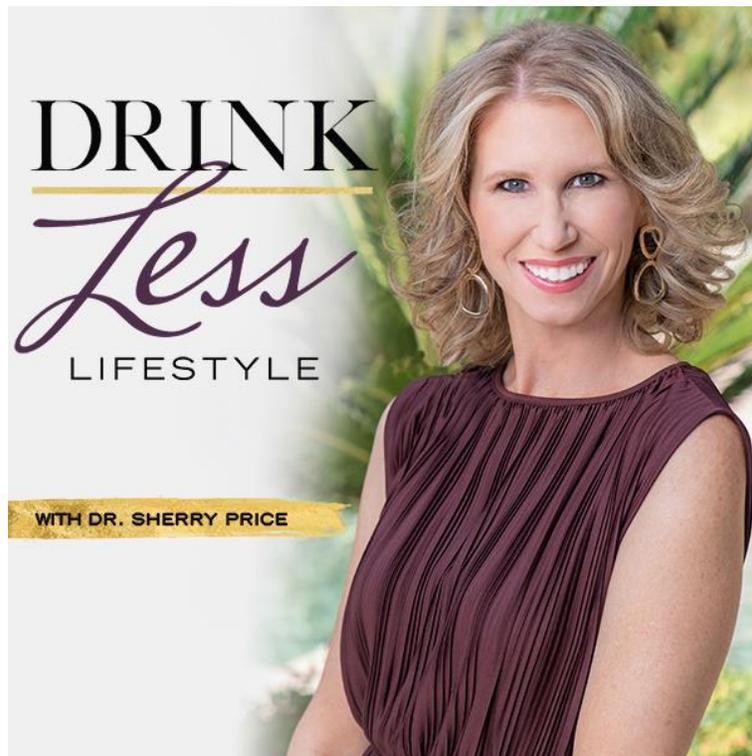


Ep #63: Dating Your Drinking



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 63.

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. I hope December is going well for you. I'm super excited, I wrote out most of my Christmas cards last night with my tradition which is one glass of Baileys, it's so tasty and it was just so fun. I think I might be part elf. I get so excited writing Christmas cards. I know that is, it's not an activity everybody looks forward to. And I know a lot of people don't like hanging up Christmas lights. And there's a lot to the holiday that can be stressful and overwhelming.

But I really think I am part elf because I enjoy so much of the Christmas holiday, and all the traditions. And I find it very exciting and not overwhelming that much unless I am not intentional with my calendar. Because there have been some Christmases where I went completely overboard and over-planned and was exhausted and got sick right before the holidays. And I learned not to do that again. But for the most part now that I've learned that and not, how to not overdo it, I just really embrace all the traditions.

And I just start thinking about all the people I am writing these cards to. And just what their expression is when they open it because I know I'm delighted when I receive Christmas cards in the mail. I'm just like, wow, they thought of me. And if it's a picture of their family it just makes me smile inside because we're all doing life and we're doing it together collectively as a community even if we aren't living next to one another. And so I love my tradition of writing out Christmas cards, I got through most of them so I'll finish up the rest of those hopefully tonight.

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And I'm also super excited because we're creating so much pleasure and happiness inside Epic You, that is the topic for this month. And I'm just delighted to see how yes, alcohol could be one way we get pleasure in our lives. But there is just so many other ways that we could create pleasure, have joy and happiness, and especially this time of year. We see it a lot and I know this time of year comes with lots of mixed emotions. So it's really nice just to focus on, hey, what makes me happy, what brings me pleasure? And how can I allow more of this into my life?

Not that our lives are going to be always pleasurable and always happy. So just learning how to create that more space to allow pleasure and happiness to be there.

Alright, so if you've listened last week, you know we talked about divorcing your current drinking habit if it's one you don't like, if it's one that's mistreating you. We owe it to ourselves to free ourselves from relationships that have gone bad, that just aren't working out for us, whether they're abusive to our bodies and our minds like overdrinking can be. We just want to just get rid of that.

