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## SPEAKERS

Christina Smith, Claire Cleary

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**Christina Smith**

Welcome to the summit, we have a really special guest today. And she is talking about a subject that really, I've been thinking a lot about since our pandemic. And Claire Cleary is a life coach, personal trainer and owner of Claire Cleary coaching as a life coach who specializes in helping people drink less alcohol long term without feeling deprived and sad so that they can still enjoy their lives. She works with what she calls grey drinkers, we'll ask her a little bit about that, who are people who wouldn't be categorized as alcoholics with an physical dependency on alcohol, but who are drinking more than they want to and struggling to cut back so Claire believes that relying on willpower doesn't work. And I agree with that. And that the key to long term success is to deal with the root cause of why it's so hard to cut back. The process and tools she uses with her clients are the same. She's used to stop drinking in the past four years. So this is a very exciting topic. For most of us. I know, Claire, because I know, during COVID, I definitely started drinking way too much. And it became more challenging to cut its back because of it just became a habit. So before I go into all that welcome, Claire, thank you so much for being here and joining our summit.



**Claire Cleary 01:28**

Thank you. Thank you for having me. It's great to be here.



**Christina Smith**

Yeah. So tell us how you got to this evolution of teaching people how to cut back on their drinking.



**Claire Cleary 01:38**

Yeah, so I got there. Because I went through this myself, I was someone who was drinking on the weekends. And little by little, I started drinking more, I started drinking, starting on Thursdays, and then it became Wednesdays. And before I knew it, it was every night of the week. And rather than what I started out at having one or two glasses of wine, red wine was my drink of choice. By the end, it was a bottle a night. And it just kind of crept up on me. And I started to realize I'm drinking more than I want, and would try and cut back and I would make these rules for myself. Alright, I won't drink until Thursday, right? I won't drink until a certain time I won't. And I would just keep breaking that over and over and over again. And this I consider myself what is called gray area drinkers. So not people who would categorize themselves as alcoholics, but drinking more than I want, and struggling with it. So usually you aren't aware that people are struggling in this way. Because from the outside, you know, maybe they're at a party and drink too much. And you say, oh, that person seems drunk. But it doesn't seem to be a problem. You wouldn't guess this person was struggling on an on a daily basis.



Christina Smith

So and I find myself in that space, because it's like, well, how much does drinking impact my life. And when I did the same thing, you know, like, Oh, I'm only going to drink on the weekends, I'm only going to drink after this time, I'm only going to have this many, right? And then we break those rules. But like, for me, there's no serious complication or implication about it. Because I still get up every morning, I still do my job, I do a great job. I don't feel like I put my life around alcohol. But it's like, oh, but when I'm done with work, let me go have that cocktail, right? Like, let me go have it and it's almost become an unconscious space, where it's like, I'm not doing it consciously. I'm just like, Oh, I'm done with I'm done for the day. So let me go get myself a drink. But I think that we think of that differently. Because like, when we think of alcoholic we think rock bottom, we think how it's, you know, interrupting their life and interfering with their lives, right? We see all of that. So I love this term gray drinker. Because I know that like for me and a lot of women that struggle with it. It's not like we would be going to a because it doesn't seem like a fit for us. But we do want to become more thoughtful maybe about it



Claire Cleary 04:39

more in control. Yeah. And that I think most most of us have known about AAA for a long time. And that's really the only thing we're used to hearing. So when you start to have this struggle, thinking I'm drinking more than I want, you start to think but I don't need a Yeah, I'm not at that point, I haven't had a you know, DWI, I haven't hit rock bottom. I'm not, you know, shaking and need alcohol. But I don't feel like I control it, I can control it the way I want to there's this middle ground. And so many of us, you know, find ourselves Googling, am I an alcoholic? And then if you're Googling it, you are. But that's that's not the case. But yeah, definitely, you mentioned the pandemic, definitely, since COVID. Started, the increase in people in this category has drastically increased. And what you mentioned about, you don't have effects that are making you really think this is a problem. But you know, I'm also a personal trainer. And I was in that same situation where I told myself, well, I can wake up at 5am, and teach boot camp, and I'm strong and fit. So this may be really isn't a problem. But then on the other side, I'm like, I know drinking a bottle of wine at night by myself is a problem. That's not how I want to be. So you have this conflict where, you know, I can, yes, maybe I had a headache when I woke up in the morning, or don't always feel my best, but I still was functioning. Fine, what

