

Ep #52: The Habit of Drinking: When You Can Take It or Leave It with Dr. Sherry Price



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Kristi Angevine

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Welcome to Episode #52. Last week, I discussed the habit of drinking, and this week we continue this topic with an interview. Today, I'm talking to Dr. Sherry Price. Dr. Price is a pharmacist who did her residencies at Duke and Barnes-Jewish Medical Center. She spent over a decade working as a pharmacist in critical care, academia, and the pharmaceutical industry.

She's also a life coach and host of the *Drink Less Lifestyle* podcast. In her work as a coach, she helps women to stop overdrinking, lose weight, and to improve their relationships. And today, we discuss the complexity of changing your relationship with alcohol. Among other things, we talk about the all-or-none thinking, shame, and numbing that are related to alcohol use. I hope you enjoy. Let's dive right in.

Welcome to *Habits On Purpose*, a podcast for high-achieving women who want to create lifelong habits that give more than they take. You'll get practical strategies for mindset shifts that will help you finally understand the root causes of why you think, feel, and act as you do. And now, here's your host, Physician, and Master Certified Life Coach, Kristi Angevine.

Kristi Angevine: I'm so excited that we get to talk today. Welcome to the podcast.

Dr. Sherry Price: Thanks, Kristi. I'm so excited to be here.

Kristi: For people who don't already stalk and follow your podcast or don't know about the programs that you do, can you just introduce yourself to everybody who's listening today?

Sherry: Absolutely. Hi, my name is Dr. Sherry Price. I'm a PharmD. And I host the podcast called *Drink Less Lifestyle*. I help women drink less so they can live epic lives.

Kristi: I've talked before on the podcast that one of the ways that I found my intrigue with habits was by learning about the habit of drinking, and by personally experiencing creating a habit of drinking as a way to sort of wind

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down, and feel better. For a long time, I helped people with their drinking habits before I discovered just my love of habits in general.

But the work that you do, knowing your focus, I just want to make a point right now that it's such important work. The work you're doing really, really matters. And I'm curious sort of how you found your way to it.

Sherry: Yeah, so I don't subscribe to the philosophy that sobriety is the opposite of addiction. And I don't subscribe to the philosophy that you have to take it out of your life completely. So, I just wanted to start that way, up front. I'm about drinking less or having a relationship with alcohol that feels appropriate for your life.

Of course, I don't advocate for more; it's always about less so that you can not have it as a way that interferes with any of the goals in your life. So for me, how I got started, I was an overdrinker. I didn't feel like I identified as an addict. I didn't crave it right in the morning; it didn't feel like this physical need.

It was more of this psychological need. It was a way I would reduce my stress after work. It was the way I would take the edge off. It was the way I would relax. It was my reward at the end of the day. But, when it gets up to be a bottle, a little bit more, it just felt like that was too much. And how I knew it was too much is because my body told me the next day.

I wouldn't remember conversations. I would have a bit of brain fog. It wouldn't feel like a massive hangover, but it would just be like, "Why do you keep doing this? You know this is too much. You're in health care, you know where this can go. You know that you could become an addict, or it could get so much worse."

It was when I reached that spot that I'm like, okay, I really want to cut back, and everything I had learned in pharmacy school, everything that I learned on my clinical rotations, and in the practice I had, was all about abstinence and Twelve Step Programs and rehabs.

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That, to me, felt quite acute, quite severe, to where I was. So I'm like, "Well, I don't feel like I would fit in there. I don't feel that my level of consumption would take me there." And I also didn't believe in the goal of abstaining. To me, it just didn't feel like the right fit, so I went to the internet.

And I said, "What can I do with this overdrinking habit?" And I didn't have the word "overdrinking" at the time. I just said, "I drink too much chardonnay," like, what do you do? And so, I read about the Dry Januarys, the Sober Octobers, and I've done those, but they never really changed the habit.

It's exactly what it felt like, Kristi; it felt like this habit I would just do that would start at five o'clock at night or right after work. Some days, it was later. And I'm like, jeez, it's just become a part of how I see my day going. And that's when the urges would come. That's when the desire would come.

