

**A BETTER LIFE WITH RACHEL ROFÉ**

**A CONVERSATION WITH  
BETH  
BURGESS**

**IF YOU HAVE A  
CHOICE, CHOOSE  
A BETTER LIFE.**

---

Rachel: Hello, everyone. Today we're here with Beth Burgess. Beth is a solution focus therapist, coach and writer specializing in addiction, anxiety disorders, stress, self-esteem and mental wellbeing. She is the author of "[The Recovery Formula](#)" and "[The Happy Addict](#)." I've actually never talked to Beth before.

I found her because one day my assistant forwarded me an article of hers and when I looked at it I just immediately knew that she was going to be an incredible person to have to talk here just about getting over struggles. I'll read you the first couple sentences that I read in her article just so you can see why I thought she'd be so great to be on the show.

"People who knew me 10 years ago would probably expect me to be dead now. They wouldn't expect me to have escaped my problems. They wouldn't expect me to have stopped drinking, drugging, taking overdoses and cutting my arms. People who knew me 10 years ago saw a sacred shell of a girl, terrified of her own shadow and on a mission to self-destruct.

"They wouldn't expect me to have turned my life around completely. They certainly wouldn't expect me to be sharing my story and helping others to let go of their struggles too. But then those people who knew me 10 years ago didn't know that I would find the secret to moving on from my struggles.

"I didn't know it back then either. I thought that there was no hope for me and that I would never be over my woes. The secrets to living on came to me slowly. It took years of suffering from anxiety and alcoholism before I found my solution, but it was worth the wait. Whatever your problems and no matter how inescapable you think they are, the answers are always universal."

As you can see, you can see why I would think she would be amazing to be on this show. Beth, thank you so much for being here.

Beth: Thank you, Rachel. It's great to be joining you. Thanks for asking me.

Rachel: I'm so excited to talk to you and hear more about you. I always love to get the show started off by asking: The intention behind A Better Life is to show people that if they have a choice that they can choose a better life. So in that spirit, can you take a minute to share with us some of the things that you're the most proud of in your life right now?

Beth: It's easier to list the things I didn't have to overcome than things I did, to be honest. I've had a lot of struggles in my life that's included addiction, borderline personality, self-harm, social phobia--all sorts of things. I think it's a culmination of having worked on myself and actually faced up to the truth of the matter in the end.

---

I did struggle. I didn't do it first time around. I struggled for a long time before realizing what I had to do to get better. I'm just proud of having worked through it because it was hard, it took courage--a lot and learning to do things I've never considered before. It's wonderful. It's enabled me to, again, go on to help other people. In a way, I think I'm most proud of using my experience to go on and help other people afterwards.

Rachel: That's amazing. What does your life look like now?

Beth: It's wonderful. In fact, even if I have a bad day, I can always look back at the days what I used to have and compare that and realize I'm actually very lucky. I'm lucky enough to be able to work with people on a one-to-one basis all the time, I write a lot, which is something I love doing as well, so I write articles about giving other people hope and inspiration. I get to talk to lovely people like you as well and share my message, which I couldn't ask for anything more, to be honest.

Rachel: That's great. I know you've worked really hard to get to where you are now. Can you describe a particularly notable time in your life? I know you've dealt with a bunch of things, but a particularly notable time for you when you felt like things just weren't going the way you wanted or maybe you felt trapped. Just tell us what was going on then, how you were feeling and paint us a picture because we want to be able to see the types of things you've overcome?

Beth: I think, for me, one of the hardest things was my social anxiety disorder because I had that from a very young age. I started really developing the symptoms around the age of 14. I didn't know it was and you don't at that age. It was things like I started being afraid of eating in front of people. I couldn't put my hand up in class. It just felt weird all the time.

If I was walking outside somewhere, I felt like people were looking at me. It was difficult because at that age I just assumed I was weird. I didn't know that it even existed as a disorder. I'd never heard of it. It took absolutely years for us to even find out it was a real disorder. The thing is, because it was anxiety, you find it so difficult to talk about it as well.

Every time I tried to speak about it, it was like my mouth would just close up. There was no way of getting out how I felt because it was so embarrassing. That was actually, in many ways, the toughest challenge. We tried to get to the bottom of it, me and my family as well. They've been very supportive throughout, thank goodness.

I think that was one of the toughest things. You just feel so stuck. You think that's going to be the rest of your life. You just think, "The rest of my life is going to be like this." Quite frankly, the way it felt, I tried to commit suicide about seven times in total, I think. Even when I stopped doing that

---

because I realized it wasn't working, it was just really upsetting my parents to have to come to the hospital every time I did that.

Even when that happened, I was just hoping a bus would run me over. I felt there was no way out of it at all. I just couldn't see a way out. Then, of course, what I did to cope with the anxiety, because I had to still go outside and try to live my life but I was so scared, I ended up drinking. Again, that just caused problems of its own.

I ended up hating myself. Obviously, when you're drunk you do certain things that you're not very proud of. It was a big mess, really. I think that was the main thing. I could not see that it would ever change. I'm so glad that I was wrong.

Rachel: Wow! That's a huge jump to be someone who at one point tried to commit suicide seven times and was just hoping that something would happen where you died to life being wonderful now. I'm curious, what are some of the choices that you made? How did you decide to change your life around?