So for forgetting conversations or not being present with our families or our loved ones. Or overdrinking is causing other consequences, maybe we're not taking the weight off and the weight's actually coming back on easier and quicker and more of it. So our precious bodies that we want to respect and make sure that they are fit and in a way that we can move easily and be free of disease. Or maybe overdrinking is causing not great sleep. All of these factors are ways that alcohol actually attacks our minds and our bodies.

And so we have to be very cognizant of what we put into our bodies because we want to protect and really honor our bodies so that we take care of them. So why would we stay in a relationship that is abusive to our minds and our bodies? Why would we stay in that current habit if we can learn to change it? Because we do have the power to get out. We may not feel like that.

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And if you don't feel like that, well, it just means you are missing some skills to be able to do it. So find those skills. Learn those skills. Come and join Drink Less Lifestyle and get my help and I will teach you the skills so that you can get out of the toxic relationship with alcohol. And it's the kindest thing you can do for yourself. So you've decided to divorce your current relationship with alcohol. And we talked all about how to do that on last week's episode.

And what I find is when we realize, yeah, my current relationship with alcohol is not working, I want to change it, I find that many people go into what I'll call dating alcohol. So I want to ask you, are you currently dating in your relationship with alcohol? Now, I want you to think about that word 'dating'. What does it mean to date? When you go out and you meet somebody and you date somebody, what are you doing when you're dating? Think about that, you meet a new person, maybe you met them online like I met my husband and you date somebody.

What is the purpose of dating? It could be different for the man than it is for the woman but let's say we're meeting and dating to discover if there is the potential for a long term relationship and what that would be, meaning how would it look? So you're dating, you're learning about a new person, could this person fit into your lifestyle? How would your lifestyle have to change? Do you have similar interests? What do they do for fun? Does it match what you do for fun? Do they have any red flags or any bad habits that are a deal breaker for you?

How does this person treat you over time? Do you enjoy spending time with this person? Can you see yourself spending a lot of time with this person or can you only take them in small doses? So when you're dating something or someone you are curious about the long term effects. You're curious about where this relationship can go, again, if we're dating for the long term relationship part. So I find that some people are treating alcohol as a dating relationship. Notice when we're dating, we're trying to figure out a lot of our unknowns.

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Could this person be a good match for me in the long term? Do we have similar interests? Notice a lot of those questions we are looking for, what are the unknowns that I don't know yet, that I'm looking to explore and figure out? It's essentially looking for if you can be compatible long term or not?

Or the thing about drinking is I don't think we have to date it. I think for many people, we've spent many years with alcohol in our lives. We've been in the relationship with alcohol. We know how the relationship turns out. My point being is there really aren't any unknowns. You've had enough experience with alcohol to know all the answers to your long term questions. You know that if you keep overdrinking that your health suffers, and your lifestyle is in jeopardy. Yes, that means your job could be in jeopardy if you continue to overdrink.

Yes, even your most precious relationships with the people who matter most to you are in jeopardy when you overdrink, because we're ingesting this toxic substance. It delays our mental cognition. It causes early dementia. It erodes relationships. It causes us to change into people we don't even like. So we know the effects of alcohol, they are very predictable. We've known them for a long time.

And if you've been ingesting alcohol and overdoing it, you know the effects it has on your life. You no longer have to date it because you already know the consequences. They are quite predictable. It's not like I look at a bottle of wine and say, "I wonder what it would be like if I drank the whole thing? I think I know clearly what it would be like if I drank the whole thing, do you know why? Because I spent many years drinking the whole thing. I clearly know how it turns out.

And I think we think that things are going to be different the next time we imbibe. Well, maybe this time will be different, or we may explore alcohol and date it in different ways. Like this month I'm not going to drink any, which is great, we don't allow any of it in. But then we change the dating relationship and to say, "Well, I'm just going to drink on weekends." Or we

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have other rules like, I'm just going to drink one or two during the week and save the rest for the weekends. We explore these different patterns.

