

# Embracing Clarity: Karolina Rzadkowolska on the Transformative Power of an Alcohol-Free Life

## LESS HOUSE MORE MOOLA

We help the tiny house community use their lower housing costs to build financial independence.

With Laura Lynch



Full Episode Transcript

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## **Embracing Clarity: Karolina Rzadkowolska on the Transformative Power of an Alcohol-Free Life**

It takes a brave and independent mindset to go tiny. If you are trying to figure out your tiny pivot, this podcast is here to inspire and connect you with the other unconventional, gritty, inspirational people within this community.

I'm Laura Lynch, your tiny house friend and host. On this show, we are always going to come back to money because, as a financial planner, this is the question I hear the most: How do I make this work for me financially?

Well, that's my jam. So jump in, let's go. New episodes drop every Thursday.

Laura Lynch: Well, welcome to Less House More Moola, Karolina. I have to say I am a little starstruck today because you have been such a major influence on my life.

In fact, when I started this podcast, I was like I have to do a podcast because there are two podcasts that have literally changed my life, and yours was the first.

So, thank you so much for accepting my pitch to come and talk about your passion and your work here on Less House More Moola.

Karolina Rzadkowolska: Oh, Laura, that just warms my heart so much, so sweet. I'm so excited to be here today. I can't wait to dive into our conversation.

Laura Lynch: Yes, I can't either. I feel like the alcohol-free thing is just a supercharge for anything you do in life, and I feel that the tiny living community is so intentional about so many aspects of their life.

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And if they aren't yet aware, if someone out there isn't yet aware that being alcohol-free, just like I said, supercharges everything you do, I just wanted to bring this message to listeners.

I have talked to other guests about being alcohol-free just a little bit, but I felt like you were the best person to come and talk about this because there's this very important tie between life of intention and being alcohol-free.

So, for listeners, Karolina is with Euphoric AF, we'll have all the links in show notes and get to where you can follow her. But first, Karolina, please share with the listeners your alcohol-free choice, where it has taken you overall.

Karolina Rzadkowska: Yeah, yeah. Thank you. Well, I think it's so beautiful to just recognize that so much of that intentionality and even with the tiny living, you have to let go of the things that no longer serve you to really make space for what you want to prioritize most in life.

And I think that the universe really kind of put me in that situation when it came to alcohol. I started drinking mostly in college and that's when I was partying a lot and overdoing it and stuff. Pretty typical story for a lot of people.

And as I got older, I got more into health and mindfulness. So, I got into yoga and meditation and just eating healthier, but drinking was still a big part of my life. So, basically, I compartmentalize the two things.

Monday through Thursday I lived a really healthy lifestyle with the yoga classes, the green juices. And every weekend without fail, alcohol was involved. And maybe it didn't look like what it

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used to look like in college with staying out until 2:00 AM and doing shots and stuff, it looked more adult.

But didn't matter, whether it was a dinner party or a sushi night, I still woke up on Monday morning feeling like crap. Feeling really like a shell of myself and all the healthy progress I made through the week was completely washed away by the weekend, and just living the cyclical living of never really finding any sense of progress or any sense of fulfillment.

And I every week on Monday, would just wake up and just wish that I could take a break from alcohol and not have to go back to it. And I always talk myself out of it because it seemed like the only type of people who stopped drinking have to wear a label and go to meetings. And so, I had this just really black and white thinking about it.

And then by Friday, I completely forgot about my Monday woes and couldn't wait to go out again, and have fun with my husband or my friends. And I was living in that cycle for so many years.

So many years of trying to consciously develop what I wanted in my life, but always being put back to that Monday morning feeling, and just felt so cyclical, so stuck. And finally, when I heard about dry January back in 2017, I was like, "Oh my gosh, I have to do this for 2018."

And it was finally the excuse I could use to take a break without having to explain it to anyone, which I really needed.

I love dry January. I fell in love with how I felt how peaceful my mornings were, how much deep sleep I got, how much pride I felt for myself too, of saying to my word, honoring my intentions,

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not breaking any rules or promises. And I also found my mood really elevating in January.

Even the simplest pleasures like taking a walk outside or looking at the clouds really brought me so much more joy than it used to.

February came around and I didn't really believe I was allowed to remain a non-drinker. It seemed like there was just this rule of adulthood that if you want to be normal, you have to drink.

So, I drank a few times that February and it sucked. Even one or two drinks would completely make me lose any sense of wonder and awe that I was feeling. I got frustrated easily, I had horrible sleep, it just wasn't fun.

And I was like, "Wait a minute, wasn't that the whole point, was that I was drinking to have fun." And I decided to take another break at that point, which just basically carried me over into almost six years later being alcohol-free.

