

Ep #83: Managing Self-Pity



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With Your Host

Dr. Sherry Price

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Ep #83: Managing Self-Pity

You are listening to the *Drink Less Lifestyle Podcast* with Dr. Sherry Price, episode number 83.

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 is everyone today? I am super excited about today's topic and I want to dive right in. And this was inspired by a quote I came across from Cheryl Strayed in *Tiny Beautiful Things*.

And she writes, "Nobody's going to do your life for you. You have to do it for yourself, whether you're rich or poor, out of money or raking it in, the beneficiary of ridiculous fortune or terrible injustice. And you have to do it no matter what is true. No matter what is hard. No matter what unjust, sad, sucky things befall on you. Self-pity is a dead-end road. You make the choice to drive down it. It's up to you to decide to stay parked there or to turn around and drive out."

I thought this was so beautiful. And how true is that? And so, this inspired me to do a podcast on looking at when we get into moments of self-pity, because we all do. We are human and we are going to experience this at times in our life. And it's how we manage through it. So, if we look at the definition according to Merriam Webster about self-pity it's defined as excessive self-absorbed unhappiness over one's own troubles.

And think about that, when we're wallowing in our self-pity all we're ruminating on is how things are unfair, or unjust, or how unhappy we are, or we just wish things weren't this way.

And another definition of self-pity is feeling sorry for oneself, being depressed about one's situation. When we think of our lives we can think of all the unfairness and all the unjust, or the drama, or the tragedies, or the trauma that have happened to us. And yes, we want to be able to process that and manage those emotions that come up because of these events.

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It's not to say we're supposed to be happy going through them or happy about them.

But when we sit in that place so long and we just kind of hang out there, and we're just sitting in these thoughts and these feelings, to the point that it's excessive. It consumes most of our day, or most of our thoughts, or most of our emotion is self-pity. We get stuck in our own unhappiness. And the crazy thing about that unhappiness is it's unhappiness we keep creating by the way we're thinking and feeling about things that have happened to us.

And when you're in that place of self-pity, I will tell you, you have no motivation to take different action. It's like you're just hanging out on this dead end road. You've given up all the power in your life and all the control over it. You just sit there. And for me it feels like a feeling of just wallowing, why did this happen to me? Why does this keep happening to me? How come I keep overdrinking? How come this keeps happening? How come I can't get motivated to do something different? I know this isn't good for me but I keep doing it anyway.

And when you're in self-pity for a long time you actually want to stay there because that becomes your known, that becomes comfortable. So, you don't want to do anything different than what you are doing. You say you want to but you actually don't because you become so attached to this current way of thinking and this current way of feeling and it actually creates more of the same. And your days start feeling like that, the same, keep overdrinking every single night. I don't know why this keeps happening.

You're wallowing in self-pity and this is so detrimental to your health on so many levels. I can't even begin to describe how detrimental this is, because your health suffers, your cognition suffers, meaning your mental state suffers, your emotional state suffers. You don't grow, you don't evolve, you don't do the things humans should be doing which they are meant to be growing, and evolving, and learning, and trying new things, and exploring

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life. It keeps you stuck and stagnant and doing the opposite of everything the human and condition is about.

And so, you don't wind up changing the very things in your life that need to be changed for your benefit. And it just becomes so important to stay in this predictable place of getting the same results. And all is your brain can see is that, hey, I need something outside of me to change. I need someone to change in my life. I need my partner to change. I need my job to change. I need this pandemic to be over. It's all these things outside of us that we start saying, "Well, when that changes I'll change." You're not in your power when you think this way.

In fact, not only does thinking this way not keep you in your power, it gives you no energy to take different action. And like I talked about in a previous episode, you can't even take power moves because you're out of your power. I was just talking about this with a woman earlier this week. She was telling me that she's just been sucking down vodka and wine and she's just so miserable. She's so miserable because she keeps doing this habit over, and over, and over for years.

She asked me, "Am I too far gone?" And I said, "No. I've done it for years too." Many people have done it for years. You're never too far gone ever. And she even said, "I'm creating my own misery and I don't even know how to stop. And I said, "Yes, this is true because when you don't know how to stop and you see that you're creating your own misery now it's time to get help. Because if you could change you would have."

And just think how nonsensical and illogical it is to keep sitting in these self-sabotaging behaviors and not actually take the actions that are going to get you out of it, because you feel that you can't. And why I know this so well is because I too sat there for so long self-pitying, wallowing, not understanding how I can help myself. And I remember thinking, this has to stop. When is this going to stop? I have to make this stop. But here's the thing, thinking it has to stop isn't the same thing as stopping.