We explore these different dating patterns with alcohol thinking that that is going to be the answer for us changing our relationship to it. But alcohol is alcohol, and we know that as we age it affects us differently. And we know this by our experience. We know that hangovers take a lot longer to recover from in our 40s than it did in our 20s. Biologically we know our livers just can't handle the quantity and so it takes a lot longer to process all of those toxins.

So we no longer have to date alcohol and experiment with it. It's no longer an unknown to us. It's very known to us. And in fact I actually drew out on a graph for one of my clients on a call one day because she was noticing at certain times she was overdrinking. So we literally mapped it out for her, meaning we drew it on a graph on my whiteboard that I have. And we drew it from this benefit harm standpoint. And as we were graphing it with the number of drinks, drink one gives us a lot of benefit, not much harm.

And then we went on to two and becomes the law of diminishing returns. We don't get as much benefit with the second drink, just like you don't get as much benefit with the fifth bite of a piece of chocolate cake. You get the law of diminishing returns. And then we noticed for her, anything after drink two starts to enter this harm territory, where there's not much benefit, there's just harm that comes. I don't remember conversations. I'm not connecting much with my kids. And a different personality starts to come out.

And usually if have three or more I don't wind up going to the gym the next day or if I do go, my workout is not as intense. And I don't get quality sleep. And the list goes on and on. So I just want you to see that that pattern is very common for most women. We hit a certain amount, generally two or three drinks, unless you're a very experienced drinker, this might happen later. But then once you hit that amount anything after that is nothing but

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harm to the body because the body can't process it. It's too much toxin for our body to handle.

So notice that we already know this for ourselves. This doesn't have to be explored. We don't have to continue drinking to find out anything more about alcohol, we already know all of it. We don't have to continue dating it. We know exactly how it helps us and where it stops helping us. And I have to say, when we drew this out for her it really hit her brain on a whole new level. She saw the drinking a lot differently. And she even said, "I want to stop dancing with the devil." And I said, "Yeah, let's stop dating the devil, we already know what happens over here. It's nothing new."

And here's the thing that I want you to hear from this. We don't want to harm or damage our bodies and our minds. They are so precious. So we get to do the work to control that. Now, we can not have any alcohol and not even roll the dice or we can say, "Hey, it's not about rolling the dice, it's about knowing where I need to stop." Great, so we know where we want to stop. Now it's learning the skills on how to make that happen.

But what I find is so many people still think of drinking like dating, they don't have it figured it out. They don't know what their sweet spot is. I start hearing things like, "Well, if I just had the right genes", or "If I didn't come from an alcoholic family", or "If I just didn't suffer this trauma when I was growing up", or "If I just had a mom or a dad who had a healthy relationship with alcohol then I would learn those skills."

Or maybe I'll hear other things from women such as, "If I didn't like it so much then I wouldn't have this overdrinking issue." Or "If my in-laws didn't live with me, or my parents weren't so crazy, or so narcissistic, or so entitled", or all the other things that we call them, "Then I wouldn't have this drinking problem going on." And just saying that means that you think you can't control it. It's because of these other factors. It's like saying, "It's beyond me. It's beyond my control. It just has to be this way or I just have this kind of luck, or this is just where I'm at right now."

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And it's not I don't have compassion for that, I do. But I just also want to tell you that, look, you're not at the casinos, this is not a gambling situation if you don't want it to be. You can learn the skills to be in control. You don't have to throw your hands up and say, "I don't know why I overdrink, it just keeps happening to me." Or maybe your adult kids are back at home and they're living in your house and you don't want them there. It's like saying, "I can't do that until this thing changes."

Well, you can work to change those things in your life but you can also learn skills where you have your power over what you put into your body. And I'll tell you what, this is a meta skill. You learn this around alcohol, then it goes over to food, then it goes over to everything else that you want to control, that you have control over. And I'll tell you, one of the key skills is learning to control your impulses because your desire, your urges, that's nothing more than an impulse to consume something.

