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Hi. Welcome to another episode of The Mel Lawson Show. Today we are talking about alcohol, and it's quite a popular subject at the moment. We're going to talk about the culture around alcohol (especially in the UK), how different it was for me growing up in Spain as a teenager, and the shock coming here when I was 19, some practical tips

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if you would like to stop drinking or reduce your drinking. Liv talks about her experience as a non-drinker. She's never really drank alcohol. I talk about my experience as someone who does drink moderate amounts and a 60 day period last summer when I didn't drink at all and I felt really amazing and would quite like to do the same again.

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But yeah, it's difficult. So yeah, we discuss all of those topics. Yeah. Welcome back Liv. Thanks. Nice to be here. Yeah, thanks for coming. So we're going to talk about alcohol. Yeah. Yeah. A lot of people are talking about alcohol at the moment- there's quite a few podcasts, just about alcohol, right? Yep. We're going to talk about a couple of different things around alcohol.

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And I think where I'm going to start is with this deep ingrained belief that if you don't drink, it's boring or you're boring, to really dig in to that. Yeah, interesting it's interesting. So, on the way here I was thinking, did I need to do some kind of preamble around... I felt like I needed to say, "Hey, everyone, I'm not some puritanical zealot.

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Like I'm all up for people having fun and doing whatever they like, you know? As long as you're not hurting other people, you know, do what you like. I'm very much a liberal or libertarian in that sense of the word". And then I thought, why do I feel this sort of angst around potentially, well not potentially but, you know, criticising alcohol and aspects of alcohol?

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Because actually, none of the stuff we're going to say is made up or untrue. And I think a lot of people will, I think, well, you've got a lot of experience in this, people don't like to hear this stuff, which is very interesting. So I'm not going to apologise, and if it bothers you, then maybe you need to think about, you know, your relationship with alcohol.

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Yeah. But, so you are a non-drinker? Yeah. How would you refer to yourself if you had to give yourself a label which people love?

Yeah, I haven't really thought about that- I just don't drink. Yeah. So that's what I say to people. I just don't really drink. Yeah, that's how I answer it normally.

Yeah, and you've never really drunk? No, I delved into it when I was a teenager, like most people,

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but it just never really stuck. There are many reasons why. But it never really is something I've enjoyed. Does it make you feel ill? Because some people, I can't remember the name, some people who are missing something due to their genetics, for them it will instantly make you feel really sick and horrible and you can't touch it. A lot of people go very red in the face.

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I do. I go very red in the face, actually for most things, because I'm quite pale so: exercise, alcohol, slightly too hot, slightly too cold... Ah right. So yeah, I definitely have that. I feel hot, bothered. Yeah. Tired, stressed. I don't get that high that other people get from alcohol. Yeah. Yeah, well so, I'm no expert on the sort of biological side of it, but I've listened to quite a few podcasts about it, there's one in particular I'll recommend later, that some people lack the... I'm not very science-y as you can tell!

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They lack the enzyme or the ability to...because alcohol is a poison basically. Yeah. And some people just cannot process it or deal with it at all. In a way, luckily for you, people who get an enormous high and they stay on a high, because most people (which will come on to) get a bit of high and then have a gradual crash.

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Some people, it makes them feel amazing. They're much, much more likely to become dependent on alcohol. So the fact that you feel pretty lousy is a good thing in that you don't have a propensity, then. Yeah, it's definitely helped me, yeah, it's just always made me feel unwell, and when I experimented, when I was a teenager, I would be seen as like a "lightweight".

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I just couldn't really handle my drink. And I just decided that it just wasn't for me. And then, yeah, I think since then, almost that feeling of feeling so unwell is not worth it. Yeah exactly. So yeah, from then on I've kind of just not really drunk anything. Yeah, and do you find that difficult?

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Oh yeah. What sort of stuff do people say to you? Yeah, I think when I was a teenager, I just kind of tried to carry on anyway because I thought, well, all my friends are doing it, I need to fit in, I need to be part of the crowd, need to go drinking in the park at the time, which now I look back is so dangerous,

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but at the time I was like doing all these things just stay in my clique, my group friends. So anything outside of that would have been "lame" or "stop being so boring". That was the sort of stuff I'd hear if I was like, I think I've had enough now. It was a lot of peer pressure. I also wasn't eating enough at the time, so I think that did also contribute to my lack of being able to drink as much as everyone else was,

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and being a lot more unwell the next day than most people. So, back then it was like very childish "you're so boring, why won't you join in?" So that was really the peer pressure then. Then, when I got to my twenties, I went through a big stint of not drinking anything really, and I didn't put myself in situations,

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I actively didn't go out, so that that gave me the excuse. It was just "oh Liv doesn't really go out". And then it wasn't really a drinking thing, it was more, "she doesn't really like clubbing", which is more accepted, I think, than the drink. And when I was at uni, obviously everyone was going out a lot, so I just kind of avoided it,

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Cause I thought I don't really want to have to explain myself. And then when I was about 25, I thought, "no actually, I really do enjoy going out and now I feel more strong in myself I'm going to start going out again". And I was faced with a lot of questioning; a lot of it was, some people thought I had a problem with alcohol, which is why I now can't drink.