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Wishing for something is not the same thing as getting something. And so, when I find myself sitting in self-pity in any time in my life I realize my life is stagnant. It's not going to get my life moving and on a new path, or on a new trajectory. It's actually going to keep me stuck and I'm going to keep ruminating. And this is not just me, this is all humans. We have the same tendencies. We know that the human condition when we're self-wallowing and in self-pity, just creates more of that.

And I love this quote by Neville Goddard that states, "Do not waste one moment in regret, for to think feeling of the mistakes of the past is to reinfect yourself. So, think about that. If we keep dwelling on the past, on things that didn't go right, the regret, the shame, the self-pity, the wallowing, it's reinfecting ourselves. In that we're creating that same virus and that same bacteria now. We're pulling that past into our present.

And I love how he says, "Do not waste one moment." Because here's the thing, what if you did stop ruminating and wasting the moments? What if you actually went and got what you wanted? I'll tell you who does this all the time. I'll tell you who goes after what they want. And it's a stark example I'm going to use but it's true.

It's people who go on to get cancer because when you get cancer, I will tell you, most people don't sit around saying, "I have this problem. I know cancer is in my body and I guess I'll just sit here and wait for something outside of me to change, maybe an oncologist will come and knock on my door and say, "Hey, do you have cancer? I'd like to help." Or maybe I'll just see and see if this cancer grows and gets worse. Maybe it just could be ignored.

Maybe it's a problem I don't have to think about now. I just have a cancer habit that's going on and it's, you know, we're just going to call it a habit and not a problem or an issue that actually could get solved." That's crazy. Nobody would ever sit there with cancer and say, "I'm just not going to look at it." When somebody discovers they have cancer they immediately want to start getting help. They immediately want to rid themselves of the cancer. They start healthy ways of living.

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They start telling others so they could get to the best doctor or the best oncologist or learn the best therapies to help rid their bodies of this cancer. And maybe they start calling friends and family and tell them, “Hey, I’m going to have chemo on these days or surgery on this day. Can you help with the kids? Can you help with the meals? Because I’m going to be tired and I’m going to need rest and I’d love your help.” I see this happen in my church community.

We advocate for our health because it’s important for us to live cancer free and not to die. And we do this in other realms of our life when we have a problem. We have a flat tire, we go and we call for help. We get help if we don’t know how to change the flat tire. We don’t sit and ruminate and say, “Oh my gosh, I’ll just wait for AAA to come down my street.” We don’t make excuses and sit and wallow in self-pity. So why do we do that with an overdrinking problem? Isn’t that interesting.

I think we do that because we think this problem can’t be solved. I can’t be free of this habit. And just think about that. If you say you can’t, you won’t. It’s easy as that. It’s just like The Little Engine Who Could. If you think you can’t, you can’t. If you think you can, you will. So, this is where most people get stuck is they think it can’t be solved. Addictions are solved all the time. And I don’t willy nilly use that term. But I’ll tell you, we are all addicted to something whether it’s the internet, work, marijuana, drinking, sweets, something.

We’re all addicted to something, chocolate, watching TV hours on end, and people free themselves all the time of these things. So, you don’t have to live with the problem unless you choose to. And the only reason you would choose to is thinking that it’s not solvable, because why else would you choose to? Nobody wants to feel miserable. Nobody wants to be killing their brain cells. Nobody wants to be feeling like they’re out of control with their life. Nobody wants the arguments, the poor sleep and all the other havoc this substance causes to our lives.

Even if it’s something like vanity, you just don’t want the weight gain. Yes, you don’t want the weight gain. Weight gain causes all kinds of catastrophic

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health things down the line. That's not a vanity issue. That's a health issue. And if you could do it on your own you would have done it by now. And just like if I got cancer, I couldn't get it out of my body by myself. I would need help, help from an expert, help from somebody who can. And so, if you want to free yourself from overdrinking you can. There are programs that exist.

There are people out there that can help you like myself. So, a question is, why aren't you running towards the help? Why aren't you wanting this problem to be solved? Notice I'm not asking the disempowering question of why are you sitting in your own self-pity? That doesn't help you. The answer doesn't even matter. The better question to ask is really, why aren't you running towards the help? Because that will tell us a lot. And I'll tell you, it's fear.

It's fear of failure, it's also fear of success, it's also fear of missing out, it's also fear of what my life look like, how will I be able to manage? What will I do when these emotions come up? How will I reward myself? How will I relax? They're all these things that can be solved. And for a lot of people, it's fear of the unknown, fear of who I'll be. It's all just a flavor of fear. And do you know how you find out the unknown? You make it known. I know it sounds simple, it sounds easy but this is the walk I walk with people all the time.