And this whole TGIF thing that I had going on of really just not being able to wait for the weekend every week to have the highlight of my week some drinking. I started to realize as I went longer and longer in my alcohol-free journey that I was missing the real deepest thing that I think we all need in our lives, and that's fulfillment.

And I realized that I wasn't getting fulfilled with my previous career and my previous kind of living situation. I had really big dreams when I was younger but kind of forgot about most of them as an adult.

And it was really in that early alcohol-free days that I was like, "Well, why not? Why not go back to these things? Why not do

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the things that I always wanted to do in this one lifetime? Why not take some chances? Why not really develop myself?”

And so, in a really short period of time, I launched a business, I wrote a book, I launched a podcast, and I started finding meaning by helping other people throughout their own journey.

And just flash forward to six years later, now I'm a bestselling author. I have a multiple six-figure business that allows both me and my husband to travel the world. We both were able to leave our day jobs, we travel whenever we want. It's literally a dream come true.

This is exactly what I wished for back when I was in a cubicle slaving away, and have just found so much meaning and impact in my every day instead of looking for the weekend for a little dopamine rush from a beverage.

So, it's my job now today to help not only women reevaluate the role of alcohol in their life, but also to find that deeper purpose and sense of meaning so that they don't ever feel that unfulfillment that we often use alcohol as a band-aid for. That's my story in a nutshell.

Laura Lynch: And it's such a impactful story. I am sure you have really sort of pulled the curtain back for so many people like you did me.

It was back in 2020 when I first started listening to your podcast and it was a revelation to go from that sort of stigmatization and that feeling of sort of down on yourself about how much you're drinking. You can't kind of get out of this cycle and there isn't really an exit path.

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Nobody shows you a way to kind of do it with dignity or whatever. And so, your podcast was just an open door of here's how you move on with your life and live in a more congruence with yourself, and take away this thing that isn't working for you and become so much better for it.

So, back when I first started listening, it was like I said, a revelation for me when I first heard your podcast. When you first started down this path, it probably was so counterculture, and in tiny living, we're living in kind of a counterculture space where you're having to push back against everybody's expectations of do the American dream thing, and the corporate thing and the two and a half kids thing, and all of that.

So, how did you learn to listen to your own voice and go with your own voice?

Karolina Rzadkowolska: That's such a great question and I think it's really important to notice how long I didn't listen to that voice. Every Monday morning, I had a very clear voice coming from my intuition, very silent, but just asking me, "Can we take a break from alcohol? You were made for so much more than this."

And every week, it was just like, "Karolina, that's not what normal people do. You can't do that. You have to go to this event; you have to go to this party." It seemed like I was getting that message for so long and just bearing it and ignoring it.

And I think that when I finally listened, that sense of that intuition, that real divine download that we get about what our life is supposed to be, not what other people's lives are supposed to be or other people expect from us, it honored that



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voice in such a beautiful way and she was like, “Oh, my gosh, you're finally listening to me. You're finally listening.”

And I think that from that moment on, I really cultivated that relationship with my intuition and getting those signals of what was right for me that she just started pouring out the messages, just pouring out, “You're meant to write this book, here's the book title, here are all the chapters, you're meant to launch this business. Here's the program idea, here's the next thing you're supposed to do.

And it's been insane to see this incredible concert I've had with my intuition about the life I want to lead. And for me, obviously, being alcohol-free is completely, almost you're right, radical in a world that expects us to drink.

And it's really kind of defined those muscles of like, “You know what, these are my values. My values include health and integrity, and mindfulness and intentionality and purpose. Alcohol doesn't help me live into any of those values. Alcohol does not help me become the woman I want to be. Alcohol does not help me achieve my bigger goals and my bigger dreams.”

So, I learned almost very quickly on after years of struggling with this, that it's okay to wear a different identity than other people if it's allowing you to become the version of yourself you want too really be.

And I love pointing out some of those just incredible celebrities who don't drink like Tony Robbins or Deepak Chopra, Brene Brown, Gabby Bernstein, who wear it, like they own it. They're proud of it, you can't embarrass them that they don't drink or something like that.

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And I think because they have that lifestyle, they're able to do all those beautiful things that they're able to do. And so, for me, not only going alcohol-free, but also living counterculture in so many ways, I think being an entrepreneur is often very counterculture.

We have this sense of safety and security and employability, and going on your own is supposed to be so risky and stuff. And so, that was really shocking to my parents when I first told them that I was quitting my job and doing this.

I mean, it was a lot, and a lot of people too still don't understand me, don't relate to my life. I also really value freedom. So, travel's one of the most important things for me.

I could travel almost ... I don't want to say all the time because I love the routine too. So, it's like I love to go off for a month and then come back for a month and then back and forth and on and on. But I lived for three months in Europe once I was able to have my husband leave his day job and we travel now to Asia and Mexico, and wherever we want.