didn't seem to affect me. So that's another part of the reason I think people have this gray area where they're like, Well, is it really affecting me? Do I need to cut back I see other people who drink the same as I do when I'm out? If there's a lot of like internal questioning mind drama, thinking about this?



**Christina Smith**

Yeah, a lot of that inner conflicts. And I hear that. So what do you think the first step would be for us to really get serious about even considering looking at it, and I know that you're sober, but that's not what you're preaching here. We're you're preaching. You're not preaching, but you're teaching us how to how to get a little bit more control over it. Right, so that we feel like we're in control of what we're doing. Rather than like me just going in, by habit, getting that cocktail, when I'm done for the day.



**Claire Cleary 07:18**

Yeah, so if you're at the point where you're, you are thinking about this a lot, thinking I should be drinking last or making those promises to yourself, and constantly breaking them and just feeling bad in the morning, kind of beating yourself up over this, then you fall into this gray area. So and, as you mentioned, I have been sober for it's been over four years now. But I would say almost everyone that comes to me does tells me they do not want to totally stop drinking, they still want to be able to drink, but they just want to feel like they have more control over it. So regardless of what you want to do, this will work, you know, when I work with people on is you decide what's right for you. And some people change their mind, some people start out, you know, I didn't think I was going to stop drinking forever, the thought of that would have been enough to make me never start. Like I just didn't think that was going to be the life for me. But as I started doing this and feeling good, I just decided not to go back. Some people think they're never going to drink again, and then feel like oh, well, maybe now and then, you know, out of party or celebration or something, I'll have a drink. It's, it's really, I think, a personal choice. And, and of course, when we're comparing ourselves to other people, you know, you have to keep in mind. Some people can actually physically drink more than other people and not have the same effects. Right, a smaller woman who hasn't eaten a lot during the day and maybe exercised and burned calories. And then you have a big guy who's eaten a big meal. There's all sorts of things it has, you know, for women, it has to do with our hormones. There's just a lot of factors. But the first thing I have people start to look at is their thoughts. And you mentioned it became a habit for you. And that's how most of us when we get to this point, we feel like that's how I felt. It was the end of the day for me the end of the workday, and I would get things out to make dinner and out of polet ingredients and I would pour myself my first glass of wine. And while I was cooking, I would have a drink. And then maybe, you know if my husband hadn't gotten home yet we weren't eating it. Maybe I would have another one and then at dinner we would have a glass and then we would have an after dinner Drink and that I didn't think about it, I just, this is what happens, I get the food out and I get the wine now. And many of us have that with, you know, going out to a restaurant with people happier with coworkers, whatever it is we there are certain situations and certain times of day, certain people that we drink with. But it's never just that circumstance. So actually, I was going to talk about this model that I use this coaching model that actually I use with everything, you can use this with any situation that you have going on. And certainly, if you're struggling with cutting back food, as a lot of people drinking and food they're trying to get a

