



COACH. SPEAKER. WORKSHOPS



THE GUIDE

FOR A
CHRISTMAS TO
REMEMBER

HAVE A CHRISTMAS TO REMEMBER

Give Yourself & Others The Gift Of Presence

My First Alcohol-Free Christmas

My first Christmas without champagne, daiquiris, and copious amounts of white wine was in 2019. It was the annual family gathering I used to love. Early morning daiquiris, champagne before midday, and the classic Aussie seafood lunch—prawns and oysters slipping down with gulps of crisp dry wine.



I was dreading it

In the lead-up, I kept myself busy, frantically buying gifts in bouts of online shopping. Daily mysterious packages arriving at my door kept my dopamine levels high. Just one more.

But I couldn't stop thinking about how I'd possibly enjoy our time in Sydney without the one thing I used to look forward to most. There it was—the brutal truth: Could the thing I enjoyed most about Christmas be the alcohol?

When I was drinking, I never examined this reality. The event and the alcohol were fused together in my mind, ingredients in a time-tested recipe that delivered everything I thought I was looking for.

Without that key ingredient, I assumed the recipe wouldn't work. It would look, taste, and feel different, and be far less enjoyable — like most things changed by the word "free." Sugar-free, caffeine-free, gluten-free... alcohol-free.

I was acutely aware of my lack of excitement that year. The neural pathways connecting Christmas with delicious escapism, carefree dancing, and long, wine-fuelled conversations with family had nowhere to go. When they fired up in my brain and excitement began to rise, they were met with a "WRONG WAY" sign, but no clear detour.

This might sound familiar if you're heading into your first alcohol-free Christmas. It's disconcerting, even frightening, but it's completely normal.

And I can't tell you I had the best time that year. But that's only because I hadn't yet identified the new route. I had no reference point, no map for this uncharted territory, and no idea what I could add to replace the missing ingredient.

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NEW PATHWAYS, NEW INGREDIENTS

When we step into new territory, it's up to us to find and carve out a pathway that feels enticing. The first time we try this, it can be clumsy, disorienting, and even disillusioning. When what used to bring us to the peak of the experience is no longer on the table, it's natural to feel moments of disappointment, frustration, and craving for the "old ways." But we can also look at it in this way.

Do we want to keep going down the same old path, knowing exactly where it will end? Or can we be creative, adventurous and curious about new possibilities and destinations?

Fast-forward to today: I'm heading into my sixth alcohol-free Christmas, and I feel a different kind of excitement. It sits far deeper in my body, independent from any external substance. It's not overshadowed by the dread of knowing that come January, I'll feel like absolute shit. There's no regret to bury in my subconscious anymore.

I've found a better recipe with a more powerful ingredient, a pathway that leads to long term happiness: presence. It's the thrill of being truly present with myself, my family, and my friends that fires my neurons now.

GIVE YOURSELF THE GIFT OF PRESENCE



TOP 10 INGREDIENTS FOR YOUR FIRST ALCOHOL-FREE CHRISTMAS

Set Your Focus and Intention

Get a pen and paper and write. Thinking about things gets confusing, writing gives clarity.

- Why are you choosing to go alcohol-free?
- What will you be missing out on – Make these things the negative; hangovers, poor sleep, weight gain, disconnection, arguments, burnt turkeys...
- What will you focus on? Connection, being present, serving others?
- How do you want to feel on December 26th?

Then write 'I get to be alcohol-free'



Plan Ahead

Write a list of the people/places/things that you know will push your buttons (triggers) and plan your response.

Eg. If people keep offering drinks wink, say "I'm starting my new year resolution early and walk off, or 'I've not been sleeping well and alcohol makes it worse' or my line ' It makes me feel like shit so I prefer not to drink it'



Avoid Temptation and Create a Signature Drink

If possible try not to have your go-to alcoholic drink in sight.

Always have an alternative on hand - I took bottles of alcohol-free champagne for my first few Christmases – it made the world of difference

Get creative with a mocktail recipe that people can add their own alcohol to if they want.



Take Charge and Redefine Traditions

Focus on activities or rituals that don't revolve around alcohol but bring real joy.

Buy some games that will connect people

Get Baking and decorating cakes.

Do a treasure hunt



TOP 10 INGREDIENTS FOR YOUR FIRST ALCOHOL-FREE CHRISTMAS

Have an Ally

Find a friend or family member who supports your choice and sit next to them. Let them know you might need encouragement and support.



Practice Presence

Focus on being fully present in conversations and activities. Observe others. It's fascinating! Notice the little things that bring you joy. Soak up and savour each special moment.



Embrace the Uncomfortable

Growth is uncomfortable, so is staying stuck, so remind yourself you're choosing growth. Reassure yourself that this is part of creating something new for long term health and happiness.



