads to family problems, family issues, relationship problems. We know it causes sexual dysfunction. We

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know it decreases libido. We know that it causes sleep problems. Okay, I can go on, and on, and on but I won't.

And so when I read this I get fired up because I'm like, "I know when I was overdrinking, I knew the facts but I really want to come back to why do we drink, because we drink because of our feelings. We're not looking at the facts, we're justifying our drinking because of how alcohol makes us feel. And I really want us to come back to the actual facts. If we looked at alcohol today, if it was a drug to go before the FDA today there would be no way it would get approved.

And I read a piece recently by Seth Godin that he put out in his newsletter and I thought this would be helpful to share with you because sometimes we hear the facts, we know the facts. But I want to share this piece that he wrote because it's very useful. It's a useful way of using information. It was a blog post that he wrote and I'm not going to read the entire blog post.

But what he started off by saying, "We don't see the world as it is, we see it as we interpret it. So we don't actually see reality, we see how we experience the reality. And maybe it would be better to experience the world in a useful way." Now, you know I love that word 'useful', so that's why this post really resonated with me. So if you want to be useful, when you think about things in a useful manner, maybe this post will resonate with you as well.

"So experience the world in a useful way, not as correct or incorrect but as useful. If the methods you have used to judge other people, or to choose projects, or to make decisions have been helping you get exactly what you want, congratulations. For the rest of us there is a chance to work on our filters, our habits and our instincts, to engage with the world and our choices in a useful way and today is the perfect day to begin a whole new useful pattern."

I love that because oftentimes we can hear the same information and it just doesn't land on us, but when we use different words that information becomes more impactful. And so I'm going to say a few facts and I'm

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saying them not from a judging standpoint but from a factual standpoint, these are the facts. And what I want you to do is listen in and hear them and see what kind of reaction it causes in your body.

So let's take the first fact, alcohol hurts your health. When you hear that how does that feel, alcohol hurts your health? I just went through a litany of the ways excessive drinking damages our organs and our system. And it makes us not live at our fullest capacity. That's a fact. And I say this for you to hear it and for it to land so it can change your drinking pattern.

Here's another fact, alcohol keeps you playing small and grasping at little things in your life. It keeps you playing small. We know that we aren't living at our full potential. We know that we aren't giving life everything because we probably don't have as much energy as if we weren't drinking or drinking a heck of a lot less. We know that when we drink excessively we stay in our comfort zone. We don't try new things. And I've even seen how alcohol makes us less grateful for the life that we have. I hear many women saying, "Gosh, I should appreciate my life more than I do."

Here's another fact, alcohol prevents you from solving problems. We drink and tolerate problems. We don't actually get to the root of what's causing the problem and eliminate it. So in essence, alcohol welcomes more problems in, because if you're going to tolerate that problem then you're going to tolerate a drinking problem. And then you're going to tolerate back talk from family members. And then you're going to tolerate something else. And then you're going to tolerate something else.

I've seen it over and over because it's just so easy just to numb instead. Instead of actually solving the problem, let's just numb out, again, keeping you playing small in your life.

Here is another fact, alcohol decreases the quality and quantity of your life. When you excessively drink you have less money. How do I know? Because you're spending it on alcohol, on something that the body doesn't really need. More than that, you might be staying in a job that you really don't like. You might be preventing learning new skills that can make you

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more valuable in the marketplace. You might be starting a disease pattern that's going to cost you more money in the future because of your drinking, so you become less wealthy.

We also know that you become less healthy. The more you drink the more your health declines, the more the weight could come on, the more the eating comes on, then you don't sleep as well. And we know if we don't get good sleep that leads to more sugar cravings and more hunger the next day because our body has not gotten the requirements and the restoration it needs for the hormones to reset. How else does it decrease quality of life? Well, the intimacy in your relationships goes down. The way you feel about yourself get affected so your self-esteem goes down.

You have less zest and less energy for life, it's like you're walking around like a half charged battery. You don't have the energy in the morning, you feel sluggish, you feel like there's brain fog. You have less brain power. And here's the big one I see is you are less emotionally flexible. You become annoyed quicker, you become more stressed out, you become more anxious. And then when you get home from work you feel like I just need to hit the bottle to deal with the emotions.

So the fact is that alcohol makes us poor, unhealthy and more emotionally labile which means we are less resilient. So those are the facts. So why do we overdrink? Why do we drink excessively? Not because of the facts. It's because how it makes you feel and we know it's not based on logic. How many women have I talked to that say, "I know I shouldn't be doing this. I know I should cut back. I know this amount of drinking isn't good for me. I know all the harmful effects." And you know my story, I've said those same things.

