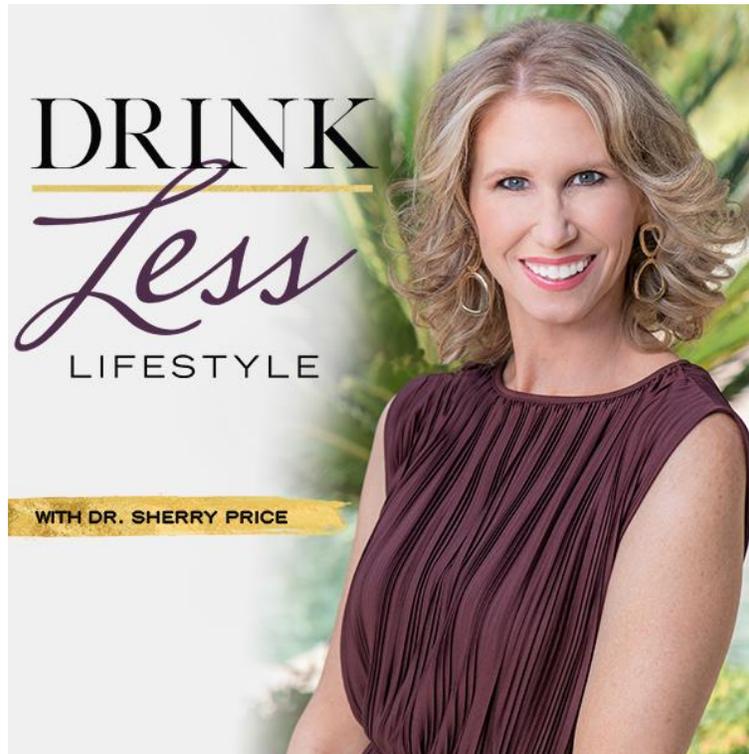


Ep #64: Defiant Drinking



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 64.

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 your December is going well. And I just want to give a quick update of things we are working on here at Drink Less Lifestyle. We have been working on making major changes to Epic You which will be released very, very soon. And some changes to Drink Less Lifestyle. And you will already notice those changes to the program on the website. And these changes have already been implemented for the members of Drink Less Lifestyle. And we are just wrapping up our retreat.

I'm so excited for our first retreat that was announced. The response has been amazing. And I'm so excited to see some of you in person at that retreat and meet many of you others that I haven't met on Zoom yet at that retreat. It's going to be fantastic. So I'm super excited for all the changes to come January and just keep popping back to my website and looking for those updates. And maybe by the time this is released those updates will be available. So excited about that, come January inside Epic You there's going to be so many changes I cannot wait to share them all with you.

But for now let's dive into today's topic which I feel comes up a lot. And that is defiant drinking. How many of you do this? I see this come up and it's coming up a lot right now in the members in Drink Less Lifestyle. So I wanted to do a podcast on this because I believe this is a common problem. So, defiant, disobedient, openly resistant. I would also call this spiteful drinking. This happens when we feel judged by particularly our spouse, when they are, "Oh, you're drinking again. Oh, you're having a drink." And maybe they are not on our same drinking pattern.

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Maybe they are embarking upon a health journey where they're cleaning up their food and their alcohol and all the intake. Or maybe they are increasing their exercise. And they kind of want you to follow along. And maybe they're slightly jealous that they're not drinking. Or maybe they are just sick of the way you've been acting with too much alcohol so they point it out to you. And I commonly hear this from women that I work with, is it's with their spouse.

But it's not uncommon that somebody else in their life points it out like their mother, or their mother-in-law, or somebody else who points out, "Hey, are you drinking? And maybe you should think about joining AA, or cutting back, or not drinking at all. And can I help you on that?" But as I said, most of the time it comes from our significant other or spouse. Because we are living with them. They see us all the time.

Now, here's what I always talk about on our coaching calls. As adults we never want to be parented by our spouse. No adult wants to feel like they're being parented, like they are the child. Somebody is telling them how to eat, how to drink, if they should exercise, how they should dress. As grown adults us women we really don't want to be parented by our spouses. We really don't like being told what to do by them.

