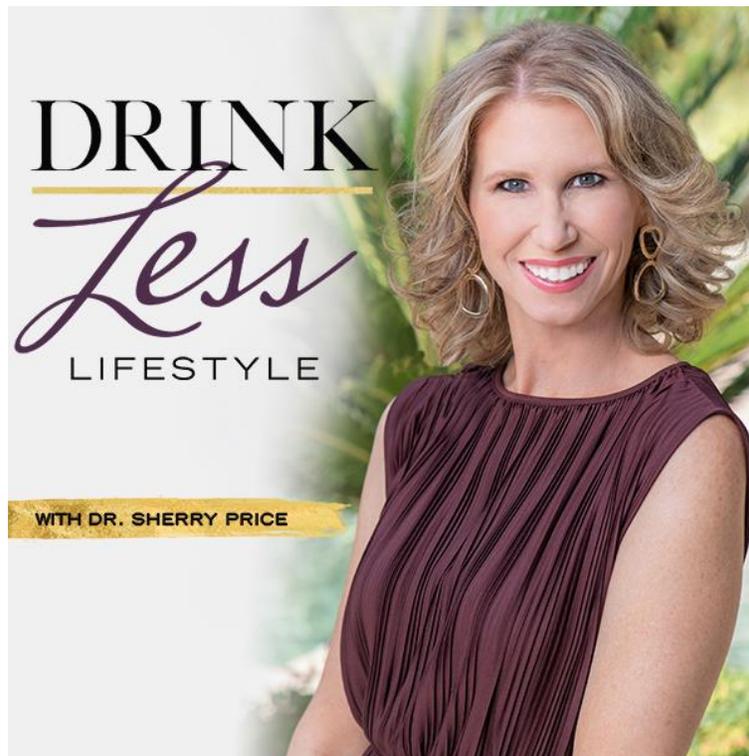


Ep #7: The Think-Feel-Act Cycle



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 7.

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.

Hello my friends. I am having so much fun with all the ladies in my private Facebook group. This month we are focusing on doing some self-care challenges. If you are not a member, come on over and join the fun. Every couple of days we're trying on a new challenge to really improve our health and our wellness. You can search for our group, Stop the Overdrinking Habit, but I'll also put a link in the show notes for you as well.

And I'm excited to announce the second winner of our \$100 Amazon gift card giveaway. All you have to do to enter the contest is rate the podcast and write a review. And I just really love hearing all the feedback from all of you. It's such a fun way to connect with all of you. And I really appreciate you following me along on this journey.

Alright, so today's winner is Dana, and I want to read to you what she wrote. "Hurray for the podcast, I've been following Dr. Sherry Price via Facebook and on her email for quite some time. I'm not always able to take advantage of her Facebook coaching and connection opportunities. So this podcast fits the bill. Thank you for all you're doing around this topic. And PS, great intro music." I love that too, Dana, I love my intro music. When I heard that the first time I'm like, "Bam, that is it."

So, congratulations, Dana and I really also want to wish you a happy upcoming 50th birthday, I know from watching your posts inside the Facebook group. And it's just so much fun to cheer you and the other ladies on to living a drink less lifestyle.

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Alright, so today I can't wait to talk to you about a special tool that I love to use in my coaching practice. If you have attended any of my webinars, or any of my masterclasses, or you've been following me for any length of time inside my Facebook group, or on my email list, well, you know that I am all about changing our drinking with the think-feel-act cycle. This tool is amazing. It's my go to tool that has freed me from my chronic nightly drinking and it helps so many of the women when I coach them.

And like I said, if you've been following me, you know I talk about this tool a lot, especially inside my Facebook Lives, and why? Because it works. But let me just forewarn you here, it is a tool. So you have to know how to use the tool. Just like with the hammer, a hammer is a tool, it's pointless and useless unless you know how to use it.

So with the think-feel-act cycle I just want to say it's very easy to understand it intellectually. It's a whole another thing when you apply it to your life, kind of just like a hammer, you can look at it, you can know that you have to pick it up and you have to hit a nail for it to work.