Beth: One of the things was basically I realized that I could either just stay stuck where I was and just continue doing that until the inevitable happens or I could try my very hardest to try to find some solutions for it. Although I didn't know what the answer was going to be, I was pretty determined to try everything that was going. Unfortunately, in the process of doing that I found a lot of things which didn't work.

A lot of the time you try counseling or you try a medication and you just lose hope again because it's another thing that doesn't work. You just thought, "Oh gosh, is there any way out of this?" Again, I'm very lucky that my family wouldn't let me give up. It was a case of continuing and finding that courage to carry on even though life is awful at that time.

It was just carrying on and believing that one day I would find some kind of solution to it. This is what I believe of everything in life, basically: If you keep on going with it, it eventually comes to you. You just have to not give up. There's a solution for everything. I think that's one of the biggest things I've learned coming through all of this--there's a solution for everything.

Rachel: Was there something that happened? Were you like, "Okay, I need to start looking for help," or was it just gradual?

Beth: This is the thing, I found it difficult to talk about my anxiety disorder. We were very much focusing on the drinking so my parents didn't even know really why I was drinking. They just thought I'd gone a bit crazy on it. They didn't really get the anxiety disorder. I did tell them I had agoraphobia but I couldn't really talk about the other stuff because it was just too embarrassing to talk about.

---

We were looking for help constantly. It was just with a slightly different focus. We never really gave up. It was just a case of constant searching and trying to get through and make it through the difficult parts while we waited until something turned up, which happened to help. It was almost by chance.

My mom, actually, who is one of these people who thinks outside the box. She's a smart lady. She suggested something to me that I had never heard of before. I'd never heard of it and we tried it and it worked. It was the best day of my life when I got rid of the anxiety disorder for good. That was the point at which I could address all the other problems or start to.

Obviously, there wasn't one thing to sort out. There was a lot. It was finding that solution for me, that one thing which worked, that enabled me to believe then that there were other things that would work for the rest of it. Again, one by one I started working on those things and finding the right answers and there we go. It's all kind of built up. It's been a work in progress. Now I'm in the position that I'm able to help others with the same sort of things which helped me, which is wonderful

Rachel: What was it that your mom suggested that worked?

Beth: I went to see an NLP practitioner. It's something called Neuro-Linguistic Programming. It's linked with hypnotherapy. It's that type of thing. It involves visualization. There's something called a Phobia Cure, which I now do with my clients. I do other things as well because it depends. Everyone's a bit of an individual so you have to see what works best for someone.

It's basically a very quick technique. I had one session with this practitioner, which took 90 minutes. I walked in with my head down, shaking walking down the street because I was so scared and I walked out and I just skipped down the street with my head held high. I was amazing, incredible!

Rachel: Wow. That is amazing. I've heard of NLP. I've been to some NLP training and I think it's amazing. You can learn so much from it and just the way you can rewire your brain. I have not heard of anybody just going in for one session, especially considering everything you had been dealing with, and then just being completely different. So you're saying you went to one session and then you were good, forever?

Beth: Yes. Basically, with the anxiety disorder, yes. Like I said, the rest of it I had to do a lot more work on. For example, the addiction itself, that takes a lot more work than one session. That's not something you can sort out with NLP. It's a very complex disorder, as I've learned, so that took a lot more work. Yes, one session. Usually when I work with people, it's one session, get rid of the anxiety disorder. It's just gone. It doesn't come back.

<http://www.RachelRofoe.com>

---

Rachel: I was talking to somebody last night about anxiety and she was saying it's a disorder, it can't really go away. Are you talking about the full thing or are you talking about people who maybe just have a little bit of anxiety?

Beth: No, you can have a full-on disorder. Like I said, I had to have a drink to go outside. I couldn't go outside because I was so scared of going outside and being looked at. I had a serious anxiety disorder. It was only one session. The thing is, you have to just pinpoint. This is what I found when working with people.

You have to pinpoint the one issue that's caused it all. It's usually something from childhood and you have to go back and you have to work on that, allow them to reprocess that and then it goes. It just goes. It's amazing. It's healing all that stuff, all that pain from childhood.

Rachel: That makes sense. When you were going over to dealing with your addiction, what were some of the things you did to be able to work through that?

Beth: This is what I always tell people when I work with them. Firstly, learn about addiction because addiction is one of those things that seems like it defies logic if you don't have it. If you don't have an addiction, watching someone who has an addiction you just think, "Why are you killing yourself? Why are you doing this? It's insane."

You have to learn about the way the brain works if you want to overcome an addiction because it will trick you. It tries to trick you into drinking. There's all sorts of weird mechanisms that go on when you have an addiction. It's partly genetic. It's partly the way your brain works.

You really do have to understand addiction fully and then you have to work on, again, healing up any of the past stuff that's contributed to the issue and then work on how you respond to life, basically, so you don't feel stressed out and think about reaching for a drink. You don't carry around negative feelings so you think about drinking.

It's basically about working on the past, working on the present as well just to build yourself into someone who can deal with the future.

Rachel: Can you give me an example of how that worked for you?

Beth: Personally, I became a Buddhist. It's not a religion, if anyone's turned off by that. It's basically a way of life. It's a way of causing yourself less suffering by the way that you think and the way you act in the world. It's basically a way of freeing yourself from negative moods and negative thinking and always trying to crave things you don't have.

