

Annie Grace:

This is Annie Grace, and you're listening to This Naked Mind Podcast, where without judgment, pain, or rules, we explore the role of alcohol in our lives and culture. This episode is sponsored by The Alcohol Experiment, a free 30-day challenge designed to interrupt your patterns, give you control, restore your health, and put you back in touch with the you who doesn't need alcohol to cope, relax, or enjoy life. More than 220,000 people have tried The Alcohol Experiment for themselves and have seen improved sleep, increased happiness, reduced anxiety, and more. Join thousands in this inspiring, hopeful, and exciting program where you examine your beliefs and reconnect with the best version of you without ever feeling like you're missing out. Start today for free at alcoholexperiment.com.

Hi, this is Annie Grace. So we are gonna talk about how to stop drinking, what support is available and specifically, what are the key things that I think are absolutely vital. The three key things in changing your relationship with alcohol, whether you wanna stop or you wanna moderate or exactly what you wanna do. So I'm Annie Grace, I'm the author of This Naked Mind and The Alcohol Experiment and I am going to dive into this very important topic. So basically, there are so many ways to think about stopping drinking. And I would say that there is two fundamental differences in how people approach stopping drinking. A lot of people reach a pain threshold, you could call this a rock bottom or a moment of time where things just feel like, "I can't go on like this anymore" where the cost of alcohol is far greater than the benefits. And they just say, "Enough, I've had enough" and they start the journey of stopping drinking, but they do it from a mindset of, "I want to be able to do this thing, but it's causing me too much pain so I need to stop now even though ideally I wouldn't want to stop, ideally I would want to go back in time to where I could drink "normally."

And so I think that's one kind of area of how people stop. Reaching enough pain, realizing, okay, they need to make a change, making that change, but making that change often with the mindset of, "This sucks because I would actually rather it be different, I would rather not have to change my drinking, I would rather fit in, I would rather be a drinker, at least an occasional drinker, I'm just not happy with how much pain alcohol is causing me and how much I'm drinking." So that's one mindset. The second one, I think is really what my work focuses on, is actually not changing your behavior in the short term, but getting super insanely curious without judgment about why you're doing that behavior in the first place. And so you actually don't change your behavior. And you can come at this from pain, you can certainly come at this from, "I've had enough, I really needed to change this" and then have the faith that actually changing it might mean not changing in the short term in order to really change it effectively in the longterm, or you can come at it from just curiosity like, "I think my life might be a bit better if I drank a bit less, or I think that I might be happier.

I'm just curious about how it would be because I keep hearing all these people talking about how great it is to be alcohol free and what could it be for me?" And this path is much different. It is really about, with curiosity, going, "Why am

I doing this to begin with? Why does this thing seem to have power over me that nothing else seems to have? Why do I spend so much time thinking about drinking? Why is drinking such a key aspect in my life? What is going on here?" And asking those questions and finding the answers without the added noise of the pressure of quitting, wanting to drink, beating yourself up for drinking again, et cetera, et cetera. So it's actually kind of taking the pressure off and saying, "You know what, I am going to completely and totally focus on understanding this and looking with total curiosity at my behavior."

And so in this path, we would do things like, "All right, I'm actually gonna time how long does having a drink make me feel good? How long is it really?" So I have one glass of wine, I set a timer, and I say, "Okay, I'm starting to feel pretty good, when do I start to feel kind of not so good?" And the interesting thing about alcohol is it works that the nice feelings are when your blood alcohol content is rising, and then the not so nice feelings happen when your blood alcohol content starts to fall. Now, the nice feelings when you time this, you'll realize it's about 20 minutes max. Sometimes a little less, sometimes a little more if you have a full stomach. The not so nice feelings of your blood alcohol falling, where alcohol becomes a depressant, that couldn't be two to three hours for one drink. And that's restlessness, uneasiness. So you see this in real life in your own personal experience. And of course, what do we do when those not so nice feelings kick in, we reach for another drink and we keep that rising as long as we can, which is why instead of just one glass of wine, we are often drinking four, five, six, because of this very predictable pattern of what alcohol does in the body.

And so you get really curious about this stuff, but without judging yourself, without saying, "Oh, I'm just so weak because I can't just have one. I'm so weak, this is my problem." Because that doesn't help. I believe that, actually, I think there's three key things if we're gonna talk about this second path, this path of not quitting from a place of really pain and deprivation, but from a place of curiosity and then decision based on what you really want once you know all the facts and that's really what I teach. The second path, there's three key things. Three core components. Number one is self-compassion. Kind of above all else is self-compassion. And that is understanding why alcohol is doing what it's doing in your life. Understanding that alcohol is addictive to human beings who have brains and blood and cells and skin. Not just a certain percentage of human beings, but all human beings, and in different capacities, in different situations. It varies, obviously, but understanding that and letting yourself off the hook, really approaching this with like, "Oh my body, by getting addicted to alcohol or wanting to drink more than I used to want to drink is actually doing exactly what it was designed to do, exactly what it was designed to do."

And so I can let myself off the hook and approach this with self-compassion and curiosity. So that's number one, self-compassion combined with curiosity. So I would also say this is curiosity without judgment. Why am I doing what I'm doing? How much am I doing? What is the cost of it? How much does it really make me feel better? Without judgment. Number two is mindset. And this is the process of learning all the things that you need to learn about alcohol. We

literally know more about the side effects of Advil than we do about the side effects of the thing, like in my case, I was consuming much more than anything. I literally think I was eating less calories in food than I was drinking alcohol. Meaning I was drinking more calories in alcohol than I was actually eating in food.