Reward Yourself

What gets rewarded gets repeated. Reward yourself with something you love—whether it's a great meal, a special gift, or time to yourself. Then associate that reward with not-drinking. Take three minutes minimum to internally congratulate yourself. This is how we rewire the brain to create new associations to pleasure.



Daily Check-In

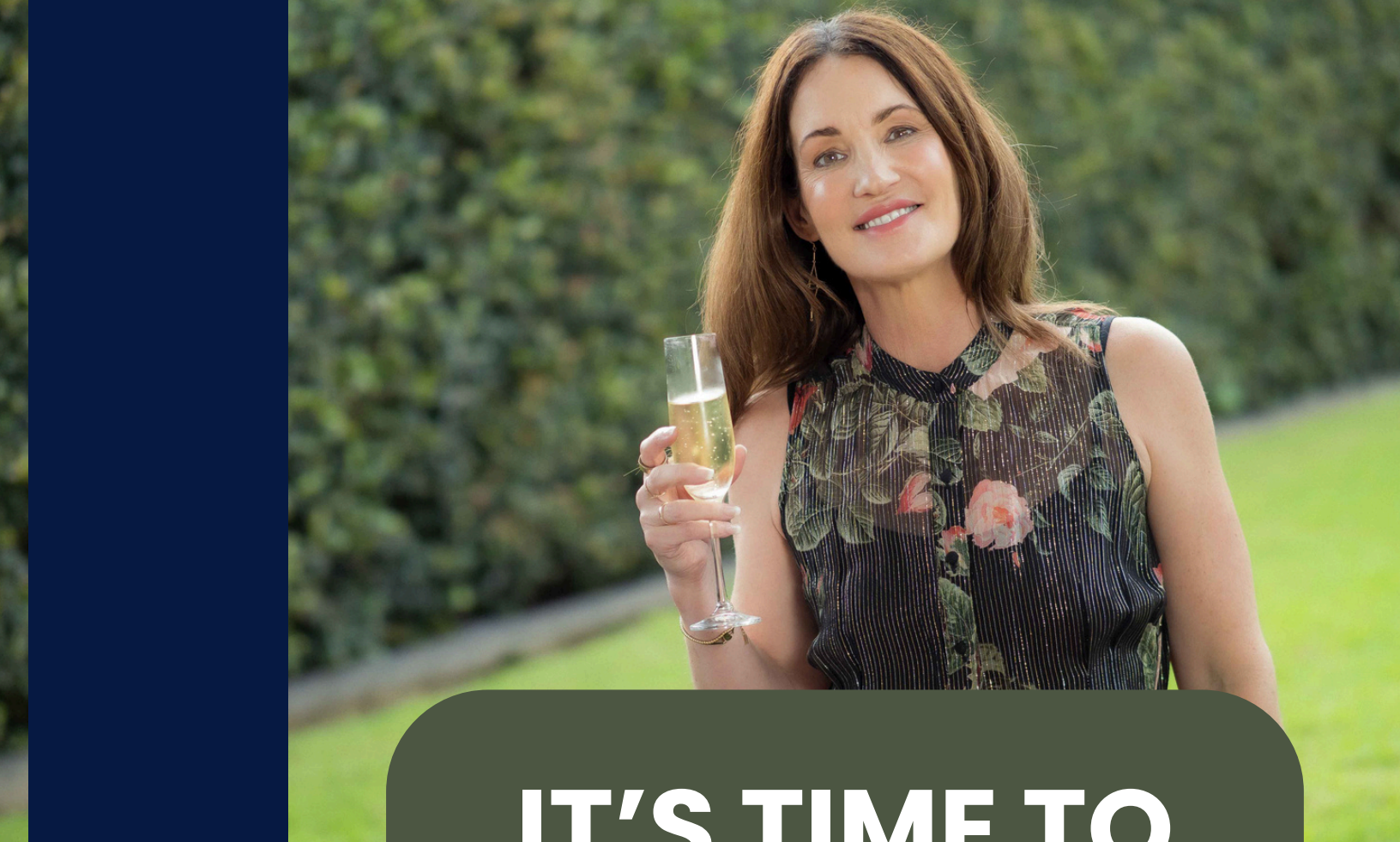
Take a few minutes each evening to journal about what went well and what you're proud of which will deepen the association of feeling good with not drinking. Visualize January Picture yourself starting the new year feeling refreshed, proud, and free from regret.

TAKE ACTION



If you action these steps, if not all, then even just some, you are on your way to re-wiring your brain. Over time it will default to this new route, this new recipe for an exciting, fulfilling and growth-filled Christmas.

Happy Christmas



**IT'S TIME TO
DISCOVER
THE
JOY
OF MISSING OUT!**