handle on or just food, all of these techniques really are very similar for food. So we often think that the circumstance, which would be the time of day that after dinner, we're getting things out, a lot of people think that they had a really tough day at work, or their boss did something they were on deadline, they, you know, had a bad presentation wants to account that these circumstances cause us to drink. But that's never the case. Circumstances just exist on their own. And how we know that is, if you think about a circumstance, like my circumstances, after dinner after work making dinner, other people don't necessarily for themselves a drink, right then the circumstances the same, but we have different thoughts about it. My thought about it is, it's time to have a drink I had a long day I deserve it. When I make dinner, I have wine, this is a good way to relax. That thought is what causes our urge, which is our feeling. And our feelings drive our action. So this is really what we look at the thought creates our feeling, the feeling creates the action. So our action is drinking. And when you start to look at this. Sometimes there's resistance and we think no, but that person really did, they poured me a drink and handed it to me and I had to drink it. You know, I felt like it would be rude. But the fact is, it's your thought that it would be rude to not have the drink. It's not the fact the person gave you the drink. So you can look at this and all these situations. And once you start to become aware of your thoughts, you can, number one question them. So many people consider a drink at the end of day a reward after a tough day. But you can question that and say, you know, is it really a reward to give yourself something that tomorrow is going to make you feel like crap or regret foul or ashamed? Or whatever it is, that's not really reward, right? So you can question those thoughts. And then you can also realize that you have so much more power in this, then you may be realizing, because when we get to this point, we feel like we're out of control. Like we're just drinking and we don't have control over it. We don't want to be drinking, we don't want to be doing this. We don't want to be feeling this way anymore, but we can't control it. And when you start to look at this, you see you actually do have the control. You just have aware of it and start working on taking that control.



### Christina Smith

Yeah, and I've been a little bit more conscious about this since we've recorded a podcast episode together. And since I found you, I've been thinking a lot more about it. And it was interesting this morning, I was telling you earlier before we started the recording that I woke up I had the PMS rage I was I started on my day and technology was just failing me all over even up until like 10 minutes ago, right? And this morning, I just could feel the rage. And one of the thoughts I had was when can I have that cocktail? What am I done today? I'm not done till 730 So I was like Ah 730 And then I was like, Hold on. Why am I trying to like fast forward this day? Right? And it seems like a little thing right? Like, oh, Christina I can tell myself all day long. Like it's not gonna hurt you to have a drink at 730 It's been a long day you really deserve this so I get that reward situation for sure. But then there was this also this thought that came in it was like Christina you're a life coach. It's okay if you don't even know you don't have to drink you don't have to. We know this. Like I the logic is there for me like I know that plenty of people We'll have technology Miss haps and have raging PMS. And they don't need to go drink, right? But why is it? Why is it that it's like 10am? And I'm thinking about this already, right? And that's, that's where I started to think there is a problem here like that might that's where my brain goes, like, why am I not rewarding myself with a walk? Or why am I not rewarding myself with some other way? Because even though alcohol, I can say alcohol doesn't impact my life negatively, it's certainly not serving me, especially as I'm getting older, right? Like, I know, my body is on the decline, as most of us are after 40 or 50. Right? It's like declining, and why am I trying to help that? That's where it got to, for me, like, why am I trying to like speed down this mountain? instead? I'd love to find other ways. Other thoughts? I guess that I could have, right?

So is that where you go about replacing those thoughts or shifting those thoughts, because I know for and the one other thing I want to touch on is I know that a lot of people do like a try January. And if I, if I can just get through a whole month of no alcohol, then obviously I have control. But then like February 1, they go right back to that bottle a night or whatever their norm is right. And it feels like their whole January, at least for me, I've done this many times, like, Oh, I'm gonna do a whole month without alcohol. And I've done it, but it's like, towards the end of the month. It's like I'm white knuckling it going home that rewards coming around the corner, right? On February one, right?

 Claire Cleary 16:41

Hey, I think when you were talking about the, you know, wanting the drink at 10am, part of that is the social, you know, all these memes and it's time for a drink. Mommy needs her, you know, mommy juice medicine to get through this. And it's something that has kind of become, you know, I think probably started out as a joke, but something behind it, like, I need a drink, oh my god, how am I going to handle this, I need, you know, my family is coming. And for Thanksgiving, I need a drink like, and, you know, we just keep saying it and get used to that. That's how we like check out or when something's tough. We use a drink. And the problem with that is, yes, it helps you like check out but it doesn't help you solve your problem. First of all, you're gonna, like, recover from that drink or have the drink and you're still gonna have this problem to deal with. And then it also teaches you every time you do that I needed this is how I solve the problem. So you're just constantly reinforced to yourself, I need this external thing, I need alcohol to help me relax to help me deal with something stressful.