So I was consuming more alcohol in terms of caloric intake than food, yet I knew less about the side effects than I did about, I would be like, "Oh, I can't take three Advil because I don't know, that just doesn't, I know that there are side effects with my liver." And so really educating yourself. And when you educate yourself, your mindset shifts. So again, in scenario one, when you're doing it with pain and then you're not learning the ins and outs of alcohol, but you're just kind of white knuckling it, you feel the sense of deprivation. You're never learning that actually the things that alcohol has been promising you, that it says it does, like reducing stress or giving you an escape or helping you feel better, it doesn't actually do those things. Literally the science is very clear. It doesn't actually do those things. I can explain to you exactly why we think it does those things and that's super interesting and super compelling, but willing to understand the ins and outs of that, you approach this with a totally different mindset.

It really becomes a mindset of, "Oh man, I don't think I want to do that. I see that that glass of wine is just gonna increase my cortisol levels instead of actually providing relief from my stressful day, I don't want that glass of wine." Until your mindset shifts. So again, number one, self-compassion with curiosity, curiosity without judgment. Self-compassion number one. Number two is mindset. Actually going into the understanding and learning about the substance of alcohol in the brain in order to understand what it's doing and how it's not doing what we think it's doing. It's not delivering on what we believed based on our entire societal influences, what we thought it should do. And number three, and I would say these are most important, the most important one is number three. And it actually, because both number one and number two play into it is emotion. It is the emotion that you bring to this habit change. That is the overall most important thing. So in scenario one, you're bringing an emotion of, "Oh my gosh, I'm in so much pain. I have to make this change. This sucks. I feel deprived. I wish I could be normal. I wish it was like it used to be. I'm so upset."

This is a very negative emotion, and so you go on and you try to make this change. And yeah, if the pain is bad enough, you can be successful. But it's a success that is wrought with tragedy and feeling sad and feeling, mourning alcohol. A lot of instances people say that they've mourned alcohol and there is a place for that. But just understanding the emotion, just really mourning what was and the fact you have to change and that negative emotion. Now, in this other way, when we're focusing on self-compassion, that's positive emotion. Understanding why you're doing what you're doing that engenders hope, that engenders understanding, that engenders acceptance of yourself, that engenders peace. Those are positive emotions, mindset, really realizing, looking at something and be like, "Huh, it's not that I can't drink this. It's not that I really

want to, but I'm not gonna allow myself to because I've just gotten myself in trouble with this, it's that because I understand it now because I understand what it's doing in my brain and my body. I don't want to drink this."

And that is a huge difference. And so both of those things, self-compassionate mindset contribute to you make a change from a positive place of emotion. So what resources are available to you to access the second way? This place of self-compassion, mindset and positive emotion. There's really four key pillars. And that is community. There's tons of free communities, specifically on Facebook, we've got this Naked Mind community, The Alcohol Experiment community. Community is so important because you're with like-minded people who are also on this path to change, who are helping you with the self-compassion, with the mindset and with the positive emotion. Number two is content and curriculum. Now, there's so many things you can do. You can join The Alcohol Experiment. It's for free. Every single day, we deliver a video which is content, exactly what alcohol is doing in your brain and body. We deliver an email. We deliver some journaling prompts if you really want to go deep, it's totally free. It's always available at thealcoholexperiment.com. So we've got community, we've got content, which is really important. And also the podcast is great content. And then you really have coaching.

So if you wanted to really dig in deeper, you can join either a Live Alcohol Experiment with a coach or we have plenty of certified This Naked Mind coaches that you can find at thisnakedmind.com, but this is really working one-on-one or in a group coaching situation. Or you can join The PATH at nakedmindpath.com and that comes coaches, every single day, you have coaching, coaches are going live. So coaching is just such an important way to do that. And then the last thing I would say is connection. Actually building relationships, real life relationships with people who are on the same path with you. And those four things are really the resources that are available to you. And again, with content, with mindset shift, there's also the books, This Naked Mind and The Alcohol Experiment. There's so many other communities and so many other books as well.

Obviously, this is something that you wanna find what works for you. If me and my work doesn't work for you, find what works for you, that's the most important thing. And so I believe though that the change that happens that is painless, and easy and sustaining, is based on those three key pillars of self-compassion, curiosity without judgment, mindset and positive emotion. And I believe that the resources available, if you had to break them down into really four basic things, they would be content, so the content you get, whether it's through a book or through a podcast or through The Alcohol Experiment community, the communities that you can immerse in and you can really go deep and hear other people's stories, including the podcast is a great place of community because we tell so many stories, people come on and tell their stories. Coaching, where you can actually join nakedmindpath.com or you can get one-on-one coaching. And then connection, where you are actually building real life relationships with people who are also on this journey, all facilitated through the first three.

And so I think that those are some of the most amazing resources. And if you don't know where to start, if all of that was super overwhelming to you, you're like, "Oh my gosh, this all sounds great, but I don't know where to start." I would say, join us at the free Alcohol Experiment at alcoholexperiment.com. And that will give you all of those components and really take you down this second path of self-compassion and mindset and positive emotion.

Let me ask you a question. What is better than change? Lasting change, of course. If you've had trouble making change stick, either with alcohol or in any other area of your life, you are in for a treat. I created the 100 Days of Lasting Change to ensure that we don't just change for a moment, but we truly transform for a lifetime. This program is so close to my heart. Thousands of people have been through it, and their results are incredible. But don't take my word for it, check it out at thisnakedmind.com/100days. As always, rate, review, and subscribe to this podcast, as it truly helps the message reach somebody who might need to hear it today.