

#121 Sober Powered with Gill Tietz

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SPEAKERS

Michelle Glogovac, Gill Tietz

M Michelle Glogovac 00:01

You're listening to the my simplified life podcast and this is episode number 121.

M Michelle Glogovac 00:12

Welcome to the my simplified life podcast, a place where you will learn that your past and even your present. Don't define your future. Regardless of what stage of life you're in, I want you to feel inspired and encouraged to pursue your dreams, simplify your life and start taking action today. I'm your host, Michelle Glogovac, and I'm excited to share my stories and life lessons with you will taking you on my own journey. This is my simplified life.

M Michelle Glogovac 00:46

Hey friends, welcome back to another episode. I'm your host, Michelle Glogovac, we are still in January. So Happy New Year. I'm going to keep saying that all month long. And if you have been watching anything trending on Twitter or the internet, you will have seen mention of dry January. Now this has nothing to do with rain and has to do with alcohol consumption. Dry January has been around for many years and back in the day when I sold wine. I remember it vividly because there was a lot of concern about a dip in wine sells. Now because of COVID. Because we've been at home so much more dry January has become more prevalent, which is why I am so excited to have my guest today. The host of sober powered podcast and biochemist, Jill teats. Jill has been sober for two years now and is sharing everything she knows about the mind the brain, how the chemistry works with alcohol, what triggers us how to get away from it, and why dry January is such an awesome thing. We talk about why 30 days is great for a light to moderate drinker and why people who are drinking much more than just a few glasses of wine a week need more like two months in order for that brain fog to clear. I loved our conversation because we have so much fun talking about this topic that seems kind of off limits for many of us. So if you are curious about a dry January, or some non alcoholic beverages, some mocktails then definitely sit back, grab your latte your cup of coffee, and listen to all that Jill has to share.



Gill Tietz 02:33

Hi, Jill. Hey, thank you so much for having me.



Michelle Glogovac 02:37

Thank you so much for coming on. I am stoked to talk to you. Because I had started out thinking about dry January, and then I saw your post and I'm like, Oh, you are who I need to speak to? Can you introduce yourself to everyone, please?



Gill Tietz 02:53

Yes. So I'm Jill. I am two years sober. I a biochemist in the Boston area, and overall just obsessed with sobriety and helping people not drink.



Michelle Glogovac 03:09

And I'm sure that listeners will be going Why is Michelle having Jill on when Michelle talks about wine all the time? And I'm like, Yes, I used to have a wine blog and I love my wine. That's not changing everybody. But I wanted to talk to you because dry January is a thing. It was something that I was considering in December and my husband was like, you know, maybe we shouldn't drink in January. And I'm like, yeah, it's called dry January. He had no idea that was a thing. And of course I've had we went out to dinner last weekend. So I've had a couple drinks. So I'm not having a dry January. But you just brought up something great called a damp January.



Gill Tietz 03:50

Yeah, yeah, I heard about it for the first time this morning. Because I'm always like, I'm about sober stuff all the time. So Google, every time I open up Chrome is recommending dry January type stories to me and it recommended one that was called like, some participating in damp January. And I'm like What is damp January? So I read it. And it's it's two drinks a week. I don't remember if the two drinks are like, can they be on the same day? Do they have to be on different days? I don't think it matters, but it's two drinks a week for January.



Michelle Glogovac 04:28

And yeah, isn't it funny that isn't that along the guidelines? They say you should be drinking anyway. Not should be your but you know shouldn't go above or beyond?



Gill Tietz 04:39

Yeah, two drinks a week is within the guidelines. For women. It's up to seven a week. No more than three at a time for women. So two drinks a week is a pretty good lifestyle choice if that's what you're doing.

M

Michelle Glogovac 04:55

And that's kind of what I'm doing. Well, it's what I did last week but I'm going for not so much. And so for us, we've always been like happy hour, people on the weekends after the kids go to bed, you know, have a glass of wine, watch a movie, that sort of thing. And when COVID hit, it seemed everybody had their lives changing with you know, we're watching so much Netflix, we're doing this and our lives didn't really change in that way. But we noticed that with distance learning, we're like, Oh, we got to Tuesday. We deserve a drink. And so we're trying to scale that back down to you know, Fridays, and Saturdays. And that's it again. But I think this is something that's really becoming more prevalent for more and more people. Am I right? From what you've seen?