Christina Smith

And What even are sorry, I was gonna say so. Yeah, go ahead.

 Claire Cleary 18:05

We want to be able to figure out how to handle stressful situations on our own, not requiring alcohol and not requiring alcohol to have fun and relax and do all these things. So that's where you know, when people who still want to drink, it's like, that's totally fine. But you want to get to the point where you're not rely on that alcohol, to help you de stress or help you really want to be able to like have fun with your friends, and have a drink while you're doing it, but not have that drink to enable you to have fun. Hmm,



Christina Smith

yeah. And I think when you're saying this, it's like so the thought becomes a habit almost like it's not even like the action becomes a habit. But it's like we've built this like neural pathway that's going to reward equals alcohol.

 Claire Cleary 18:55

Yeah. And if you look back, you know, have people look back at their thoughts around drinking

mean. And if you look back, you know, have people look back at their thoughts around drinking, and you think back to when this started. And when you start drinking, you know, and you're younger, and you think it's sophisticated, and it helps you fit in, you know, this is what everyone's doing. It's the cool thing to do. And we have these thoughts, and many of them. We've just been believing for 20 3040 years. So it's time to, you know, look at that and you have to unlearn certain beliefs and and maybe some of those beliefs you even think are true, but if you find they're not serving you, let's not focus on that belief. Let's focus on something else. That's also true. That's going to help you reach the goal that you want to



Christina Smith

that makes sense. So what do we do with these thoughts?



Claire Cleary 19:55

So we start looking at the thoughts and kind of braking or taking a pause, when you feel that urge, stopping and asking yourself, What am I thinking? You know, like realizing this isn't just that habit, I'm not jumping straight from, you know, six o'clock to having a drink that I have things in between here? And what are those thoughts, and really becoming aware of those and that at the beginning, that's all we're doing is looking at those thoughts, realizing that we're having them. And then we start to get into, okay, questioning them? What thoughts would serve us better? And, you know, it's not about all positive thoughts. Like, it's definitely going to be fun without a drink. No, we're, you know, we have to think of things that we're going to believe. And, and so it's kind of like little steps towards your end goal. But what you asked me about the dry January, that's become a really big thing in society now, right? All sort of at the end of the year, there's like, sober October, all these, which many people think, okay, if I do, I'm doing it to prove something to myself that I can do this, then I don't really have a problem. But I equate it to a crash diet. Because what you said, you're, you're depriving yourself for that 30 days, typically, that's all people are doing, they're just telling themselves, they can't be having something that they want. And so they're focusing on just checking the days off on the calendar, but thinking, I can't wait till February 1, or whenever it is, and, you know, they get to the end of the month, you feel proud for not having drank, and that is an accomplishment. If you've been, you know, drinking every day, definitely, it's an accomplishment. But if you haven't dealt with, why you're struggling, if you haven't dealt with all this stuff, the thoughts and why, over and over again, this habit comes back, then you're going to start you're probably going to find yourself getting right back into it. And eventually, you know, getting back to a point where you're, you know, waiting to do that sober month again, it just doesn't solve the root problem.



Christina Smith

So we haven't done the internal work yet of really changing that default. I mean, it's like, it's like, like you said, like a crash diet, like, Okay, I'm not gonna have any sugar for 30 days. But you know, that day, one of the next month, and suddenly I can, oh, let me have all the things I couldn't have before. And let me just kind of, we might even say, Oh, we're going to ease back into it. But I've seen for me many times, like I can do a whole month without alcohol. And then like, within a month or two, I could be completely back to where I was before. And I I mean, it's great that we can control it for 30 days, right? I mean, I think that that's great. And it's not

really a long term solution is what you're saying this is just it's gonna work for spurts. And I believe that too, because I know when I'm white knuckling anything, that's not a long term solution. Because in the long term, I don't like to white knuckle anything,