And I didn't always really enjoy the taste, even. I talk with a lot of women who are like, "I do it, but it's not even the taste that keeps me going. It's just that I want that effect. It's that I want that relief." And so, on the internet, I found a coach who helped women stop overdrinking, and I'm like, "That sounds amazing."

I didn't know what the goal was at the time, if you get to abstinence or whatever, but I'm like, I do want to stop at least the 'overing' part. And then, when I learned the tools to do that, I wanted to help other women. Because I knew my friends felt this way, and we kind of felt trapped. Especially if you have a reputation to uphold in your job.

I know some doctors that feel this way, that they can't really explore options because if it hits their medical record or their medical chart... You could go to these meetings, they say they're anonymous, but people know your face, so that didn't feel safe.

So, it felt like there was this lack of true confidentiality, in a way you could take care of it privately, that I wanted to offer to professionals, to people

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who don't want to join big groups, and really just take care of this from I say, a science-backed standpoint, right?

It doesn't have to necessarily be spiritual; it can be if that's what the person wants. But really, just from the Pavlovian dog kind of response, that conditioned response. And then we know that there are tools to help people to apply this to their drinking so that they can cut back or abstain if that's their goal.

Kristi: Right. So gosh, you touched on so many things here that I think are gonna be worthy of... I have a bunch of questions I want to ask you, basically. One of the things, I think it's just so important to really explicitly acknowledge that there can be a lot of shame about being open about, talking about your habit of drinking, or overdrinking, and talking about the desire to want it less or to cut back.

And you alluded that there can be a risk or a compromise to confidentiality if you go talk to somebody and you think it's going to be on your medical record if you do a public meeting. Or, is there going to be a paper trail that's going to come back and haunt me socially or professionally? I would see that with a lot of the clients I would coach.

Because they would seek out a coach, as opposed to a therapist or a physician, just because they felt there is a sense of safety and security and privacy with that. So when there's that shame, the way I think about it is that talking about it comes with a sort of like admission of a "problem." People who are listening, I'm doing air quotes around "problem."

And so, there can be a sense of embarrassment or a sense of hiding. And not only will people hide their concerns about it, or they'll hide their curiosity about, "Could there be something here to explore for me with my relationship with alcohol?" But they might be stealthy about their concerns and stealthy about their drinking.

Like, "Well, let me just maybe drink a little bit before I go out to dinner." You go out to dinner, and then, "I'll drink a little bit after I come back from

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dinner. I don't really want people to look at me sideways or wonder or worry, because that would therefore be bad, capital B." Can you speak to the self-judgment and shame piece to this?

Sherry: That's huge. If you look at the literature, that's probably the number one or the number two reason, people don't get help or don't seek help, is the shame, right? There's so much judgment that... Even I had, right? I'm in health care. I know all the statistics. I treat people who are on the liver transplant list and who have cirrhosis. I've seen what it can do in esophageal bleeding. I worked as an ICU pharmacist; I saw all of that.

So there was this level of, "You know better; why aren't you doing better?" Knowing all the facts, knowing it's a poison, knowing that it can lead to harm, knowing that I'm forgetting conversations, and I'm not being the healthiest version. And yet, I'm in healthcare, and I felt like a hypocrite. So yeah, that self-judgment and shame.

I talked to a lot of women who will say they're hiding it. I would hide it from myself. I'd put it in a different refrigerator, thinking, "Oh, I'm just gonna forget it's there." You just never forget, right? You know where the alcohol is. I talked to women who hide it in their ovens from their husbands.

It's stigmatized that if you can't control it, that there's something wrong with you. And that's how I looked at it; there was something wrong with me. And what I had learned, it's just the way that my brain had thought about it. It's the way that I had conditioned myself. It's a learned behavior. It's a learned affection; we don't come out of the womb, wanting alcohol, right? All of it was learned.

And in our culture today, it's everywhere. It's advertised at football games and concerts. If you open up a magazine for a luxury vacation, there are always people on the cruise ships drinking out of a champagne glass. There's the older couple, the younger couple, beer bottles; to say Corona, and Mexico, right? It's just part of the culture.

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So, we see these things, and I don't think we intentionally know that we are being programmed to want them. I think it's cultural. I talk about how alcohol seems to be the new smoking. Smoking was so sexy and fun, and it's what you did in romantic movies. Now it's about alcohol.