And it's interesting, this comes up a lot too. It's like, "My husband has been telling me this for a long time and then all of a sudden my friend said it, or I've heard it from you and now all of a sudden I want to make the change. But because it was coming from him, I was resistant to it. I was resisting his advice." Because you don't want to hear it from your spouse. Your spouse has a different relationship than other relationships that we have. They are our lover. They serve us in a different capacity than our moms, than our friends, than other people in our life.

And because of that model of that relationship we are not going to take kindly to criticism, or to judgment, or to being parented by, or feeling like the parent child relationship. That is not going to work when it comes to the marriage. And how it'll often be interpreted by a lot of the women I work

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with is there's a power struggle going on. He wants to tell me what to do. He wants to take ownership of my life. He wants to dictate or control my actions. And that's exactly how it could feel.

We may like it when somebody tells us what to do in other areas of our life but we certainly don't like that in our relationships in the household. Just to give you a quick example. I love it when I go to an exercise class at my gym and the instructor is yelling and telling me to crank out more reps, to try harder. I love that. However if that came from my husband it wouldn't work. I wouldn't love it. I would actually not take kindly to it at all. Because our brains can perceive it as a power struggle. Or he's trying to exert his influence over me. We get very sensitive to that in that relationship.

And when you have these power struggles it could be disastrous for our marriage. It could start breaking and cracking that foundation that our marriage is built upon. So in our relationships, particularly our marital relationships we want to feel like an equal. And that doesn't mean that we do the same amount, meaning the responsibilities don't have to be necessarily split 50/50 if that doesn't work for us.

But what we want is to feel like an equal, to feel love, respected and supported. And that can be separate than the contribution given to the relationship. Who does what tasks, who takes out the trash, who does this, who raises the kids, all of that. So when you have a power struggle that's going on it will break down communication. And when we have a break down of communication, of course that leads to a break down of the marriage. People don't feel heard, they feel misunderstood, they feel judged, attacked, criticized.

And I hear this a lot coming up from women. And how they respond is then they go drink more. They do this spiteful drinking, this defiant drinking. Well, he told me I should drink less and that makes me just want to storm and go have more. It's oftentimes when women start hiding their drinking because they don't feel safe. They feel judged. They feel criticized. They

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don't feel supported so they go start hiding the alcohol. They don't want anybody in their household to know, especially their spouse.

And this is a common reason for people to overdrink. And I hear it when I'm working with women when they say, "Well, if he didn't say anything, that it wouldn't have went off to my secret stash and had a whole glass and just gulped it right down. Or I wouldn't have gone and done a couple of shots in the closet where I keep my liquor stash that he doesn't know about." And as we look at that behavior even they don't feel good when you're drinking in spite of somebody. That type of drinking never feels good.

And here's the thing, we all know it's just punishing yourself, those extra shots or extra glasses of wine aren't harming him. They're causing the damage to your body and your relationship with alcohol, and your relationship with yourself, and your relationship with him. So just think about that. The worst part of that whole scenario is that usually the woman is not even focused on solving the correct problem. And they're fueling the power struggle and they're fueling the drinking habit. That's a triple whammy.

Because you're mad at him, you're mad at yourself, you're mad at your relationship with alcohol. And your drinking problem gets worse and your marriage relationship starts to deteriorate even more. And that type of drinking never feels good. And then here's the thing, you're confused. You don't know how to fix it because there's so many issues going on that you just don't know where to start.

I work with clients who think, do I need marriage counseling? Do I need help and support with the alcohol which feels like a lower priority because you have the wrong problem pegged? You think it's him in this power that he needs to exert over you. And then how do I help myself with managing my emotions? Because I'm obviously not doing it well if I'm storming the closet and my hidden secret stash.

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And how most women handle this is they go talk about it with a girl friend. And what does the girl friend do? They aren't trained on how to handle this situation, how to pinpoint the exact problem. And they aren't trained with modalities to solve the problem. So the best friend will give you empathy, take your side. And it'll just fuel your anger because they'll agree with you, agree with everything you're saying. And then guess what? Nothing happens. Nothing changes. There are no solutions offered. You continue to feel stuck and you continue to repeat the cycle.