It's a way of being, really, which is really useful. The way I came across it was because I had borderline personality disorder and one of the most

<http://www.RachelRofe.com>

---

effective treatments for that, which available very much unfortunately so it's something I now teach, but it's called [Dialectical Core Behavior Therapy](#). People have probably heard of CBT, which is Cognitive Behavior Therapy.

DBT is a special one which is sort of combined with elements of Buddhism. It's used for people with personality disorders because it's very validating with how you feel. With some people CBT is a bit harsh. It says, "Oh, stop thinking about that. That's bad. Think like this instead." Whereas DBT is more about learning to accept things you can't change, to change things you can and have the courage to do that.

It's a really good thing. I would say that's what got me my recovery from addiction--learning to think and behave differently--and that was through DBT. What I found were the most useful parts of it were the Buddhist parts. I basically looked into that a bit more and then went down that road. It's been so helpful for me, very helpful.

Rachel: When you say you learned the way of life from them and different ways to approach things, can you give us an example of, let's say your mind goes to "I really want to drink right now," what are the types of things you would tell yourself with what you had been learning to help change your mindset?

Beth: In the early days of recovery, you do get that, "Oh gosh, I want a drink now" sort of thing. The trick about it is is that you learn to be a person that doesn't ever get to the stage where you're stressed enough to want that. You think about things differently. For example, most people get stressed out because they start worrying about what's happened in the past or they start worrying about what's happening in the future.

Now, you can never really be stressed about the present moment. You have a choice there for an action you can take to deal with how things are. So there's no point in worrying about the past or the future. You've only have a certain amount of energy so you may as well spend that on actually changing things in the present moment, if you can.

Basically, things like mindfulness meditation teach you to train your brain to come back to the present and focus on that rather than worrying about the past or the future. It's about becoming a more effective person that doesn't waste their energy on stressing out about things, worrying about things, thinking negative things about people.

They teach you things like not to be resentful against other people because, again, it's a waste of your energy. It's a drain. It will make you feel bad. It's training your mindset so that you're happier and more able to deal with life. That's what I think it is. You actually find you don't get those thoughts about, "Oh, I should have a drink," because you accept yourself

<http://www.RachelRofoe.com>

---

as a person, you accept the world as it is and you get on with it without ever getting to that stress threshold.

A lot of the time, the things that make people relapse is high stress. If you can avoid that by changing your mindset, you don't get those negative thoughts anymore.

Rachel: If someone were to come to you and they were a high stress person, how much time did you tell them to spend removing the stress, doing the mindfulness meditations and things to calm themselves down?

Beth: I think it's really useful to include meditation as almost something you do, like brushing your teeth, because it's a way of maintaining your condition. If they're in recovery, people have to work on their recovery all the time. You can't let it go because actually you have a neuro path in your brain now which is addicted and it will try to get you back down that path because that's the way addiction works, basically.

You have this nice strong response to most situations in life. You now think, "Oh, I should have a drink now," because if you've been drinking a long time that's the normal response so your brain starts giving you signals to do that. To overcome it, you really have to keep a check on where you are, what your stress levels are like.

I always recommend to people if they really want to get into this to do something like five or 10 minutes of mindfulness meditation every morning where you kind of just focus on the body and how you're feeling because a lot of times we carry feelings in our body as well. Well, most of the time we do.

You can usually feel things like stress or anger, anxiety, you can feel that in your chest or in your stomach. You can feel tension maybe in your face, your jaw, your eyes, your shoulders. It's about seeing where you are with the day. I tell people when they wake up to have a check of how you're doing today and then another little mini check around lunchtime and another mini check in the evening.

It's only by knowing how you are that you can learn how to respond to your day. For example, it's really important if you know that you're feeling particularly stressed out about a certain issue that you don't then take on something too challenging on that particular day.

You leave it for a bit or you go do something else or you do something else to help you feel better, whether it's going to help someone else because that's always a great way to take your mind off things, or doing an exercise. You basically treat yourself in the day based on how you are, if you're mindful.



---

Rachel: What would you say to somebody who is maybe starting out and their doing mindfulness meditations and they're checking in in the morning and at lunch and they're doing good, maybe they're doing it for a few days, and then all of the sudden something that super triggers them happens one night and they're kind of in the moment? Is there something they can tell themselves or do in that moment because their minds too busy going to do the mindfulness meditation or something like that?

Beth: That are definite things you can do in emergency situations. One thing I always say is think about how what you do today will make you feel like tomorrow, particularly with addicts. We're very bad at predicting long-term things. We' don't think about consequences. It's all about, "I have to change how I feel right now."

I always say to people if you think about what you do today, basically build your tomorrow and the next day and the next day. It's all a spiral. If you do something negative today, it's going to take you down a negative route tomorrow as well and the next day and the next day and you'll end up hating yourself for it.

You'll just be going downwards. Instead, you can make a positive and powerful and courageous sometimes choice to do the next right thing. This is my mantra for life: Do the next right thing. If you do the next right thing at all times, your life will be good.

Rachel: I like that. One of the other questions I was going to ask you was one of the big thoughts you have in your head, the decisions you tell yourself about just being able to live the most empowered life possible. I really like the one you're saying now. I think that's helpful. It doesn't feel overwhelming at all.