This is how you help mankind and humankind get to their goals. I remember when I was struggling and I was like, "Gosh, darn it, there has to be a solution." And I was ready to take care of the problem and guess what? My teacher arose, my teacher appeared because I was ready. I saw a Facebook ad and I'm like, "Oh, that's what I want." And I stalked her for a hot minute and I signed up because I wanted a solution. I was done sitting in my own self-pity. I was on a mission to solve it. And like a cancer, I wanted it gone.

The negative effects of my drinking were getting worse and worse. And I was done lying to myself about it. You know what I was even doing? I was justifying it so much that I was losing my desire for other things in my life.

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Everything else just felt kind of lackluster, my job, my family. Everything just kind of felt apathetic, lackluster. And that was a real warning sign for me. That's not rock bottom. But that's a real warning sign for me, why?

Because I'm a high achiever and I'm a self-help junkie. I read books on self-help. I believe in self-improvement. I believe in bettering myself. And when I wasn't that felt wrong. That felt off. That felt like who am I. Why am I here? What is my purpose? Because even now I still read a lot of books. I listen to podcasts. I'm always bettering myself. And it feels good to do that. It feels good to evolve. It feels good to look back on my life and say, "I'm glad I'm not doing that anymore. I'm glad I moved on."

And here's what's sad and people who self-pity and stay in wallowing too long, they're thinking crappy thoughts about their life. And what's worse is if they think it can't be solved. You think you just have to tolerate this crappy life, this crappy marriage, this crappy whatever you're feeling, or experiencing. And right now, we're working through some relationship issues in my programs and how to make them better because they can be better.

So, if something can be better, why not? And I know some of you might be listening to this podcast and like, "No, that's not me, I don't wallow. I don't sit in self-pity too long. The reason I drink is because life's so good. I just do it to sleep at night. I just do it to unwind at the end of the day, each and every day. I just do it to relax. It's how I reward myself at the end of the day. I mean I deserve it." Well, let me ask you, is it giving you any negative consequences?

Because when I find when I talk to women and they're really honest and open, it's leading to arguments, poor sleep, poor health, weight gain, things they don't like. They also then recognize, yeah, my anxiety has been getting worse. Yeah, I have been feeling more stressed. Yeah, I feel more depressed when I overdrink. I have regret. I don't like it. So then if you're drinking for all these benefits why are you still doing it if you get all these negative consequences? Why are you letting the cancer grow?

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And by all means, if you want the cancer to grow, go ahead but I don't think any human wants an issue to get bigger and wants a cancer to grow. I don't think anybody in their right logical mind would want a problem that can be solved and fixed to actually continue. The only reason they allow it to continue is they think it can't be fixed or can't be solved which is just not true. I mean I guess it is true if you do nothing about it, then it can't be fixed. But the benefit of fixing the issue is not only do you not have the issue but you now have this life you love. And your life gets better.

And this is what I invite my clients to do. It's not just solve a drinking issue. I mean that's fun in and of itself, but if we can do that and get a better life, let's do both. Because let's make our life amazing and epic along the way if we can, why not, how fun is that? And if it's so much fun and so enjoyable, and you're getting the results you want then why not? I mean I'm all in. And even if you feel like your life is good now, you can take it to the next level. I'm not saying we go to Pollyanna land.

But I am saying, if we could get a 10% improvement, or a 1% improvement, or a 25% improvement, why wouldn't you? It feels so good to delight in your life. It feels so good to have issues removed. It feels so good to overcome something and be the hero in your own life.

And here's what the statistics show. They say that any type of an addiction is a mental disorder. And when we look at alcohol use, we know that it comes from mentally not being well, a mental disorder. Mentally your thoughts aren't in order. Mentally you use it to cope. So, this is why we have to look at the mental component of what's going on for you that you don't like, that we're using alcohol to cope. And when your body becomes used to sitting in the same rumination and the same self-pity, that becomes a habit, that becomes the habit we need to break.

And when you break that habit the drinking just falls away. So you can be in the camp that wishes for life to be better or for this problem to go away. Or you can be in the camp that's actually working on solving this issue and making your life better. And the difference really is a couple of things and one of them is ending this self-pity. And if you knew you didn't have to stay

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here and feel stuck what would you start doing? What is your answer to that question? Whatever it is then go and start doing it.

And if you can't take that action then you need my help because if you can do it on your own you don't need my help. If these podcasts are helping and you've gotten to your goal, great, I applaud you. But there are people that reach out to me and say, "I've been listening to your podcast, and I'm getting a little bit better but I'm still not where I want to be." Great, then let's work on it, let's get you to where you want to be. Let's solve the problem so you can have the life you want. I invite you into your power.

I invite you to your solution. I invite you to a better future. I invite you to the life of your dreams, to end the battle with the bottle and live well, delightfully well.

Alright my friends, that's what I have for you today. I love you all 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.