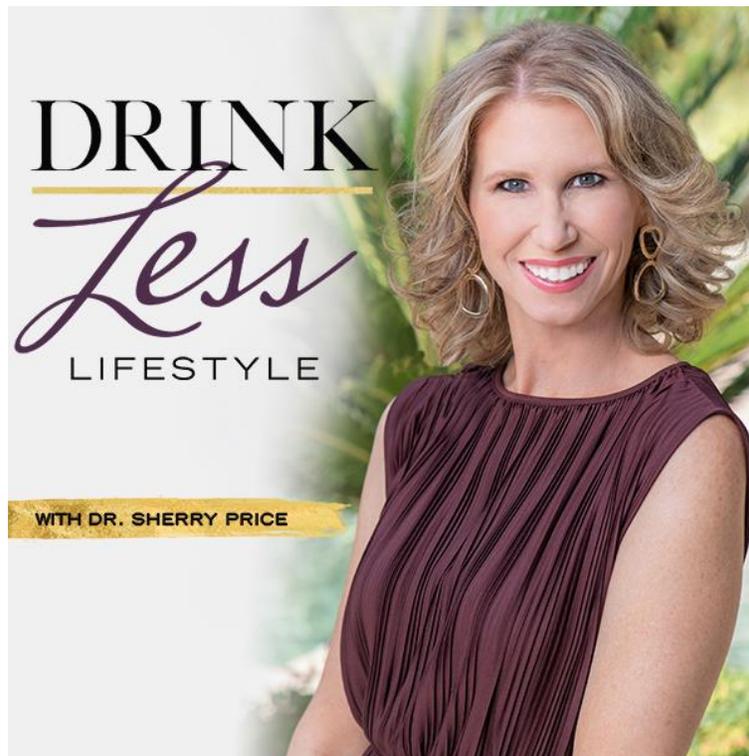


Ep #41: Minimizing Our Problems



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Dr. Sherry Price

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

Ep #41: Minimizing Our Problems

You are listening to the *Drink Less Lifestyle Podcast* with Dr. Sherry Price, episode number 41.

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 friends. How are you today? I am getting pretty excited because in a couple of days I am going to be leaving here and visiting my family in Pennsylvania. And when I get there we get to celebrate my sister's 40th birthday. I get to see my nephews. I get to see my mom and dad. And it's just so nice to be able to see my family again.

I am so thankful vaccination happened and we're out and about, and things are opening. It's so wonderful. It feels so good for my soul. And I hope you are able to get together with your friends, and loved ones, and family because that connection is so needed for our health and our happiness.

So today I want to talk about something that I have experienced in my life, I still experience in my life. And I see this issue come up with my clients when I'm coaching. And I think it's really important that we look at it and consider the effect of doing this and how it doesn't help our lives. It's actually pretty damaging. And that is when we minimize our problems. And I think this is something we all do. And for some of us we may not even consider that we're doing it. We may not even be aware that we are minimizing our problems. And here's what minimizing our problems sounds like.

So, notice when you say, "Well, I have this problem", or, "Well, it's not that bad." That's minimizing the problem. Or I may hear my clients say on our coaching calls, "This is just white girl problems", or, "This is just first world problems", or, "My kids or my marriage are good overall but there is this one thing. But we're good. We're really good." Or I hear a lot of times when

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

Ep #41: Minimizing Our Problems

I'm talking with women that, "Well, my drinking isn't that bad. I mean I just do a few extra glasses here and there or I just binge a couple of times a month." We're always thinking about minimizing the problem.

And I started doing some thinking around this recently because I was noticing it in my own life as well, just minimizing the problem because I think we've been through a lot this past year. And we're comparing our problems to other problems out there in the world. So, there is this pain point in our lives that we just don't really want to make a big deal of it. And we talk about it and then we brush it under the rug. It comes up, it pokes its head out and then we smack it down and just push it under the rug.

And I think our brain just really wants to focus on the bright side. Or we want to just say, "Life is really good except this little thing. We want to focus on the good in our life." And I think that's where positive psychology can go run amok because if we're always looking at the positive side, yes, there is an upside to that. But does it really allow us the space to evaluate that pain point?

Because just brushing it under the rug may not be serving us because here's the thing, if we just keep pushing it aside and saying that it's really not a big deal we actually continue to live with that pain point in our life. And we just keep reminding ourselves that it's not important, and to ignore it, and just to brush it off. But here's what I find that pain point doesn't go away.

That pain point stays there and kind of festers because if we don't really address it and solve it it's going to continue to bother us. If it bothers us today and it bothered us yesterday, chances are it's still going to bother us in the future. So, think about if you get a splinter in your hand and you're just going to ignore the splinter, and you're just going to allow the pain to be there. Rather than looking at the splinter and saying, "Is there a way I can remove this and grab tweezers and extract it so the pain actually goes away and it goes away for good."