Beth: I think that's because you're keeping it in the present moment, which is the only place you can take action in. It likes, "Okay, if I do the next right thing." You don't have to say to yourself, "I'm going to be a saint for the rest of my life."

You just have to say, "I'm just going to do the next right thing." When it's tough, when life's tough, sometimes you have to take things in these little bite-sized chunks and it's easier to do that.

Rachel: You work with the NLP for the anxiety and then you incorporated the Buddhists beliefs and the mindfulness meditations for getting over the addiction. Are there any other things that you did to help you get to where you are now, practices that people listening could take on?

Beth: I always think it's really important, general things, is to start doing something which means something to you as well. Really work on having a life that means something to you. Again, a lot of the times we've gone

---

down the path where we're feeling quite negative and maybe we've had things happen to us which are really painful and stuff. We just kind of shut down and we spend our life thinking that's all there is.

Actually, even when I was ill, I started doing something which I kind of knew was where my heart was. I started working with the homeless as a volunteer, for example. Even when I was sick, I managed to do that. As I went forward, I knew that was in my heart that I wanted to help people. It was something that really was about me. It clicked with me.

As it went forward, I didn't just start doing therapy with people as soon as I got better. I always wanted to be a journalist so I went off and did that and I did some journalism. I found I missed helping people. I found that there wasn't as much meaning to my life when I wasn't doing the things I was doing before with helping people out.

That's what I think really, again, sort of consolidated my life for me, doing something that actually means something really important to me. It's like a mission. I think if you can find your mission, again, you have no reason really not to be happy every day.

Rachel: That's a great point. I'd love to dig into that for a minute. How do you suggest that people find things that are meaningful to them? I think it's probably harder than it sounds for some people, right?

Beth: Definitely. I get asked this question a lot. I always tell people to look at what your values are. If you don't know what they are, have a think about who you consider your hero. It might be someone famous. It might be someone who lives next door. Someone you really admire. Then you can have a look at the things that it is that you admire about them.

When I did this exercise on myself, the one I really admired was one of my old counselors. I found all the things I loved about what he did were basically the same things I wanted to do. This is usually the case. The things you admire in other people are the things you want for yourself. That's a really good starting point--find out what your values are.

Think about what [indiscernible 21:20], what you have fun doing as well. Again, like I've incorporated writing into what I do because I love writing. It's something I've always loved doing. When I was ill, I used to write depressing poetry. I've always loved writing so it's really important to me to be able to do things like write books now, write articles.

Again, just see what you enjoying doing as well and what you're good at. It's really good to strengthen your skills at things you're good at because that makes you feel good about yourself too, boost your self-esteem.

---

Rachel: When you were thinking about your counselor and the different things you liked about him, what were some of the qualities you liked and how could you have applied that into what's meaningful for you?

Beth: Obviously, one of the clearest things was helping other people. I liked that about that about him, which I then went on to do. I did like the face that he seemed very peaceful. He was very serene and, actually, was a Buddhist so I think that might have, again, influenced my decision to go down that route. A lot of it was seeing what he was doing with other people.

The way that I work with people, I think, is the way that he worked with me, actually, all those years ago. He very much worked with me as an individual, respected who I was as well. I know some therapists and counselors will just be like, "Okay, I'll do this technique with you or I'll do that with you and that will work."

I think it's really important to work with people very empathetically, getting who they are as an individual and working from there to see how you can help them best. That's what he was like with me. He pushed the boundaries. I was only supposed to see him for a certain amount of time. We have [indiscernible 22:54] in this country so you get free treatment but it's only limited so you only get a certain amount of time with someone at service.

He actually went out of his way to see me for longer because he thought I needed it. He wasn't even supposed to and he just did it. When I moved out of the catchment area as well, (you're supposed to live in a certain area to do it) he still worked with me.

I think it's because he knew. He knew that there was a spot within me that wanted to get better. He believed in me. Again, that's something I really value. I think, I hope, I express all those same things when I work with people.

Rachel: That's a beautiful way of going about it. For people who might not know the things that might come up just having those feelings that they want to go after and then being open to however they get expressed is a really good tool for people to hang their hat on.

Beth: Definitely.

Rachel: Let's switch gears for a second. As you were going and improving yourself and working on getting to the best version of yourself, how were the people around you impacted?

Beth: When you start to do things which are the right things, some people won't like it. For example, I used to know a lot of people who would drink a lot and the way that they get away with it is by hiding with other people who

---

drink a lot. So they felt very uncomfortable when I suddenly started getting better because I was the worst of the lot of them.

It was like they were finally forced to have a bit of a look at themselves. There were some people who didn't like it. There were some people who I had to not have in my life anymore because they were destructive people. Mostly, everyone's been really supportive. This is what people don't realize: When I work with clients, a lot of them complain about how their family are odd.

"It's so hard for me to get sober because my family doesn't trust me. They treat me like this." I'm like, "This is a result of what they've been through with you and you have to understand that. But as you start doing the right things and doing positive things, they'll suddenly get happier. They'll suddenly start to trust you more."

It's like everything that you do with yourself, because you're a little part of the world, it all ripples out around you, all the good stuff you do. It's good vibes rather than negative vibes you were giving out before. From the way I talk to the person in the [indiscernible 25:04] where I used to go in with my head down and shaking, now I smile and say, "Hello." That's a nice way of affecting his day.