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So they were like, "oh, you're not drinking..." or it would be "are you pregnant?" It was quite extreme. They thought the reason for me not drinking was an extreme reason. Yeah. And then just like other things, like, "oh, that could never be me. I'd find this so, like, hard to do" and there would be like a judgement.

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Or they almost felt like I was judging them almost? Like, "how do you do that? How do you have fun? This is how I switch off." Yeah, there's a lot of judgements that get thrown at you when you say no thank you to drink. Yeah. But the biggest one, when I was thinking about this topic, is around celebrations.

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So more recently, I've had weddings to go to, or birthday parties, and people have been handing round wine or like at weddings there's always a toast at weddings. So I'd toast and then I'd have a sip, then I'd put it down and people would be like "oh you're not drinking that?"- it's like, I was almost rejecting the celebration by not drinking.

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That's harder to deal with actually, that's something that still gets to me because I don't want to be seen as not celebrating the people around me, but I just don't want to drink it's as simple as that really. Hmm, that's a tricky one isn't it. Yeah. And it is because it's alcohol, because let's say you were coeliac, and you can't eat gluten...

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Yes! And it's a birthday, and it's a birthday cake and that's the celebration piece, and you say you know "I'm alright thanks. I can't eat gluten." Yeah. No one would say "oh", but because it's alcohol it's, and you know when you say to people "I'm not drinking" you, you're not judging those people that are drinking.

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No. But you can feel that they're somehow feeling that and imagining that that's what you're doing. So it's all really uncomfortable. And yeah, I've really struggled with that, so I'm now more likely going to say, you know, "I'm not drinking at the moment". And then this whole, you know, it's so much more about them- that you're kind of holding a mirror up.

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It's not all your fault, but they don't want to look in the mirror and think, maybe I shouldn't drink or...Yeah. I also think what came up for me then is the judgement, as I've always had people be like "you don't need to worry, just have a drink, it's like, not that bad for you."

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It's almost the same judgement you get. If you say "I'm eating a certain way" or like, "I'm going to have a pizza", "I'm not going to have that". You always have to have a reason. And it's that thing of

like, indulging and not being part of indulging and that people are like "you're lacking something" if you don't do that.

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Yeah, that's almost like that. Actually the reasoning might actually just be, I don't want to feel like crap the next day. I want to have a good night's sleep and not be anxious for a whole week after I've had a drink. So, yeah, yeah, there's a lot of pressure, especially more so in my early twenties.

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But in my twenties in general, there was a lot of pressure around. Yeah, I think that is the worst period. Because it's such a cultural thing, and I think I don't really know where it's come from. It must be because it's everywhere. The is factory brainwashing, probably the alcohol industry.

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I mean, you know, every advert for alcohol- everyone's very happy and beautiful and you know, you can't celebrate without alcohol and that's really ingrained in my brain. So I grew up with that. Yeah, alcohol for celebrations. And if there's no alcohol, it's not really a celebration. Is this interesting? Yeah.

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It's not your 18th birthday if you don't get taken down the pub or, you know, or you don't go out shopping with your mates. Yeah. Have a drink. Yeah. Yeah. And every movie and TV show- so with the American TV shows, they'll show like a business scene and then they're like, pouring massive whiskies in the office, like, who has bottles of whisky in the office?

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Yeah. I just don't think that happens in real life. But it's always, you know, film TV is everywhere. It's constant, constant, constant. Which is effectively what brainwashing is. Yeah. So we've all been brainwashed. We've got a culture for binge drinking which is normalised and actually glamorised.

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It's a sort of badge of honour. Yeah. That's how much you drank last night. I associate it more with, with young blokes.

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Yeah. 20 pints. You know, you wouldn't brag about 20 portions of fish and chips. Yeah. People would call you a lightweight and it's somehow like you're a lesser person because you're physiologically

not able to process a poison. Yeah. And you're just, you know, not cool.

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Yeah, I remember your previous career. Yeah, in marketing and advertising. Yeah. Would you know how to tell clients now? I know when I was working in London, I'd come out and that be just how they are behaving at like 2 p.m..

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Yeah. And it would all be like people in their suits working have been on lunches, drinking. Yeah. Probably on the company cards. And they're encouraged to do that. You might make money and business.

Yeah like that was a big part of my job. Yeah. Was entertaining clients and getting them drunk basically. Which really sinks how crazy.