And it would feel like it elevated my life. I felt like once I got established, and I made a great income, and yeah, let me be able to afford these things, it became like a status symbol. We were doing wine tours in Napa, and that just felt so classy and sophisticated. And the drinkware, the stemware; I really got into it. I got so into it, I knew the varietals, and I'd be able to talk to what vintage, and what years.

It became this whole academic intellectual experience for me. That I felt part of something. It was part of my identity. And so, when you ask me just to drop all of that, to go to nothing... First of all, it felt impossible. Second of all, it felt like I don't know who I would be. So, I felt so scared for you to take this theme that meant so much to me, that I've cultivated decades doing and learning about and enjoying.

So, I operate under the philosophy of, let's just meet you where you're at. Right? If you're feeling it's unhealthy, and if you're feeling like the relationship is getting a little too close and a little too comfortable here, and I kind of want to start changing, let's just meet yourself where you're at. And take it slow if you need to go slow, right? Some people want to rip the Band-Aid off, and some people don't.

But really, that shame piece, like you said, is we have to stop judging ourselves and just realize, "Okay, this is something that has happened." I call it your "check engine light comes on." All of a sudden, you think your car's operating fine, and then the check engine light comes on. All of a sudden, you feel fine, and then you're like, "Err, there's something about this relationship with alcohol that I'm not feeling so good about."

And so, we just investigate that, explore it, and take it to a mechanic, take it to a coach, take it to a therapist, whomever you feel comfortable with. Just investigate it, so you can solve it. And that's where I think I differ in my

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philosophy on it; I do think it's a solvable thing. I don't think it's something you need to state, or carry around a diagnosis about, forever.

Kristi: I think what you touch on is so huge. The idea that our habits are neutral until we think of thought about them. And even though it's common to think thoughts that create shame around a habit of drinking, it's optional. And it can be just as neutral as your check engine light.

Not many of us go to the mechanic... I mean, I'm sure someone could, but not many of us go to the mechanic thinking, "Oh, my gosh, this is an indictment of my worth. I cannot believe... What did I do to my car to create this?"

Even if we actually did do something like not stay on top of the maintenance for a while, usually that deep shame isn't there when we go to the mechanic and say the light's on. Like, it is secondary to a lot of the socialization, a lot of the messaging we get around alcohol, for the habit of drinking.

So, you also touched on something that I want to ask you about. And that's that idea of all-or-none, black-or-white thinking when it comes to drinking. If people want to change their relationship with alcohol, they might think, "Well, either I just drink as I have been," which may not feel great. "Or, I just can't drink at all." Or either, "I'm a 'normal' drinker. I'm a 'problem' drinker. I have some problem." What do you say to that all-or-none sort of tendency?

Sherry: I love this question so much, and we cover this a lot. Because I think we think of a lot of things as all-or-nothing. I have a private Facebook page, and I often see, "I'm on day 23. I'm on day 24." And then, all of a sudden, somebody has a slip-up. And they think they have to start all over again, their count, right? It's like, "I'm back to day 1." I hear it, I see this all the time, the posts, "I'm back to day 1. Oh, I'll never get over this."

It's like, wait, we just discounted the 23 or 24 days of healthiness and not doing it, and how did we experience and enjoy our life in that time period?

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Versus having to say, “Oh, none of that is meaningful. I just washed that all away, just because I drank.”

And that all-or-nothing thinking will also keep people in that cycle of once they start, then oh my gosh, why bother? And why try again? And they might go weeks, months, years before trying to abstain. That's another reason I'm not about all-or-nothing.

What you had said, when you started off speaking, was exactly the words I used to my husband. I said it like this, “I can continue drinking a bottle, and sometimes more, of chardonnay, a night. Or, I can abstain. And I will tell you right now, if I was to choose between the two, I'm drinking.”

Because it felt too scary, too boring, too yucky to go over there. And there was a part of me that was like, wow, would I love my life? Would I enjoy my life? Because it's enjoyable to drink. There was that fear component. The fear of missing out, the fear of not having it, the fear of who would I be and what would my identity be?