And think about it, we teach this to our kids. It's what parents do. Well, most parents, I mean I guess there are parents that spoil their kids and think giving their kids everything is the way to raise them but it's not. We're not always going to get what we want. And learning that once we have desire for something and we don't have to answer that desire is a key skill to learning to be in control. And not only that, when you learn the skill, you're able to do life easier. It goes a little more smoothly.

The thing is, a lot of the skills that I teach in my programs, they're not taught in schools. We weren't taught these as kids. These are things that we had to learn beyond the classroom. And just think, if you acted on every impulse, every urge, every desire you have had, you would be in some pretty hot water.

Just think if you said whatever came to your mind, every single thought that came into your mind, you just blurt it out. And think about every desire you've had for another individual and you just acted that out. Imagine you purchased everything that was of interest to you, imagine you drank everything that you felt like drinking. And imagine you ate every time you

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saw delicious food. You'd wind up fat, drunk, broke, with a foul mouth, and sexual promiscuity, and probably some sexual harassment lawsuits.

Really the human experience is about controlling our desires, is about controlling our impulses. And it is a skill you can learn. My guess is you have this skill in some areas of your life. Maybe you're good with your finances. Maybe you're good with the types of food you eat. Maybe you're good at showing up to work on time and giving your employer the best of what you have. So you're good at controlling the impulses of hitting the snooze button, staying longer in the shower because it feels so good in the morning to take a hot shower, especially when it's cold outside.

You're good at controlling the impulses to be able to get to work on time. So we learn these schools in certain areas of our life, it's just learning to take it to other areas where we feel unskilled.

So going back to dating, we don't have to go on more romps with alcohol to know how it's going to affect us. We're pretty clear on where we know that line is between where it stops providing pleasure and it just gives us a lot of harm. So what is the opposite of dating alcohol? Just the opposite of dating in life, you stop dating. And for many people they choose commitment. Yes, when you commit, you're no longer jerking around, wondering how this escapade will end, you're committed.

You're committed to the type of relationship that you want to have with alcohol. The one that you take responsibility for, the one you show up for and the one you want to be in charge of. And when you are in commitment mode you stop making yourself powerless. You show up in your full truth knowing that hey, you're not here to fool around. You're here for results because you're committed.

And when you're committed you learn how to stay in your power. You learn all the skills needed to stay in your power. You're no longer dancing with destiny or dancing with the devil. You're no longer saying to yourself, "Well, once I start, I can't stop." Well, if that is your truth then don't start. And if

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you want to be someone who can have one or two drinks then learn the skill to stay in control and to control the impulses. And here's the thing when you decide to go with commitment over dating. Commitment changes you.

Think about when you are in a committed relationship. Maybe you're married, maybe you've been married, maybe you were in a committed relationship in the past. When you commit to being that person in a committed relationship, what do you do? You stop acting like a single woman. You start acting like the woman you've committed yourself to be. I committed to my marriage. I love showing up as a wife. I love my role as a wife. I chose that role and I still want to choose that role. And it makes me feel delighted. I am committed to that.

Because I'm committed to that I don't go around hitting on guys, having romantic romps with guys. No, I am committed to my marriage just like I'm committed to my current relationship with alcohol, because it serves me. I also decided to commit to being a mom. And thankfully that worked out. And guess what? Now that I'm committed to being a mom, I love showing up to do mom things. Maybe not all of them but I'm committed to showing up to do them because I made that commitment.

I'm not going to tell my daughter to go find another mother. No, I'm committed to being her mother. And when I made that commitment, it changed me. Not good, not bad, it just changed me. And because I got changed, now I notice that I want to parent other kids. Whereas my single friends don't know how to parent other kids, because they never had a kid. So it changed me in a way that I want to care for all the kids. And I'm not saying you have to be a mom to be able to do that.