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Yeah. And I didn't really drink until I started that career in advertising in London. Yeah, I wasn't a very big drinker at all. When I grew up in Spain as a teenager, I don't know what it's like now, but it's never more drinking than Italy. But it's not this.

It's not that drinking culture that we have, and teenagers are given a bit of wine at home with the food we always were as well.

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And, you know, and that's how I've been with my children. So that it was never this kind of, you know, this forbidden thing that soon as I'm 18... But we just didn't get drunk as teenagers. Extremely rare that you'd see a drunk teenager in Spain.

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We did smoke, but we drink, you know, Coke, Coca-Cola. Yeah. And the alcohol in Spain. I mean, when you order a gin and tonic in Spain- huge, huge measures. And then the tonic on the side and you kind of...Yeah, So you can drink a lot. But when I moved back to the UK, I went to university here and, and I had lived in the UK since I was about 12, so I didn't know it as a, as a young adult.

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So I was 19 and it was freshers week and I was just like so confused and aghast, and the drinking games...It was quite a big rugby university, and going into this bar and all the boys had their willies and their pints and like I was like drinking. Really cool.

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Yeah, I've never seen anything like that. I felt really liked. It

was a whole different world. Yeah. And I remember being at parties and they were doing drinking games and I remember quite vividly they would throw a ball around and if it landed in your glass...? Yeah.
One of those.

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Yeah. Like beer pong. Yeah. And it was big glass of really shit white wine. Pretty nasty like slightly warm (and like my father was really into wine, so I grew up drinking very nice wine and just small amount). But I was, you know, already a wine snob at age 19. And this guy said "down it" and I went "I'm not downing it".

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So I have to put an explicit warning. And he went, "you have to". "I don't have to do anything". And I remember that, like just literally everyone looking at me like, what the hell? And I could just feel right, well, I'm never going to get invited here again. I said, there's no way I am downing that to please some guy who I've never met, I couldn't give two shits.

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Why would I want to do that?

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And the thing with alcohol is that once you're kind of drinking quite a lot, you start to crave it. So that is very difficult. And then you drink more and more and more because you get more and more used to drinking more. Yeah, and now I get that. Yeah. So, yeah, I remember when I found out I was pregnant with Grace, and being at a party and having to go to the bar guy and say "Can you make me something that looks like alcohol, like a gin and tonic, but it's not gin and tonic or something".

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And "don't tell anyone" because I had to pretend. And then you have to pretend that you're a bit drunk. I mean, the good thing is, once everyone's drunk, they don't realise you're not drunk, so they can't tell. Yeah. My husband says we just sort of disappear and no one notices.

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They've gone because they were drunk. Yeah. Yes. So, it's culturally very, very difficult not to drink. Yeah. And as I mentioned today, again, no judgement around these women, but I was in a cafe in Brighton early on a Saturday morning waiting to go to a class, having a coffee, and three women came in to have brunch and they ordered cocktails at 9 a.m..

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Yeah, and they're my age. And I thought, you know, again, do what you like, but I would feel so unwell. And by mid-morning I'd want, you know...I love a Saturday where I get up and do stuff and I thought, I bet those women are sort of on a constant hunt for things that can make me feel better during peri-menopause.

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So, yeah, that whole "I need more energy, I need less brain fog, I need better sleep. I want to remove the feelings of the week. Tough, tough week at work." And then the worst thing you could do is drink alcohol. And I mean, literally the worst thing you can do on so many levels and all the risks of breast cancer.

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There's such a disconnect. Yeah. People I know who are like, yeah, you've got to take this supplement and do this. I see plunge pools and breathing exercises and all this, and then the alcohol doesn't come into it. Yeah, the disconnect. Right, right. You can do as much of that as you like.

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I wonder if some of that is to overcompensate so they feel less sure about having a drink as well. Because I know that if I had been hung over I'd have to work extra hard that week to get myself out of a funk. So it's like I don't have that cold water stuff in there because I just needed anything to get me to fall back to normal.

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I'd feel back to normal again by Friday, go out again, ready to drink again. And then it's like the same cycle would come around again. Yeah. And then, yeah, sometimes I think, well, in my experience it was to overcompensate because I felt so sure that I had to do all these things to get me out of that hole that I was in.

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Yeah. And it's really interesting around culture, like, I think it's a culture thing, It's an upbringing thing. Like you said, your upbringing was you were given a bit of wine that was good wine shown to appreciate it and enjoy it. And I think I definitely went down at one point as what alcohol do I enjoy? Is that something I like?

