

Day 3: Creating Fun



5 Day Reset

with

Rachel Hart

www.rachelhart.com

Day 3: Creating Fun

Hey everybody, welcome back to day three of the five day reset. Day three, it's awesome. And this is an awesome topic because we are talking about fun. You have to talk about fun, right? If we're going to be taking a break from drinking, we have to also be talking about fun. This is one of my favorite topics, and so I'm really excited to share it with you.

I'll tell you that for so long, especially in my 20s when I was really trying to figure out how to change my drinking, if I was on a break period, I would always start drinking again because I felt so deprived. I felt like I was so restricted and I was missing out, and things just weren't as fun.

And this is what I hear from people all the time. They like how they feel physically, they like how they feel the next morning, they like the sleep that they're getting, they like waking up the next day and not worrying about what they did or said, but they wish they had more fun. And I think this is such an important piece of the puzzle to understand, because so many of us believe that we are not having fun because we're not drinking, that we're feeling deprived, that we're missing out because we're not drinking, and I have to tell you nothing could be further from the truth.

Now, if you don't believe me, I want you to ask yourself a question. Think back to before you started drinking, whatever age that was for you. Think back to that time in your life, and ask yourself, did you never have fun? Were you always feeling like you were deprived and restricted and missing out? Did you never enjoy yourself? And you know, the answer is no, of course, right? You knew how to have fun, you knew how to have a good time before you started drinking.

But once you started drinking, two things happened. One is that you introduced your brain to alcohol. You introduced your brain to this really easy way to get a very concentrated hit of dopamine, to create this concentrated, easy pleasure, and that created a lot of thoughts for you about drinking and what was fun connected with drinking. So that's the first reason.

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But the second reason is because as a kid, you knew how to create fun versus consuming fun, and I will tell you, if you've never thought about this before, this distinction is everything. Creating fun versus consuming fun. Now, when you were a kid, you didn't need alcohol to have fun. You didn't need alcohol to dance, or to make friends, or to meet people, or to enjoy a meal, or to have a birthday party, or watch a sports game. You didn't need alcohol to enjoy all of these things. You had fun on your own without it.

But now, if you are not drinking, you may catch yourself saying this, "Oh, I'm no fun without a drink. This event is so boring without a drink." And what happens is you don't even realize that you have fallen from creating fun into consuming fun, and when you're consuming fun, you are sitting there passively waiting for fun to happen to you, versus expending the energy to create it yourself.

Because drinking is such an easy way to be totally passive about fun. You're not really doing anything other than having a drink, and that flood of dopamine is making it seem like you're having a lot of fun. So consuming fun is passive. You are waiting to be entertained, and here's the thing. It doesn't just apply to drinking. It applies to a lot of other activities in our life.

Consuming fun is very connected to things like watching TV, using social media, it can even be connected to eating, right? You're not really doing much of anything, you're sitting there passively, hoping that this thing is going to entertain you.

Now, creating fun is totally different. It's not passive, it's active. You have to actually use your mind to create and to produce that fun. You have to expend energy. And a really simple way to think about what those activities look like are often kind of child-like activities, because of course kids aren't drinking.

So if you think about playing games, or exploring, or making music, or making art, or writing, moving your body and dancing; all of these things require that you are active. You can't be passive. You are actively creating

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your fun, and it's a huge difference between consuming fun and expecting that you will be entertained and creating fun, and actually producing that entertainment for yourself.

Now, the big difference between creating and consuming is this: how much energy you have to expend. With all things, anything you choose to do, you have to expend a certain amount of energy. But, consuming fun and creating fun, once you start looking at it, you'll see they are very different in their energy expenditures.

So I want you to think about it this way: there is a motivational triad that is basically how humans learned how to survive. How we survived was this: seek pleasure, avoid pain, and do this by expending the least amount of energy possible. This is the motivational triad. Go after pleasure, avoid pain, and try to expend the least amount of energy as you do this.

And it makes sense. It makes sense now, especially that you understand that reward piece, you understand how dopamine is something that doesn't just create pleasure, but it's actually a signal to your brain when it comes to activities that are important for survival. So you understand that piece, and this energy piece is now a really important thing for you to consider because we are now in a world of instant gratification.

Everything is so easy. It is so easy to sit on the couch and pick up the remote control and turn on Netflix and watch whatever movie you want. It is so easy to pick up your phone and scroll through Facebook and look and see how many people liked your status update, look and see how many people responded to a message that you wrote. It is so easy to open up a bag of chips and just sit there and eat the chips and get entertained by that dopamine that you get from the food.

But now the other thing that of course is incredibly easy is picking up a glass, raising it to your lips and taking a sip. Drinking is incredibly easy, and now we live in this modern world where we are surrounded by all of these things that give so much instant gratification. And so what ends up

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happening is that your brain - because it is always looking for ways to save energy, it's always looking for ways to be efficient.