I'm in healthcare and I've been in ERs, and I've worked as an ICU pharmacist and I saw the cirrhosis, and I saw the GI bleeds, and I saw the liver transplant people, and I saw what alcohol can do. But here's the thing, I knew it all. I'm probably just like you, you know it all, you got all the

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information but information doesn't always change us, because we don't operate in a logical fashion most of the time.

Think about this, think about how many of you came out of college and contributed right away to a retirement plan? There are people out there that have the option to contribute to a retirement plan but don't. Why? Because they don't feel like it, because they'd rather spend the money. But the more logical way would be to say, "We're not going to work until the day we die", for most of us, we're going to want to stop working at some point and we need a nest egg. So we know the logical thing to do is to put money into a retirement account especially if there's an employer based match.

It's like if we don't do it, we're leaving money on the table, totally illogical, but how many people do that? They're leaving free money out there when it could be theirs to be collected. People do this all the time. We choose feelings over facts. So, yes, it's not logical, the smart logical person would do all they can to set themselves up for a great life and eliminate any problems in their life. They would do all they can, the logical person, the smart person. That's what we call a smart person. But it's about feelings, it's about the emotions.

And I was recently listening to a podcast by Simon Sinek, he was on one of the podcasts that I was listening in on and he said the most beautiful thing, "We talk about EQ and emotions as these soft skills. They're not soft skills. There's nothing soft about them. They're human skills, stop calling them soft skills." And I'm like, "That's so good." Most people aren't trained on how to have a difficult conversation. Most women avoid difficult conversations because of the feelings. Having difficult conversations, my friends, is a human skill, it's not a soft skill, it's a learned skill.

We don't come out of the womb knowing how to have difficult conversations. That's a life skill we need to learn. And this is why I focus on so many different topics inside of EpicYOU. We focus a lot on feelings. We're talking about feelings all the time on our calls because it's the feelings that drive the action of drinking. I could tell you how to make a

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drink plan, you know how to make a drink plan. Why don't you follow the drink plan? Your feelings, it's the number one reason people don't stay committed to drinking less, it's because of their feelings.

And let me point this out as broad day with this example. I think this example you can all relate to. How many of us will say at the end of a day, "I need a drink. Gosh, after today I need a drink?" Think about that logically. From a purely logical standpoint does your body need alcohol? It certainly does not need alcohol. It will survive longer and better without a drop of alcohol. So when we say we need a drink it's not really what we're saying. What we're really saying underneath that is I feel like I need a drink because logically we don't need a drink.

We may need a drink of water, but we don't need a drink of alcohol. What we're saying is, "I feel like I really need a drink. I feel the need for a drink." That is feelings. And the more you think that the more you're going to fall for that illogical thinking from the brain. And we call it thinking but it's really a feeling. Or here's another lie. I just like the taste. Okay, think about most people's wine habit, at least the women that I work with it's at least a bottle of wine a night, sometimes more. And they usually consume it within four hours or less.

So if you think about a bottle of wine, that's five drinks per the standard drink size, a bottle of wine is five drinks, five drinks in four hours or less. Do you drink five sodas, five lemonades, five iced teas in four hours or less because you like the taste? My guess is no. So if you're saying you're drinking for the taste I would argue you're drinking for the effect. And if you're truly thirsty, choose water, not alcohol.

So I wanted to do this podcast because part of what makes you successful in being a woman who doesn't drink or becoming a woman who can take it or leave it is being a woman who can manage her emotions. These are not soft skills. I love it, these are human skills. And you can maybe see this in your own life, when sometimes fact does come into play and that's what

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keeps you on the straight and narrow. That's what keeps you drinking responsibly. That's what keeps you not having nights where you overdrink.

I talk with many women who say, "If I'm driving there's no way I overdrink on those days." Sometimes I go out with friends and if I'm designated as the DD, I don't have a drink and I have no problem with that. Because now their brain has switched into logic mode and has come out of feeling mode. Or some women will say, "I don't drink around my kids. I wait till they go to bed." They're in logic mode and that's what controls their drinking. It's when they go to feelings mode, that's when they get into trouble.

Or I'm really good at work, I can control my drinking around my colleagues because you're logical, you're like my brain is telling me my job could be in jeopardy. I don't want to tarnish my reputation. I don't want anybody around me to question or think I have a drinking problem so I can keep it in check. But then when I go home behind closed doors and nobody's watching that's when it's a mess. You see when the logic brain is active versus the emotional brain, the feelings brain.