Right down from the people I walk down the street and I can smile rather than walking passed looking freaked out. Right from those tiny people you encounter everyday to the people I see every day, the people I love, my family, my partner, my friends. It makes a difference to them all. If you can just focus on yourself and being the most positive and helpful and goodhearted and genuine person you can, everyone around you benefits-- everyone.

Rachel: It's been interesting because a lot of people I've been talking to in podcasts talk a lot about how having support was able to help them, but what you're talking about, really pulling from your internal and being very strong internally until you're able to get people to rally around you too, right?

Beth: Yes, this is something I thoroughly believe. Everyone has to do it for themselves at the end of the day. It's very helpful to have people around you that do support. If you don't have that, you can get better anyway. This is something I really want to get across to people because sometimes people feel because they have a disorder or an illness or are in a bit of trouble they have no faith in themselves and they think, "That's it now. I can't do anything."

They discount all the strengths they have, all the courage they have, all the wonderful lessons they've already learned. They discount all of that. Actually, you can get better no matter what circumstance you're in. You

<http://www.RachelRofoe.com>

---

don't need support. It's wonderful to have it. It's helpful to have it. If you don't have it, you can still get better.

You have all the resources within you to get better. I know that because I managed to get through all these different things and I'm not a special person. I'm just someone that did it. Everyone else can do it too. I know they can. We all have it within us. We're all born with the resources we need. They just get pushed down a bit, buried, a bit damaged and a bit guffed up but we still have them. It's just a case of learning to access them again.

Rachel: Absolutely. When people are just starting out, I know you say you have them check in morning, lunchtime and again at night, are their action steps that you have them take to constantly be in that place of empowerment?

Beth: Like I said, it's different for everyone you work with. Things that I generally recommend to people are things like practicing gratitude every day. So maybe before you go to bed the last thing you do is write down three things or five things or 10 things you're grateful for, even if they're little things.

Gratitude has been shown scientifically to actually make us happier. Again, I think there's a study that showed that practicing gratitude every day actually does reduce relapsing onto things like alcohol and drugs. It's a really good tool. It's just little things like that--waking up in the morning and maybe starting out with a positive thought or trying to start with a positive frame of mind.

Addressing problems: If you have a problem, this is a really vital one: Don't ever just wait for it to get out of control. Address it as soon as you can. I find the earlier you address problems the easier it is to address them, actually. You don't have all that stress hanging over of not knowing what's happening or, "What do I do about this," and "How's that going to turn out," if you just address it as soon as you can.

Have the difficult conversation if you need to have it because it's actually easier to have that difficult conversation in the beginning than it is to wait for ages, wait a week, really stress yourself out and then have it. As soon as you need to do something, do it. Face up to the truth and get on with it as soon as you can because that's actually the easier way.

Rachel: In your experience, what's something you feel like most people don't share about improving yourself, either it's not sexy or it just doesn't paint that rainbow and butterflies picture? What's something people find really tough to deal with?

Beth: I would say everyone I work with has had some kind of issues from childhood that they need to resolve. Now it's not always something huge. I

---

call it trauma with a big T and trauma with a little T. There's trauma with a big T, which I'm sure you can imagine is violence, abuse and that sort of thing. Trauma with a little T is all those little things that undermine us or make us feel like we're not worth anything.

It can invalidate as a child, having gone through bullying, just those things growing up, maybe your parents got divorced. Just those little things that give us these little triggers. So we have these internal triggers. For example, my parents got divorced and what I found was I grew up with a real sense of abandonment on some ways where I would be in a relationship and I would start to either push people away so they wouldn't get too close in case they left or I would do the opposite and I would get all clingy and weird about things.

That was because I had this real sense of abandonment. It was like that little child in me going, "Oh, please don't leave me." Again, this is the one thing that will free you the most of all, I believe, is going back and sorting out those issues, basically reprocessing them because it's the little child in you that's going to jump you up and down saying, "Please, listen to me." You do have to go back and do that, I think, to be totally free.

That's the thing I think people don't talk about because they don't like to say, "I'm going to a therapist." They don't like to say, "I need to deal with childhood stuff," because it's not sexy, is it? But it's the one thing that will free you more than anything in my experience.

Rachel: How can people remember the things that maybe were the turning points where they made different decisions? Do you think it's something that they need to talk out with other people or are there things people can do maybe that are even listening right now?

Beth: When I do it formally with people, I use NLP, which is fantastic. You can just start to notice it on your own. A really clear way of doing it is noticing your feelings, so this is why it's really important to start noticing your feelings. Check in with your gut. When certain things come up, do you suddenly get this gut reaction of, "Oh, I don't like this?"

If someone criticizes you, do you suddenly go, "Oh, " and get really defensive? If that's a pattern for you, that comes from somewhere. You can trace the feelings back. You can go back using the feeling as a little guide to see where that came from. It's much easier, obviously, if you do it with someone like me because I do it all the time. I can guide people if they're a little bit lost with it.

Just notice the patterns to start with and see if you can trace them back to where they came from because almost all of them, I guarantee you, will have come from somewhere in childhood.

---

Rachel: I know a lot of NLP practitioners ask people to identify the earliest possible moment they can remember usually before three or five?