But it's a whole another story when you actually pick up the hammer and go to use the tool. You have to apply equal pressure, you have to apply it at the right angle, with the right amount of force if you really want that nail to go in correctly, pretty, and keep the two pieces of wood together or keep them sturdy. So, same thing, we are going to talk about this think-feel-act cycle tool because I don't want you just to know about it cognitively. I want you to start applying it to your drinking, start applying it to your life, because that's when you truly can see the results change.

So let's dive in. The overview is quite simple; it's that your thoughts are what create your feelings. And it's your feelings that drive your actions. So let me just say that again. It's that your thoughts that create your feelings. And it's your feelings that drive your actions. So this is what I mean by the think-feel-act cycle. If this is the first time you've learned about it, I didn't make this concept up. This has been around for ages. There are many quotes out there that basically describe this same kind of concept.

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So this is one quote I like, “Watch your thoughts for they become your words. Watch your words for they become your actions. Watch your actions for they become your habits. Watch your habits for they become your character. Watch your character for it becomes your destiny.” So you can see the thoughts, the words, the actions, the habits, that’s all in alignment with the think-feel-act cycle.

Also another quote, Plato had said, “Human behavior flows from three main sources: desire, emotion and knowledge.” Desire and emotion are our feelings and knowledge is how we’re thinking. So again it’s that think-feel-act cycle. It’s the thinking and the feeling that drives the behavior that drives all of our action. It drives what we do and what we don’t do. So I like the think-feel-act cycle concept because it just breaks it down to the three main components. Our thoughts that create our feelings, our feelings that create our actions.

So I want to talk about this in the context of drinking and overdrinking. So let me give you example number one. If you have the thought, I’d like a drink to take the edge off, if you’re thinking that way what kind of feeling does that create? For me if I’m thinking that way it creates the feeling of desire. And if I have desire for the drink, what do you think my behavior or my action is that I’m going to take? Yes, I’m going to pour a drink. So think, feel, act.

Or look at example number two. This was one I experienced a lot. My thought was at the end of the day after I worked a hard day and before transitioning into home life, my thought would be I deserve a drink. And if I’m thinking the thought, I deserve a drink, what kind of feeling did that produce in my body? It felt kind of entitlement, I deserve a drink. I’m entitled to a drink. I’m entitled to have an adult beverage. And then of course what action did it lead me to? Pouring myself a drink.

So I know these examples are both very simple, but they really explain why it is that we pour the first drink. And if we continue to think that way, guess what? We’ll continue to pour subsequent drinks. So from these examples I

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really want you to see that how you think about alcohol or how you think about a drink will actually cause you to create a sense of desire, or entitlement, or other feeling for it. Your brain has a programmed way of thinking about alcohol, especially as you age.

So this programmed way of thinking, it's really our past and our experience of alcohol that's now following us into the future, that's creating this pattern of drinking. And when we think about it a certain way over, and over, and over again, that's going to create the same types of feelings. The feeling of desire, the feeling of entitlement, the feeling of permission, I get to do this, I should be able to do this. That's all the ways our brain is thinking about alcohol.

And I want you to know that this is huge – huge. It's the key to success to changing your relationship with alcohol if you know that it's coming from the think-feel-act cycle. And if you want to change your relationship with alcohol permanently, we have to use the think-feel-act cycle to help get us there. Because think about it, without changing thoughts about alcohol you wouldn't create this chemical cascade of hormones, and neurotransmitters in your body that create the desire, the feeling for it in the body. If we didn't have thought we wouldn't be producing that feeling.

So I want you to consider two scenarios, let's look at one scenario. Think about people who can truly take it or leave it with alcohol. What are their thoughts? What do you think they're thinking about alcohol? Alcohol doesn't have the same meaning to them as it does to somebody who constantly drinks and over-drinks.

And you can also think about the people who just choose not to drink. Maybe they've not been exposed to it. Maybe they don't have this patterned way of thinking about it where they feel they need it, or they need it to relax. They just don't think about it at all so they don't drink at all. So it's not like they're a good person and you're a bad person or any of that, it's just that their brain thinks different thoughts than the person whose

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brain over-drinks. They have different thoughts around alcohol, that's all it is.

Let's consider a second example. Think about yourself and think about you having early Alzheimer's or early dementia. When you have Alzheimer's or dementia you know you tend to forget things, you tend to forget your thoughts. You tend to forget your mind. They call that absent minded.