C

Claire Cleary 23:30

right? You, you only have a certain amount of willpower, right? And you're only going to, I mean, you're not going to be able to use willpower the rest of your life. The other thing is, if you're relying on alcohol, to de stress or do certain things for you, then you're not and you're not addressing the problem, that you're having the stress, then you're you're not, you're always going to have this stress, and you're going to want this outside thing. Right? So yes, it may help. You know, it's healthy to stop for a month sake. So you're going to feel better. But one term, it just, it's yeah, it's not going to last. So I encourage people, I think, you know, taking a month is great, and it will help with some of the habit that trigger because you'll be you'll be breaking that you won't have done that maybe while you're taking that month off. Instead of drinking after dinner with dinner, you find some other junk that you like, or you find that you're exercising at night instead of drinking whatever it is. So that does help with the habit. But again, the underlying issue so I would encourage people that it's not that taking a month off is a bad way to go. But that to be doing the work of looking at why you're struggling at the same time.



Christina Smith

So than not drinking is like a bandage. And there's, there's an actual wound under there that needs to be looked at, right. And I don't want to say wound because people think, oh, that's gotta be deep dark work. But that doesn't necessarily mean that it could just be my job is stressful, and that's the way that I relax. I have a lot of friends who drink so I just, you know, have a drink with them. I don't drink as much as them. Right, we have all those excuses.

C

Claire Cleary 25:25

Yeah, yeah. And again, it's the same thing that people go through with food, you know, it's doing that crash diet, and then craving those dessert or cookies, or whatever it is. And then it feels bad to go when you want it, you know, you're telling yourself, it's something that you shouldn't be having. And we'd get into these bad and good, you know, like, it's fit, I'm bad. If I drink, you know, it's, I'm better. I'm good people saying like, I was really good this week. I try. And I try and avoid that, too. Because you don't want to be thinking of it that way. Again, it's it's a circumstance and you get to decide what you think about it, you just wanted to be neutral. And if you're still hanging out with people that were drinking, you don't want to be thinking of them as bad for having alcohol, right? And you're, and you're good, they're bad. We just want to avoid that. It's just, you know, you're you're making certain choices for yourself, that again, are going to serve you make you feel better. You're not, you're not bad and good. And that's another thing, thinking of yourself as bad. And there's so much shame. tied to this, when people get to this point where they feel that they're drinking more than they want to on they can't control it. There's so much shame and guilt. And it's really hard. But that's a big thing to work on is releasing that. And looking at what you're doing and yourself without judgment. People really focus on being curious about what's going on, you know, so. So why

why do you think you had, you know, a drink when you didn't want to? Let's be curious, what happened? What was going on? What were you thinking, What did someone say to you? What did you make that mean? With curiosity, not? What, you know, what did you do that you were bad judgment? And to be able to do it? Yeah, because when we've tried this, so many times, we just keep gathering evidence that we're never going to be able to do it. But I that one of the biggest messages I would like to get across is, no matter how many times that you've tried this before. It does not mean you can't do this going forward. And and everyone I've worked with, has tried that, you know, dry January thing before just willpower not. And if you haven't done this work, just you get to tell yourself, I have the wrong, you know, I wasn't using the right strategy, like this is a new strategy, this is the time, it doesn't mean that you are never going to be able to do it.



Christina Smith

What I love about this to the format that you have this, what you have there is that, I also know that it goes like it starts with a circumstance or a trigger, or whatever we want to call it. And then there's a thought and a feeling. And when I talk about intentionally aligned, what that means is we actually go beyond the thought we go straight to the feeling. And the reason we do that is because I want to know how they actually want to feel, right. We already know the feelings that they get from drinking too much or feeling guilt and shame because they said they weren't going to or they said they weren't going to have that many or whatever. And then they feel crappy the next morning and I always go to the question what's wrong with me? Why can I right? That's my wound. So that's what comes up for me. But we go straight to the feeling well, how is it that you want to feel if you don't want to feel this shame in this skill and this? Like how would it feel not to drink? How would you feel about yourself? Because if we know that feeling, then we can align we can get curious about thoughts that line up with that feeling as well.



