



COACH. SPEAKER. WORKSHOPS



# THE GUIDE TO TAKING A POWER PAUSE FROM ALCOHOL

# WELCOME TO “THE POWER PAUSE”

The Guide That Helps You Reclaim Energy, Focus, and Clarity by  
Taking a Break from Alcohol.

---

## Discover What a Break Can Do for You

You don't have to be struggling with alcohol to benefit from taking a break. But, as we now know, there is no safe amount to consume, so no matter your intake, you will be taking proactive steps to improve your physical and mental health. And if you drink more than 2-5 drinks a week you could be adding (some wonderful) years to your life

In this free guide you'll learn how even the busiest professionals can reframe their relationship with alcohol—and experience game-changing benefits like:

**Increased Energy:** Start your day feeling refreshed, not groggy.

**Sharper Focus:** Say goodbye to mental fog and rediscover clarity and confidence at work.

**Better Sleep:** Enjoy deeper, more restorative rest which reduces stress and anxiety.

**Improved Mood:** Feel more calm and present in your daily life.

**Self-Respect and Motivation:** Wake each day knowing you are taking action to improve your life.

**Clearer Skin and Improved Health:** See and feel the difference within weeks.

---

## READY TO GET STARTED?



# CLIENT STORY

---



## Catherine's story

Catherine was the epitome of a high-achiever. As a high profile legal professional and mum of two, she was juggling 10-12 hour workdays, managing a team of 30, and squeezing in networking events after hours. She would get home wired but exhausted, so to unwind, she leaned on her evening ritual: a glass (or two) of wine to “take the edge off.”

It felt like self-care, but over time, she noticed her energy dipping. Mornings felt harder, and her once-sharp focus seemed clouded. The evening drinking ritual became more regular, sometimes adding a whisky or gin as the effect of the wine started to wear off more quickly.

I hear stories like this almost daily, and I lived it myself. People are using alcohol to relax, relieve their stress and reward themselves.. And why not? It's easy, and it works. But eventually people realise that this quick-fix solution has insidious consequences, leading to more stress, more anxiety and lack of motivation.

This is no way to live. And it only gets worse.

When I met Catherine she talked about burnout, poor sleep, anxiety and disconnection from her family – and she was curious to find out if removing alcohol would make a difference.

Catherine made a bold decision: to take a 30-day break from alcohol. Within two weeks, her mornings became brighter. She experienced a clarity in meetings that had felt elusive for months. Her skin, energy levels and overall mood improved so much that her colleagues asked what her secret was.

It was the simple, yet transformative, act of  
hitting pause on alcohol.



# WHAT IS A GREY AREA DRINKER?

---

## Grey Area Drinkers

I specialise in working with Grey Area Drinkers having been one myself and now working with them for over five years.

A lot of people don't know what this means so here's a quick guide

### NOT AN ALCOHOLIC

I dislike this word, and this will be the only time you see me use it. There is no set test or marker to 'qualify' so it has no real meaning (to me). Chances are you don't identify with the word either, as it often holds stigmas and stereotypical associations.

### A GREY AREA DRINKER

In broad terms anyone who drinks is in the grey area because we now know there is no safe amount of alcohol consumption. But, as a guide it's someone who drinks more than 2 drinks per week. Whether this is a problem or not depends entirely on the drinker.

### THE FIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF A GREY AREA DRINKER

Here are signs that your grey area drinking is calling for your attention;

1. You Silently worry, regret and fret about your drinking
2. You often drink between two extremes ( all or nothing)
3. You can stop drinking, but you can't stay stopped.
4. Your drinking doesn't usually look problematic to those around you.
5. You go back and forth convincing yourself it's not that bad, try and moderate and find yourself back where you started.

If this describes your experience then you're in the right place. If you have never stopped before, and you're drinking daily, or excessively please seek medical advice before taking a break as it can be dangerous.

# HERE'S WHAT'S INSIDE THE GUIDE

---

## The Science of Why Taking A Pause Works

A brief overview of how alcohol affects your body, mind, and productivity—and why stepping away can make all the difference. Includes a section on binge drinking.

## What Happens When You Stop Ingesting Ethanol

And what you can look forward to.

## A Simple Plan for Success

A step-by-step guide designed for busy professionals to fit easily into your busy life.

## Tips for Social Situations

My top tips for navigating networking events, client dinners, and Friday night drinks without feeling out of place.

## A Toolkit for Lasting Results Including Book List and Podcast Recommendations.

Practical tools to maintain your momentum and stay energised long after your break is over along with book and podcast recommendations.

## Specific Tips For Binge Drinkers.

A guide to changing all or nothing drinking.