And that's just this part of our lifestyle that's so important to us that again, most people wish they want but don't either understand or won't take the chances or the risks themselves to be able to kind of live that life.

So, I think it's such a beautiful analogy of really asking yourself, "What kind of life do I want to live, and am I okay with being different from other people in order to have this kind of lifestyle?"

I remember for example, going to a party and it was like a game party. We were playing board games and one of the games

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was dragging on to like 2:00 AM, and I was already alcohol-free, and I already started writing my book at this point.

And I just remember looking around at people and being like, “How can you guys stay up till 2:00 AM, don't you have things to do tomorrow?”

And it was this real shift, and not trying to be judgmental to them, but really having the shift of like the version of me that I want to be as a writer, the version of me that I want to be as an author.

I wake up early on Saturday mornings to write, I don't have time to play games until 2:00 AM on a Friday night because this is who I want to be. So, I think it's really aligning your life to your deeper values and especially with the minimalism or the intentionality or the sense of presence we can have in the tiny living situation.

It's also so great to ask us, is alcohol really serving us? Is alcohol really allowing us to have that presence? Is alcohol really allowing us to have even the lifestyle that we want to have?

So many women save so much money, not spending it on cocktails or bottles of wine or all those kinds of things to then fuel what you really want, and also give yourself the mental time and space to do what you really want.

I love creating things, I love being an entrepreneur, I love writing, I love traveling. Alcohol was just taking up that mind space to be able to really tap into all those beautiful things.

Laura Lynch: I love that. And so, much of my podcast has been about aligning with your values, and being very specific about figuring

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out what is most important to you and creating the time, the work, the space around that. And alcohol certainly detracts us or distracts us, or drags us into a different direction.

It's so interesting because I would say that my self-employment, my entrepreneurship journey would never have happened had I not become completely alcohol-free, and started to listen to my own intuition and trust my own voice, and follow my own path just because it creates so much confidence once you kind of take that step for yourself and listen to yourself, you're able to do it as you said in other aspects of your life.

So, share with us a little bit about how you think that your journey of being an entrepreneur was specifically tied. Obviously, it was logistically because everything about your business is now about being alcohol-free, but do you think you ever would've started your own business had you kind of stayed in that rut?

Karolina Rzadkowolska: No, I do not. I do not think it would've happened. And it's so interesting that I had a dream of wanting to be an author ever since I was a little girl. So, I wrote a lot of short stories and poems and little plays when I was younger, and my writing completely dried up when I started drinking.

I stopped writing, I stopped journaling even, and I never lost that dream. So, as I got older, every New Year's resolution I had was to write more. It was this is the year I'm going to write the book, and I would write the first week of January and then never pick up a pen the rest of the year.

I literally didn't have the discipline to write. It was so much easier to open a bottle of wine than write the next great American novel. I also don't think I had the vulnerability and

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emotional intelligence because by just the act of drinking it was pushing away my emotions. How could I possibly ever develop those in a character?

And I really have that emotional arch and that emotional kind of storyline that goes with that. And so, that was just a dream that felt like the older I got, that's just not going to happen for me. I completely, completely gave up hope on that one.

And to be an entrepreneur was even more out of the ballpark. I grew up foreign, so a daughter of Polish immigrants, that was my first language growing up, just very different, feeling than everyone else.

I grew up shy, I'm introverted, and to me, I always saw entrepreneurs as these charismatic men who swoon, venture capitalists and angel investors and are just tech experts and stuff. And so, I never saw any part of me fitting into the definition I had of an entrepreneur.

And I even had an MBA and I worked in a business school, so I was surrounded by innovation and startups and entrepreneurship. And I think that probably started the spark for me to be interested in it. But there was still this huge identity piece that I could never do it.

I also never had any ideas, inspiration, that connection you need with your intuition was completely blocked for me when I was drinking.

And so, I think it was literally not only going alcohol-free, the so many gifts you get when you go alcohol-free, the mental time, the mental energy, the intuition, the creativity, but really the confidence is what really kicked it over the edge for me

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because this whole time I'm doing something I never thought I could ever do.

3 weeks, 5 weeks, 10 weeks, 12 weeks without alcohol, who is this woman? She's like superwoman to me. And that's when it finally started to spill over into like, "Well, why couldn't you be an entrepreneur? Why couldn't you be an author?" These other things you didn't believe were possible for you are possible. So, maybe this other stuff could be too.

And I just started getting these divine downloads literally from the universe. I have these incredible like memories and moments of time, I was on a beach in Hawaii for example, in one of them, I was in Japan for another. Where literally the universe told me that this is all happening to me for a reason because I'm meant to share it with other people in the format of a business and a book.

And just taking those first baby steps. At first, I was like, "Well, we'll do it, but I don't know if it's really going to work." So, I was kind of just putting my toe in. But the more and more I went, the more conviction, the more courage, the more confidence I got that yes, I am meant to launch a business.