Ep #41: Minimizing Our Problems

And I know when I use that example it sounds kind of crazy. It's like well, of course, if you have a pain point or a splinter you would want to logically remove it. The same would be is if they found a small cancer in your body. You wouldn't just allow it to be there. You would do everything in your power to extract it, treat it, and get rid of it because we know that cancer most likely gets harder to treat the bigger it is, the more it spreads. And the more devastating the prognosis and the chance of actually curing it.

So, when it comes to cancer we're completely logical about it. We see a pain point. We see something cancerous and then we go and we treat it immediately. But other things in our life that aren't 'cancer' or 'cancerous' we might just leave them there. So, it's interesting that we get that aggressive with cancer.

But then we have these other pain points in our life that we just tend to live with. We don't actually think about solving them until they manifest into something bigger. We just let it linger, and linger, and fester, and grow and guess what? We keep brushing it under the rug thinking it's no big deal, I'll take care of it someday. I'll wait till it manifests into a bigger problem.

And I see this a lot with drinking because if we look outside of us we will learn from society that it's normal to drink. We will compare our drinking patterns and habits to others. And we will always find a way to minimize the problem drinking causes in our life when we look outside of us and compare. And here's what I find interesting is that we continue to tolerate it and not feel good about our habit for months, years, even decades and we continue to minimize the problem. We continue to minimize the effects that drinking has on our life.

We tell ourselves it's not that bad. We think our kids won't notice. We think we're crafty and sneaky when we're hiding it from others when really they know and we know. And I think we do this because we minimize it because we think facing the issue will be more painful. When actually if we face it, we can solve it which theoretically means it would be a lot less painful to

Ep #41: Minimizing Our Problems

face it. And this is why I love the work of coaching so much is because we think our brains are so logical.

And our brains really just want to protect us from hurting, and pain, and suffering but on the same token they are not so logical. And by minimizing the problem we are creating more pain, and more festering, and the problem to continue for years on end. Wouldn't it be way more logical just to take care of it and solve it? I think that would make a lot more sense.

Now, if our friends come to us with painful problems or something they're dealing with, a pain point in their life, I don't think as a friend we tell them to tolerate it. Just ignore it, it'll go away. It won't be there tomorrow. We don't give that advice to other people so why do we allow our brains to convince us that it's okay to leave it there? I mean just think if you had a horn growing out the side of your head, you wouldn't want that horn there. You would go get it removed. You would look to solve the issue.

And similarly, if you had a nail in your tire you wouldn't just go and put more air in the tire and deal with the nail that's stuck in the tire. You would actually fix the problem and remove the nail from the tire. And now the issue is fixed but yet so many of us talk ourselves into it's okay to have this small problem. And it's okay that I have to tolerate this because we all have our cross to bear, or we all have problems in life, or this is just expected, or my life is really good except this drinking thing. And we let it linger and fester for months and years.

It just makes no sense to me to minimize the pain. And I think our brains tell us it's doing us a good thing, if we can just minimize the pain, don't suffer, don't think about the depression, don't think about how this is affecting your life, keep an upbeat attitude. All of those things which is helpful in the short term but then yet the brain is telling us that it's okay to allow this pain point to linger.

And going back to when I was coaching a client about it's just a white girl problem. I said, "Yes, it's true but let's not minimize the problem. It's a

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

Ep #41: Minimizing Our Problems

problem and this problem can be solved.” And here I think she was minimizing it because there are bigger problems in the world. But I reminded her, “You can’t have Black girl problems or other color problems because you’re not Black or another color. So, the only problems you are going to get in life are white girl problems.” Because yes, no matter what race or color you are we’re going to have problems. They are a part of life.

And I think it’s really damaging to ourselves if we think that we shouldn’t have problems or that somehow the problems that we do encounter are less than other people’s bigger problems. It’s only moral or virtuous to take care of the big problems of the world and not worry about my petty little problems. But let’s not get all judgy on our problems. A problem is a problem, a problem means that there is pain in your life. And if it’s small or big, why wouldn’t you work to solve it? Because logically if something is fixable, let’s fix it.

And then when one person learns how to fix something in their life they can share that with others and help them fix if they have a similar problem in their life. That’s the evolution of humankind. And here’s the thing, once we solve one problem guess what happens? Another one appears, and then another one appears. You don’t get through life without problems. It’s just not possible. So, here’s what I think. Instead of staying a victim to my problems and minimizing them, and judging them, and saying, “Well, they’re not that big to world hunger or other things going on in the world.”