So, it's interesting that you said that because I so had that all-or-nothing thinking. And that's exactly what the options were, that I knew at the time. And I've heard of moderate drinking, but that never really landed on me because I'm like, what does that mean? I didn't have a good description of it. It just felt nebulous, it felt abstract.

That's why I love working with people individually, is to really get to say, “Okay, if you want to be a moderate drinker, what does that look like for you?” For me, the words I used, were, “I want to be a woman who can take it or leave it.” And that felt like freedom. Right?

That felt like the choice is always in my power, even though we don't always know it is in our power. But it was like, wow, some days I'm gonna want it. And some days, I'm not. And that felt to me, like a “normal” drinker. And that's what I wanted to get to. And that's what I've been able to achieve.

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Some people may say, "Well, you shouldn't drink at all." And that's true, maybe I shouldn't drink at all, but I'm choosing to be a woman who can take it or leave it. And that feels good to me.

Kristi: Yeah, I think you just really hit the nail on the head with the idea that, yes, there are guidelines out there that will sort of posit this is how much is okay or healthy based on whichever country you're in, and whichever organization you're looking at. And the variability of those guidelines can be confusing. And when it gets down to it, it all comes down to each individual, and what will feel good to them.

And for some people, 'take it or leave it' will be the liberation that they want. Which, I can very much relate to that. That's what I also love, the 'take it or leave it' feeling. And for others, they want a little something different. And that's wonderful, right?

One of the things that you said, I don't know if the listeners caught it, but it really struck me. When you were talking about the concerns of either I drink my bottle, or I don't have any. I think that points to a lot of people thinking that, "well if I can't do as I'm going now, then life is going to be worse."

They're worried about the process of cutting back or maybe abstaining because things are going to be, and the word you said is, they'll be boring. Who wants a boring life? Without having some fun, without having the connection or the belonging or the going out? If you take away the alcohol, how can you have those? Can you talk a little bit about the fear of things being worse, particularly that boredom factor?

Sherry: Oh my gosh, my brain probably doesn't think like most. At least, that's what I think. The terms that are associated with people who drink less or don't drink at all, weigh so heavy on my brain that they don't feel good. I can never wear a t-shirt, personally, at least... Right when we're recording this, maybe I'll change in the future... But sober just sounds like somber to me. It really just sounds boring.

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No offense to people who are sober and love that word. My brain just has an electric fence type of reaction to that. It's like, "Ugh, I don't know. I don't want to be not fun." And I know that's not what it means. But it's just terminology, I don't know, that I didn't feel drawn towards.

Same with recovery. I'll never think of myself in recovery. I'm not recovering from anything. I just was a person who overdrank, and now I don't overdrink. And that's the end of the story. Right? So, I don't want charms, I don't want accolades, I don't want to count days. All of that still feels like I'm not totally free. I just wanted freedom.

And to me, freedom is the quality of life to make choices, without fear. So, I don't have fear if I drink or don't drink. In the past, I'd only go to parties and only hang out with people who drank. I would never go to a toddler's birthday party. And if I did, I had a flask in my purse, right? It's like alcohol needed to be present if we were going to have fun.

So, I have a different relationship with fun now, right? Fun to me doesn't necessarily mean alcohol, whereas, in the past, it did. And that's something that I learned. And something that I had to explore on my terms, in a way that felt comfortable and not like you're taking my alcohol away from me, right?

I think there's that fear, "If I was just to set a quit date..." like they tell smokers to set a quit date, and then they take away your cigarettes. I don't know, if you take away my bottle of alcohol, I would be like... Not because I'm addicted to it physically. But just because I'm like, "Wait, wait, what am I going to do? How am I going to go to this party?"

Some of the typical terms just didn't work for me, and I think that's okay. We choose labels that make us feel that they get us to our goals. So, if the label of 'recovery' or 'sober' or 'not having fun' or 'boredom'... Don't go towards those labels. It doesn't mean you can't drink less; you could still drink less and choose other labels.

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I'm just having, and learning, a healthier way to be around alcohol. Learning to become a woman who can take it or leave it.

