

Ep #68: Effect Vs. Experience



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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 68.

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 all doing out there? I hope you are all doing fantastic. And today I want to dive into this topic that has been coming up with the members inside Drink Less Lifestyle. And that is do you drink for the effect? Are you drinking for the experience? So I bring this up because it really helps tease out why you're drinking, how to make sense of your drinking and then how to get to progress on cutting back or abstaining.

So I want you to consider something, if you are drinking for the effect of alcohol. What effects are those? So oftentimes I will hear that, "I drink alcohol for all of its various effects." So I'm going to go through a list of things that as I mentioned I have heard over the years of doing this work. And I want to see how many of these resonate or relate to why you drink. So are you drinking for the buzz? Are you drinking to relax? Are you drinking to numb your feelings because you're afraid you can't handle them or is it to de-stress at the end of your day?

Is it to turn off your thoughts or to switch off your brain? Or do you drink to escape from the day? Do you drink to forget about what somebody said to you? Or maybe you drink to get drunk. Maybe you drink to let loose. Maybe you drink to get lit. Or maybe you drink because it helps you feel not responsible for things in your life. Do you drink to bottle your feelings because you're afraid of what will happen when you express them? Or do you drink to make a problem go away? Do you drink to avoid doing the thing that you actually want to be doing?

Or do you drink to give yourself permission to sit and do nothing? Do you drink to entertain yourself away from yourself and away from how you feel?

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Or maybe you drink to entertain yourself away from feeling bored or lonely? Do you drink to calm your nerves? Do you drink to soothe yourself from this stressful life, the passing of a loved one, or even a bad day? Do you drink to ease the pain that comes with life, with working, with raising kids, with getting old, with developing more wrinkles, gaining weight, going grey or dealing with compromised health?

Or maybe you drink to not feel the pain of your own disappointment, wishing you were further along, arguing with the reality of how things actually turned out. Maybe you drink to not feel the sadness when your family upsets you, hurts you, disappoints you, but doesn't show you the appreciation you want, the validation you seek, or the words of kindness you feel you deserve. Maybe you drink to cope with a job you don't like, a job you don't really want, maybe it's even a job you can't stand going to.

Maybe you drink to numb the past because it shouldn't have happened that way, that thing, that event, that person. They should have not done what they've done, acted the way they've acted, or treated you that way. I can go on and on my friends but if you drink for any of these reasons I feel your pain. And I will tell you, you are drinking for the effect that alcohol brings.

And I will tell you that there is no amount of alcohol that will fix these problems or make them go away. And actually alcohol makes them get bigger, it makes them grow. Because whether it's a glass, a bottle, a box, a six pack, a case, a vat, or a lifetime membership.

The alcohol you drink cannot fix or solve your problems, change your past, change your job, change your family, clean your house, cook your dinner, help you lose wrinkles, fix your grey or thinning hair, reverse your health problems, find your next mate, change what somebody said to you or bring back that person. My friends, alcohol cannot do these things.

And if you drink for the effect of the buzz, or to get drunk, or to check out, I will tell you the truth, there will never be enough alcohol. Because what initially will take to get you there, maybe one or two drinks, then it will increase to three or four, then it will take five or six, then it will take seven

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or eight because your tolerance keeps growing. Your tolerance keeps moving until you drink yourself to death. I share this with you my friends because it's a lose/lose game.

And really this conversation came up inside Drink Less Lifestyle amongst the members. We were looking at what it takes to become a woman who can take it or leave it with alcohol and what it is to really understand what it means to be able to take it or leave it. And when you're a woman who can take it or leave it with alcohol, you know what that means? You are a woman who can manage her life, how she thinks, how she acts, how she feels without needing alcohol.

When a woman can take it or leave it with alcohol she knows that alcohol is not used to fix things it can't fix. Alcohol can't fix a broken marriage, it can't fix an aging body, it can't fix a terrible crappy job you shouldn't be in, it can't change the past, it can't bring humans back to life, it can't make you lose weight. And it can't make you change how you feel about yourself long term. So if you're drinking for any of these effects I tell you it won't work. And in some cases it makes the problem worse.

It makes you look older than you actually are. It worsens your skin. It worsens your wrinkles. It worsens the coloring of your skin. It makes you feel older on the inside. Beer makes us bloated, sugary drinks makes us inflamed, it accelerates bad and poor health and it keeps you stuck in the past in the same emotional state night after night, week after week. When you keep drinking there is no progress, there is no evolution, there is no growth. Heck, some people are drinking just as much or way more in their 40s, 50s and 60s than they did in their 20s.

At least in our 20s we can say, "Hey, we've been experimenting, we were young and naïve." But what can we say about our 40s, 50s and 60s as we're overdoing it, as our bodies can't tolerate it, can't process it and can't handle it the way it did in our 20s? It's saying that we are stuck, we have not evolved, there's no progress, there's no evolution and we are still hurting in our pain. We cannot look to alcohol to do something it cannot do.