But it did change me in a way that I understand children much more than when I was without children. The same with drinking, when I changed my relationship with alcohol it changed me. And guess what? It's supposed to. When you stop dating and start committing you show up differently. You

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change and then guess what happens? Your behavior with alcohol changes. And most people think it's the opposite.

You have to change what you do with alcohol first before you change. And yes, that can happen but you're more likely to get lasting results when you change how you show up when alcohol is present. Because that's how you know you're doing the skills, and learning the skills, and practicing the skills because then alcohol has no pull over you. It's just alcohol. It's just liquid in a glass.

And here's also what I noticed, when I decided to change my relationship with alcohol I stopped acting like my old self around alcohol because my old self couldn't control their drinking. So when I stepped into my new self, I knew this person could learn how to control their drinking. And the more I did it, the more my confidence grew.

And the more I did it the more it became my new habit, my new relationship, because that's the beautiful thing when you're doing this work is you're committed to being that person. That person who can just take it or leave it and shows up differently when alcohol is around. And I kept practicing that new pattern, and that new pattern, and that pattern, and the new skills, and the new skills. And it took months, ladies, it took months for me to develop the new habit. I've worked with some women who get there in weeks. And I work with some women, it takes months.

For me it didn't matter, it didn't matter how long it took because I was committed, I didn't care how long it took. I didn't want the current relationship I had with alcohol. I was committed to going after a new one. I was done dating alcohol and pretending, I don't know how this is going to affect me, let's just keep going. More is better, ha, ha, ha. I've proven to myself so many years over and over that more wasn't better. And I stopped laughing at myself and saying, "Ha, ha, ha." I got serious because I knew some day it wouldn't be a laughing matter.

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The consequences could have been so much greater than they were. And I'll tell you what, in the month of December there is going to be so much drinking all around us, so much overconsuming. And our brain is going to say, "It's normal, it's this time of year, it's what we do." Yeah, just go back 100 years, I don't think this activity was normal for this long. Now the celebrations start right after thanksgiving. Or for some people they start at Halloween and they keep going. But your body knows that it's not normal.

But the culture will tell you, keep going, the marketing will get you to buy into it all. And then you'll wonder why you're so unhappy, why you don't experience pleasure, because you're numbed out on this depressant. And I think December is the perfect time, not to even wait till January, but to decide now, I'm done with romping with my alcohol. We're no longer going on binges or overdoing it just because other people are or just because it's the holidays or giving your power away to something outside of you.

And here's something I've learned, when I committed to my husband, my mental chatter about getting married and other men stopped because I was committed to this one guy. And when you commit to a new relationship with alcohol and decide what you want that to be, all the mental chatter can stop for you. You can decide, this is what I'm going after and I'm going to learn the tools and the skills to get there no matter what. And I can't tell you how good that feels. Because you don't have to wait till you're actually there in the new habit, just when you commit starts feeling good.

Just making that commitment stops the mental chatter. And then your brain switches to let's learn new skills, how fun could that be? How fun can it be to learn to be in control of my drinking? It is so fun my friends, I can't tell you how wonderful it feels to be on this side, to be able to have one drink and be done, and be satisfied, and to not have much desire for the next drink.

To be able to control my impulses. To be able to maintain a weight that I feel good at. To be able to own my health to the best of my ability, and not point to people, parties, excuses, things to say, "That's why I can't do it."

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No, I know I can. I just need skills. And that's what I want for you my friends. If you're ready to learn the skills I welcome you into Drink Less Lifestyle. It's never too late. And there's nothing more fun than committing to yourself and making your life better. Cheers to that.

Alright my friends, have a great rest of the week, stay powerful and I'll see you next week.

Thanks for listening to the *Drink Less Lifestyle*. If you're ready to change your relationship with alcohol, check out my free guide, How to Effectively Break the Overdrinking Habit at sherryprice.com/startnow. That's sherryprice.com/startnow. I'll see you next week.