G

Gill Tietz 05:44

Yeah. So what happened was COVID, is it removed that appropriate time for drinking, that doesn't exist anymore, you don't have to wait for you know, when you get home from work, or after dinner, after the kids are in bed, or after you know, whatever is done, there's no more like appropriate time, you can just drink whatever, and it's fine. So that's where a lot of people had difficulty. And because there's a lot of extra boredom introduced into our lives in quarantine. And drinking instantly fixes that problem. So it's so much easier to have the lines blurred between weekends and weekdays. And you know, why not have a drink on Tuesday?

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Michelle Glogovac 06:24

Well, I have workouts on Wednesdays. So that's why not. I just I can't do it, I have found that for myself, I feel so much better. Not drinking, you know, I think it takes it might even take a while for you to recognize that when you wake up in the morning, like, Oh, I feel refreshed and good. And yet, when I have a bad night's sleep, my husband, I will go did we drink last night because I slept horribly. And I also since I have a Fitbit, I'll look at you know my measurements of my health and my oxygen rate and all of this stuff. And I can literally see when my body reacts to me having a few glasses of wine versus nothing.

G

Gill Tietz 07:08

Yeah, alcohol really has an impact on our sleep and makes it so that our sleep is more broken, we wake up more often it reduces the amount of REM sleep that we get, which is the restorative type of sleep. So you wake up feeling. Maybe you feel like you slept the same amount of time, but your sleep was broken apart all night. And even if you were asleep, you weren't getting restorative sleep. So you're still waking up kind of tired. And I think that's great that you're recognizing that too. And that you recognize if you do Happy Hour on Tuesday night, it interferes with your workout on Wednesday. I think awareness is so key for people that can moderate.

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Michelle Glogovac 07:49

Absolutely. And do you want to share a bit about yourself and your story how you got to here?

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Gill Tietz 07:54

Yeah, so I absolutely cannot moderate. It was my obsession. For five years. It was all I wanted. It was my life's dream, to learn to moderate someday. But I could not achieve it. So I started drinking when I was 22. I was really bullied in high school. So I was never invited to parties or anything. And then college I just studied. But when I was 22, I went to grad school. And everyone was drinking except for me. And I was so scared that I would go back to not having friends and having people you know, not want to hang out with me because I wasn't drinking too. So I started drinking. And immediately, I had no understanding of how much was too much when I would be drunk and when I wouldn't. So I would just keep drinking and alcohol felt like the best thing ever. For me it was the best feeling I've ever experienced. So within a year, I became a daily drinker. And then the year after that my tolerance had doubled. And that's when I realized like, Whoa, you're drinking a lot. I didn't think every day was a lot. I thought that was normal. But it was the tolerance increase that made me notice and that's when I started trying to moderate and trying to do what you're doing and have exercise be a priority and, you know, have a drink limit or do this kind of damp January thing. I had all of these rules and none of them would work for me. And it eventually led to a lot of self hatred and shame. And I developed anxiety from my drinking that would keep me up all night. It was a big mess. And I became very suicidal at the end and that's when I was like I'm risking my life pursuing this thing that I clearly can't do. And then that's when I finally gave it up and got sober. I'm so I've been sober for two years and two months.

M

Michelle Glogovac 10:04

Congratulations. Thank you. That's it, I think it really takes willpower to not only recognize, you know that you have this problem, but to really get through it and push past it and make that change, and then to stick to it, because it's not like, you know, store stop selling alcohol. You know, it's not like you're all I've got a problem, everybody stopped, you know, anywhere around me. It's still there when you go the grocery store.