Kristi: Yes, the learning and the individualization there are just key. And so, I've heard you before, I don't remember where it was, but refer to changing your relationship with drinking as "restructuring the habit." I just love that phrase "restructuring the habit" of drinking. Which, you and I both know that there are other behaviors that people use that are very similar to drinking, that are amenable to restructuring.

My take on habits is that there's always some benefit to the habit; otherwise, we just wouldn't do it. And for me, I remember, having the habit changed how I felt, it kind of quieted my internal chatter, and it reduced the potency of the thoughts I had. And therefore, anything that was running through my mind when I came home from work, I could just get it to be quiet. So, I could be able to focus and be more present.

And essentially numbed some of the emotions that I either didn't know how to feel, didn't want to feel, or didn't know what to do with, at the time. And we hear how Brené Brown talks about how you can selectively numb. What I would love to hear your take on is the numbing aspect of drinking. Either what you see with your clients, or how the drinking is resourceful to them in one way, even though it's essentially numbing.

Sherry: Yeah, I will talk about an example from my own life. It was when I was still on my overdrinking journey. I didn't hide it from my family. I'd have my glass of wine out around my husband, around my daughter. I was probably, three, maybe four glasses in. And my daughter, I think, who was about five at the time, came down out of bed.

You just want your kids to go to bed when they're young. It's like, "I just need my alone time." And so, I was having my glass of chardonnay on the couch, and she just comes down, and I got really upset. Because I'm like, "Why is she not in the bed? I just want to be left alone." And she goes, "Mommy, I just came down to give you a kiss." Sweetest thing, sweetest

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moment. Oh, my goodness, I would die to go back in time for that kiss, right?

But the words out of my mouth were like, “Can you just go to bed? I just want to be left alone.” And it's because I really wanted to be with my wine more than I wanted just this moment. And so, it numbed me to the relationship I was having in my own household. I was already three or four drinks in. And I was just like, I don't care about your love and your kiss right now. Because it numbs the bad and it numbs the good.

So, it became just an annoyance because she was getting in the way of what I wanted to do. I look back at that, and I'm like, yeah, it numbs you to the point that the words that would come out of my mouth... We all hear it, “Oh, I lose my filter when I drink.” Yeah, it just numbs us to our way to connect with others and our way to connect with ourselves.

We think we're connecting with ourselves. But we're not; we're disconnecting. We're disconnecting from the world, we're disconnecting from our feelings, like you mentioned, we're disconnecting from our emotions. And there are other ways we can disconnect if we need to.

Kristi: Yeah, I think it's so important just to recognize those unintended consequences of doing something that most people and most of my clients, and it sounds like you've experienced this, as well. Most people grab the drink, partially out of habit, but because there's something good about it. There's some benefit to it. Like, “It's fun to cook dinner with this makes. It makes this a little bit easier. It quiets...” whatever it is, there's some benefit.

And yet, when that benefit has an underbelly to it, that's when we can get curious about whether the relationship is amenable to something different. So the other thing that you mentioned at the very beginning, and you mentioned, like, ten things in a row that were awesome to talk about, so I'll just like reiterate what you said.

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You referenced Dry Januarys and Sober Octobers. Every single month, you could have a little acronym for doing a dry thing. And this time of year, in particular, there are a lot of people making New Year's resolutions and joining a gym or doing Dry January or Dry February, whatever it is now.

And my take is that some of these ways to jumpstart a change are problematic because, number one, they are oftentimes driven by a desire to fix a problem. Like, there's something wrong with me; I need to fix it. And therefore, I need to do it in this way. And oftentimes, that can have some shame or unworthiness embedded in it. As opposed to, wow, it's time to change my relationship, from a place of like, nothing's wrong with me; I just want to change.

And number two, they call on willpower. And because of that, they don't work, and they're like a yo-yo diet where you count down the days, and you don't do anything; you white-knuckle your way through there. And ultimately, at the end of the day, the relationship itself hasn't changed.

And I'm curious if you could speak to these dry months or challenges that people do as a way to propel them into longer-lasting change.

Sherry: Yeah, that's such a great question. And I'm actually doing a webinar on this next week, about how to come off a Dry January. Because I think we think these dry periods are going to, like you said, fix us, they're going to change the habit for good. And while being without a lot of alcohol in the system or any alcohol in the system is good for the body, that's just looking at the body, right?

