

Ep #7: Stress Eating & Drinking



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Diana Murphy

Leaders with Diana Murphy

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Welcome to *Empowered Wellness for Leaders*, a podcast that teaches CEOs, entrepreneurs and sales leaders how to deal with the unique challenges of balancing a high-stress career, family, AND their own health. Here's your host, Certified Executive Wellness Coach, Diana Murphy.

Alright, I want to start this episode in just a spot of gratitude. First of all, I have an amazing team that is supporting me, and you really do know who you are, but I want to shout out to Pavel and Angela for helping me launch the podcast. And Jess, who is just slaying my virtual assistant help. She is so responsive and has been just right there behind me, whether I've had just a little bit of work for her or a really heavy load.

And I could not do this without them. I've added another to my team, and I'll introduce him later, but I am having a blast developing a team. I hope you get to have that experience sometime in your life, whether it's volunteer work or even just thinking more about your family being a team. This has been a blast.

Alright, a shout out goes to Mama Sylvia gave me a review, and I love, like most of us, and really like me, she has struggled with her weight most of her adult life. Boy, I hear you. But she also thought it was a little funny that I was laughing about wine o'clock. So that leads us into the episode today where we are always looking for a little release or you know, a stress buster at the end of the day. But Mama Sylvia, thank you so much for leaving a review.

I want to shout out to Marcy as well today. She is a fellow business owner in Atlanta, and she wrote me a beautiful text yesterday just saying that she was really enjoying the podcast. I'm so glad they spoke to her. She's just slaying it in Atlanta, shifting her business into this beautiful new company

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called Engaging Play, helping corporations really incorporate play with family events and also corporate activities.

We meet for breakfast every other month or so and oh my goodness, I just love being able to hang out with her. And I call her one of my tribe. So I just wanted to really start with some gratitude today and let you know the feedback means so much to me, positive and negative. I really need your feedback to know if this is really supporting you or where I've gotten off track. Thanks.

Alright, let's get to the episode. Maybe I'm avoiding it like most of us, it's about stress. So I do want to talk about how stress eating and drinking affects us. We've all done it. We have such a ball of stress as we might look back on a workweek and realize we don't even know what we ate because we were under such pressure or things were moving so fast.

And then we're experiencing such a high level of stress on most days that we feel like there's absolutely no way to survive that pressure that we're under, except by enjoying an adult beverage, or two, or three, after those particularly tough days.

Let me be clear here. No judgment is coming from me. I am actually sick of hearing my fellow health professionals telling people to just stop and judge their behaviors of drinking too much on a weekend or overeating without giving them the tools to understand how to really shift in these areas. And that's what I'm going to provide you with today.

Some insight, some tools to help you disrupt a pattern of stress eating and drinking in your life, if that's what you want to do. I want to give you a little disclaimer here. I'm the last person that is perfectly handling my fun, yet, sometimes intense life without some letdown moments of my own.

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Let's be real here. There are some Fridays that a cold one and some bar food is my way of letting down. We do not have to be perfect on our behavior to take great care of our bodies. I want to remind you of that. Our bodies are really resilient, but when we see a pattern, it really is a place where we could get a lot of traction towards our health.

So today, I'm not talking about the occasional happy hour letdown, or your foggy. What I want to address today is when the stress overeating overdrinking cycle - when that feels absolutely unbreakable, inevitable, and hopeless to you. Especially when these cycles are getting in your way of achieving your goals and a healthy, confident life.

If in fact that you suspect that these patterns of overdrinking might be the reason that you're yo-yo dieting or not able to keep weight off and stay healthy, if you have that hunch, I know this pattern sounds familiar to you. You vow to drink less this week, you start your Monday in a strong fashion, you watch what you're eating, but by Wednesday night, after a particularly tough day, you can't wait to have a beer or two when you get home.

Or you're the person that's not necessarily a drinker, and you worked really hard all day and find yourself at four, standing in front of the pantry deciding just which chip bag you're going to dive into. Or you're preparing dinner and you prepare the ultimate comfort food dinner.

And by Thursday morning, the shame begins. Your body's not very happy. You're either a little hungover or you're feeling a little gross from the food you ate. And the conversations begin in your head. "Why can't I do this? I'm such a loser. I'll never be able to lose weight. I can't stand my job, this stress is too much. It's causing me to drink too much."