### **IMPORTANT : NO SHAME ZONE**

**HOW MUCH YOU DRINK IS NOT YOUR FAULT BUT IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY**

There are numerous factors that contribute to how much we drink. In brief they can be put in four buckets. Our genes, our psychology (including neurodiversity eg. ADHD), our environment and connection/spirituality.

If you'd like to learn more about the science of addiction you can watch my short video [here](#).

# The Science of Why a Pause Works.

## How Alcohol Affects Your Body and Mind

---

“Alcohol affects neurotransmitters which play crucial roles in **regulating stress** and **energy levels**. Initially, alcohol enhances GABA activity, leading to relaxation, but as its effects wear off, this can result in heightened **anxiety** and **disrupted brain function**.

Dr. David Nutt, Neuropsychopharmacologist

”

### WHAT GOES UP MUST COME DOWN.

- When you drink to relieve stress you're actually self-medicating to get relief from the negative effects of drinking from the days before.
- When you feel like a drink it's because your body is craving relief from the discomfort of excess chemicals and hormones released by your drinking.

It takes approximately 10 days to break this physiological cycle.

After that, you want alcohol not because your body craves it, but because your body and mind are used to having it to relieve discomfort. Good news, you can get the feeling you want in many other healthier ways, without the substance.

### Other Important Things to Know

- **Alcohol disrupts your sleep**, leaving you less rested, more fatigued and even anxious.
- **It slows down your mental sharpness** as it impairs cognitive functions, including decision making and impulse control.
- **Regular drinking**—even in moderation—can contribute to chronic stress and decreased energy.
- **Cancer** - Alcohol consumption is directly linked to seven types of cancer, including breast, liver, and bowel cancer, due to its role in DNA damage and cell mutation.

**WANT TO MISS OUT  
ON ALL THIS?  
KEEP READING**

# WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU STOP DRINKING?

---

“The freedom you feel when you’re not preoccupied with drinking is incredible. Imagine what all that brain energy can now be used for!”

Sarah Connekillly

If you’re anything like me you’ve been drinking for quite a few years, maybe even decades, so it’s important to manage your expectations.

The first 7 days can be tough, BUT like all genuinely good things in life, effort and patience is key.

You can rest assured that you have the following things to look forward to;

- **Increased Energy:** Without alcohol, your liver works more efficiently, giving you a natural energy boost.
- **Sharper Focus:** Cognitive functions improve as your brain chemistry rebalances.
- **Better Sleep:** Alcohol-free nights mean deeper REM cycles and more restorative sleep.
- **Less Bloating & Weight Loss:** Alcohol is full of empty calories, and we often eat badly when we drink. I’ve dropped 15kgs since I quit, and maintained this for over 4 years.

NOTE: Everyone’s experience is different. It was at around day 8 when I started to notice my sleep improved dramatically and the mental fog lifted. It was miraculous. If you struggle with sleep or low mood in the first 7-10 days, know this is your brain chemistry recalibrating after years of being flooded with extra chemicals.

---

**"Patience is bitter,  
but its fruit is sweet."**

**Jean-Jacques Rousseau**

# BINGE DRINKING

---

“Alcohol highjacks our reward system and once we get the dopamine surge it makes it very hard to stop at one. You're not an 'all or nothing' person, you're just highly sensitised to dopamine

Sarah Connelly”

## About Binge Drinking.

Many of my clients say 'I'm an all or nothing person'. They can often go for days, even weeks without drinking (This is known as Grey Area Drinking), but once they start, they find it very hard to stop at one or two.

Binge Drinking is when we drink large amounts of alcohol in a short period. As I got older I started having blackouts, waking up with little memory of the final hours of the evening. This is especially common for women in peri-menopause, when the body is trying to process excess hormones. This can begin anytime from around aged 40, but can begin earlier.

Binge drinkers may not drink daily, which can create a false sense of control because we know they don't need to drink every day. Social acceptance of occasional heavy drinking also makes it harder for us to recognise its long-term impact on our health and well-being.

## Key Challenges:

### Awareness:

Binge drinkers often don't see themselves as having a problem, everyone seems to be doing it so it's normalised.

**Health Risks:** Binge drinking poses acute risks including blackouts, risky or impulsive behaviours (late night texts as an example) injuries & even drink driving.

**Behavioral Patterns:** Binge drinking often involves external triggers like social events when the guard is down and it's easy to give in to temptation.

For more information and specific resources head to page 13

---

"When you engage in all-or-nothing thinking, you evaluate your life in extreme terms: It's either perfect or a disaster. You're either a total success or a total failure."