We also need to look at the mind. Like you said, why do we want it? And that's where the relationship is, in our head, in our mind. And if we're not doing that concurrently... I think that's where I've always failed in the past because I thought it was just avoiding it, or taking it out of the house, or not being around it, or just not putting it in my body.

But when it's part of your identity, or you've done it for so long, and it feels like it is a habit, or it is something that's a part of you, if you don't do the

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mental piece, you just wind up going right back to the same habit and the same pattern because you haven't changed any of that relationship. Right?

You called it a relationship, and so, if you don't repattern and if you don't change that relationship, even if you stay away from it for a year... I've seen people relapse or go back to exactly right where they were.

Kristi: Yeah, the root causes were never looked at. Like, the real reason for the drinking was sort of set aside in the back of the junk drawer. You stopped drinking, then as soon as it's February 1...

Sherry: Yes. And I remember having the calendar count down, just like you said. I'd be on January 19 and going, "Who-oooh, 12 more days," right? Because it has 31 days in the month, right? And I'd be like, "Whoo-hoo, I could do this." But then, when February 1 came, boom, I was right back, or the 2nd or the 3rd, right? It didn't take very long till I was back up to my bottle of wine a night. Because I didn't change the relationship, and the fundamental reason I wanted it.

Kristi: In that vein of painting a picture and planting a seed of hope and optimism. For anybody who's listening, who's thinking, "You know what? This actually really deeply resonates. I can relate to wanting to want it less. I can relate to feeling like this isn't the relationship that I want. Whether I have some shame or just want to change it without shame."

Can you talk a little bit about what does 'take it or leave it' look like for you?

Sherry: For me, there'll be weeks where I don't. Currently, I'm doing a Dry January, but from a different perspective now; I just don't want to put it in my body. I do allow my drinking to increase on holidays, vacations, and Christmas; I feel at peace with that.

So, I think when you're defining 'take it or leave it' for me, it's not... It felt too regimented to say, "I'm only going to have four drinks a week." And I tried that, and I stuck to it, but it felt somewhat rigid; it felt like it wasn't flexible. That's why I love the title of *Drink Less Lifestyle*. I want to set someone up

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for success, for life. And so, the amount of alcohol I want in my life fluctuates based on things and what I'm choosing.

I also don't ever want it to get out of hand where I'm embarrassed by what I said, what I didn't remember, conversations. So, I've learned what those parameters are for me. And how I like to describe it, since I'm a pharmacist, I know "my exact dose" that works for my body.

I encourage women... If you're shorter than me or more petite because I'm kind of tall. Your dose might be different because it is a pharmacological drug, right? So it does have effects on your brain. And some people want to limit it for various reasons; conversations, brain health. We know it causes weight gain, and increases sugar and sugar cravings. Just finding what that dose is for you.

And when I exceed a certain amount, I know my body is not able to control it so well. So, then I just don't go past that dose. And it's not from a wagging finger, you should never. It's from self-care and self-love. And I just don't desire to have the negative consequences.

It takes a little bit of time to find that. So many things affect that. It's different if I'm dehydrated versus if I'm hydrated, right? It's different, my quantity, if I'm thirsty and on an empty stomach and haven't had food. Alcohol will hit me super quick. My dose changes based on how my body and what my body's needs are and other things.

So, it's not like one tablet will do you. You know what I mean? It depends. And, of course, if I'm driving, I take it more seriously. I think, for me, it's about taking 100% responsibility for this. And that makes me feel powerful and in control. And those are the ways that I want my relationship with alcohol to feel like and to be like.

Kristi: Okay, I'm just imagining somebody listening to this thinking, "That sounds so great to have that flexibility with doses. To have that sense of ownership or personal responsibility that doesn't feel like an iron fist. And to have a fluidity to be like, 'Oh, this is what I want my relationship to be like.'

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Not occupying 95% of my waking thoughts.” I love that you just painted that picture because I think it really emphasizes the fact that if you have a desire to alter your relationship with alcohol, it's completely possible, no matter what it's like right now.