Claire Cleary 29:30

Yeah, you can work backwards. That's definitely we work backwards to right so if your action is that you are not going to drink or didn't do something else. How would you be feeling maybe it's committed to doing this work? It's confident or healthy, determined. If you were feeling that way, what would you be thinking? If I'm if I'm feeling committed, I'm thinking I'm going to do this, even though it's hard, I know I can do it this time I have the tools and techniques and support I need. Whatever those thoughts are feeling healthy, what are you thinking I, you know, I'm choosing food and drinks and things I've put in my body that are good for my body and make me feel good. So yeah, definitely work backwards. I



Christina Smith


love that. So when we're talking about a dry January, it's almost like they go from circumstance to action, right? And they kind of skip the thoughts and feelings that they're having. They're just like, Yep, I'm just not going to drink, I'm just not going to drink, I'm just not going to drink. And that's their action, right? So they're skipping those two really, really important things that really drive us as human beings, right? Because I think like the feeling is always like in our heart space in our bodies. And then the thought is like, this monkey mind that just keeps going



and is on its normal default paths that we have now created, maybe over the pandemic, maybe over a lifetime, we've created these new pathways, and our brain just goes, yep, time for a cocktail done with my responsibilities time for a cocktail. But instead, what you're saying is to start looking at these thoughts and these feelings, which let me tell you, we don't like to do, we'd rather just have the solution and not have to have all that inner conflict, right. But it's really doing the work of the inner conflict, where we start gaining the control, right? Because the control isn't necessarily in the action, the control is understanding how we're thinking about things, whether that's alcohol, or food, or whatever shopping, our addictions are right, and then how to manage those feelings, which is a huge thing. I mean, I think that's what life coaches are really about is this, managing our feelings, because so many of us were taught to not have them. That's how we, that's how we deal with them. And it's really like alcohol is a really easy solution to that, I'm just not going to feel that way. Great. I'll just, you know, have a few glasses of wine or a cocktail, and I won't have to think about it or feel about it. So this is actually a challenging part. And why I believe, you know, at least for me, the number one thing when you want to shift anything is getting support and accountability. So that you have people you know, like you said, you can keep your drinking friends, but it sure is going to be helpful if you have some non drinking friends as well, that you can relate to, or a and or a coach, or someone who can help you really look at those two spots where we want to just skip over those thoughts and feelings.

 Claire Cleary 32:48

Yeah, definitely. I, when I started to stop drinking, I did it with another friend who's a coach. And that for me, you know, I definitely think that that was key for me that every day having someone who was doing what I was doing, who knew at what I was feeling, and that we could check in with each other, like support each other out that was really important for me. So I would definitely encourage people to either, you know, certainly reach out to me, or if you have a friend who's doing this, or, you know, online, there are other there certainly groups of people who are who are doing this, but I find that found that really helpful.

 Christina Smith

But we're not talking friends into it, because that would be a different deal for me, like we would have to, we would have to have friends that are actually, you know, friends or colleagues or peers or whatever, that are actually interested in this. Because if you're trying to convince somebody who has no interest in quitting drinking, to be this accountability partner, it may not be the best day I think that people have to be serious about it. Because for me, I know, the biggest thing about support is I want to be asked those really hard questions. And if I'm in accountability, or getting support from someone who kinda doesn't think it's a big deal, or is like belittling it in their minds, it can be really challenging. So it's great that you had a friend who was just as serious as you about looking at it.