So if you forgot all of your past programmed thoughts about alcohol, guess what? I guarantee you; you wouldn't want alcohol, because your desire comes from your brain. It comes from the thoughts that you have about alcohol. And if you don't have those thoughts in your brain, guess what? You're not going to desire it. Therefore you're not going to drink.

So this goes back to my very first podcast where I said drinking is a thinking problem. How we think about alcohol will cause us to feel a certain way about it, which will cause us to do something about it like pour a drink, like drink too much. But it's only because of the practiced way of thinking, feeling and our action around it. That's just the current relationship that we have with alcohol, which is really all in your mind.

But don't mishear me, it's not like I'm saying something's wrong with you, something's wrong with your brain or you're bad. It's just programmed rehearsed process, that's all it is, a programmed rehearsed process over and over again. It's so rehearsed that you might not even be aware of the thoughts causing the behavior of overdrinking. You might not even feel like it's a thinking problem. And that's where many people think it's a drinking problem.

So it's just this repeated process over and over again. We have the same thoughts at the end of the day, which leads to the same feeling of desire, and that creates the same action of pouring the drink.

So now we can use that same tool to change our relationship with alcohol. So when I'm coaching women and I say, "We have to change our thinking

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around alcohol,” please don’t hear me say that we have to change it to a 180 degrees from where we’re at now. So it’s not like we have to think alcohol’s terrible. We don’t have to say it’s toxic. We don’t have to say alcohol is poison. We don’t have to think of it as alcohol is not my friend. We don’t have to think about it as alcohol makes me feel like hell the next day, or alcohol is evil.

I don’t recommend that way because it didn’t work for me and I see how it backfires for so many of my clients. And do you know why that is? Because we turn it into this forbidden fruit that we can’t have, and guess what? Sometimes that makes our brain crave it even more. It’s like saying, “I can’t drink until Friday.” And then Friday comes and you wind up bingeing, because all the while that whole week leading up to Friday you’ve been telling yourself you can’t have it. And so if you tell yourself you can’t have it, those thoughts can create desire for some people.

So that method or that strategy really doesn’t work for some people and it didn’t work for me because by telling myself I couldn’t have something, it made me want me want it even more. So what does work? For me it’s thinking about alcohol being totally neutral. If I think something is neutral it’s kind of no, kind of like I don’t want it, it’s just neutral. It has no meaning to it, it’s not good. It’s not bad. It’s just alcohol, totally neutral. Because your desire for alcohol is truly just caused by your thoughts about it, it’s not because of the alcohol, it’s because your thoughts about the alcohol.

So now I want to share with you something I did on a Facebook Live that I think will really hit this point home. So I was doing some training on a Facebook Live inside my Stop the Overdrinking Habit free private group. And I had a glass of Chardonnay off to the side. So while I was teaching about the think-feel-act cycle, I bring this glass of Chardonnay into view and I said, “I just poured this cold glass of Chardonnay, how many of you guys desire it?”

And then I removed the wine glass from the camera shot and I began teaching a bit again on the think-feel-act cycle. And then I said, “Okay, now

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here's this glass." And I bring in the same glass of Chardonnay but this time I tell them it is warm concentrated urine, yes, pee. So how many of you have desire for this drink now? What has changed? It's the same content in the glass, what has changed is I told you different thoughts to have about it. And did you notice if you think it's warm urine, you're not going to want to drink it? But the alcohol stayed the same.

Now, some people will hear this example and it won't resonate with them anyway because they don't have desire for that type of alcohol. Some people just have desire for red wine. Some people just have desire for beer. Some people have desire for all types of alcohol. But I want to tell you, it's not the alcohol. You'll tell me it's the taste, it's this, it's that. But I'll tell you, it's just your thoughts about that type of alcohol. And I love that example that I just used because I so feel it drives home the point.

Okay, so I've hammered it home, it is our thoughts about the alcohol. So now I think that's great news because now we know what we have to work on. We now know what we have to change, and what is that? Yes, our thoughts. So just consider, it's not about avoiding alcohol. It's not about counting days of being alcohol free. It's not about using apps to track your process. It's not about crossing days off on the calendar.