And this goes on, and on, and on. And the longer it goes on, and on, and on, the more you feel stuck, the more you feel confused, the more you feel overwhelmed. And then you just don't know where to go for help. But here's the grand solution. It's when you work on all three at once. And when you work on all three at once, guess what? Everything starts to improve and you feel so much better.

Right now I am working privately one-on-one with a client as she's struggling with this herself. I don't advertise that I take one-on-one clients because that calendar and that roster fills up very, very quickly. So I actually don't even need to advertise that. But some people really want to solve this quickly and in a one-on-one confidential fashion.

And so she's in this power struggle with her husband who is very powerful at work. He's the CEO of his company. And so it's no wonder he's going to act this way at home. He's used to making decisions, telling people what to do and having a thriving business. And it's been this way for years in their marriage. But that's not what matters. What matters is when you work on all the things together, things begin to shift very quickly. And now you have ways to stop the power struggle, stop the defiant drinking and work on building the relationship.

And as she's seen this shift quickly it's starting to feel like this heavy weight has been lifted from her. And so for the first step of that is knowing that there's a power struggle. And it's also knowing how you're contributing to that power struggle. How are you giving your power away? Are you asking

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for permission to do things in that relationship? Does the other person ask you for permission to do things? It's recognizing in all of the communication, how that dynamic is being set up.

So recognizing the power struggle and steps to end it is the first step to helping this client with her defiant drinking. Because unless that power struggle ends, the defiant drinking will continue. The defiant drinking is a problem but it's not the root of the problem. And so what I'm helping is always getting to the root of what's causing the drinking, the problematic drinking. And as we break this power struggle, and as she learns ways to empower herself in this relationship that dynamic is going to change. And in fact it's already changing.

So I can't emphasize enough is getting to the root cause of why the drinking is happening. Yes, the drinking is a problem but as I often say, your brain finds drinking to be the solution. What is the real problem going on? So once we have identified the power struggle and given her tools to be in her power again, number two, we have to stop blaming. Oftentimes I'll hear that, "If he wasn't this way then I wouldn't be drinking so much."

And I just want to remind all of us, nobody causes our drinking. We have complete control if we pour the glass, if we pick up the glass, if we buy the alcohol. We have all control over that. And when you start blaming people it's the fastest way to give away your power because now you rely on other people to change in order for you to change. It's that cause and effect. But it's actually not true. You can change despite their behavior. And I just want to point out, I picked this up so quickly. And maybe you might even hear it if it's something that you're doing.

Whenever I hear, "If only", whenever those words are uttered I know the woman is giving away her power. You've stepped out of your power and into victim mode whenever you're using that language. For instance I hear, "If only my adult children would get a job." "If only my husband didn't judge my drinking." "If only such and such didn't happen to me in my childhood." "If only I didn't lose my job." "If only I wasn't a stay at home mom." "If only I

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didn't work with all men." "If only if I didn't have this stressful job." "If only my kids did better in school or got better grades."

Any time we're using this if only mentality we are always blaming something outside of us. And here's the thing, if something outside of you isn't working and you can fix it, fix it. But oftentimes you can fix it without fixing that thing. And this only type of thinking hurts you. It hurts you the most because now you become in this place where you feel powerless about the situation. So I'm all for it if the situation needs to change, walk in your power and go change it.

You do have power and influence over things and over people, use it. Not in a manipulative destructive way but in a loving compassionate way where everybody gets what they want. Because you don't have to stay stuck unless you choose to. Staying stuck is a choice. And I've done a podcast on that. Well, I can't change because of so and so. That's clearly a lie. And here's the thing that happens when you start blaming things, people outside of you, you know what your brain does? It shuts down possibilities. It stops exploring new routes to see the way to a solution.

Because I'll tell you, there are many ways to solve a problem. Oftentimes we get locked into thinking it's got to be this way, or it's got to be that way or else. And we don't see anything else. But there are so many roads that lead to Rome. So if that pathway is not going to work and that pathway's not going to work, let's find a pathway that will. Because there are multiple ways to get what you want. And that starts with utilizing your brain in a helpful fashion, not in a victim mode, I can't do this fashion, unless something else changes.