 Claire Cleary 34:19

Yeah, and she was a coach, too. So we both using the same techniques, but definitely yeah, I mean with anything, right when you have an accountability partner, if they are not as serious, and that's, you know, that's another thing that's really key to success is is the commitment,

because, you know, it's going to be hard and you're going to wind up having some what you may call like, you know, flip backs or what you consider you failed one night because you drank more than you wanted to. But if you're committed to doing it and just keep moving forward, then you'll be able to do it but your commitment really does have to be high. Yeah,



**Christina Smith**

yeah equal to the other person's at least so that you're both holding each other really accountable. Right? Not just, it's great to be compassionate. And I know for me at least I need people to ask me the hard questions. And I need them to be brave enough to ask me the hard questions because I can avoid them with all of my mind, if I really want to write and My Shadows spot, I can definitely do that. So what are some other ways at some other things that you think, besides support that people might need in order to be on this journey of starting to look at their thoughts and their feelings and all of the whys.



**Claire Cleary 35:43**

When I started, what I think is key for me was having that accountability person starting to look at and question my thoughts, you know, realizing that it wasn't an automatic thing. The other thing is, I would, I would fast forward, when I got to that urge, I would fast forward the night, okay, if I had this drink, now, what's going to happen the rest of the night and tomorrow morning, and I knew I wasn't going to just have one as much as I said, one or two, I knew I was going to wind up with more, and then I could fast forward till tomorrow morning, and knew that it was going to be that same cycle that I was in, in the morning, I was gonna feel crappy, and I was going to regret it. So I would try and do that a lot like playing it out, you know, oh, you know, this is going to make me feel better right now having one or Oh, if someone's having it next to me, that smells really good. That looks really good. And then, but it's not worth it for me. Because I know what's gonna happen, I'm gonna want another one. I know, it's not, you know, it's gonna make me feel crappy. So that was helpful for me to thinking about where this would all lead not wanting, not wanting to hear



**Christina Smith**

this part of honesty with yourself. Right. And I think that this goes back to your point earlier that I think it's really worth repeating is the honesty with ourselves can come when we're not judging ourselves so harshly about it, which I think comes with that curiosity, right? I always say that the answer for judgment that you know, is curiosity all the time. Because if we can be curious, instead of judgmental, where we often want to go, that can really open us up to being like, let's just look at the data. This isn't about me being an awful a good or a bad person, or whatever. This is just about really looking at the data.



**Claire Cleary 37:42**

Yeah. And that's helpful, too, when you feel like you're not where you want to be, it's part of this journey. And I often have to remind people, you know, say, like, it's been a week or two, and things have been going well, and then you have more than you want. And people our

tendency is, again, oh, I'm not going to be able to do this, I slipped again. But if you keep in mind and are, whether you're writing it down, or, you know, just repeating it to yourself, keeping in mind what you are learning in the progress that you're making, because you never start at total zero, if you're doing this work, you know, if you are using willpower, then you might just go back to zero. But if you're doing this work and you start getting awareness, then you're never going back to zero, because you've learned, you've learned things that you're not going to suddenly forget. So you're always moving forward. Yeah.



### Christina Smith

Beautiful. Beautiful, any other needs that we need before we start really looking at this and when you talk about going through your thoughts and your feelings? For me, that's a lot of journaling. Like I, for me, the work behind this isn't just saying no to the alcohol, it's dedicating myself to saying, okay, 15 to 30 minutes a day, Christina, I want you to be journaling about your thoughts and feelings around this. So that we can like to me it's like one of those subjects that we want to get more comfortable with, like if I can get more comfortable with it. If I can get more comfortable just talking to myself about it, you know, through journaling, I can start to uncover little things doesn't mean that I'm going to get perfect all of a sudden right but it means like I love just tracking progress. And I think that's that's key when it comes to any shift is like looking at the little progresses and we're expecting like this big mountain to show up and be like, Yes, I climb that mountain. But in order to climb that mountain, there has to be like one step and then another step and then another step, you know, and so it may not happen overnight, right?