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And I remember that gin and tonic is something I do enjoy. So I bought some to have a home because that's just a thing people do, isn't it? Like on a Friday. I started to get into the habit of like on a Friday. I'd have like a couple of gin and tonics while I was

watching something on TV and it was lovely. 00:21:45:21 -

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I'd enjoy doing that. I didn't get drunk. It was just a nice I'm enjoying the drink. And then I went into the kitchen and I thought I could just have it again right now. And it was like 6 p.m. on a Tuesday, right? Yeah. And I thought, I don't need to do that.

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But I was craving it. Yeah. Because it's that like feeling of, I wanted that fried. I can let go of the weight, I wanted that feeling and I was associating that feeling with the gin and I clocked it.

But I wonder how many people don't clock it. 00:22:21:18 -

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And the question I've always sat with is when does it become a problem? Because culture tells us that's normal. Like when does it cross the line of your religion? Yeah. And when is it just enjoying them? Because in this country it's like, yeah, binge drinking is just seen as normal.

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And just thought, yeah, you're actually right. Because you do get that surge of dopamine that first drink- your brain remembers that. So it goes, I want to feel that you have a drink. Yeah, but also the amount of times I've had a meeting like a zoom with someone and a woman my age or, you know, and they'll say, you know, how's it been?

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We are really busy today. Wow, it's nearly 6:00 and crack open the wine. Yeah. Like, well I'd rather have a massage. If I was rich I'd have a really good chef who made really healthy food. A massage person.

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You know what I mean? Does that is that is what I would want to do. But that all requires quite a lot discipline, self-discipline, because that's effort. Whereas cracking open the wine is easy. Yeah, is and quick. And it does relax you in initially because it shuts stuff down in your brain and that that's a part of your brain that is associated with sort of judgement and so people who are very shy or, you know, in the during the last shy because it shuts down the brain, as they call it, Dutch courage.

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Dutch courage. I've seen nervous flyers- just numb yourself rather than just sitting and chatting with them maybe.

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Give them a breathing exercise. But that's effort- alcohol is that's just a quick yes. It's numbing the initial feeling. Yeah. And they need us to dive into it. But speaking of flying,

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I went to, Ibiza last year. 00:24:49:08 -

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Yeah. Completely sober. I did have one drink while I was there, that's before I was with two friends that also were kind of looking to not have a drink, which made things happen. Yeah, but I remember going to a big gig at one of the super clubs and it was the first time I was going something like that, and I was shocked when I went up and got three Diet Cokes and it was, how much it was now? €70 or something.

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I knew that it would be expensive because it was a super club. And then I had somebody next to me being served alcohol and it was it was so much less money to drink. Yeah. So at first I thought actually be cheaper for me to drink alcohol right now, but I stuck to my guns. Then when we got to the stage, we were watching everything.

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I just looked around me and I was just shocked at how numb people were that they weren't even experiencing what they'd come to experience. They were just watching. They're not even watching it. It was like they were just completely numbed out. Probably on drugs as well. And I just found myself feeling really sad for them because I was like, I'm getting so much high, natural, high.

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Yeah. Because by being fully present in this experience that I've paid quite a lot of money to be here. Yeah. And I think it just had me thinking about how people drink if they get in that high. Is that natural high enough? Like are they going for the music and having that experience or are they going to just get that high they used to with alcohol?

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And I found that quite sad that there's so much that life has to offer us that people will just spend a lot of their lives numbing because they've kind of trained their brain.

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Yeah, which is a dopamine thing. Yeah. Yeah. And you kind of have to get through that. But I think it's also, again, this thing that, well, you're not having a good time unless you try that you can't go to a club and

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not drink like that's mental. Am I right? I recognise that I'm seen as quite weird or people are like, "How are you doing this?" And don't get me wrong, there are times where I'm like, it would be easier if I was drunk right now. Drunk people are quite annoying.

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Yeah. And so it is easier in those moments. Yeah. But I just don't want to let go as that feeling as I now remember the entire night. I do get tired quicker, that's one thing. One downside is by 1am, I was like, yeah, yeah, I'm ready to go home now. People were going over the road and then partying till six And I don't think you can really do that unless you've got a stimulant of some kind and in your body it's just not being normal.

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Yeah. So yeah there's things like that that I can understand why people gravitate towards those things, but it's just not for me. So I just accept that there's a cut off point for me if I don't drink. Yeah. And I get to actually enjoy all the things people do anyway. Well, that's right. Yeah. And the rest I suspect you don't.

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I enjoy stuff more. Yeah. And I think it does help though. I have two people with me that also went drinking because I think before I got drunk to stay connected to the people around me. But is it really connection? I don't think drunk people can actually have a coherent conversation when they get past a certain point.

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It's kind of like just you think you are at the time, but you're just yeah, you don't remember it. When you're the sober one in the room, you realise people are actually having a conversation that is just kind of talking at each other. Yeah. So I think that's the thing I crave most is like connection.