Sherry: It doesn't have to be this one-size-fits-all model that I think I was privy to, and that's all I knew. I really think you could customize it to what you feel you need or what works for your life.

Kristi: Oh, totally. I love that so much. I always like to offer the listener who's out on their walk, or they're on their commute, or they're at the hospital on-call... Offer them something, either a tangible to do. That they can take what they've learned and do something with it this week. Or, one of those things where we say, “Hey, if you remember nothing else out of this whole conversation that we had, this would be a really wonderful thing to take home.”

I'm wondering, kind of think back on our conversation, and then, just what you teach your clients, what you've learned. Does anything come to mind?

Sherry: There are a few things. One that I took from Maia Szalavitz; she wrote a book, a couple of them, actually. I had her on my podcast. But if you want to really look at addiction, I think of it more as a habit, but addiction in a different way; she wrote this great book called, *Undoing Drugs* that came out last year. There was a saying in that book that I was like, wow, I've been doing that to myself all my life. “You can't punish addiction out of somebody. You can't punish a habit out of somebody.”

And I know there was so much self-loathing, self-hate the next day, regret. Sometimes I would cut back or not drink because of punishment. And it doesn't last. So, I would love for your listener, who may be struggling in this area, to really think of this as self-care and self-compassion. I'm doing this for whatever reason, right?

There could be hundreds of reasons: Your health. So you can live longer to play with your kids. So you can feel better about yourself and not have the

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whack-a-mole ups and downs, highs and lows that alcohol brings because it is a hormone dysregulated on so many levels.

And then also, she said just to meet people where they're at, but don't leave them there. So, meet yourself where you're at. I think that comes with acceptance, that comes with saying, "Hey, this was my past self. This is how she responded around alcohol. But I'm gonna meet myself today. How do I want tomorrow and my future to look?"

Then, start taking yourself there or getting help to take yourself on this journey through compassion and through really wanting better and more for yourself.

Kristi: I'm so glad you shared that quote, and just that concept, in general. Because that really does sort of tie everything together so nicely. And now I want to, of course, go read the books. Thank you for that. So for the people who want to learn more about the work that you do, or just follow you in all the places, how can people find you?

Sherry: My podcast is called *Drink Less Lifestyle*. And that used to be the name of my program, but people are like, "I don't want that coming across my credit card," for the shame purposes. It's so funny you got into that. So I recently, about a year ago, changed the name of my program to EpicYou.

Because really, that's what we're doing. We're making a better version, a more epic version, of you and your life and your surroundings, and elevating how you feel. So my program is called EpicYou. And so, the website, if you want to read more about me or my work, is EpicYou.com.

Kristi: That's perfect. Well, it was really wonderful to have this conversation. And I think I think it needs to be a 'To be continued,' have a part two. So, thank you for your time. Thank you for sharing the very personal aspects of your story because I think that really flushes out a topic. So, it's not just boring and dry. It's actually you talking about what happened in your life, what you struggled with, what you noticed, and I just really appreciate you putting it out there in that way. Thank you so much.

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Sherry: And thank you for having me on to look at this as not something that is bad, just something that we really want to get our hands around. And in part two, I'd love to talk about mommyhood and how that brings a whole new level; the mommy wine culture... I have a neurodivergent child, and so that was hard with raising, and I think I took to the bottle to soothe feeling inadequate as a mother and as a provider. And so, I think we can touch upon so much more in a session, just how it affects moms.

Kristi: 100%. It sounds like we just need to schedule that because part two: Parenting meets alcohol. Inadequacy. All of that stuff. How that's just the perfect combination, in our particular culture especially, with all the messaging around alcohol being cool and sophisticated and the way to cope. That would be a perfect conversation. Let's definitely do that.

Sherry: Yes. I'd love that. Thank you.

Kristi: Thank you for coming on. Take care.

If you want to learn more about how to better understand your patterns, stop feeling reactionary, and get back into the proverbial driver's seat with your habits, you'll want to join my email list. Which you can find linked in the show notes, or if you go to HabitsOnPurpose.com, you'll find it right there.

Thanks for listening to *Habits On Purpose*. If you want more information on Kristi Angevine or the resources from the podcast, visit HabitsOnPurpose.com Tune in next week for another episode.