Or maybe you're not as much of a drama queen as I am. You know, that could be possible. Can you tell that these sentences have been running rampant during my life? They really have. You know, maybe you just push

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yourself hard, you get out the door that next morning with a big old cup of coffee and you don't even notice how bad your body's feeling.

Alright, let's start at the beginning. I promise, there's a simple approach, and you can tackle this. It is so possible to break the stress and overdue cycle by understanding what's going on, by getting curious about the triggers, and helping that cycle to disappear in your life.

Why on earth do we do this in the first place? We just want to feel better. Food calms your nervous stomach. It feels great. And eating comfort food, okay, there's an obvious reason it's called that. When we eat foods that are loaded with sugar, flour, and fat, those items literally calm us down. And even more than that, they give us a zap of pleasure. They're concentrated, they're processed, and so they give us a zing. That's what happens in your body.

You feel better right away, but unfortunately, it does not last. Those foods really most times, do leave us wanting when eaten in high quantity. And alcohol, pretty quickly and obviously, it relaxes our nervous system and it'll lift our spirits for some. For some, it drops them, right?

Okay, listen to me here. Your body is asking for it. But it's not about willpower. It's not about how good you're doing. It's about understanding what is at play here.

Remember, I'm all about compassion. Be kind that all your human self wants is some relief. But there is a more empowering way. Not only is there a true biological reaction where your body just says, thank you, I needed those foods and drinks to feel better, but there's something else at play. Our brain loves routine and pattern. Our brain is perpetuating this cycle as well.

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Let me explain. This is just like a toddler in the grocery store. I want a cookie. They might ask the first time, and mom calmly says yes. But another time in the store, and mom says no. So the toddler asks more urgently, and mom says no again. And now they're yelling, and maybe even crying.

Mom doesn't have time for this, she gives in. And the toddler understands very clearly that this works. Our brain is working in the same way around these urges and desires. Now, this is why you might just feel a little bit crazy sometimes when you try to change a pattern or a habit like this.

And it absolutely explains what happens when we decide to not eat a particular food. You know, when we have dietary restrictions or allergies come up and we realize we cannot eat something that we love, this is perhaps why it is so hard for you.

Every thought in our brain creates a reaction. And when the brain thinks a thought like, "I want a beer. I want a glass of wine. I want that cookie. Please give me some chip," and we give in, it realizes it works and the pattern gets ingrained. It grows, the desire grows, the urgency grows.

It's a thought of wanting that creates an emotion that feels like urge or desire. Alright, let me give you a personal example. I'm going to play it all the way out to see if this helps you understand. I have walked into most girl's night, "I need a glass of wine. I've had a big day, I want some relief." I wanted a glass of wine.

Wow, about 20 minutes later, I'm feeling a little woozy and now I need some food. I stuff my face, I feel a little better now, but then I realize I'm practically falling asleep. Wow, did I really want that glass of wine? Well, I sure did. I can remember thinking it.

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But as I looked at it later, it felt gross and I actually realize in these moments I was overeating because I didn't want to feel woozy. I know, I'm a lightweight. Sorry. But looking back, don't you see? My brain was all about I need a glass of wine. No, what I really needed as I process this and got a little curious is I needed some time off and some fun with my girlfriends. I did not need that glass of wine.

I realized in the scheme of things, my brain was wrong. I know it is up to tricks when I hear that voice because I don't do well drinking on an empty stomach. So I approach my evenings very differently now around wine. In fact, I realized I didn't even like chardonnay.

But it was all about my brain making me feel like the need was going to solve all my problems. And actually, it created more. I was overeating on all those nights because I felt funny drinking that sugary wine on an empty stomach. Alright, I digress. But I hope that helps you to see, give a little light to what might be going on for you.

This cycle continues to grow when we resist it, and by trying to change it, it starts throwing a dang temper tantrum. Seriously, this is what's going on in our minds. For some of you, if you work with me, you know that I call our brains, and all those crazy thoughts in there, toddler with a knife.

Those thoughts can cause some damage, but they are running around in there without our supervision. So for today's purposes, let's remember the toddler and the tantrum. You can supervise and disrupt your thoughts. Let me show you how.

Alright, you do say no to the tantrum, and that toddler, that brain of yours is going to start insisting and pleading. You say no again, really, I'm not going to have a beer tonight. Oh, now the toddler is on full blown tantrum here. Can you see that toddler laying on the grocery store floor kicking his or her

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legs and crying? Beet beet red face. What on earth are we supposed to do?