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I spent so much time and effort trying to get embodied. What you mean by that feeling in your body. And so being like the reason I had such anxiety before is I just wasn't tuned into my body. So now when I go to a gig, I can see the music in my body, like the

vibrations in the floor. 00:29:02:06 -

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I'm like looking at all of the amazing stuff that's going on on stage. I can feel the emotions that's coming up to me. I'm like, in how I was describe it, I'm feeling everything. If I then have a drink, I'm pulling myself completely out of my body. Yeah, And I had spent so much time trying to pull myself back in.

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Why would I want to do that? Or so I don't. Yeah, well, I think a lot of people would be quite envious in a way of you that you don't have that pull to the alcohol and you can very ease. I think a lot of people would love to not drink. Yeah, but find it so difficult and, and so, so I drank my twenties largely to fit in but also just I then got used to it and I got into that quite unhealthy. Then you have children and you can't really drink and and then yeah last last year I was doing not, not drinking loads but I would spend all week trying to feel

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good and get rid of the brain fog and the have more energy feel more motivated. And then Friday's gin and tonic or you know whatever and then feel quite crap on Monday not like hangover just a bit crap Yeah. And it's obvious but then it's like okay well it's the alcohol is the common factor the weekend.

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So by Friday I'm feeling good. Well I'll have a drink and then perhaps the cycle... Yeah. So then I listened to an episode of the Huberman lab, which I recommend anybody who I mean, everyone should listen to it, really, because he really spells this myth that moderate drinking is actually good for you. Because a thing, you know, especially the red wine industry and, you know, I do love a nice glass of red wine, but it's I know it's how she could fear, you know, people who drink red wine live longer.

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And it's really unfortunately not true. I think that a lot of the examples they use where people drink a little bit sort of places where they call blue zones in Italy. Yeah, if few in Italy, it's not the alcohol, it's it's a combination of lots of things. But I think largely it's the community piece.

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So no, they're not lonely. Old people don't get an old folks homes. Everybody looks after each other. They have quite a simple life. And but you know, people who want a drink to be okay, go. look, see,

they live reduced because they drink a couple glasses of red wine every day. I need that. So I listened to it and I took some notes.

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But I do recommend the episode- he goes through everything and said things that I worry about. And that's probably because I'm a bit older now. But obviously breast cancer and cancer in general and brain degeneration, so on, on the sort of lower and just brain fog and my memory small, sharp, you know, not saying that's happening, but I don't want that to happen.

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Yeah. To, you know, full blown dementia, Alzheimer's- those are things that are massively on the rise and he talks about a study, it was a UK study, and we'll put a link, and it was called the "the liver associations between alcohol consumption and grey white matter volumes in the brain". And they looked at 35,000 people, healthy middle aged adults who drink a couple of drinks a day, which makes you go, that's fine, that's, you know, 14 units or whatever.

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that's probably good for you. and there was evidence that it thins the neocortex, which is basically means you lose neurones. So that really made me think, crikey, Okay. And then a lot about gut health. So I have a lot of issues, a lot of irritable bowel, heartburn, nausea. And it's you know, I've had it since I was a teenager and that something never occurred to me is the alcohol, is it it's antibacterial.

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So it kills your gut bacteria. So I could spend all week eating all my kimchi and china, eat all my different varieties of veg and fibre to improve my you know and it's the thing of the day at the moment is that the microbiome we've got. Yeah. And then you have a few drinks so, it makes so much sense.

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So that really stuck in my head- I literally spent half my life trying to figure out how to make my gut feel better. The impact on sleep, yeah, is nuts. And I know so many people who drink so they can go to sleep and say, Well, how will I go to sleep without a drink? And the whole nightcap- have a nightcap?

00:35:00:08 - 00:35:21:11

So I've had insomnia since I was a kid. Have a whisky, right? That's really bad advice. And I know that instinctively because alcohol keeps me awake- or you pass out for a bit, and then you wake up wide awake and your heart's pounding. Yeah. And that's all the effects of

it have been.

00:35:21:11 - 00:35:48:20

Which he explains really well in this, in this class. There's really no upside. The things I like about alcohol, which are the things that are hard to give up aside from the societal kind of culture pieces, it does taste delicious. Yeah, I got a really delicious wine or gin and tonic or in a lovely and like copious cocktail.

00:35:48:20 - 00:36:16:13

I drink negroni. It's delicious. It you do get this, especially if you're with other people who drink. There's a there's a there's a kind of euphoria which does come for you. I mean, that is quite hard to replicate in the evening in a social setting without alcohol, it's very easy to replicate at different times. If you go cold water swimming with your friends or play tennis.

00:36:16:13 - 00:36:45:01

Yeah. Or like I always think of kids, kids in playgrounds or yeah, they don't need alcohol to have a good time and be themselves and how they don't need any Dutch courage actually. You know what I mean? So it's definitely something that we love. Yeah, over time. So I like alcohol for those reasons and also my husband drinks alcohol, so that's quite tricky on a Friday.