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I do not look to my vacuum cleaner to dust. My vacuum cleaner sweeps, it does not dust a house, it does not cook a meal, it does not wash clothes.

So when we're looking and using alcohol for an effect, for an outcome that it cannot deliver on, we have to start questioning, do we really know alcohol? Do we really understand what alcohol can do for us, can provide for us and what it can't? Now, this came up as we were discussing how I use alcohol. And for most of the time I do not drink for the effect of alcohol. I drink for the experience.

And one of the examples that I have used on this podcast in the past was when I was in Italy and I had champagne, just a glass of champagne when we rented a private boat. I wanted to have that experience of having a glass of champagne on our lovely romantic vacation. Did I need it? No. Did it make the experience that much more delightful? Not really. Did I want it? A little bit, yeah. But you know what? If the bottle spilled, if the bottle went overboard, whatever, it wouldn't have changed the outcome of that vacation. It wouldn't have changed the outcome of that boating experience.

It would have still have been beautiful, romantic and magical but I had a glass of champagne because it was lovely, it was delightful, there was no downsides to having it. So for me, when I drink it's more about the experience, it's not about the effect. I may choose to have it to add to the experience but I certainly don't have it for it's numbing or escaping properties. Actually I look for a time when I get to pair it with food.

There is this one restaurant that my husband and I want to go to in Napa Valley that's pretty exclusive, pretty high end and you have to make reservations well in advance. And so this is on our bucket list and when we go I do want to experience the wine pairing with the food. Again, it's for the experience, not the effect. I choose to have it to elevate an experience.

But my end goal is not to get drunk or to numb out from my life. And it's certainly not to fix any problems because I know the truth, alcohol cannot fix problems. I have learned that. I see that. I see and understand it on a level that I've never understood in the past because in the past I'd just keep

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turning to alcohol when I had a problem, a problem with my emotions, turned to alcohol. Bad day, turned to alcohol. Need to relax, turned to alcohol. And what that did was keep me dependent on alcohol. But when you really learn and embrace that alcohol doesn't fix problems you stop relying on it to fix problems.

Now, many of you listening to this will say, "Yeah, I know that, Sherry, I know it doesn't fix my problems." Great, then why are you drinking? And if you tell me it's because you hate your job, well, I just want to remind you that alcohol doesn't change your job, only you can. And if you're drinking because you have marriage problems or maybe you're not in a relationship and you want to be. Then I want to remind you that alcohol doesn't fix marital or relationship problems, only you do.

So I really want you to dive deep into understanding why it is you drink because asking that question you can uncover why you're drinking and learn, can alcohol fix it? Can alcohol make this better? And if not then why are you still doing it? Is it that you didn't learn that yet? Is it that you know it but you choose to live in denial? Then I ask, why would you deny yourself the truth? Why do you want to keep living in a fantasy that can't give you that happily ever after result that you truly desire?

And I want you to consider what you really want. And I want you to consider if alcohol and having lots of it or more of it can get you there. Because we all have circumstances, we all go through circumstances we don't like in life, but it's how we bounce back, it's how we heal, it's how we move forward. I know plenty of people who have divorced and remarried, they say it's the best decision ever. I have friends who are married and they're miserable, neither the husband or the wife drinks very much but they're both working on the problem, the real problem.

And then there are people who I know are married and miserable and drink all the time because deep down they're wishing that their marriage would heal miraculously without doing much effort, without requiring any change. And they just keep drinking, thinking that magically their marriage will turn around. They're not wanting to take the responsibility for their part of their

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unhappiness. So I want you to see the truth my friends, what alcohol can and cannot do for your life.

And relying on alcohol for the effect, you know what it will do? It'll keep you dependent on it because you will still be desiring that effect and not knowing how else to get it. And here's the sad part is alcohol keeps you trapped in that cycle and not really giving you the end result you truly want because alcohol can't do that. And what I like to do for my clients is to actually solve their problems, their real problem. Alcohol is just another problem on top of the real problem.

We go and solve the real problem because once the real problem has gone you will get and have what you truly want, not a substandard temporary, side-effect inducing habit that makes you feel powerless. And this is what I mean by living in your power, it's taking charge of yourself and of your life to get the lasting progress on an issue in your life to solve it. So you know what you learn? You learn to create dependency on your brain and on yourself, not on alcohol or not on anything else outside of you. Because I promise you this, alcohol does not deliver what you truly want.

If you truly want to numb out it's because you don't like your life. There is nobody who loves their life and says, "I want to numb out from this amazingness." Just think of the most epic adventure, vacation you want to take. Maybe it is to go to Italy on the Amalfi Coast. Maybe it's to go see the Mona Lisa in Paris.

Think of the most epic thing you want to do. And then let me ask you, do you want to numb out from that experience? Do you want to be so intoxicated that you don't remember it, that you can't remember conversations and how you truly felt in front of the Mona Lisa, that it's all just a blur and that you have to ask other people how you got into the museum and out of the museum? No, you wouldn't want to numb from an amazing life.