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Gill Tietz 10:33

Yeah, thank you for saying that. And everyone's still drinking it around me, you know, the world hasn't changed. It's still on every TV show. We're still, you know, seeing all of these articles about why we shouldn't do dry January because it's restrictive. And so all of these things, trying to get you to drink and normalize alcohol. And I just accepted one day, like, I literally can't, I'm married to a normal drinker. So I can observe, excuse me, so I can observe what, you know, moderation looks like for real, not the kind of moderation that I was trying to do. And I never drank like that. I never drink even close to that. So that helps me stay true to my sobriety to when all these messages come in about, you know, you deserve it, you should drink everyone

else drinks. Are you really never going to drink again, like in all of those romanticized thoughts, because I was a wine drinker too. And I wine is so romantic. It's the most romantic alcoholic drink, which makes it even harder to stay away from it.

M

Michelle Glogovac 11:40

Yeah, I've never heard it put that way. But it sounds so nice.

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Gill Tietz 11:46

I've thought a lot about it.

M

Michelle Glogovac 11:49

I was raised in a household with an alcoholic, and she never defined herself as that. But my mom drank every single day, she would drink before she'd get us home from school, you know, drink with the friends, all the girlfriends would drink. And it, it's still to this day, it baffles me, especially now that I'm a mom, I'm like, How did you do that. And, you know, we'll have a drink in front of our kids on like, a Sunday as they're playing in the backyard, and we're barbecuing. But I'm not pouring myself a bottle of wine, you know, while my kids are watching. Because I also know that I'm responsible for them. If something happens, you know, they don't care if they have a bad dream in the middle of the night, and mommy's had, you know, one too many. I still have to go help them. You know, accidents can happen. So that's always in the back of my mind. And I think that for people who are alcoholics that that doesn't trigger in their mind.

G

Gill Tietz 12:45

Yeah, alcohol does something really weird to your brain. When you develop a problem with it, it makes it so that you're not aware. Like you know what's going on, you know what could potentially happen, but you're like not fully aware you don't get it? Or you don't think it would actually happen. So an easy one is drunk driving. So you go out to the bar, and your rule was, oh, I'm only going to have to because I have to drive or whatever. And then you have to and you're like, Oh, screw it, you know, I'm fine. And then you have five, and then you drive anyways. And then the next day, you're like, what's wrong with me? Why am I such a loser? Why do I always do this? Why can't I control myself. And it's weird. It's like, even though your brain knows, you shouldn't drive, the message isn't being sent, that you should stop drinking. It's like the alcohol is more important. One more, one more, one more, that message in your brain becomes so much more important than all the other messages. And it's hard to get out of that. Like looking back on my own drinking. Like why did you obsessively try to moderate for five years when you never moderated once? Like, can you take a hit? And I look back I'm like, geez, man, like, what were you thinking? And I couldn't see the reality. And that's something that now I can see and people who are very heavy drinkers. Something interesting happens around 60 days of sobriety, that we get this big boost of mental clarity. And it's like, wow, I can think clearly for the first time. Like you can understand the world around you fully. And I think

about this kind of thing a lot. And kids who get their hearts broken, like why wasn't I enough? Or partners? Why don't they love me enough? And it's awful what alcohol can do to people who are addicted to it.

M Michelle Glogovac 14:54

It's very interesting, and it's so true, and I can understand how there must be some sort of a fog that the alcohol creates, and it's got a lasting effect. And that's why you find this clarity.

G Gill Tietz 15:06

Yeah. And that's why like, you don't get the clarity immediately. So if you don't make it to 60 days, and you keep going back and forth, and back and forth, you're never getting this clarity, you're never fully understanding what you're drinking does, like we believe alcohol is the only good thing, like alcohol helps us parent, mommy wine culture, and this whole thing that you need wine to be a good parent. And it's not till you get at least a month off, that you'll start to see, well know, when I drink, I snap at my kids more or when I drink. I'm not around to play with my kids as much, or they don't really like to play with me as much when I drink. And after 30 to 60 days, you can finally see like what your drinking actually does. But while you're stuck in it, it's like this crazy, weird loop. At the end of my drinking, I literally felt like I went crazy. Like I lost my mind. And then when I got my mind back around 60 days, it was amazing. And I never wanted to give it up. So we

M Michelle Glogovac 16:15

don't need a dry January, we need like a dry quarter.