No, I'm not meant to work in a cubicle and follow someone else's dream or make another employer money, I am meant to do this for myself. And I think entrepreneurship is very hard.

I mean you learn everything from scratch. I don't know that anyone's actually prepared for entrepreneurship because it's just so new with online marketing and selling.

I mean, selling can feel very uncomfortable for a newbie and just all the systems you need and all that kind of stuff. So, it's

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not like it's been this easy get rich quick scheme, but it has been the most incredible growth journey.

Ditching alcohol was the biggest one I ever had. And then following my dream and my purpose and my passion by becoming entrepreneur and growing a multiple six figure business has definitely been that next one.

And I think your story is so beautiful because to me, the magic isn't just stop drinking. That's like step one and that's like the first step to just clear away what no longer serves you.

Step two, step three, step four is really where the beautiful things that happen next when we start to live into what we're really supposed to be doing on this time in our planet, really believe in ourselves more and really listen to that deeper pinings of our heart of what we really want.

And even in the case of not going the corporate route, not having a big house, not having the white picket fence, you have to actually listen to yourself and discover what you want. And alcohol kind of teaches us not to be able to do that.

We don't actually know what's fun because drinking is fun on a Friday night. We don't really know what brings us organic joy or real pleasure or what we like or what we don't like.

And I think a lot of us being like a master mindset coach also frame our lives based on what we think is possible, not what we really want. So, if we don't think that our dreams are possible, why would we spend the time and energy to even devote any space to that?

And so, I think ditching alcohol is this incredible, just massive transformation you get where all of a sudden, your intuition,

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creativity, confidence goes up and you start getting these deeper epiphanies from your soul, from the universe, from God, whatever you call it, on what you're meant to do.

And there's such a deeper conviction to stay true to who you are and what you really want and to go after it because you know that it's your destiny. So, it was like all of that coming to me at once in this first year I went alcohol-free. And even since then, it's gotten stronger and stronger.

Every year I get a new message of the next direction I'm supposed to go into or the next place to develop it. And I think that this is living life fully awake, fully alive, versus really staying stuck in a status quo, doing the same thing weekend after weekend, after weekend, after weekend and not growing ourselves.

We're meant to take risks, we're meant to grow, we're meant to evolve, and I think we're meant to help other people on the front end of their journeys as well.

Laura Lynch: So, one of the things I learned from your podcast was — and from Annie Grace's book too, that alcohol is just numbing. And we're always just sort of not dealing with life because we're sort of numbing it out.

You're numbing the highs, you're numbing the lows, all for that 20 minutes of euphoria that you get. And I feel that so much of that growth, that personal growth that you talk about doesn't occur until we're face-to-face with the trueness of life.

And so, stripping away that band-aid that we give ourselves, which is an ineffective, I think in your words ineffective coping strategy — allows us to take the leap and do something

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different and go through that self-exploration and that self-development journey.

But recently you wrote about people being stuck in careers that aren't fulfilling and how I think the statistic was 60% of Americans overdrink and a similar percentage of folks are stuck in careers that aren't fulfilling.

Talk a little bit about that link between being stuck in careers that aren't fulfilling in alcohol.

Karolina Rzadkowska: Such good points. And I think it's really important to recognize that when we are numbing and alcohol, it's number one job, it does so many things that ... it doesn't do so many things, people falsely believe it does.

So, it doesn't relax us, it doesn't help us sleep, we have so many misinformation on what we do put on alcohol. But the number one thing that it truly does do is anesthetize. So, it is a numbing agent. It will numb the good, it will numb the bad.

Meaning that we're not really in touch with what we really want. So, just take a typical example, someone has a really stressful job. They come home from work, they're very stressed out, and they drink. And they drink that night, and they wake up the next day, and they do it all over again.

That person could literally live in that hamster wheel on and on and on and on and on and on and on. And it's like that moment where you take away that alcohol, that numbing agent, you actually have to face your emotions.

“Why am I so stressed at work? Is this the job for me? Do I not like the boss? Do I not like the type of work? Am I not

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passionate about it? Should I get a different position? Should I maybe start my own company?"

That's when the real processing of the emotions can happen, and we can actually make shifts based on what those emotions are telling us. So, for me, I can say 100% that the number one reason I drank was out of boredom.

I was bored with my life; I was bored with my career. Drinking was literally the highlight of my week. And it's so sad to say that because I didn't consider myself an alcoholic, I wasn't drinking all the time a lot or anything like that.

Just even whatever it did look like though, it always felt like this is what I have to look forward to, and I think that's really sad. And so, in that sense, that boredom that I felt, I didn't get to express it or learn from it or really engage deeply in what do I want would be really stimulating and fulfilling to me.