Let it pass. This not only confuses the brain but allows those urgent emotions to pass. Don't resist it because your brain will fight back. Just like that toddler. Just calmly say no here.

Now, back to the toddler in the grocery store. Remember that one day where you watched the brave mom that calmly said no and ignored every emotion of her child. That, my friends, is your power tool. The emotional storm in your head and body will dissipate. It will burn out. Just like the toddler.

That toddler laying down in the aisle, having that tantrum, but you are the manager of that brain, of that thought, and you're the mom blissfully shopping nearby. It's hilarious because in just a few minutes, that toddler realizes it doesn't work, it's totally drained, and acts as if nothing has happened.

Again, our brain has developed a pattern and by honoring that desire, the desire grows. When we resist it, it feels like we have no choice and, in some ways, we really don't. but confuse that brain's pattern by disrupting it and letting it fizzle out and pass, it will get easier every single time.

Alright, okay, now you ask, what about making this an all or non-behavior? Certainly, for some of us, we do make a decision to not drink alcohol or eat sugar and flour. But what about those of us that want to enjoy an occasional adult beverage or enjoy fun food?

You decide to have it ahead of time. You plan for it. You never have it in the moment; you are the one in charge. You are not answering the toddler's tantrum; you're an adult, the manager of your beautiful brain. And you get to decide.

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It might look like this: I'm going to have dessert on Saturday night, I'm going to that amazing restaurant. I cannot wait. Or, I'd love a glass of wine with that special dinner on Thursday night.

There might be a little war at first, as you've seen by my example. But trust me, when you decide going forward to not use food and alcohol in this way, to take away stress, it's your ticket to freedom. I've totally ignored the trigger here: stress. I don't know if you've noticed that, and I've done that absolutely on purpose.

Stress does trigger these cycles. And I teach how to manage that core issue, or those stress moments, in module three of my Empowered Wellness video training. You can listen to that module and dial down for you and manage those stressful moments in your life.

I'm going to download the worksheet that goes with that so you can dig in here as well. But trust me, that episode and video module will help you drill down any stressful event at work, or with your kids, anything that's going on with you, and help you get to the bottom of the thinking so that you can manage it better.

You can get access to that training on any page of my website. I invite you there. Alright, why would doing this work of managing your brain even be worth it?

Can you imagine how much better you'll feel by being in charge of these decisions and not having so much buffering with these foods and alcohol in your life? No hangover, no puffiness from icky food, no regrets, no stomach aches.

And also, you don't miss the information that stress can give you. Yeah, you heard me right. Sometimes these stressful moment are our body's

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indicator that we're not in alignment or we might need to handle something at work, or we might need to have a quiet conversation with our kids.

Ignoring it and diving right into a glass of wine before processing that really robs you of some beautiful inquiry. So instead of running to food and alcohol to feel better, when we take time to acquire what is really going on for us, we can get that insight.

That is the most confidence boosting effort I've done in my entire life. You know, I know that looking at myself compassionately around these episodes has given me so much information. You know, remember the one example? I really realized that first I track back because I realized I was overeating and I was kind of guilty, feeling about that.

But my chardonnay story was really triggered by some social anxiety with people I knew really well. I didn't even realize I was having it. But by choosing not to run to the food, not run to the wine, and just kind of go, "What's going on there?" I offered myself a little curiosity and compassion and it actually makes those moments a lot better for me.

I go into those parties and times with others where I might be tempted to be kind of awkward, and I just take a deep breath and I ask how somebody else is doing. And my day is so much better. But do you see that?

Some of our stress triggers are warnings. They are indicators for something else. I'm sure there's going to be an entire episode around stress at some point, so watch for it.

I want to thank you for being here today and I create - I think there's only one episode I've created where I did not create a worksheet for you. And I've got another one for this one. First, you will have access to this stress 101 worksheet. It's a beautiful way to learn the thought model, to kind of

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learn how your thoughts, not the facts in your life are creating your emotions, and what to do around that.

And I will lay out all the steps in the episode of really learning to move from buffering with your favorite items and learning to be more empowered around them. And not only that, I love good questions, and I'll just put some great questions in there to help you if you're like, "Why am I so stressed?" to dig in a little bit.

I love being with you on this rainy day and I can't wait to bring you my next episode. Road warriors unite. Pack your bags. I'm ready to go.

Thank you for listening to this episode of *Empowered Wellness for Leaders!* If you enjoyed this episode and want to learn more, download our Free Video Series: Empowered Wellness Now.

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