G Gill Tietz 16:18

I mean, that would be the best. But if you are a light or a moderate drinker, dry January's a lot. If you're a heavy drinker, you need like a dry quarter to see, like all the good things by 90 days, there are so many benefits for heavy drinkers. But for light to moderate drinkers 30 days is a ton. And by then you should see. Like your sleep quality is better, your energy is higher, you can concentrate more, you might feel happier, your mental health might be more stable. So it all depends on how much you drink. So the more you drink, the longer these benefits may take.

M Michelle Glogovac 17:05

Now what about when you replace something for the alcohol? I noticed that and this could just be because it's the holidays do. I'm eating chocolate like a crazy person. It didn't help that neighbors gifted us like I'm not kidding over three pounds of chocolate. And so I'll put the box on the couch next to me at night. And I'll just start eating truffles one after the other. And I'm like, Oh, am I replacing a glass of wine with this. And I actually Googled it because I'm one of

those people that always kills everything. And I found that your liver you know, once the the sugar and so you could replace chocolate or sweets, you know if you're having wine or whatnot. Hopefully that's not true, but I'm almost out of chocolate anyway. So

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Gill Tietz 17:55

I love that you brought that up. And this is a huge myth. So a lot of people think that alcohol is made out of sugar or the alcohol turns into sugar as it's metabolized in the liver. So then when you give up alcohol, your body's seeking the sugar. And that's actually not true. Alcohol is not made of sugar unless you add sugar to it like in wine or some mixed drinks. But like vodka is sugar free.

M

Michelle Glogovac 18:26

Okay, so I'm not a vodka drinker, per se. So

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Gill Tietz 18:28

yeah, so the wine has sugar, but alcohol actually doesn't have any sugar in it. But the reason why we crave it when we give up alcohol is because it hits the same areas of the brain. So wine releases endorphins, which then go on to release dopamine and you feel amazing, and happy. And sugar will do that too. Sugar can instantly change your mood. And nothing else is going to do that like doing the healthy things going on a walk or calling a friend or going to an exercise class. There's a barrier to go do that. And you don't get instant gratification from it. But sugar is another form of this instant gratification that we're seeking. So I started doing that big time. In my sobriety, there was a point where I ordered delivery ice cream every day for months. It's embarrassing. It's so bad. And then I got really obsessed with takeout. And I started ordering takeout every day on GrubHub because it made me feel exciting and like I was doing something bad and and good instantly fix my mood and we're chasing this instant gratification thing that alcohol was giving us and that's why you just quickly go right to sugar because we all know that it does that too. So I'm I'm doing a take out free challenge right now. That's my dry January. Take out a free take out free January.

M

Michelle Glogovac 20:07

I like that. I needed to do it dry sugar free January.

G

Gill Tietz 20:12

You could do sugar free February

M

Michelle Glogovac 20:16

with Valentine's Day and everything's No I just have to pre order Girl Scout cookies for my

daughter so sure of that skin.

G Gill Tietz 20:25

Yeah, February so bad. But yeah, I would if you're trying to not drink for 30 days or however many days, just eat the sugar and then eventually you can address it unless it makes you feel shame. Otherwise it's fine.

M Michelle Glogovac 20:42

Good. I like that you've given us all permission, the talk my permission, you're not drinking wine. Go ahead and eat that chocolate. There is no problem.

G Gill Tietz 20:50

Yep, eat it. Don't feel bad about yourself. Just focus on one thing at a time.

M Michelle Glogovac 20:54

Why do you think it is that we've created something like dry January and that we're all talking about it? It's I know that it's something that's been going on for many years, but it feels like this year more so than before.