Beth: Exactly. This is where it goes back to the anxiety disorders and stuff, Rachel. This is the original source of it. If you go back and sort out the original source of something, whether it's an anxiety disorder or just a pattern or feelings of abandonment, if you go back and find the earliest memories of it and work on that, that's when everything changes because it changes how your life is. That's earliest one that caused it.

This is why you can get rid of anxiety disorders, et cetera, in one session because you identify the first one.

Rachel: And then you just turn it around.

Beth: Yes.

Rachel: Interesting. For the people who are listening who maybe also have the divorce thing and, I think, it would be awesome for them to work with you and even just as an in the moment exercise, do you think that just being able to understand where the pattern even came from is a big key in freeing it up?

Beth: I think it helps but it doesn't make it go away in my experience. What I find is that when people cognitively understand where something comes from they get it then. They're like, "Oh gosh, I know that comes from..." That's a bit of a relief in some ways. But at the same time, they haven't processed it emotionally so they will still get the triggers.

If you think about it logically and you know where it comes from, what you might be able to do is go into a new situation and go, "Oh, I'm doing that abandonment thing again. I know where that comes from. That's a past thing." You might recognize it and you might be able to change what you do to it behaviorally but you won't change that gut response, that gut response within you which feels that.

That's why I always recommend actually reprocessing it properly. Again, I use NLP to do it because it's very quick and easy. Basically, reprocessing it will take the feeling away as well as the thought.

Rachel: Are there other ways, in addition to NLP, that you think help?

Beth: Basically, anything which allows you to reprocess the memory. I've heard of EFT being useful. I have used that with people. I use eye movement therapy with people as well. That's a really effective one, particularly if it's traumatic memories because that wipes them out quite well. So there are a few different things.

---

I believe, again, in working with whatever helps people the most. Those sorts of things, in my experience, are the quickest way of doing it. Again, hypnotherapy, which basically is very much like NLP anyway. They're kind of similar. Make sure you get a good practitioner. Don't just go to anyone. If you go and find someone who really knows what they're doing with this sort of thing, that could work wonders as well.

Rachel: When you say "reprocess the memory," what exactly do you mean?

Beth: It sounds a bit weird. You basically go back into childhood, you go back and you view it from a new perspective. The reason why these things get stuck is because we're still feeling them from a childhood perspective. It's a bit complex to say actually how you do it because it's quite weird. You almost take someone back in time so that they were there again and you get to reprocess it from that perspective.

As an adult they know anyway. If you're an adult when you had someone bullying you or something, it's not going to affect you as much because you have all the resources. You've learned everything to do. You're in a position where you can stand up for yourself. It's not going to be the same thing usually.

You get them to bring all the resources they have to the front as a child. It sounds weird but it works. It's incredibly effective.

Rachel: It doesn't sound weird. I've studied this stuff too. I think just another way to explain it is once you identify what the memory is you can change the memory around in your mind and then it'll believe that memory. It's very easy to change anything you have.

If you've kept on acting out of patterns because of one memory but then you go back to that original memory, knowing the resources that you have now, like you're saying, Beth, and then being able to change what you would have done back then. It just completely rewires everything and then you start making new decisions from the new stuff that you have in your subconscious. It does sound really simple. It's mindboggling how it works.

Beth: I think that's a much better explanation than mine, Rachel. I just do this stuff. I rarely talk about the actual process. That's what it is, basically. If you had a phobia, you'd know that one experience can just make you act and feel very scared for now reason when you just see a trigger again and that's because of the memory.

You have that memory stored in the part of your brain which says, "This is a scary memory." It has to do with the limbic system. It's based in science very much so. So removing the memory from that part of the brain into another one where other memories, different types of memories, are stored, you're basically just fiddling with people's learning capacities and

<http://www.RachelRofoe.com>



---

memory capacities. It's wonderful stuff. It's really empowering. It is quite simple. You explained it better than I did, I think.

Rachel: I think we just complimented each other really well. Team effort there.

Beth: Thank you. I'll take that.

Rachel: I think the people who are listening now have something really tangible they can get from what you're saying. They notice this pattern coming up in their life over and over, anything that's making them feel uncomfortable, trace it back to the earliest memory that you can of where you would have started creating that pattern for yourself, responding in the way that you are, and then just see if you can change the memory around. Maybe you can do it, maybe you need to talk to somebody.

I think that at least having that initial figuring out what it is definitely, like you said, part of the empowerment process and a good cognitive, at the minimum, thing to have. That's fabulous. You're in an amazing place now and I'm sure that just because you're a human being you're also going to have things that you're working on right now. I'd love to hear something that you're currently working on in your life and how you're getting through it.

Beth: I am one of these biological addicts. There are two types of people who get addicted to people. There are people who take things which are extremely addictive, where that would turn anyone into an addict, and there are other people who have a predisposition to it. There are certain genes.

If you come from a family who has quite a few addicts in them, you're probably one of these people. I'm one of these people who can become addicted to anything, really, because my brain is wired that way. It has low dopamine to start out with and it just grabs on to any that it can get and hangs on.

I've had to give up, obviously, alcohol. I've also had to give up sugar because when I gave up alcohol I found that the sugar thing was massive. My next one is probably caffeine because, again, I'm a little bit of a caffeine fiend. As it goes, that's one that I'm not so concerned about at the moment.