So just notice if you use if only language because that makes you dependent on your situation, with a circumstance or other people and it's the fastest way to strip you of your power. And I think one of the telltale signs is that when you do feel hopeless, that is an indication that, hey, wait, where have I given my power away? Where have I left it behind and I need to go back and pick it up and claim it. So I love that we can use our

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emotions to kind of cue us in to where we've gone awry. Where have we left behind some of our influence?

Where have we kind of given up on our brain because we are married to this thought that it has to be this way or else it's not going to happen. So I notice it in my language if I'm ever saying if only statements, I know I left my power behind. If I'm feeling hopeless I'm like, "Why am I feeling hopeless?" Or that my result depends on somebody else, or that I'm feeling despondent about something. How have I left my power behind? And I come back and I reengage, I reengage my brain. I start thinking, okay, wait, there are more roads that lead to Rome than one.

If I really want this, how can I make it happen? Because if you think there are two types of people in life, and this isn't true. But just think if there were two types of people in life, doers and complainers. Which one would you want to fall on? Would you want to be the doer, somebody who figures out, gets it done? Or be the complainer, somebody who just keeps rehashing this year after year, month after month saying, "If he didn't change or this doesn't happen then I can't be relieved of this drinking habit?" I'd rather be the doer.

I don't want to be blamer. I don't want to be the complainer because it's always your decision to drink or not. And I'm a big advocate, if you can't tolerate the environment, change it. If you can't tolerate the person, it's your decision if you want to stay or go. If you choose to go then the drinking should stop. But notice for a lot of people it doesn't because it really wasn't about the other person.

I could tell you countless of examples of women I have helped who started drinking, their habit increased when they were going through a divorce. The divorce is long over, the guy is long gone, they don't have feelings for the person anymore but they're still overdrinking. So yes, they couldn't tolerate the person, they left the person then the drinking should have stopped. But if it didn't, they didn't get to the root cause of what was causing their drinking.

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This could be the same if you move a neighborhood because of somebody was picking on your kids or you just ended a relationship with a girl friend and that really wrecked your world. Or ended a relationship with your immediate family and that wrecked your world and you're still drinking over it. And those relationships weren't healthy to begin with and you changed that, you got yourself away from those environments then the drinking should have stopped.

So now we know that there's unhealed trauma and unhealed emotions from that experience or something else causing the drinking. And I love working with my clients to heal that emotional clutter and that emotional baggage, that's really at the root cause of their drinking.

Now, maybe you decide to stay with the person, great. Now get to work creating the best relationship ever and stop the power struggle and stop blaming. Because the solution is there and you want to use it. You want to create that amazing life and that amazing relationship that you want. And if we're always pointing the finger, well, he needs to change first, then we're always going to be waiting. You know when people change? When they see other people change. They're like, "Wow, look at her, I want some of that."

Alright, so what's step three? Well, you can't get to step three, ladies, unless you've done step one and step two. You've got to end the power struggle and you've got to stop blaming otherwise step three won't work. And I think it's the step that most of us go to first. And that's the fix it step, you just want it to end, you want it to end quickly. You want it to end now. And what I mean by fix it, fix the thing that's really broken. So you've ended the power struggle, great, now it's time to repair. Now it's time to say, "Hey, okay, we've been through that, now let's repair."

And power struggles go on for a lot of people, it could be with your mom. They want to exert their influence over your life and tell you what to do. You can have power struggles with your kids, that's very common. There are lots of people out there that like to be in charge. And here's the thing. It's

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not necessarily a bad thing to be in charge. We need leaders. We need people who are driven, who have a purpose, they start companies, they build schools, they start non-profits, they speak their mind, they change the world to make it a better place.

Not all power is abusive. You can use power in a very positive way. And I know this personally. I was blessed, sometimes it doesn't feel like a blessing to have a very strong-willed daughter. She was strong-willed from birth. And everybody in my family saw this. She wanted to be held a certain way. She wanted to be carried a certain way. You couldn't carry her where she faced inward. She had to be turned around because she wanted to explore and study her environment even from a baby.

She never wanted to be bounced. If you bounced her, full on temper tantrum. Most babies like to be rocked to sleep, bounced to sleep, not her. She would just go on screaming and crying if you shook her in that way. And then she became really defiant to my discipline techniques as a toddler. She didn't like any of them. She was always involved in a power struggle. And I'll tell you ladies, for years I visited therapists, doctors. I had her visit therapists because I was beside myself with these daily power struggles and temper tantrums.