G Gill Tietz 21:06

Yeah, this year is huge for dry January, which makes me really happy. I think a lot of it comes from the increased drinking from quarantine and people are starting to wake up and realize more about the effects that alcohol has. I think this year might also be a bit bigger because non alcoholic drinks are becoming more popular with Heineken zero being sponsored by, you know, James Bond, so he made it cool to drink non alcoholic beer. And then there's a lot of TV shows like Miranda. Yeah,

M Michelle Glogovac 21:42

I was gonna bring that up. Yeah. And just like that. I was talking to a friend about it the other day. And she's like, Miranda is not an alcoholic. I go. Yeah, she's at the bar before even open before going to class. That's kind of a sign that something's wrong.

G Gill Tietz 22:00

Yeah, they're showing it very subtly. And I like it. Like when I saw her go to the bar. My mind was like, that's, that's not that bad. But, you know, I'm speaking from someone who used to do the same thing. So clearly it was that bad. But I like that she drunkenly ordered the Quizlet

book. Yeah, she's been watching the show or not? Yes. And

M

Michelle Glogovac 22:25

then then Amazon's like, how do you like your order?

G

Gill Tietz 22:29

And then that was enough. And she's like, Oh, my gosh, I I know it's a problem. And that finally flipped that switch for her and the denial was gone. So I love the way that they're representing it because you don't have to completely destroy your life. Drink every single day, you know, fall down in public have everyone hate you to have a problem with alcohol. It's progressive. Like if she doesn't address it now. She's gonna address it in two years or five years when it's worse than it is now. So you can address it at any time. You don't have to have this like big rock bottom thing.

M

Michelle Glogovac 23:06

Yeah, you don't need that major aha moment. Any little trigger can do it. I like that. Yeah, I was convinced that Kerry was going to come forward and say well, Charlotte didn't send you the book. I did. I was waiting for that. I was totally blown away when she got the how do you like your recent order?

G

Gill Tietz 23:24

Yeah, that made me so happy. It was so subtle. But it was really great because when you're really suffering in you're drinking and you're feeling ashamed of yourself or you hate yourself for what you're doing, you will drunkenly reach out on you know, sober Facebook groups or to sober influencers on Instagram or you'll order a book or you'll you know, read a website or send an email to someone and you may not remember it, but that was amazing how they put that in.

M

Michelle Glogovac 23:56

Yeah. And your mention of you know, new drinks coming out and Heineken zero I just saw a commercial for that and I used to love Heineken. I when I have a beer, I'll have a Heineken but that'll be one to try. And then ginger beer and stuff got me through two pregnancies. And it was more so not that I needed an alcohol but to have a drink and hide it. Yep. You know, from friends, because it's one of those taboo things that everyone will say Why aren't you drinking? Yeah, we shouldn't be asking people that just a note for everybody. Especially if they could be pregnant. But you know, to be able to not even have to think about that of can I go to this function and not drink without you know, somebody asking me why am I not drinking? Yeah, we there's a lot of things that we need to change in society in order to get to that place. But I saw that Blake Lively is also launched a line of non alcoholic beverages. I would love to try them because the alcohol free wine that I've tried is not good.

G Gill Tietz 25:06

Most have so much sugar. I can tell you some good brands that you can try that are nice and dry. I've tried a lot of them, because the non alcoholic stuff creates the same vibe without the alcohol. So you feel included. You feel like you're having a little bit more fun. You feel fancy, like a grown up?

M Michelle Glogovac 25:27

Yeah, so you try to like them. Maybe that's like the Real Housewives why they drink water in a wineglass.

G Gill Tietz 25:32

Yeah, exactly. So even if you're doing dry January, and you feel like, Oh, this is boring. I don't know what to do. Just try to use your wine glasses. I use my wine glasses all the time. I use them for smoothies and non alcoholic beer, water. I use them for everything. And it's just a nice adult thing to do. It makes me feel like a cool girl.

M Michelle Glogovac 25:57

I like that. I think that we need more restaurants to get on board to there with the restaurant we went to last weekend, I looked at their cocktail menu and I was really looking forward to what kind of mocktails do they have? And it was I swear to God, a Shirley Temple, a Roy Rogers and a fizzy lemonade, which was just soda and a lime. I'm like, Yeah, this is No, those are five year old drinks that my kids have like, this isn't going to give me any kind of satisfaction at all.