And it was only until I removed the alcohol where I could actually feel those emotions, but then also feel this new sense of energy and this new sense of confidence to answer the question. Okay, so if I'm bored, "What would be fun for me? What would be an adventure? What would be this next challenge?"

And at first, it kind of revolved around just figuring out what to do with my time. So, it wasn't until a passion project or a business, it was just like, "Okay, what do we do on a Friday night?"

And I did so many new things, and part of the process I work with in clients and my program, *Becoming Euphoric*, is literally just to explore. Like go to the pottery class, go to the yoga,

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dancing class, go do a writer's workshop, go take a Zumba class, go to the botanical gardens.

I did all of this stuff just to kind of start exploring the world again and exploring what brings me a sense of joy because we don't really know when alcohol's already always messing with our pleasure system in our brain.

And from there, I think just reengaging with the world in such a meaningful way without that numbing agent really allowed me to see where I found passion, where I found sense of purpose, what I was really interested in learning. And so, for me, it was definitely writing and sharing out this information with other people in the form of a business.

And it's so interesting because the thing that alcohol releases in the brain is ... we release dopamine in the brain when we drink, that 20-minute buzz. And it's not a good thing: it's artificial, it's too high for the brain to be able to really register it just like cocaine or heroin.

So, our receptors that actually catch that neurotransmitter start to recede over time. So, people who drink are less sensitive to dopamine, and have less dopamine levels in their brain.

But it's interesting, dopamine actually isn't a happiness neurotransmitter as it was first classified, it's one based on motivation. And what we really need to elicit it is actually something that's challenging or stimulating to us.

So, in the smallest sense, it could be anything that gives us a sense of adventure, maybe a great hike or a waterfall, or jumping into the ocean. But I think deeper down into that, into a

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sustainable way is challenge. How can we challenge ourselves on a daily basis?

And so, for me, the idea of launching a business and growing as an author was something that gave me that sense of not only dopamine but that sense of stimulation and challenge that is literally the number one thing, I'm passionate about in the whole world. I love it so much, I keep coming back to it.

So, it's really interesting to me to, again, not just helping people remove the thing that doesn't serve them anymore, but it's like, "What's that secret combination that's going to give you that sense of fulfillment, meaning, and passion?"

So, I think that those things are super important when we're looking at what a really fulfilled life looks like. Like you said, it's not a band-aid solution like alcohol that's going to give you a 20-minute buzz and rob you of pure enjoyment. It's really kind of getting to know yourself better and learning what brings you joy, what do you want to focus on? What are your passions?

And at first, even if we don't know those answers, to allow ourselves to go through this exploratory phase of true self-discovery. Removing alcohol or taking a break or ditching it all together to me is so much more symbolic than actually about the alcohol.

It's like this vehicle to greater personal growth, self-discovery, and then mastery of this next beautiful thing that you're meant to create in the world.

Laura Lynch: That's so true. I do feel like that it is just sort of a proxy for so many other areas that you unlock in your life. And earlier you mentioned some celebrities and I think that I've noticed within

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influencer community and the voices that I look up to, definitely being alcohol free and talks around being sober and these sorts of things seem to be prevalent within the sort of influencer and self-help community, and that seems to maybe come together.

The alcohol-free and the launching of these more developmental sort of influences. What do you see within sort of the celebrity and influencer community. Do you feel like that a lot of alcohol-free sort of pairs up with being successful in these sort of thought leadership areas?

Karolina Rzadkowolska: Oh, absolutely. And if I was just ... I really love personal development so much, but if I kind of was only focused on personal development and maybe didn't address alcohol, I feel like it would be the big elephant in the room.

Most people out there do drink. Obviously, it's a smaller percentage of people who don't drink. So, it's like if you're working with anyone on any kind of life improvement or any kind of healing, and that alcohol piece is this big boulder that they have, that they're dragging along with them, it just seems so less effective to get the true work done.

And I really respect those personal development leaders who will call it out, who will be honest about their own relationship with alcohol or share that they don't really use drinking as something, as a regular tool in their life.

Because it's almost ignoring like if we want to, whether it's balancing your hormones or writing your next book, or really going minimalist or all these different areas we could grow into — it's like if alcohol's involved in any of those things, the results won't really be as big as you want them to be, you know what I mean?

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Any kind of health journey, healing journey, personal development journey and business journey ... I will talk to a lot of entrepreneurs and I'm just like, "This is the one thing you could remove that would skyrocket your business growth."

I obviously have the story of ditching alcohol and then launching a business like it was the catalyst for me. But for example, Jenna Kutcher has been an incredible voice in the marketing and online space for the last 10 or so years, and she gave up alcohol about a year and a year and a half ago at this point.

She is like this new radiance that's coming from her, this new ... and she looks incredible. She's speaking in a different way. She was already always amazing, but that one change even in her level of magnificence has brought her to the next level.