I would rather just say, “Hey, what can I do to solve my problems?” Because I think that’s a valuable skill to learn. That’s how people get jobs. You go to work to solve problems. If I have a leaky faucet, I call a plumber to fix my problem. I want the problem fixed. I don’t want to tolerate that pain point in my life even if it’s small because you know what? I don’t have to. There’s somebody out there that fixes the problem. So why wouldn’t I engage in that? And here’s the thing, if you get skilled at fixing problems guess what happens? You get better at what you practice.

Ep #41: Minimizing Our Problems

I love thinking we are problem solvers, that is actually a mantra in my house. We are problem solvers. Because if you're not solving the problem what are you doing instead? Talking about it, complaining about it, venting to others about it. You're only engaging in the problem and making it bigger in your life because you're not taking any action to actually solve it. I love being a problem solver. Here's the thing, I've had so many problems in my life that I've solved. I had a drinking problem. Guess what? I didn't like it. I wasn't willing to tolerate it. It was a pain point for me. I wanted to change it.

I wanted to get a relationship with alcohol that I liked and guess what? I have one. I solved that problem for me. Now I don't feel like my drinking is a problem. It doesn't get in the way of other things in my life. Guess what? I used to have a problem with sugar. I loved sugar. I loved cookies, cake, all the things, dessert, but it was causing problems in my life. It was creating mood swings that I didn't want. It was creating shifts in my body weight that I didn't want, but guess what? I figured out how to solve that problem too. And now I don't have a sugar problem.

I used to have another problem in my life and that was I couldn't really genuinely connect with my daughter. We had yelling matches, and disrespectful matches, and we were always trying to one up each other. And I said, "This is a problem. She's young. What is this going to look like when she turns into the teenage years and there's door slamming and even more?" I don't want to live with this problem. I want to fix this problem. Guess what? I got help. I got help on how to solve the problem and now we have a beautiful connection between us.

So those are just three examples of problems I used to have and I didn't minimize them. I brought them to light. I looked at them. Now, it wasn't immediate. I wallowed for a while. I drank for a long time. I overate sugar for a long time. And yes, I had a relationship a long time with my daughter that I didn't like but I was done sweeping it under the rug. I started questioning, "Brain, why are you telling me it's okay to live a life like this?"

Ep #41: Minimizing Our Problems

Why am I tolerating these pain points in my life when maybe I don't have to?"

I have seen other people solve their drinking problem. I have seen other people solve their parenting problem. I have seen other people solve their sugar problem. And truth be told when I saw that I wanted that for my life. I didn't want to deal with these pain points. I didn't want them festering and worried when they would get bigger. And here's also what I didn't want. I didn't want to be telling the same story a year, two years from now about this problem. I had complained about it far too long. I had vented to people about it far too long.

I have kept it quiet inside of me far too long. And by not doing anything about it, you know what I felt like? I felt like a victim. And when you feel like a victim, I'll tell you, you feel powerless. You stay in that space of I don't know what to do next. I don't know how to get help. I don't know. I don't know. I don't know always keeps coming up. And that felt unacceptable to me over a time.

It's just like no, I can learn to control this. I can certainly learn to control what goes in my mouth. I have the power to do that. And if I have the power to do that and I can learn the skills to do that, guess what? I no longer have those problems. And here's the thing, I stopped going for perfection because for a long time wanting to be doing it perfectly is what kept me held back. It kept me in that all or nothing mentality. I need to totally figure this all out, right out of the gates or I'm going to fail. That is perfectionistic thinking.

And for many women I work with, that's what holds them back. They think they need to get it right a 100% right out of the gate. And let's not go for the A+ ladies, let's just take it up a notch. If we're living a life at a C-, let's just get to a B because that incremental change shows that you're learning, you're learning the skill. And when you're learning to solve that problem little by little and you're figuring it out step by step guess what that starts to build? Not only the skill set but your self-confidence. And you start thinking

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

Ep #41: Minimizing Our Problems

of yourself less like a victim and more like the victor. You start realizing you have so much more power and control than what you initially thought.

And then the strategic byproducts of that are you're happier with your life, you feel more fulfilled, you feel more energetic. And it starts to ripple into so many other facets of your life. And you also begin to wonder, why did you tolerate the pain point for so long. You start seeing that your brain was just trying to protect you but it really didn't know that what it was doing wasn't the best for you. And that's why I don't like for anyone to minimize their problems. When you minimize your problems, you stay stuck in it.

When we minimize our problems, we don't give ourselves the opportunity to look at them and all the little nuances that they may be causing in our life, that it may not be actually such a little problem. I shared that when I didn't feel connected to my daughter, guess what? There were screaming matches. There were yelling matches. There were hurtful words that were said. There were words that we had to apologize to each other for later. And that's just how it affected the relationship with my daughter.

Now let's talk about the relationship with my husband, when I want to go to him and vent to him about how she did everything wrong. And how he's not sticking up for me, or this, or that. And now I'm taking it out on that relationship and that relationship became compromised. And because I was focused on the relationship with my daughter I wasn't growing the relationship with my husband. And he's just an innocent bystander in the whole thing. Of course, he feels powerless. How am I going to help?