Psychologist Toni Bernhard



# A SIMPLE PLAN FOR SUCCESS

---

“Developing a specific plan for when, where, and how you will stick to a new habit will dramatically increase the odds that you will actually follow through, but only if you focus on one thing.”

James Clear - Atomic Habits

## 1. Write Down Your “Why.”

It is well known that humans tend to be more motivated to avoid pain, than to gain pleasure. It's known as 'loss aversion'. This in mind get clear on what you do want, but also what you don't.

We want to be inspired to move toward a better life, and away from things we don't want.

Take a journal or notebook and write down;

- What do you hope to gain from this break? More energy? Better focus? Improved mood?
- What are you excited to be missing out on? Hangovers, anxiety, poor sleep, lethargy?

## 2. Start Small and Set Your Goal

High achievers can often overwhelm themselves with huge expectations and multiple goals. Focus on setting one goal, the goal of enjoying being alcohol free.

Decide on your break duration—start with 7, 14, or 30 days. Set a time-frame that feels manageable but a little uncomfortable, and take it one day at a time.

**"He who has a why to live can bear almost any how."**

Friedrich Nietzsche

# A SIMPLE PLAN FOR SUCCESS

---

## 3. Build Your Support System

Find a person, or people who you trust and share your goal. This provides accountability and support. Tell them you're taking 'A Power Pause' to get your energy back on track. No further explanation is needed.

If you're into social media find groups and communities online where people are posting about being alcohol-free. You can even create an anonymous profile. These groups will provide motivation and keep your focus on the benefits of what you're doing.

## 4. Create a Replacement Ritual

Habits are more easily changed when we replace the habit, instead of just trying to get rid of it.

Get clear on your most common drinking rituals, times and places. Then make sure you have something you look forward to to replace it.

Examples:

An alcohol-free alternative, such as herbal tea, sparkling water with lime, or a creative mocktail.

There are also many alcohol-free alternatives such as champagne, beers or wine now available. If you don't find these triggering then go for it!

## 5. What Gets Rewarded Gets Repeated

Our brains are motivated by action. When we achieve something we get a chemical boost (dopamine). Every day you don't drink record it somewhere and take at least 3 minutes each morning to savour the feelings of self respect and accomplishment. This will begin to rewire your brain to link reward to NOT DRINKING.

Tip: Use a journal or an app to log daily wins, such as better sleep, improved productivity and savings.

---

**"The brain is a prediction machine, constantly seeking rewards and avoiding threats. Dopamine plays a key role, not just in experiencing pleasure, but in motivating us to pursue goals and anticipate positive outcomes."**

**Dr. Loretta Breuning**

# A SIMPLE PLAN FOR SUCCESS

---

## 6. Navigating Social Situations

Get clear on all the occasions you'll be attending while you're taking a pause and prepare for Common Scenarios.

### Networking Events, Dinners and Celebrations:

Hold a soda water with lime to blend in confidently or BYO your own non-alcoholic favourite drink. I was known to show up with my non-alc champagne in a brown paper bag!

### Set Your Positive Intention.

"I am here to celebrate/connect/network with clarity and ease"  
"I easily socialise without the need for alcohol"

### Handle Questions with Ease

- Responses like "I'm on a health kick" or "I'm taking a pause" work wonders without over explaining.
- Turn the conversation by asking others about their drink or their day.

My go-to line has always been "Alcohol made me feel like 'sh\*\*' so I've stopped to see what happens". No one has ever disagreed with this or tried to pressure me into drinking.

"

### Stay Focused on Your "Why"

- Keep your goals and personal values top of mind. Focus on what you're missing out on ( hangovers, anxiety, guilt, shame and regret) and what you have to gain - clarity, energy, and better performance ( and a whole lot more).

---

**"Setting an intention focuses the brain's energy and attention, creating a mental framework that aligns thoughts, emotions, and actions with desired outcomes."**

**—Dr. Daniel Siegel**

# A TOOLKIT FOR LASTING SUCCESS

---

## Daily Affirmations

- Use simple phrases like “I choose clarity and energy today” to remind yourself of your commitment.

## Stress-Management Techniques

- Practice deep breathing, mindfulness, or a quick 10-minute walk to manage stress instead of reaching for a drink.

## Celebrate Milestones

• Reward yourself for sticking to your break—book a massage, buy a new book, or treat yourself to a non-alcoholic beverage you love. Remember, what gets rewarded gets repeated.

## Plan for the Future

- Reflect on how you feel after the break. You may decide to extend it or set new boundaries with alcohol moving forward.

---

PLEASE SEE NEXT PAGE FOR ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

# BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS

---

Here is a list of books I recommend. Pick the one that jumps out at you - it will be the one to start with.