So, I think it's just really cool to see that, and especially that for me, that cognitive dissonance I would have, if like I would be preaching about improving yourself and being better than the day that before, whatever angle it was, whether it's health or nutrition or personal development or entrepreneurship.

If alcohol was always dragging me down personally, it would really feel like that's the one thing, that's the domino effect. That's what habit experts call it, it's the domino effect. It's like the one habit that allows all the other habits to fall into place.

And I see that's really interesting too with the coaches that I certify is that we focus ... they get certified as alcohol free coaches, and in addition to that, they get mindset coaching, success coaching, NLP practitioner as under their belt certified.

And it's really important for me for each of them to not just focus on alcohol-free but to also focus on another element of

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personal development, healing or health. So, that really, we are helping people change so many other factors of their lives at the same time, and kind of get to the goal that they want most.

So, it's so easy to kind of look at it this way, "What do I want today, now?" Maybe I want to drink. "But what do I want most out of life?" A freedom lifestyle, financial independence, my own business that's self-sustaining, to be able to travel whenever I want.

And I think all of us would say that all of that stuff seems way more important than the thing we want in the moment, you know what I mean? So, it's kind of delaying that gratification to really build up what you want.

I think that the alcohol-free movement is growing so much, there's so many more people going for it. So, it's not just this anomaly where you're going to be the odd one out.

Really nowadays you are the leader, you're the role model and the inspirer who's doing it, and so many people want to do it who need you to kind of go first and be able to kind of shine the light for them. So, I think it's really cool to see that.

Probably, alcohol, I believe it personally will go the way of cigarettes, and one day, it will be a fringe activity. And being at the front of the bell curve now is a really exciting place to be instead of being a last straggler with it.

Laura Lynch: That's awesome. When I first heard you, I felt like that definitely, Gen Z, maybe millennials really were catching onto this. There were bars being set up that just had mocktails and things that you were talking about in California.

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What do you see in the generational spread as far as all of the new people getting on board?

Karolina Rzadkowska: Definitely hitting all the different generations, I think that even though we see a trend of more Gen Z, kind of hopping on a non-drinking bus or being a little bit more into health or you can watch these skincare routines that a 22-year-old do, there's just no room for drinking when you have like a 5, 10 step skincare routine every end of the night.

But we have to recognize that even still, we still grow up with this expectation to drink. We still grow up and get brainwashed really into thinking that adulthood is marked by drinking.

And that to be an adult, to be independent, to be sophisticated, to be glamorous, to be whatever it is in your mind is something that's been conditioned by marketing, by TV, by culture, by media.

So, that we still think that that is the mark of adulthood, and every single person still growing up today will face that and have to make decisions for themselves whether or not that's the route they take or not.

We've been bombarded since childhood really with messages that show us that, whether it's commercials or TV, I mean they have so many TV shows where teenagers are drinking fine whiskeys or champagnes and you're just like, "What is going on? Why are they including this in the show?"

And I think it's really important to recognize that all of this meaning we've attached to alcohol, whether it's glamor, sophistication, adultery, adult relaxation, all of these things are constructs. They're all contextual societal constructs.

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Alcohol itself is nothing more than ethanol, which is a toxic beverage. And we as a society have attached so much meaning to it. Drinking alcohol won't make you more rebellious. I mean, how could that even be possible when everybody drinks? You're doing the thing that everybody does, you know what I mean?

So, it's also kind of unpacking too. I think what we believe alcohol is giving us in that moment or even just looking back at our own drinking story and really recognizing that that is all a construct, that's all this meaning that we've attached to it as a society.

And so, yeah, I think that Gen Z is now kind of like the leading generation who's drinking less because they're more into the social media element, is like they're recording themselves more, they have more alternative things, and just are into health and wellness and healing a little bit more.

But I see it happening all around at all ages. I think what's happening is this time is special. Maybe someone's 50 when they ditch alcohol or maybe they're 30. But the time in history, I think is really pivotal because it's all happening now.

There's so much awareness and consciousness building now around alcohol that did not exist before. And I think it's really special because we have to also recognize in the last 30 years before this alcohol-free movement really surged, we started drinking more than we ever have in history, ever.

The consumption levels for women and people went up so much, a lot of third world or developing countries started drinking a lot more and having more access to alcohol.

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If you think about 30 years ago, breweries, wineries, it's not like you could go to your local brewery. 30 years ago, you couldn't drink in a movie theater. I mean, alcohol consumption went up so much.

And we also were given this misinformation that red wine is good for you. It was actually one doctor, one doctor in 1991, who made the correlation that alcohol is good for heart health. And then all these misconstrued studies came out after that proving that moderation is good for you.

All of that has been so debunked. Alcohol is so bad for your heart health and heart disease risk. It heightens your cholesterol, it heightens your blood pressure, it makes the heart beat faster and sag over time, and it is not good for our heart at all.