The same is true when I brushed my drinking problem under the rug and minimized all the effects it had in my life. I didn't want to clearly see all the ways it was festering and had the ripple effect in other areas of my life. But when I started to look at it I noticed how not controlling my drinking eroded my self-confidence. I didn't trust myself around alcohol. I felt like a bad person because I couldn't trust myself around alcohol.

Ep #41: Minimizing Our Problems

And because I was judgmental of myself and my behavior around alcohol, guess what happened? I was worried about how others would perceive me around alcohol. I didn't want them to know I couldn't control myself around alcohol. So hey, if we're going to meet up with friends I'd get a jump start on my drinking. I'd have two at home because when I met up with them I only wanted to order two with them so they didn't see that gosh, she ordered a lot of alcohol, she might have a problem. I wanted to keep it hidden.

So, I'd show up at a dinner with my friends already two drinks in. And any time it came time to order more than two drinks and they went for more I'd just remind myself that I could drink at home. And I'd finish off the night with a nightcap at home. And you know why I did that? Because I didn't want them to know but I knew. And that feeling of needing five drinks when you're hanging out with people that you love and you're having fun with just felt kind of off. Why did I feel like I needed five drinks?

Why did I need it so much when I have this great life, great friends, great evening? What was wrong? Couldn't those friends and that experience been enough pleasure for my brain? Why was I looking to take it to the next level? Why did I always go for more? And then it bit me in the butt the next day, not remembering conversations, not getting a good night's sleep, feeling slightly hungover in the morning. And all the mental chatter around this small festering problem.

I'd take Advil to get rid of the headache. I'd drink water to get rid of cotton mouth. I'd be looking for hangover busters on Amazon, taking milk thistle to support my liver, to help detoxify the booze and all the things. Yes, I spent so much time managing this small problem. Dear heavens, do you know how much time and energy my brain spent on thinking about my drinking and managing my small alcohol problem, all the time, money, emotional energy, mental energy? It was exhausting. It was too much.

And here my brain would just say, "It's just a small problem. It's just something you do at night. There's two-thirds of your day you're not

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

Ep #41: Minimizing Our Problems

drinking most days.” But that wasn’t the truth because you sleep for one-third of your day. So, another third of my day felt like I was drinking and I was thinking about drinking. And I had mental chatter around drinking. It was exhausting. It wasn’t a small problem.

So next time you minimize a problem, whatever it is, I think we owe it to ourselves to really consider if it’s a small problem, and especially if the same problem keeps resurfacing. Because if it keep resurfacing and we spend a lot of time thinking about it, chances are it’s not a small problem.

So, I came up with a list of a few questions you can ask yourself whenever you find that you’re minimizing a problem in your life. Are there recurring problems in my life that keep coming up, keep resurfacing that I’m ready to solve? Why is it that I’m minimizing the problem? Is it to feel better about myself? And logically wouldn’t it feel better if I just solved the problem instead of letting it fester on for months and years on end? What is the true scope of this problem? How much time do I spend on this problem? How does this problem affect other areas of my life?

Truly understand all the nuances this problem brings into your life. Here’s a good one. Why do I keep holding onto this problem? Why aren’t I willing to solve it? And you know you’re hanging onto the problem if you just love venting about it, complaining about it, but you’re unwilling to seek help or do anything about it. You’re not taking any action to solve it.

Another question is, does it help you or hurt you to avoid the difficult conversation with yourself about this problem, especially about your drinking? How much longer am I willing to let this fester and play the victim to this problem? What is stopping me from getting the life and the relationship I want with alcohol? I encourage you to go back and listen to these questions, write them down, answer them for yourself because these questions will not only highlight the things for you but I think they’re necessary to answer in order for you to move forward in solving them.

Ep #41: Minimizing Our Problems

Because here's what I find, minimizing the problem means we're ignoring it, means we're downplaying it, means we're saying it's not really an issue in my life and we're lying to ourselves. And if you truly look at the scope of the problem, really that will tell you if it's a small problem or a big one and what actions do you want to be taking to solve it? Because here's the thing, you are in charge of your life my friends. You are fully in charge of what you put into your body, how you treat your body and the outcomes of your body.

And I love learning skills to get more control of that. I love being a problem solver. And that's the work we do in my coaching program. We solve problems so you can live your most amazing life without this nagging festering problem. If you want me as your coach to help you solve your problems then I invite you to check out my programs on my website at sherryprice.com. Let's stop minimizing those problems and let's solve them. Let's create an epic life.

Alright my friends, as always, thanks for joining me for another episode of this podcast and I will 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 Break the Overdrinking Habit* at sherryprice.com/startnow. See you next week.