00:36:45:03 - 00:37:15:03

But I was listening to this thinking, my go to sleep thing, stress, mood, stomach, all the long term risks, but just the short term things and the dopamine piece. So it affects your dopamine.

00:37:15:06 - 00:37:36:10

So it's harder and harder to get those dopamine hits. So just everything made me think, ah, I'm going to, I'm just going to try. So I did 60 Days of No Alcohol. I think it was sort of May, June, quite tricky months. I was going to say midsummer to do it, but I literally felt amazing. Yeah, yeah.

00:37:36:12 - 00:37:58:09

To the point where I think I was boring people with how amazing I felt. I kept it quiet from quite a lot of people because I didn't want the questions in my ear.

00:37:58:11 - 00:38:20:22

I even had somebody say to me about the gut bacteria thing "wine is a fermented drink". Like it's because they're just trying to link.

00:38:20:22 - 00:38:41:15

Yeah. I feel really great. I say, a lot of people don't have that mind-body connection. Yeah, you were talking about you can actually feel just really good in your body day to day. And it's actually possible.

00:38:41:15 - 00:39:10:13

Yes, I guess it is a sacrifice, isn't it? I think because there are some sacrifices to drink. I guess what I mean by sacrifice is you're choosing your health over staying out a bit later, or the feeling like you're connected.

00:39:10:13 - 00:39:33:03

There's like always things that people probably feel they're getting from alcohol. As you were saying, the pay off like having a nice drink with your partner after work. It's like those moments that you're kind of you're choosing your health highlights. There is a bit of like you have to choose. I think it's yeah, I think sacrifice is or is it You have to have quite a lot of self-discipline.

00:39:33:03 - 00:39:35:11

Yeah. To push through those.

00:39:35:11 - 00:39:59:23

But some people also think, well, my group of friends, that's our whole social life is around alcohol. So if I don't drink how am I part of that anymore? Yeah, that's a really difficult one that is, but going back to that mind-body connection that you were talking about, a lot of people just don't have that at all so they don't actually know how they feel.

00:40:00:00 - 00:40:23:14

No. So you know how some people say, I don't know. You think you're hungry and actually a thirsty. Right. Yes. And actually just have a drink of water or, you know, you've got a headache and you say, it's just actually dehydrated. Yeah.

00:40:23:14 - 00:40:43:19

My trying to figure out like, what's that? I'm very, in a way unaware but a lot of people aren't. So I think a lot of people think, yeah, I feel fine drinking, but then they don't think they do have brain fog by the time I do. Still low. I need quite a lot caffeine. Yeah. They just don't really.

00:40:43:19 - 00:41:09:05

When I stopped drinking for 60 days, I felt amazing. My gut issues went. My sleep was amazing. Yeah, I was really motivated because

you're just way more productive and then you get on a massive high getting up on a Saturday and going to box fit class really, really early.

00:41:09:05 - 00:41:19:03

And then coming back and everyone's still in bed- you can't do that if you've been drinking the night before.

00:41:19:05 - 00:41:52:02

Yeah, So I didn't come up with this, but I think it's a really good way of expressing it- alcohol robs some of your happiness from tomorrow. It's really good way of looking at it. You're borrowing it, you know. Yeah. And I think when you don't drink you actually feel happier and you're not borrowing any happiness from tomorrow.

00:41:52:02 - 00:41:55:06

It kind of gets better and better each day. 00:41:55:06 -

00:42:17:19

Yeah. and then we went on holiday at the end of my 60 days and I was thinking I really do want to start drinking again. We were on holiday as a family. So it was a combination of it does feel quite weird to be not drinking a little wine.

00:42:17:19 - 00:42:42:21

You know, you're with a lot of family in the house, and alcohol definitely helps some situations where, you know, it's quite hectic and I love a party.

00:42:42:21 - 00:43:16:12

I can stay up all night dancing without alcohol. But yeah, sometimes I just think, it's just easier to drink. Oh go on then. And then you think, well, you know, and then the next day and then I'm back to drinking probably Friday and Saturday. Not loads. Yeah, but or maybe on a Saturday and it's okay, but there is a part of me that just thinks I would quite like to not drink at all, but there's also a bit of me just can't accept the idea at all.

00:43:16:16 - 00:43:44:06

And like it's Grace's 18th birthday this month. Yeah. And she's already, you know, requested what champagne she would like. I'm like, well, I can't not drink on her 18th birthday and it's so ingrained that "it won't be that as a celebration" again. There's no celebration because I'm not drinking.

00:43:44:08 - 00:44:03:02

I have a heavy caveat that you can't just have one.

