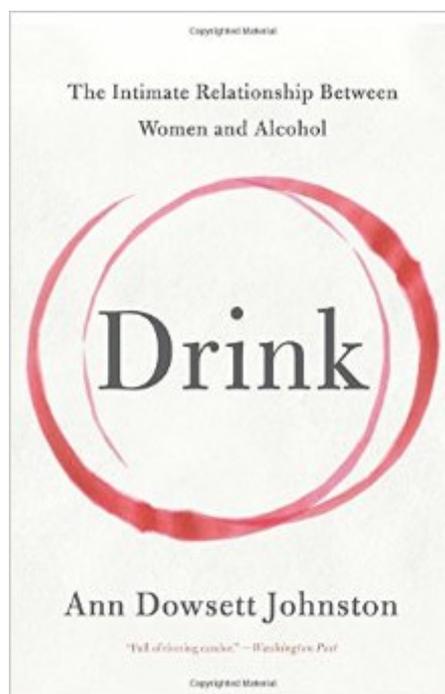


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# Drink: The Intimate Relationship Between Women And Alcohol



## Synopsis

In *Drink: The Intimate Relationship Between Women and Alcohol*, award-winning journalist Anne Dowsett Johnston combines in-depth research with her own personal story of recovery, and delivers a groundbreaking examination of a shocking yet little recognized epidemic threatening society today: the precipitous rise in risky drinking among women and girls. With the feminist revolution, women have closed the gender gap in their professional and educational lives. They have also achieved equality with men in more troubling areas as well. In the U.S. alone, the rates of alcohol abuse among women have skyrocketed in the past decade. DUIs, binge drinking (choosing to limit eating to consume greater quantities of alcohol), and health problems connected to drinking are all rising—a problem exacerbated by the alcohol industry itself. Battling for women's dollars and leisure time, corporations have developed marketing strategies and products targeted exclusively to women. Equally alarming is a recent CDC report showing a sharp rise in binge drinking, putting women and girls at further risk. As she brilliantly weaves in-depth research, interviews with leading researchers, and the moving story of her own struggle with alcohol abuse, Johnston illuminates this startling epidemic, dissecting the psychological, social, and industry factors that have contributed to its rise, and exploring its long-lasting impact on our society and individual lives.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Drink" is a very thorough memoir of not only Johnston's relationship with alcohol, but more specifically the relationship women in our culture have with alcohol. What I liked about "Drink": 1. Ann

Dowsett Johnston's excellent command of the English language<sup>2</sup>. Johnston's voice and tone in "Drink"<sup>3</sup>. The fact that the book was not a complete recounting of every sordid moment<sup>4</sup>. "Drink" wasn't just about Johnston. At heart, mankind has the tendency to be fairly pre-occupied with self-interests and so a memoir can often blow up grievances with others and have gratuitous undertones when recounting the ugly experiences in our lives, especially one that deals with addictions. Ms. Johnston not only fought this tendency, but lifted her memoir to a higher level. She researched the trajectory of drinking over the past 60 years. Studies and surveys don't always tell the entire story, but they certainly do reveal a lot more than anecdotal evidence. Especially when the people behind the studies and surveys are trying to understand not just prove a certain perspective. The sources Johnston went to were clearly trying to be honest and scientific in their research approach. As a result, I learned more than I expected.

What I learned:

1. People who tend toward alcoholism have fewer D2 receptors (a type of dopamine receptor) and need to drink more to get the pleasure alcohol brings<sup>2</sup>.
2. The advice about drinking a glass of red wine every day is not necessarily healthy advice for women because there are so many links between alcohol and many cancers, but especially breast and colorectal<sup>3</sup>.
3. Because women have more body fat and fat contains little water, alcohol won't get as diluted as it does in a man's body<sup>4</sup>.

This book is a real page-turner. I found the issues unique to women who drink most fascinating. Women, for example, don't metabolize alcohol as quickly as men do - it's an enzyme issue - yet are often pressured to "keep up with the boys." Women don't burn as many calories as men do (having less muscle mass) and as a result are more prone to "drunkorexia"--limiting food intake so as to not gain weight with alcohol (which, by the way, is higher in calories per gram than carbohydrates and proteins). Women are targeted in certain ways by advertising ("mommy marketing," "girls' night out," etc), and alcohol companies gear lots of their products toward women with low-calorie or flavored options. A comparison is frequently made between the tobacco industry and the alcohol one. The author bravely intertwines her own dance with alcohol in nearly every chapter, letting us peer into her most intimate history growing up with an alcoholic mother and finally realizing she has the same disease. She discusses how her drinking interfered with her relationship with her husband and son, as well as her own recovery. But if you are not interested in her story, it's easy to bypass it, since it's written in a different font.

Chapters are devoted to the consequences of drinking while pregnant--even "moderate drinking" such as one glass a day, and the intertwinement of romance and drinking, which is a big issue for sure: think of how women love to be "dined and wined."

Another chapter exposes campus drinking--and if you went to college as a baby boomer, you're

bound to be shocked by this chapter! Other chapters focus on drinking to forget trauma and drinking to get rid of depression (which of course has the opposite effect, since alcohol is itself a depressant) or other mood disorders.

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