I recently pointed this out to one of my clients. She was talking about if I didn't live with my husband, he's the one that makes me drink. I said, "Okay, let's look at your entire drinking pattern. So when you go out on business trips or when you go out with the girls, do you drink?" She said, "Absolutely and sometimes I overdrink." "Okay, well, it's not just with the husband then. It's not just the husband that's causing the problems."

She goes, "Well, he makes me mad." "Okay, well, then let's look at ways to cope with your anger rather than running off to alcohol and a bottle or two of wine a night." So there's ways you can work on this problem. You can work on it from the angle of learning to manage the anger, or work on the source of the anger so that you are able to control your drinking. That may be getting rid of the problem such as something dramatic like a divorce or separating yourself from the person. That may mean two different parts of the house, two different houses, living apart but still married.

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Or inviting him into not being part of the problem and being part of the solution. So what is exactly he doing that's causing her to be angry? And then of course always adding in the skillset of learning to manage difficult emotions. And for some people that's anger, for some people that's stress, for some people that's perfectionism, for some people it's disappointment, for some people it's they can't have fun without alcohol. That's another emotional problem.

And I bring all this up because once your brain sees that we can get under the belief system that alcohol is helping, that's what's going to move you towards lasting change because if you're overdrinking your brain thinks that alcohol is part of the solution, not part of the problem. So when we get under that belief and we change that belief that's when the change becomes long lasting just like they say once you see something you can't unsee it.

Once you see how your brain's being sneaky, and tricky, and lying, and blaming the problem on something that really isn't the problem, it's like now I see it I can't unsee it. And now that I see it, it's shifted my thinking, it's shifted my belief. And I love when my coach points this out for me because we all live with false illusions. We all live in our own made up narrative of things. And when we could see it a different way we can change the narrative and that sets us free. Because think about it, we are free to be who we want to be.

We have many liberties and freedoms here in this country. Nobody's making us overdrink. And if you don't learn the skills to manage those feelings you know what you're training your brain to do? To feed those feelings with alcohol. You're training your body that it's unsafe to feel this anger, let's just drink. And so you become incapable of experiencing anger and managing it in a healthier way. And you're teaching your body it shouldn't feel anger. And that's just wrong my friends because from now until we die we're going to feel anger, I guarantee it.

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There are going to be things out there that make you angry. And not all anger is bad. Sometimes I read the news about COVID rates increasing alcohol use among women and I get mad. But that fuels me into action to help the women. It gets me moving into action. It gets me wanting to do something about this wine culture that we are living in and drinking from. We're like fish in a big fish bowl saying, "Drinking, that's bad?" We can't even see it because we're in it. That's where I was.

And you know from my story I didn't like the solutions that were out there. They had to say you were going to not touch it ever again and I wasn't willing to do that right away. And I just want to bring you back that the body's going to experience lots of feelings, the ones that we call good, the ones that we call bad and our body is really meant, I believe, to experience these feelings. When someone dies we will be sad. When we care about something and it doesn't go the way we had planned we will be disappointed,

When somebody lets us down or yells at us, we might get mad, chances are we will. Nobody enjoys being yelled at. But I want to invite you to something different, to be able to experience those feelings and not have to numb them, to be able to manage them in a healthy way that we don't turn to copious amounts of alcohol, and not run away from difficult emotions but see why we have them, understand them, see what's causing them. See if there's a solution to fixing them. I'm not saying to stay in them.

What I'm advocating for is to understand them so that they can fuel you into action that's productive, that's helpful, that's useful. And that my friends I can't self-mastery. It's part knowing how to react when the world delivers us disappointing news. And it's knowing what to do with those feelings and not running away from them to escape them. And this was my mission in creating EpicYOU. It's so much larger than just the drink. When I got into this I thought, okay, I'm going to help women with the tools to control their drinking, to help them with overdrinking.

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But what women needed was so much bigger than that, to feel empowered in their life, to feel a sense of purpose in their life, to understand how to use their feelings without drinking them and eating them. To know how to energize themselves because they want the energy and they want the brain power back. How to feed themselves, how to get good sleep, all of the things that makes them function so they could feel epic and that their battery is fully charged.

Because think about it my friends, when your battery is fully charged and you're running at a 100%, or even 90%, you can handle the world. You are more resilient and you show up in the world the way you want to show up. So I invite you into EpicYOU my friends. If you are finding that the information and the facts aren't changing you, try a different approach, go towards the feelings because this is the part where I see women get stuck. And this is the part you just need a few skills to learn in order to not only feel better but to be your best self, your most epic self.

Alright my friends, that's it for this week. 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 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.