At the same time, I think we're all a work in progress. I'm never going to be perfect and certainly not when I have those sorts of traits within me. But it's that willingness to actually try and work on it anyway. I'm at the stage of Buddhism where I'm trying to learn about equanimity and actually being able to greet good and bad all the same and that ability to sit with a feeling no matter how painful it is.

---

If I don't have something to hold onto sometimes, something to grab onto, in quite an addict way, I find this discomfort within me. That's a biological thing. That's a normal thing for an addict to feel but it's sometimes overwhelming, particularly if I'm trying to work with other people and being positive and do my best with my clients and work hard and be able to concentrate.

There's a little fear. I always think, "Gosh, will I be able to do that and just sit with that feeling?" I've learned to do it with other things. I think that's what I'm building up to--learning to let go of everything that I've ever been addicted to. Who knows if it will work? It's a work in progress.

Rachel: That's fabulous. You're just working on, basically, in the moment just identifying the feeling and choosing a different one?

Beth: It's more about learning just to sit with it because this is what addicts don't do well. We all have to run around and grab things and either work or exercise or drink some coffee or have a cigarette, all of those things, the things that our brain wants us to do. It's in our biology to do that but it doesn't mean we can't overcome it. Otherwise, I wouldn't be able to give up alcohol, I wouldn't be able to give up sugar and all those things.

You have to do it little by little. It's learning to sit with that feeling and not do anything about it, just learn to be a bit more still, learning to be a bit more, "Actually, I could just sit here and not do anything if I want." I am one of those people who has to be running around busy all the time. I know that's part of the addictive thing. I know it is. That's part of it.

I'm hoping through practicing a bit more, learning to be equanimous, then I'll be able to sit more with that feeling and not have to act on it.

Rachel: It's not so easy to be able to extend that range of just receiving all that energy coming at you and not doing anything about it. It's a noble effort.

Beth: I know other people have done it so I have no doubt if I really want to and I really work hard with it I can do it too. I believe everyone has all the resources if they want to choose to access them.

Rachel: Absolutely. You said you were a biological addict. I don't know if you have percentages. This is just a random question so you might not be prepped for it. How many people are considered biological addicts compared to casual addictions to things, like maybe just a sugar addiction because it's an addicting thing?

Beth: I don't know the exact stats on it. Again, it's one of these things that we know bits about addiction biology. We know bits about addiction science. I know what everyone else knows about it but at the same time they can't put together an exact thing because it's one of those things that's difficult

---

to measure. Unless you scanned everyone from birth, you're not going to know because people can make themselves addicted.

An addicted brain looks exactly the same as a brain that is prone to addiction but hasn't touched an addictive thing at all. In fact, something came out just this week about that in the news. If you scan the brain of someone who's never taken an addictive substance but has a family history of it and you compare that to the brain scan of someone who has taken addictive things and has made this neuro path in their brain, it's the same.

Basically, how can you tell if you've got it, which might be a more useful thing. Usually what I find is, again, there's some kind of family history. It doesn't have to be the thing that you're addicted to. For example, I was quite puzzled when I found out I was an alcoholic because my mom's not, my dad's not. I don't know anyone in my family that is.

But if you look at my dad, he's exactly like that with sugar. He starts eating a packet of chocolate or something and he can't not finish it. He has to finish it. That's the same as addiction. It's that inability to stop something once you've started it. So once you have the taste for it you can't stop. He's so like that. A whole packet of biscuits he could just eat in one sitting because he can't stop once he's had it.

Then I found out later on about the family members that I didn't know because I don't know really half of my family. They, again, did have big alcohol problems I wasn't previously aware of. The first thing to do is have a look at that, basically. If you have some signs of addictive behavior in your family, that's one of the key things to it. It's the starting point for developing it.

Rachel: That's really interesting stuff.

Beth: I don't know the stats. I think it's something between like 3% and 10% of the people. I wouldn't know exactly but it's around those figures maybe.

Rachel: It's interesting that it's 3% and 10%. I would have imagined it would have been higher but I guess that just speaks to all the people who have ended up creating addiction within themselves because a lot of stuff is really easy to be addicted to, like alcohol.

Beth: There are two parts. When I say 3% to 10%, again, we're talking about people who have manifested that. For example, if you have a predisposition to addiction, that doesn't necessarily mean you end up as an alcoholic. From working with people, what I usually find is there's some element of trauma (again, it can be big T or little T) that starts off a period of heavy drinking if you have a predisposition.

---

Then that turns into something you can't turn back. That's the 3% to 10% I'm talking about of people who are like that. Now there are other people who drink situationally. I don't know if they have bereavement or a period of life which is extremely difficult and then they drink. Usually I find with those people they are the ones that can stop if they want to.

For a biological alcoholic, if you have one drink, that's it. That sets it off. You cannot stop them for the rest of the evening. Whereas someone who's drinking heavily, maybe they'll have three to five drinks, but they can stop if they want to. An addict really feels compelled to just continue. They feel like they can't stop.

That's part of the neurology. That's part of the brain that's pulling them that way because it's releasing so much dopamine and then that goes down and is replaced by another chemical. It's like a whole thing that just drives them down that path. That's due to biology. I had to answer a media thing today and they were asking about smart phone addiction.

Things like smart phones are inherently addictive in some ways because they give you that dopamine hit through the way that they act. It's all those little bursts of information. It's like Twitter. Apparently, that's one of the greatest addiction things of our time because it basically gives you these little bursts of information and makes you crave more of it.