G Gill Tietz 26:30

Exactly. And I've gone to places and asked for a mocktail, and they'll bring me back a glass of orange juice. And it's like, no, that's not. That's not what I meant. But I think some places are catching up quicker than others, like I live in the Boston area. And sometimes they will have a non alcoholic beer on the menu. Usually you have to ask, it's not on the actual menu. And I've seen one place that had an actual like, alcohol free section. But I think all these celebrities that are coming forward like Blake Lively and James Bond, even though he's not a real celebrity, but they're making it cool. Yeah, so more restaurants will want to offer it if it's cool. So I think this is a big year for sober, curious people and sober people.

M Michelle Glogovac 27:19

I love that. So we're curious. That's great. That's such a great little term. You know, and I love your shows. So repowered you share about that, please?

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Gill Tietz 27:30

Yeah, so when I stopped drinking, I had the stigma in my head that I chose to drink that way. I was weak willed, I was a loser. All of these things that it was my fault. And I wanted to understand like, is that really true? Is it my fault? So I started reading the scientific literature, because that's what I do for my job every day. So I started educating myself on addiction. And eventually I learned so much and it was helping me let go of the shame that I decided to start a podcast about it. So I explained these really complex topics and like what's going on in our brain? Why are we unable to stop when it's clear that you know we're not someone who can moderate so stuff like that? And it's it's helped my sobriety so much to do my show.

M

Michelle Glogovac 28:18

I love it. And you're a biochemist for those who don't know it. You your your smarty pants?

G

Gill Tietz 28:25

not that smart, but I try. Thank you

M

Michelle Glogovac 28:27

are my brothers majored in biochemistry, and I'm like no chemistry. Like I did it in high school so that I wouldn't have to do it in college. Smart. Yes, I am in that sense. Oh, I love it. And I'm going to keep following you on your journey. And I'm going to try my best to get 30 days and

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Gill Tietz 28:50

yeah, keep me updated. And I can send you a bunch of links for non alcoholic wine that yes, will make you feel like really fun and cool. And you know, the mind is so powerful, it can make us believe that it's like almost a real wine. And so you never know. It may really help you.

M

Michelle Glogovac 29:11

I would love to find something that is non alcoholic that tastes as good as my you know, Chardonnay or my cat or my red.

G

Gill Tietz 29:19

Okay, good. You gave me some I just had a bunch of ideas. I'll send you an email and some links.

M

Michelle Glogovac 29:25

Perfect. We'll get them in the show notes because I know everybody's listening to me like I

perfect. we'll get them in the show notes because I know everybody's listening to me like I want it to. I'll report back. Yeah. Can you share with everyone where they can find you, please?

G

Gill Tietz 29:35

Yeah, so you can connect with me. If you search for sober powered, you'll find me I'm on YouTube. That's my podcast. That's my Instagram. I also have a Facebook group if you're sober, curious, and you just want a safe space to share your thoughts. So you can join that or connect with me on my website. You can find my email there.

M

Michelle Glogovac 29:56

Thank you so much. You are such a pleasure to talk to you. This was fun.

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Gill Tietz 30:00

Yeah, I had so much fun. I enjoy talking to people that are not in the recovery community. So thank you for giving me the opportunity. Thank

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Michelle Glogovac 30:08

you. Okay friends, I am going to report back to you on the list of alcohol free wines that Joel sends me because I am definitely curious on what she has to recommend. Like I said before, in the interview, I have tried some of the alcohol free wines and they taste like grape juice or cough syrup, it's just not good. So I'm really excited to do that. I will continue to have a journey this month and maybe into February of trying to be more dry. You know, damp January doesn't sound too bad and I have had a couple of glasses this month. But we're in the middle of the month so that's not too bad. I would say for me. I look forward to hearing what you guys have to say about dry January and if you want to try it and are sober curious, let me know sneaking the DMS send me an email and let's go on this journey together. Let's get healthier and get in that mindset that we can achieve anything that we try. Until next week, my friends. Stay curious. Enjoy your glass of wine if you want to. And don't be afraid to eat the chocolate