But it's like not only we were taught that socializing and alcohol goes in hand in hand in the early 90s, we were also taught that health and alcohol goes hand in hand. And so, really looking back those last 30 years of over consumption, it's now we're kind of swinging the other way.

Where, finally, there's just other options. And I'm not talking about prohibition, I'm not talking about a world where nobody's allowed to drink — I'm talking about really having a choice. Because when I was growing up, it did not seem like a choice. You did this to be cool, you did this to be popular, you did this to fit in with adults, you did this to be an adult.

I remember having my budding wine collection to feel like I was really growing up, you know what I mean? And it wasn't a choice. This was what you just did. And so, I really want to develop a kind of society where truly, it is an informed choice.

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And it would be just as normal to see half people not drinking at a bar as the other half drinking, and one day it being more of a fringe activity just like smoking, where yeah, people still smoke if they want to, but it's not the expectation that one has to smoke.

Because I believe that's wrong. And I've definitely had younger people come up to me and say, "I don't want to have to drink." And I think it's sad that we created a culture and a kind of world where they feel like they have to, just to be able to fit in and to get acceptance and validation from their peers.

And I think that's the coolest thing that we can model, is like we can be the generation that changes it for future generations. In a hundred years from now, I'm sure we won't be drinking alcohol because we'll be more technologically evolved, more health-minded. They'll invent something else that isn't toxic like that, you know what I mean?

And so, it's like if we are willing to see the shifts, the trends shift, that things change and be the generation that changes it today, we can also help the future generation not get stuck in it in the first place, and truly have that choice like I mentioned.

So, I think each one of us, whether we're 75 or 25, has a really big role to play in this kind of awareness building revolution that we're having around alcohol. Which I think is so freeing because like you said in my story, in your story, removing alcohol was the linchpin to go after what we truly wanted. This isn't just a small diet change we're talking about here, it's huge.

Laura Lynch: That's so good. Everywhere I go, I will bring it up. And I have this hashtag sober rebellion that I've used off and on, and I feel like I want to be the evangelist for this. And so, I always

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talk about it and just kind of bringing awareness because it takes that first person who mentions it to you, and then the next person, and then maybe you hear something and maybe you read an article, and maybe listen to a podcast.

It takes time for people to make change and to realize there's this whole ... I know you know this probably from coaching, all these steps of change. And so, you have to be the person to help others kind of have that next step in the process, whatever that is. Whether that's the first step of awareness or whatever.

And so, I think it's really important for all of us out there who have already made that transition in life to continue to talk about it so that others can get through their process a little quicker because we're there.

So, dry January is a huge step for many people. Provide us with a little advice for those that are kind of at their pivotal moment of change where they're ready to maybe dip their toes in the water. How do they take a first step of kind of making this transition in life?

Karolina Rzadkowolska:      Amazing. Well, I love dry January. I think it's such a good first step and that's really where my journey started. I think it's really great to recognize that when we are first starting, our fears about ditching alcohol or giving it up are so much higher and we don't really have the answers yet.

We're not really experienced in it yet. We haven't evolved to a certain level yet. So, this is not the time to decide whether you're going to quit drinking for forever. You don't have the emotional intelligence to do that at this point. And I don't mean that as a dig, I just mean you haven't experienced it yet.

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So, take the bar, lower it, and really make it a break, really commit to the 30 days. Because I think that when we do that, it seems so much easier to do something that isn't for forever, isn't something that I'm depriving myself or feeling like I'm will-powering. It's a good experiment truly where I get to experience life in a different way.

And if I really want to drink, well, I just tell myself, "Okay, I can drink on day 31 or 32. It's not a big deal." But allow yourself to really go through the journey and allow yourself to really go into this lifestyle with no non-negotiables whether you're going to drink or anything like that.

So, really make a firm commitment to the 30 days or 60 days or whatever it looks like for you. And then throughout that process, really focus on when you have a habit loop, it's really hard to change habits just by not doing it or like sitting through it. We really want to replace our habits.

So, I think it's really good to focus on getting mocktails and a lot of other alcohol-free drinks. It's the easiest way to replace this habit of not depriving yourself. So, if you're used to pouring a drink at 5:00 PM or having Friday night drinks or something, then get yourself mocktails.

There's so many options available these days that will make you feel like you're having your treat and fit all your needs without having it to have that ethanol in it. And then last but not least, it's all in the mindset.

So, the habit change is really like the tip of the iceberg, the behavior change, it's really the mindset. We all have these beliefs that have been formed through culturalization and through our own experiences with alcohol that lead us to

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believe that alcohol serves us, it meets our needs, it gives us pleasure, benefit, or some comfort.

And it's really important to dig really deep into what those things are for you. So, this sounds complicated, but my number one question I'll ask people is like, "Well why do you like to drink?"