Again, like you said, sugar. Sugar in itself isn't addictive. It wouldn't make you go mad on it. But the way that sugar is in our society now it's condensed, it's had all the goodness stripped out of it, it's completely pure sugar times 20 and that is addictive. It's the same with caffeine. It's the [indiscernible 44:47] manufacturers fault, I think. If I'd just start with coffee, I'd be all right.

Rachel: If I were to know somebody in my life, like people listening, who has the predisposition towards addiction, is there a way that you would recommend supporting them?

Beth: If someone's already addicted?

Rachel: Not that they just have their predisposition but they're actually addicted.

Beth: Basically, addiction is one of those funny things. It's an illness of denial sometimes. It feels like the addiction will try to trick you and lie to you and all sorts of things. So people who have addiction they're often very confused, defensive about it because they don't understand what's going on and they can be quite hostile.

What I find is telling people not to drink or nagging at them does not help at all. It just doesn't help. What I always say to people is to positively reinforce them for times when they don't do the addictive behavior. Say

---

your partner, for example, or your child is drinking and you think it's out of control.

They won't listen. If you shout at them for drinking, they would just go away and drink at you. They'll resent you. They'll go, "All right, I need to drink now because you stressed me out." People who have this addictive thing have a very low threshold. They'll feel stressed out and they'll go out and drink some more.

Instead the thing to do is, number one, don't enable them. If it is your child or your partner, don't give them money so they can maintain their addiction. The second thing is, when they're really trying hard not to do the substance or when they're seeking help, be so supportive. Be kind to them. Be encouraging. Give them quality time. Give them lots of hugs and kisses. Really support what they're doing.

You won't necessarily understand it. If you haven't been down that path yourself, you won't necessarily understand it. Again, if they relapse, they're not doing it to annoy you. They're not doing it because they don't want to get better. It's a relapse in illness, unfortunately, because it's so misunderstood. It's like you're fighting your brain to try to get better.

Just bear that in mind. Just be gentle with them, be kind to them if you can and keep yourself safe as well. While I'm saying you'll have this sympathy for the addict, I know it's tough. For the people who are around the addict, it's sometimes very damaging and painful. Make sure that you're supported yourself.

Don't spend all your time worrying and focusing on this one person. Do your own thing as well. Build your own life. Learn to be happy as well and look after yourself. That's a really important point as well.

Rachel: That is so helpful. Thank you. That's really good. A lot of people right now might be listening and might be inspired by you but still kind of scared to make changes in their own life. What advice would you give them?

Beth: It's a choice at the end of the day of what you want to do. You can start out by doing little things. People find change hard. Again, it's one of these things that's wired into our brains from the caveman days. We don't like change because it's see as scary in some way. You can do little things. Like I said, doing something like writing a gratitude list every day.

That can start to put you in a more positive mindset. Or you can start to do a little bit of mindfulness. If you don't want to do it in a group, there's stuff online. On my website, I have free mindfulness things. I think there's a seven minute one you can just listen to. For seven minutes just focus on your breathing, have a little mini meditation.

---

Just try things and you'll find something that feels comfortable for you. If it's the case that you're having deeper problems, I would say it's taken you a lot of courage to spend all your life having that problem. You may as well just make the push and actually go, "I'm just going to be really super brave for one day and just go and look at treatment or see someone or open up about my problem and try to deal with it." Otherwise, you're going to have to spend the rest of your life being really brave to try to live with it.

Rachel: I love that you mentioned your website because my next question is actually going to be: Where can people go to learn more about you?

Beth: They can visit my website, which is <http://Smyls.co.uk>. or you just Google me because I'm on a lot of things. You can just google Beth Burgess . I have another website. I'm sort of everywhere but Smyls is the main one.

Rachel: Thank you. This has been so helpful. This has been really good. I really think this is going to help a lot of people who are listening. I really appreciate your time.

Beth: Wonderful.

END

---

## Want More?

If you liked this, there's plenty more where it come from. Let's stay in touch!

We can connect in any of these places:

Main website: <http://www.RachelRofe.com>

A Better Life Podcast – where these transcripts are taken from:  
<http://www.rachelrofe.com/podcast>

Rachel's books – Learn new ways to improve your life:

<http://www.rachelrofe.com/booklist>

Twitter: <http://www.Twitter.com/RachelRofe>

Instagram: <http://www.Instagram.com/RachelRofe>

YouTube: <http://www.YouTube.com/RachelRofe>

And as a thank you for checking this out, I'd be thrilled to give you a copy of my **favorite** time management tool. It's normally \$97 and can add a mind-blowing amount of productivity to your day.

Sign up to that here: <http://www.rachelrofe.com/ablgift>

## Review

<http://www.RachelRofe.com>

---

Thanks again for reading my book and getting all the way to the end. I am so glad you've enjoyed it enough to get to this point.

If you liked the book and you wouldn't mind, I'd *\*love\** if you could take a minute to leave a rating, review, and subscribe on iTunes.

Your doing that will help me to continue to publish more and more podcasts that will hopefully help you.

Learn how to rate, review, and subscribe by going right here:

<http://rachelrofe.com/subscribe>

*Thank you in advance!*

I really appreciate you.

With love,

Rachel Rofé