It was a very rough time in my life. And actually that was when my drinking increased the most. I felt completely powerless as a mom and this was to a toddler. My brain would just think, oh my gosh, if I can't control this girl now, what's going to happen when she's in her teens and her 20s? And I talked about this before on the podcast. I looked to everyone for advice, all the professionals, my girl friends, not a single piece of helpful advice did I receive.

I would secretly cry at night because I was spending so much money on all these specialists. I was drinking more than I wanted. And I just couldn't figure out how to have this loving bonding relationship with my daughter. All she did was want to fight with me. Do you see? I'm blaming. I'm blaming. I'm saying all she did was want to fight with me. And this caused my heart

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to ache. I felt inferior and defeated as a mom. I was in anguish over this. And as I mentioned, the advice I got from my friends didn't help, not my pastor's wife, not the professionals and this went on for years.

It's not like I stopped trying. As a mom, you keep trying. I remember beating my head against the wall because I'm like, "Okay, I have a bachelor's degree, a doctorate degree, an MBA degree, multiple certifications and why can't I figure this out?" It's the most frustrating thing ever. And it wasn't until I learned life skills, life coaching skills, everything changed. I remember that I went back to my negotiations class from MBA school. And those skills helped me get more money when I was at my job, when I learned those skills, that was great.

So then I thought, great, I'll use them with my six year old daughter. No, power struggle went on, because you can't get to a negotiation if you're fighting and fighting a power struggle. That's got to be the first layer you cut through otherwise nothing else that you try is going to work. And that's why ending the power struggle has to be step one. Because anything you try, without ending the power struggle won't work. So one of the first tools I started using with her is something I use with my clients called, sitting on the same side of the table.

Now, it's not literal, it's a figure of speech. But when I use this tool, it totally disempowers her, not taking her out of her power but it calms that need for power. Because how we often approach family members is being on the opposite side, they want this, you want that. And as long as you're in that power struggle neither side is going to hear each other. It's just an argument with words and loud noises. They want this, you want that.

And so you'll continue talking, you'll continue having the conversation and no matter how much proof you have, how strong your argument is, how loud you yell, how often you say the same thing over and over, months on end. How many dishes you break in the process, how many timeouts, or consequences, or threats, or ultimatums you make, you won't be heard and

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understood. I have tried it all, my friends. It never worked. It never fixed the problem. I just kept trying to get more power.

I just kept trying for somebody to listen to me and hear me with the wrong strategy. And when you do that, it leaves you feeling tapped out, exhausted, drained, out of hope, disgusted. You just want to throw your hands up in the air. It can even make you apathetic. You just stop caring about the person. And I'll tell you, there is nothing more painful than that.

A person you want to love, a person you want to connect with and then you do things you don't want to be doing, like defiantly drinking all because the strategy that you're using isn't working. And most likely it's fueling the problem. When you start with the tool of sitting on the same side of the table it breaks down that power struggle. And then you can start using other tools on your path to fixing the problem. Now, yes, you will have to use other tools along the path but you have to slice through the power struggle first.

And ironically, I think this means stepping into your power, meaning you know what to do and how to communicate in a way that you're both on the same side of the table. You're coming at it with the same goal, not opposing goals. And that's the first step, getting rid of the power struggle. And then the defiant drinking can stop because we want to get at the root cause of the problem, the root cause of the drinking. And when you're not feeling powerful in your relationships, and heard, and respected, and understood, of course you're going to want to numb out and escape.

And this is why my message and the core of all my programs is about stepping into your power in a positive way, in a way that supports yourself and your family members, so that you can create the life you want and the relationships that you want, including the relationship with alcohol if you want one. So yeah, you know how to fuel yourself and that you're not relying on others to do it for you. You are your source of power. You are your source of change. You are in charge of your life and your outcomes.

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And with the right tools and skills you can get the life and the results that you want. And I say that's the best gift ever to yourself. Alright my lovely friends, have a beautiful week and I'll see you in the next episode.

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.