And do you know the downside of drinking too much? It makes you think that tolerating the life that you already have is the best you'll get. It kills

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your dreams. It's a dream stealer, it's a motivation stealer. When we have too much alcohol we don't feel like going after the weight we want to use. We don't feel like going after all the things that we want to contribute, or create, or volunteer, or offer to the world. Keeps us stuck in our own misery. It keeps us playing small. It keeps us tolerating a life we don't really like, instead of changing it for a life we really are passionate about.

I want you to consider this, when you overdrink it's not even a zero sum game. It's not like alcohol contributes 30 points and the aftereffect, the aftermath takes away 30 points. It's not a zero sum game. It's a negative sum game. It's, I can't figure this out so let me just drink.

And then when I have a hangover not only do I think I'm a loser, or I suck, or I can't learn to figure this out, or I can't understand this habit, I also am mad at other people who can. Or I'm mad at other people who can understand me. Or I'm mad at the world for some other reason but it's probably related to my drinking habit. Yuck. I do not want that kind of life. I don't want to play and look at life as a negative sum game because it doesn't have to be.

And if you're drinking for the effect, that's what you're doing, you're numbing from your own life. Rather than taking the steps to up-level your life, to heal your pain, to get past what you're suffering from because if you're drinking for the effect it's to cover up something you're currently experiencing. My guess is it might be something that eats at you, it might be something that you've been carrying for a quite amount of time.

And here's the thing, your brain might think that there's no other solution but here's what I want to offer you. There certainly is. There's always a solution, we know how to heal from past hurts. There is a path, there are healers, there are therapists, there are life coaches. There are people there with tools that can help you out of this pain. If you want to be alcohol free there is a path, there's actually many. If you want to become someone who can take it or leave it and not feel controlled by alcohol, there is a path and I offer that to you in my Drink Less Lifestyle program.

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So if you're using alcohol as the drug it is to self-medicate your emotional hurts, your mental hurts and your wounds from the past that you're carrying into the present and into the future. I will tell you that your body and your mind will only be seeking this daily and nightly dose continuously. Because you're training your body, you're training your brain to rely on it, to need it and then you begin to crave it more, and more, and more. And the desire grows, that is over-desire, my friends.

And when you don't have it, guess what happens? The mental and emotional pain comes back because you haven't healed it because alcohol cannot do that. And when you're numbed out you lack the motivation to seek a path that can truly heal, to seek the effective solution rather than settling for a band-aid that can't heal a gashing wound.

You know why also it's a negative sum game? Because alcohol damages your mental health, your spiritual health, your emotional health and your physical health. It sucks your energy, it sucks your vitality, it sucks your drive and your passion for life, you just give up. But that doesn't have to be your path because we know that path, we know how it ends, we know where it runs into and it is a dead end. So jump off this path and get onto a path that works but that takes you to find your healer, to find your solution, to find something that will work.

That's why I believe you are powerful my friends, you can find what works for you. And here's the thing, it's your life, don't wait. I spent eight years suffering when I could have found my healer so much sooner. And when I signed up and I did the program I said, "I'm going all in because this is what I want." I went all in on myself because I wanted to solve it. And here's the thing, time is a ticking my friends, and every choice you make today will impact not only the quality of your future but the quantity of your future.

So this is my wish for you, if you're drinking for the effect, find something else that can give you a pleasurable effect. Find other pleasures in your life if you're just doing it for pleasure. But most of us are doing it to avoid pain. And if that's the case, root out the pain. Heal from the past, learn from the past, be willing to evolve, be willing to embrace a new path, be willing to get

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off the rollercoaster that just goes around in a circle and around in a circle. It can never take you to where you want to go.

Whatever effect alcohol brings into your life temporarily it will always be worse on the other side, the bottoming out, the hangovers, the weight gain, the poor sleep, the poor conversations, the relationships that don't get rebuilt but continue to deteriorate. The relationship with yourself which is the most important begins to erode slowly over time where you don't trust yourself. And sometimes I hear women who say, "I can't even look at myself in the mirror."

How much longer do you want to be living like that? That's what I asked myself, in 10 years from now when my daughter graduates, or gets married, or looks back, how is she going to describe her mom? How is her mom going to describe her mom? Am I drinking for the effect or am I drinking for the experience? This shed a lot of light for me in helping me understand my relationship with alcohol, and how it needed to change. And the beautiful thing is when you realize you need change, get it, go for it, go all in on yourselves.

Because here's the thing, if you don't feel good about you, no one else is going to be able to make you feel good about you. No matter how many compliments, pay raises, outside accolades we get, it's only going to be temporary. It has to start from within.

Alright my friends, I hope this podcast has provided some questions to get you further clarity on your relationship with alcohol and how you want that to change. Have a beautiful week my friends and I will 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.