

Drinking For Company: Why We Reach For A Glass When We're On Our Own

Notice It • Sit With It • Fill It

For the nights nothing happened and you still reached for a glass.

The urge you're feeling right now probably isn't about the alcohol. It's about not wanting to sit in an empty room, or an empty feeling, on your own.

Once you can tell the difference between the two, you get to actually choose what you do about the second one — instead of automatically reaching for the first.

How to manage an emotional craving:

NOTICE IT

Before you can do anything differently, you need to see what's actually happening.



SIT WITH IT

You don't have to fix the emptiness tonight. You just have to get through the next hour.



FILL IT

Not every ordinary evening needs solving. But when you notice you're reaching for company in a glass, it helps to know what else actually works for you.

Most cravings peak in 15-20 minutes. This one might not follow that pattern as neatly — emotions don't always clock off on schedule. That's fine. You don't have to fix the whole feeling tonight. You just have to get through the next hour without handing it over to a glass of wine or a beer.

Notice It

Before you can do anything differently, you need to see what's actually happening.

WHAT'S ACTUALLY GOING ON RIGHT NOW?



Nothing dramatic, probably – that's kind of the point. Is the evening just quiet? Long? Is the house empty in a way that feels loud? Name what's actually true, not the version of it you'd tell someone else.

WHAT ARE YOU FEELING IN YOUR BODY RIGHT NOW?



Flat? Restless? A bit hollow? Fidgety, like you can't settle on anything? Or just tired of your own thoughts for company?

WHAT'S THE REAL FEELING UNDERNEATH THAT LED TO THIS?



Boredom? Loneliness? Sadness? Longing? Name it if you can – describe it if you can't.

WHO OR WHAT ARE YOU ACTUALLY MISSING?



A time in your life when the house wasn't this quiet? Not wanting to be alone with yourself for a few hours? A version of your life that used to feel fuller? A specific someone?

Sit With It

You don't have to fix the emptiness tonight. You just have to get through the next hour.

Acknowledge: Accept that you feel the way you do and that that is leading to an urge to drink. Pretending you don't won't make it go away.

- *This is a normal part of changing the way you drink.*

Decide: Make an actual choice about whether alcohol gets a say in this evening or not.

- *Only you will know if that drink will actually help you in this moment... and the next.*

IF YOU CHOOSE TO DRINK



Delay: Even though you are choosing to drink, delaying it, even by just 10 minutes, teaches your brain that this is a measured decision and not just an automatic reaction.

It sets a standard that you take forward for future decisions.

Consider: You still have the option to choose a lighter alcohol drink. A mid-range spirit & mixer or a half-strength beer or wine can give you the flavour notes you might want, but with just half the alcohol content.

IF YOU CHOOSE NOT TO DRINK



This is where you rely on the power of your people and reach out.

It doesn't have to be a whole conversation if you don't have it in you. It also doesn't have to be a heartfelt deep and meaningful if that doesn't feel comfortable.

A text to a good friend counts if it helps you feel connected.

Fill the quiet on purpose, rather than just enduring it.

Put some music on, or better still, your favourite funny movie or 80s action flick.

Do something with your hands.

Not to distract yourself from the feeling, but to stop the glass from being the only thing in the room with you.

Have something ready in the fridge in advance

The choice shouldn't just be between booze and nothing. A little bit of preparation takes the decision-making off tonight's emotionally drained brain.

Fill It

Delete the examples and fill this in with your own, as evenings come up:

Put it all together and make a plan you can use next time an unwanted urge strikes.

How the evening feels?	What I'm actually missing	What I did	Did it help? (out of 10)
Flat, restless	Someone to talk to	Called my sister	8/10
Bored, scrolling	Mental stimulation	Put my favourite movie on	6/10

Connection matters



Cheers to a life less intoxicated!

Keep Exploring

Changing how you drink rarely happens in one sitting.

It happens over and over again in the small moments of noticing what you reached for, why you reached for it, and what you actually need instead.

→ The **Podcast** goes deeper into the thinking.

→ The **Vault** holds the practical tools.

And the **4-Week Midlife Mindful Drinking Reset** gives everything structure and helps ‘comforter’ drinkers to understand the difference between wanting a drink and wanting to fill the emptiness.

In week 1, you’ll learn to build awareness of your own habits.

In week 2 you’ll set boundaries that protect you and your goals.

In week 3 you’ll find ways to optimise your stress, energy and health.

And in week 4 you’ll put it all together so you can build a life less intoxicated on your own terms.

→ **The 4-Week Midlife Mindful Drinking Reset**

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If you are concerned about your relationship with alcohol, experience withdrawal symptoms, or think you may be physically dependent on alcohol, seek advice from your GP or another qualified healthcare or alcohol-support professional before reducing or stopping. Suddenly stopping alcohol when physically dependent can be dangerous and, in some cases, life-threatening.

UK support is available through [Alcohol Change UK](#) and the [NHS](#). If you are outside the UK, contact an appropriate healthcare or alcohol-support service in your country. In an emergency, contact your local emergency services.

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