00:44:03:04 - 00:44:21:03

So I'll say, what a waste? Why would I just have one? I'd rather not drink or get absolutely hammered. You know, that's another mindset that I've seen. Yeah. What's the point if you just can have one? And I think that some people maybe don't enjoy the taste, so they're just doing it to get drunk.

00:44:21:03 - 00:44:41:04

Yeah. Whereas if you enjoy the taste of alcohol, you get a nice glass wine. It's very different. Yeah. I've never actually really liked the taste of alcohol. And maybe that's not a thing that's on my side. Like wine I can't get behind. Yeah. So I think that also plays to my advantage. If you do enjoy it, like you say, if you've got this amazing champagne that you know you're going to pick a really nice place.

00:44:41:04 - 00:44:58:11

Delicious. Then you're going to be more inclined to say "we're going to have a glass". Exactly. And, and then there's maybe nothing wrong with that. He's going to kill me for saying this because he doesn't drink very much,

00:44:58:11 - 00:45:23:13

My husband says "let's put the cork thing in" his special cork. Yeah. And put it in the fridge. What else did we want to talk about on the alcohol front?

00:45:23:13 - 00:45:48:13

Feeling less connected. Less so a lot of people, yeah. Do they feel less awkward in social situations, which is where smoking is quite handy.

00:45:48:14 - 00:46:11:23

Yeah. There's something that I think's really interesting when you stop drinking. I realised. Do I actually like this person or do I like this scenario? I mean, I just used to like it because I was drunk. And that's something that is also awkward to sit with some people is like if you go and make out with your friends and then you all decide, let's have a sober night, and then you ends up really being quite bored.

00:46:12:00 - 00:46:30:10

There's actually nothing wrong with being bored sometimes. It's actually really good for your brain. Yeah, but if it's a reoccurring thing, if you're sober and in the spaces and places that you're in,

the people that you're with and you're not having the conversations you'd like to have or you don't feel good in these scenarios,

00:46:30:11 - 00:46:53:02

places and people, or was it the alcohol that was just making that bearable? Yeah, and that's like a really scary thing. So a lot of people might have to face that and it won't be the your entire life. But yeah, you know, like if you need that as a crutch, that should be a sign that maybe you don't actually enjoy that place or person.

00:46:53:02 - 00:47:29:04

Yeah. And, and on a broader note, if you need alcohol as a crutch or need it to relax or to sleep or, you know, to switch off. Then again, I think that's a sign that something needs to change.

00:47:29:04 - 00:47:37:07

It's only the first sort of half an hour of an evening or drinking situation where you have to really like, hang on.

00:47:37:07 - 00:47:44:17

Once you get through that, you're like, "so glad I'm not drinking". Yeah. Then everyone's just kind of, yeah, you get over it. It's

00:47:44:17 - 00:47:47:07

just that first bit. 00:47:47:07

- 00:47:55:11

And I've found that if I've got something nice to drink in that first bit, a nice soft drink. Yeah, there's quite a lot of good mocktails you can get now. That's a good tip.

00:47:55:11 - 00:48:20:22

No water, I love water, but no. Something that tastes nice. Yeah. And then once you're through that first bit then it's a breeze and then you get really smug and then obviously try not to show your smugness, but it's actually really nice.

00:48:20:22 - 00:48:40:23

Yeah. So yeah, that would be one thing I would say. Just don't thing about your whole night without drinking. It's only about half an hour. That's a good tip. That's a good one. Have something nice to drink. The taste nice that don't worry if it's sugary and sweet. Doesn't matter. No. People say, it's got you know, it's got to be healthy.

00:48:40:23 - 00:48:44:15

It's fine. Yeah. Have a bit of sugar over alcohol. 00:48:44:15 -

00:49:08:01

Yeah. Mean alcohol's just sugary anyway isn't it. Yeah. And so I think that's something I think people often say you've got to replace it with something else. I don't know if I do because I'm not sure it's that easy. I think keeping a diary really helps. I kept a journal, so that's how good I felt.

00:49:08:04 - 00:49:32:01

Yeah. And then I had a party coming up and I was bit worried about it, so I wrote down things I was worried about. And then we turned up at this party. I was completely sober. Everyone was trashed. They didn't notice I wasn't drunk. A couple of people handed me drinks. Even though I said I didn't want one. And then I just put it down and they didn't notice.

00:49:32:01 - 00:49:59:14

Yeah. and then, yeah, I found everyone quite shouty and I just kept mine. And that's you want to sort of replace the you know, addiction's the wrong word.

00:49:59:16 - 00:50:22:12

Doing something difficult is difficult. But it makes you feel so good. Yeah. Yeah but if you can just keep that in your head and I do think it's becoming more acceptable. Yeah, I think it is. To drink. Yeah. I suppose some people might be feeling a bit judged and they try and get you to it.