### Claire Cleary 40:00

Now journaling is definitely a big part of this, I have, I have my clients journal that all of this stuff, they're fun, you know, starting to work through models like this. And the other. The other thing that's important in this whole process is working on your relationship with yourself. Because when you're feeling shame, and you're beating yourself up over and over again, for drinking more than you wanted to making promises and breaking them, you really don't have a good relationship with yourself, you're often you know, just nasty to yourself saying nasty things. And when you think about those promises that you keep breaking, usually, we consider ourselves reliable to other people, you know, if you make a promise to a friend or family member, that you're going to pick them up at a certain time from somewhere, and then that time comes and you don't feel like doing it, you're gonna do it anyway. Because you told your kid or your friend or whatever, that you're gonna go pick them up. But we make these promises to ourselves that we don't feel like doing it. And we just blow ourselves off, blow that promise off, right? So we have this relationship with ourselves where we don't believe what we're gonna say we don't trust our promises. And this is so helpful for all goals, that when you say you're going to do something, you actually do it. So it's working on that too. And you know, you can work on this again, outside of what you're drinking, you can be working on just saying that you're going to do things and then actually doing it, this comes up so often with exercise, right? And health, like, we say, we're going to work out and then we don't feel like doing it and, and you know, just telling yourself, I'm going to do this one thing. And then no expect that when that time comes, you're not going to want to do it. I'm not going to drink tonight, I'm only going to have one or two glasses tonight, the time is going to come and you're going to start that negotiation with yourself. All right, I'll have one more tonight. But then I'll do it. You know, I'll

have water after I won't have as many tomorrow and know that you're gonna want to do that. But at that moment, tell yourself No, I made this promise to myself, and I'm keeping this tomorrow, I can have two glasses. But tonight, I'm sticking to my promise. And then in the morning, you're going to feel good about that, too, that you actually kept that promise to yourself and building that relationship? Yeah,



Christina Smith

yeah. Yeah, I believe that. I mean, that's why we don't have a lot of self trust or self love or self confidence, because we break our promises to ourselves all the time where I mean, if a friend broke as many promises to me, as I've broken to myself, they would not be my friend today. But we just keep showing up and doing it that way. So it's pretty amazing. It's pretty amazing. Well, thank you so much. If if you haven't already, and listeners written all these five steps down, I really invite you to put them in your journal, maybe have a conversation with yourself. And it doesn't even have to be about drinking. Maybe you're a non drinker or a light drinker. Maybe this is about food for you. Maybe this is about something else. But where is it where your circumstance is like, feels like it's determining that results when we know that there's a million ways that people deal with the same circumstance. And it doesn't have to be that way that makes you feel bad about yourself when you break those commitments. Thank you, Claire, for being here today. And do you have a gift for us?



Claire Cleary 43:45

Oh, I do. So we've been talking a lot about thoughts and journaling. And I actually have a week of questions. That is great to get you started with all of this. So if you sign up for these emails, you'll get one a day and each email will have a few questions that will start to help you become aware of your thoughts around drinking and then you can journal those out your thoughts and then you can start to question them. And that awareness is really going to help you take the control that you already have kind of regain that control.



Christina Smith

Yeah, I love that. It gives you some focus areas to think about so that you know what to journal about. Even if you're looking at these five pieces. And you're like, I don't know where I should start with this. I love that she gives you a little starter guide to help you with this. And I hope that those listening will commit you know, give yourself 15 to 30 minutes to just jot down your thoughts every day. If this is really important to you, even if you don't stop drinking right now. Just making that commitment is I'm going to at least show up for myself and think about it 15 to 30 minutes a day. Like that is more than you were doing last week. about it. So I mean, I think it's really a beautiful way to start. Thanks again, Claire for being here and sharing all of this great wisdom. If you're not following Claire already, all of her information is below. So please go follow her. She's got great posts. I mean, when you're reading her posts, you know that she's talking to some of us directly, like she knows exactly how we're feeling about our drinking. There's no shame, there's no guilt. There's no blame about it. It's just being curious which I really love. Thank you. Thank you.