And that will often shed a light on some of the beliefs and the deeper reasons you have for associating alcohol as meeting your needs. So, for example, I like to drink because it helps me socialize. I like to drink because it's fun, I like to drink because it relaxes me. All of these things point to beliefs that you have about alcohol.

So, for example, a simple one that alcohol relaxes me. Well, if you read a few books and really learn a little bit more about how alcohol affects the human body, it does not relax the human body.

In fact, it actually triggers our stress, hormonal response and we release more cortisol and adrenaline when we're drinking. And sometimes, you can feel that if you have just one drink, you can feel it like an hour later you'll feel more wired.

Sometimes we keep drinking so you won't feel it until 3:00 AM, 4:00 AM. You wake up with a start, there's all that adrenaline coursing through your body and you're ruminating about everything that you did wrong ever in your life. Or you'll feel it the next morning with a lot of anxiety the next day.

So, it's like even these things that we believe sometimes can scientifically be just completely wiped away that that's not true. And this is the real truth that alcohol actually stresses me out.

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And there's other things that might seem a little bit more mindset based of like, “Well, if alcohol makes me feel more confident, for example, why do I need this band-aid to feel that way?”

How about developing intrinsic confidence, and does it really make me more confident when it gives me wine stains and embarrasses me? So, it's really unpacking every single positive thing we believe about alcohol and reframing it to a new truth. What this does is actually changes the desire level in the brain.

The subconscious programming changes so that you no longer desire alcohol. So, it's not, “I can't drink,” it's, “I don't want to drink.” And that's the most empowering place to be.

And this sounds complicated, I highly recommend my book, *Euphoric: Ditch Alcohol and Gain a Happier, More Confident You*, because it'll walk you through an eight-week plan and all of the journal prompts and the reflection questions that you need to start doing this mindset work and guide you through the situations, whether it's with your partner or socializing or finding those new experiences for yourself that you can follow.

But I think it's just a really incredible — like what really dry January represents to me is a time to really turn within and to really do some self-discovery. Really start asking yourself these deeper questions of what you want out of life, what makes you really happy.

The cacophony of alcohol really messes up our neurochemistry. We don't even know what we're thinking sometimes with alcohol involved. And to really get that space away can really help define what you truly want, what you're here for, what kind of life you want to build.

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Maybe not in a short month, maybe it'll take more time, but usually, the month is what wets the appetite to really want to keep going.

Laura Lynch: So good. I would say education was a huge key for me. I read several books, several books over a period of number of months. And you're right, just sort of, kind of debunking the things was really helpful.

I went through a series of different sort of five o'clock sort of treats, grapefruit and tonic was the thing for me for a while because that seemed bitter enough. And even three years later, at the end of the day, I'm like, "Okay, it's kombucha time." It's kind of that marker of the day to say ... and what I find is I'm thirsty.

At the end of the day, I think it all just came down to a lot of it. I was just thirsty because I had been focused on whatever I was focused on all day. And sometimes you forget to hydrate, who knows. But in any case, all great thoughts.

So, Karolina, for those who want to find your book or your podcast or your coaching training program or any of the things that you have got going on, where do people find and connect with you?

Karolina Rzadkowolska: Awesome. Well, just type in euphoric in Amazon or any book reseller, you'll find that there or you can get at [www.euphoricbook.com](http://www.euphoricbook.com) to get it directly to you. And then also, as you said, I host retreats around the world.

We have a forex certification program that also includes an in-person retreat and a business mastermind. We're opening the cohort for our next class of 2024 pretty soon. And if you want to

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work with me or any of my programs, you can find all of that at [euphoricaf.com](http://euphoricaf.com).

And then I'm also pretty active on Instagram. If any of this intrigued you or you have any questions about it or anything like that, please feel free to shoot me a message that's, at euphoric.af.

Laura Lynch: Well, thank you so much for joining me today to talk about dry January and about supercharging life in an alcohol-free way. All of your thoughts were so well articulated. Karolina, thank you so much for being here.

Karolina Rzadkowolska: Thank you, Laura so much. It was a pleasure.

Hey, I'm honored that you listened to this episode of *Less House More Moolah*. I hope something in it will help you continue to move toward a life aligned with your values.

Every algorithm out there is trying to tell us what to prioritize, but we get to choose. If you haven't ever identified your key values, I have a free resource on my website to help you.

You just have to go to [thetinyhouseadviser.com](http://thetinyhouseadviser.com). It's the tiny house A-D-V-I-S-E-R dot com.

At the bottom of the page, you can grab the tiny life values worksheet. When we design a life around "what is our core truth?", we shortcut to deep fulfillment.

See you next Thursday.

Please see the show notes for an important disclosure regarding The Tiny House Adviser, LLC and this episode.

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