00:50:22:17 - 00:50:46:06

Yes. To rope you in. That's quite difficult. You will get this right. I think my advice would be if you are going to like a gig or something where people are drinking. Yeah, I find that's easier. I think mine's reversed. So I find the beginning of the night easy is when I start flagging at like 11 p.m. and people were like, just have a drink.

00:50:46:08 - 00:51:11:08

It will wake you up. Yeah, because my friend's having a really great time, but actually I'm really knackered now. Yes, my body's tired and it's not wired. So I then go into the night knowing that I'm not going to be able to meet everybody where there are. And if I'm okay with that, I normally make sure I've booked a taxi for a certain time, so I'm not tempted to just keep going because then it get if I have done it, I've then started drinking.

00:51:11:08 - 00:51:30:16

11 p.m.. no. And then being like going home at 4 a.m.. Yeah. And then I'm like, I did all of that beginning and then I've got the kind of comedown because I've given in, because I'm tired and I'll do anything to stay out. Yeah, I think that I've accepted that there's a cut off for me. That's the first rather than trying to keep up.

00:51:30:18 - 00:51:52:08

So that was quite impossible today. That is interesting. And the other thing was the if you are going to drink, if you want to be more in body, I'd still want a drink. Just notice how you're feeling as you're drinking. Yeah. So rather than just knocking them back and, you know, being really fast and keeping up with everyone else's pace.

00:51:52:08 - 00:52:10:04

Yeah. When I do drink now, I'm like, I kind of know my limit. Yeah. And so I've had to know, how am I feeling? Yeah. So quite good. And buzzed like a carry on. Now I don't eat, I drink more. A lot of people just disassociate and carry on. I'm thinking, I like this feeling. I'll have another.

00:52:10:05 - 00:52:31:20

Yeah, yeah. And then also the next day and sort of try a number again. Just notice how you feel in the day after and then maybe just take notice of how long it takes your body to get out of that and just be a bit more aware of how you feel. Yeah. Even without having to change any of your, you know, drinking habits, just being a bit more aware.

00:52:31:20 - 00:52:51:18

Yeah. And writing it down does help. Yeah. And just the connection. If I had a really bad week this week and maybe it was because I drank too much last weekend was something. What I also do is I, when I don't feel good, I make a note in my diary, my electronic diary. I have like a separate diary for it's in a different colour.

00:52:51:19 - 00:53:20:01

Yeah, I kind of write this very brief how I felt and what I'd done. And I had a look through and pretty much nine times out of ten I'd had some alcohol and even just a small amount. And now it's like, look, it's plain to see. I've checked and nearly every diary entry had a glass of wine the night before.

00:53:20:06 - 00:53:43:24

Well, Helen so yeah, I think just being more aware. Yeah. And not letting other people's, that's a very hard thing to say, but not

letting other people's judgements infiltrate your own mindset around if you are wanting to stay sober. As you're saying, if you can get to that first bit, that kind of stuff, I forget and they forget because it is, yeah.

00:53:43:24 - 00:54:03:10

If it was any other drug, I imagine if people were like, go on. Like you even be friends with them on like a hard drug or some coke. Come on. Yeah. I'd be like out of there or even cigarettes. Yeah, You know, Come on. I don't want that smoke. They don't call me boring on images on bottles of alcohol, do they.

00:54:03:10 - 00:54:24:09

Like, they do cigarettes now but it's the same. The same thing. Yes. So for me, I mean, I'm not I'm not a fan of sanitising stuff for people, but I was watching Elmo's Fire, which none of you will know because it's very old film. So it's one of my favourite films.

Watching it last night. 00:54:24:09 -

00:54:49:15

For some reason, everyone smokes all of the time, even in hospitals and I can remember when smoking on planes and stuff, I can remember those days, but now very rarely see smoking and there's a warning in there which again I'm not massive fan of that so I think people can but yeah the way alcohol is portrayed is completely different.

00:54:49:15 - 00:55:13:10

Smoking. Yeah, you're different. You barely see smoking now. And there's a warning. Yes. Well I'm really interested to hear your thoughts. Yeah. If you're listening. Yeah. If you're watching.

Especially leave a comment. And like I said at the beginning, here I go again.

00:55:13:12 - 00:55:38:24

I don't judge people with anything. I'm very much, you know, into personal freedom. And I also think life should be fun and joyous. But I think most thing is alcohol is can be pretty joyless for lots of reasons. And if you're seeking joy and energy and then alcohol might be one to look out. Yeah it's not the target.

00:55:39:00 - 00:55:56:22

Right. They're looking for. Right. Really sorry. Yeah. Yeah. Borrowing happiness. I like that. Also the thing I'm taking away. Borrowing happiness from tomorrow.