## **Alcohol Explained by William Porter**

To get really clear on how alcohol effects our brains and bodies this book is one of my favourites. It also provides advice for quitting.

## **This Naked Mind by Annie Grace**

Probably the most popular book for people curious about changing their relationship with alcohol. Thought provoking and great for challenging your perception about alcohol.

## **The Unexpected Joy of Being Sober by Catherine Gray**

Catherine Gray shares her journey and highlights the unexpected benefits of an alcohol-free life. It's candid and uplifting.

## **Recovery by Russell Brand**

Russell presents his take on the 12 Steps of AA from his own experiences. If you like his wit, words and intellect it's a great read.

## **Quit Like a Woman by Holly Whitaker**

Especially tailored for women Holly Whitaker presents a radical approach to quitting drinking.

## **Allen Carr's Stop Drinking Now**

Known for his method to quit smoking, Allen Carr applies his approach to alcohol providing practical steps to quitting without relying on willpower or deprivation.

## **The Sober Diaries by Clare Pooley**

An inspirational memoir that chronicles her first year of sobriety with honesty and humour.

## **Sober on a Drunk Planet by Sean Alexander**

Sean Alexander provides a comprehensive guide to navigating being alcohol free in a world where drinking is prevalent, sharing personal stories and strategies for success.

# PODCAST RECOMMENDATIONS

---

Before I quit drinking I used to use wine as a way to motivate me to do the chores. Now I love nothing more than an audiobook or podcast to stimulate my mind in a positive way.

Here are some great podcasts that will have you laughing, maybe crying but overall feeling like you're not alone.

## **Sober Awkward - Victoria Vanstone and And Hamish Adams**

Victoria is a friend of mine and she started this podcast a few years ago. It's now one of the best and is funny,, relatable and filled with great advice.

## **Soberful - Veronica Valli and Chip Somers**

Both hosts have lived and professional experience, this is a great podcast option expert insights via interviews with people who have built a "soberful" life.

## **The Addicted Mind - Duane and Eric Osterlind**

This in one for those of us that like research and science. Duane includes the latest research-backed treatments and therapies, the role of nutrition and understanding the nervous system is effected by over-drinking.

## **That Sober Guy Podcast - Shane Ramer**

Shane's lived experience is weaved through this podcast which is dedicated to helping you discover the benefits of not drinking. He has a diverse group of guests with personal stories to professional advice.

## **Recovery Happy Hour**

Tricia Lewis has meaningful conversations that remind us that being alcohol-free is worth celebrating, and that life doesn't stop when you stop drinking.

## **. The Bubble Hour**

Jean McCarthy'S podcast has more than 75,000 monthly downloads. She shares candid and informative conversations with people who have been affected by unhealthy alcohol use to inspire and encourage you.

# BINGE DRINKING - MORE INFO

---

## How a Binge Drinker Can Start Taking Action to Quit.

Binge drinking can feel like an uncontrollable cycle, but you can break free from theB pattern. Taking a break, and focusing on enjoying social occasions without alcohol willB start to rewire the brain so that, over time, it associates pleasure with being alcohol-free.

Here's how you can start taking action:

### 1. Acknowledge the Problem

If you're reading this then congratulations, you've probably completed step 1!

### 2. Get Clear On Your Triggers

Journal about episodes of binge drinking. We need to get clear on our triggers and patterns, in order to break them.

### 3. . Set Clear Goals

Decide whether you want to cut back or quit entirely.  
Create specific, measurable goals, such as "I will not drink more than two drinks at any event" or "I will abstain from drinking for one month." and notice how this experience goes. If you can't stick to your goals gather the data. It's all about experimenting at the beginning.

### 4.Understand Triggers

Identify the situations, emotions, or environments that lead to binge drinking (e.g., stress, social pressure, or celebrations).

Plan alternative ways to handle these triggers, such as replacing alcohol with non-alcoholic beverages or finding healthier coping mechanisms.

- Replace drinking with activities that reduce stress or provide a sense of accomplishment, like exercise, meditation, or hobbies.
- Practice mindfulness or stress-management techniques to manage emotional triggers.
- 

### 5. Create New Rituals

- If social settings are a trigger, plan alcohol-free outings or introduce a new ritual like making mocktails or tea during traditional drinking times.
- Redefine how you celebrate achievements or de-stress without involving alcohol.

### SPECIFIC READING:

"How to Quit Binge Drinking: A Comprehensive Recovery Guide"  
by Rachel Hart





**IT'S TIME TO  
DISCOVER  
THE  
JOY**

**OF MISSING OUT!**

[www.sarahconnelly.com.au](http://www.sarahconnelly.com.au)