Now, I'm not saying that those ways are wrong, or shouldn't be used, or that aren't helpful, but what I'm saying is, are they measuring exactly what counts? So these methods are measuring your behavior, which is helpful, but they're really not truly measuring your relationship with alcohol. And what I see with some women is that if they have an alcohol free week they make it mean that they were good or that this is getting progress and things are working, only to find the next week they fall off the wagon and now they feel bad. And now they feel discouraged.

Well, yes, counting days of being alcohol free is measuring progress, but it's only looking at the behavior of drinking. It's not actually measuring the way we think about alcohol and our relationship to it. So when you're measuring your progress, it's good to know what your behavior is.

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But if you're putting all this effort in just to looking at the behavior, but we're not changing our relationship to alcohol then this is probably not going to be a permanent shift. Because we truly haven't changed what alcohol means to us in our life. All we're doing is measuring our behavior, not the relationship, not what you think about it. Because what are you thinking when you're not drinking? What are you thinking when you are having those alcohol free days and nights?

Because if you're thinking, life's not fun, or I can't wait to have a drink again, or I'm not any fun, or I can't be trusted around alcohol so that's why I'm doing this. Or I just have to white knuckle through this night or this week, and then it'll get easier. Or then when you start drinking again do you have thoughts like here I go again, I'm on the slippery slope, oh my gosh, I fell off the wagon.

And so we're constantly using the behavior of drinking to beat ourselves up, and to make a judgment call about our morality, if we're good, or if we're bad, or if we're making progress. When true progress should be measured by how we think about alcohol and our relationship to it. Oftentimes I'll see women; they'll do really great, get a string of days in a row and then all of a sudden start drinking again. And then it's like all hell breaks loose, the wheels come off. And they make it mean they don't have willpower, or they're not self-disciplined, or they don't have control.

But none of that is true, and none of those ways are truly going to work to changing your relationship with it. You're always going to be using force. And force is not the way to change your relationship. Force is always going to feel uncomfortable or not good. And it's like pushing against something we don't really want. I say, check-in with your thinking whether you're drinking or you're not.

How does it change when you drink versus when you don't drink? Because when alcohol is totally neutral when you choose to have it or you choose not to have it, that it doesn't add or subtract from the quality or the experience of your life, that's what I call true freedom around alcohol.

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That's when I say you are a woman who can take it or leave it, because it doesn't mean that you're having a better night, or more fun, or less fun, or something's wrong. It's just alcohol, you either choose to have some or you don't. But the meaning of your life, the meaning of you as a person hasn't changed; at least that's how I define it for me.

So I really want you to consider that for yourself, how does alcohol add or subtract to your life, if you choose to have or you don't have it? How do your thoughts change? Because that's the work that needs to be done with the think-feel-act cycle, because when I think alcohol is totally neutral, it doesn't create the feeling of desire. And it doesn't cause me an action or a behavior to go pour it, it's just neutral, I could take it or leave it.

I hope this episode has shed some significant light for you on what you're doing and why you're doing it, and the relationship you currently have with alcohol. And that you can use this tool to form the relationship you do want with alcohol. It took me a while to grasp it mentally and a little bit longer to apply it. But it is a very, very powerful tool. It's the tool that changed my desire and my behavior around my drinking. This think-feel-act cycle is everything.

And here is a secret; it doesn't just work with drinking. The think-feel-act cycle, when you apply it to any area of your life you can change it dramatically, because you can change how you think, and ultimately that will change how you act. That will get you the results that you want in your life. This is amazing stuff my friends. Okay, that's what I have for you today.

Before you go, I'm excited to celebrate the launch of this podcast by giving away four \$100 Amazon gift cards to lucky listeners who subscribe, rate, and review this show on Apple Podcasts. Of course, I do hope that you love the show, but it does not have to be a 5-star review. I want your honest feedback to make sure I continue to provide you tons of value. So, visit sherryprice.com/podcastlaunch to learn more about the contest and how to enter. I'll be announcing the winners on the show in an upcoming episode. Bye for now. I'll see you next week.

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Thanks for listening to *Drink Less Lifestyle*. If you're ready to change your relationship with drinking now check out the free guide, *How to Effectively Break the Overdrinking Habit* at sherryprice.com/startnow. See you next week.