Remember, we talked a little bit about this in day two with the habit cycle. Your brain loves to be efficient. Your brain now surrounded by all this instant gratification, in our modern world, looks at all the different activities that you used to do to create fun, and thinks, "Looks like a lot of work, that seems really hard. That seems like that's going to take a lot of energy. I would really rather sit on the couch with my glass of wine and my bag of chips, watching Netflix and scrolling through Facebook. That's really easy. I have to expend barely any energy to do that."

So once you start to understand this difference, once you start to understand the difference between consuming fun and creating fun, and also how much your brain is programmed to find and seek out easy things, easy things that give pleasure, the thing for you then is to realize it is time for you to start supervising your own brain. You have to start supervising your mind, and know that how the human brain developed that helped us survive in the past is not helping you right now. It is not helping you in a world filled with instant gratification to just always do the easiest thing. And you see this because hey, you don't like the results that you're getting from your habit of just drinking, and that habit is really easy. It's a really easy way to consume fun.

Your brain wants things to be easy, but you can supervise your brain. You can start using your prefrontal cortex; a part of your brain that cares about the future. The part of your brain that cares about what you go after in life, the part of your brain that cares about planning, and use that to make other decisions, and not just keep consuming fun because it's easy. But actually think about creating fun, because not only is it more enjoyable often, but you'll like the results that you're getting better.

This piece is really, really important around taking a break because I think a lot of people, when they think of taking a break, it feels like this kind of solemn, isolating time, and I don't think that it needs to be that way. I just think that your brain has gotten so used to thinking, "Well, I'm just not fun

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without a drink" or "These events are just boring if you're not drinking", that we've gotten out of practice of remembering that we can create our own fun. We are capable of doing this is we are just willing to expend a little bit of energy.

A big piece of this, when you're feeling like you're missing out, when you're feeling like you're deprived or restricted or that you're just not enjoying yourself, you have to start paying attention to what you are thinking. You have to start paying attention to what you're saying about yourself, what you're saying about events, what you're even saying about your ability to drink or not drink.

I'll tell you that there is a huge difference between telling yourself, "I can't drink" and "I'm choosing to take a break." Those two thoughts will feel completely different. Just if you don't believe me, say them to yourself. See how they feel in your body. Start to understand that what you're thinking is creating how deprived you feel. Your thinking is definitely impacting if you feel like you're missing out and your thinking is most definitely impacting your ability to have fun. But all of that, before you can start to really dig deeper, you have to start to understand the difference between consuming fun and creating fun.

So today's exercise is a pretty simple one, but I think that it actually is really enjoyable, and can be a lot of fun, because you are going to start to figure out how to create the fun you want to have. So here are the questions to answer today.

Number one, why do you feel deprived if you're not drinking? Take your time with this one. This is a good question to really dig into. I want you to really answer for yourself why you feel deprived if you're not drinking.

Question two, what do you think you're missing out on if you're not drinking? Really important. What do you think you're missing out on if you're not drinking. And it will be very interesting for you to take a look and see what your brain is telling you you are missing out on if you don't have a drink in your hand.

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Number three, and this is going to switch it up a little bit. What did you do for fun as a kid? Right? Like so rarely, we don't think about this. It feels for a lot of us, being a kid was a long time away, but think about that. What did you do for fun? What did you like doing? How did you want to spend your time? Because of course as a kid, we weren't drinking yet, we didn't have this really easy way to make our brain think that we were having fun, and so we were doing much more creating of fun. We were spending much more energy actually producing fun for ourselves. We weren't necessarily sitting back and waiting to be entertained, but actually doing the work of creation. So think about that, spend some time thinking about what you liked to do as a kid.

Now, have a really open mind. Just because you played with dolls as a kid, don't say, "Well, I'm not going to write that down" because you know what, there might be something there that's useful. Maybe you really liked doing things that involved using your imagination. Maybe you really liked coming up with stories. Just really open yourself up to remember what you liked to do as a kid.

And then finally, the last question is how can you create fun for yourself this week? That's a big one. This is a big challenge for you. At some point during the reset period, I want you to create something fun for yourself, and it may mean that you're doing something that you haven't done in a long time. It may mean that you're stretching a little outside of your comfort zone, but this piece is so important because if you want to shift away from just consuming fun and changing this habit, you have to reconnect with creating fun.

So really decide for yourself, how can you create fun for yourself this week, and go out and do it. That's a big piece of this reset is actually taking the effort and the time to try and create that fun for yourself. I think this is one of my favorite challenges. I really love this piece. I love the idea of differentiating between consuming fun and creating fun, and I think it just will shed light on so many activities that you do, not just drinking.

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So do this exercise, write it out, and go figure out what you're going to do this week to create fun for yourself, and then go do it. Alright, I will see you tomorrow with day four.