

Season 3 Episode 1 Katie Lain of Thrive Alcohol Recovery

Voice over – Season three of the Options Save Lives podcast is brought to you with the support of our presenting sponsor, R Street Institute, and is hosted by Executive Director, Jenny Williamson.

Jenny Williamson – Today we have Katie Lain with us from Thrive Alcohol Recovery and our very own Your Sinclair Method coaching program. Welcome back to the show Katie. Please introduce yourself to our audience and share a bit about your background helping people access and successfully navigate the Sinclair Method.

Katie Lain – Yes, thank you so much. When you reached out to ask for me to come back as a guest I was like, yes, it would be an honor. So thank you, Jenny, so much for having me back again and for everything you guys are doing at C Three. So my name is Katie Lain. I am a success story of the Sinclair Method thanks to Claudia's now famous TED talk with nearly 4 million views I think last time I looked. I struggled with alcohol for almost 10 years and tried to quit drinking literally dozens of times over the course of that decade. And I would make it a couple days, couple of weeks, couple of months and eventually I'd relapse and return to drinking again. And now I know, you know, through David Sinclair's research that it was because of the alcohol deprivation effect. And so that vicious cycle is what finally led me to stumble upon Claudia's now famous TED talk about her experience overcoming alcoholism with the Sinclair Method. And I remember watching it multiple times and just thinking, this seems too good to be true, but also maybe it's the answer I've been praying for kind of thing. And at that time, I wasn't aware of the C Three Foundation and there weren't that many doctors like there are now that can provide the medication naltrexone. I remember spending a couple of months like calling my GP and different physicians in the area and nobody would give me naltrexone, or they wanted me to go to rehab and then they would give it to me at the rehab and I was like, No, there's got to be a different way. So finally got the medication through one of your sources when I learned about C Three. And yeah, within the first week, I knew it was going to work for me. You know, it was a long road after that, but I could see some obvious changes that would not have been the case without the medication. Just the way I was thinking about alcohol less and not able to drink as much. Just some other signs I saw early on, and it was up and down. It took me nine months to reach extinction. But over the time, I just saw my relationship with alcohol drastically changed, and that drastically changed all other areas of my life as well. And since then I've been a coach since 2018 coaching people one on one and then in group settings as well through the Sinclair Method, and then last year launched Thrive Alcohol Recovery, which is really a comprehensive program that includes coaching and video courses, resources, peer support, and it's really one place where everyone can come and get everything that they need on the Sinclair Method. And so that's been an amazing journey to build out that program and really make it the program that I wish I would have had when I was starting on the Sinclair Method, you know, so it's been really meaningful to be able to do that and see how it is helping

our members and the feedback we're getting has been great. I know you're in there as well and so I know you're sharing C Three resources and stuff. So yeah, just on fire to advocate for the Sinclair Method, you know. A lot of that is inspired by Claudia and you and your advocacy work, because it's insane that this Method isn't front line treatment right next to AA when people are struggling and looking for an answer.

Jenny Williamson – And a lot of your enthusiasm for helping people on the Sinclair Method does come from your own experience with the treatment. Can you talk a bit more about your personal journey and how that developed over time into your desire to help others?

Katie Lain – Yeah, that's a really good question. Um, you know, I think it started with my first YouTube video, because I remember I made it after I'd been on the Method for a month and I knew the Method was working by the end of the first week. And that's when I started thinking I need to tell people about this, because there's Claudia's video, and then I remember searching for other real life testimonies and I couldn't really find anything. I know Gary Bell had a blog at the time and I would just like read every word he had on his blog about this Method, but there weren't really personal testimonies outside of Claudia's. And so I kept getting this thought like, you need to make a video, you need to make a video, and finally got enough courage to put up the video. Was planning to just do the one and only video and what happened was people started reaching out to me like, Oh my gosh, you described, you know, my experience is so much like yours. You described what I'm going through, the struggles with alcohol, and I honestly thought I was gonna get a lot of negative feedback but it was mostly positive. Of course there's the negative Nellies out there, but it was so uplifting because I think for so long, I felt so alone in my addiction to alcohol or my dependence or my disordered drinking and I knew there were others struggling, but like, I never really talked to anyone about it. And so, in some weird way, I became really deeply connected with people from all over the world who could relate to what I was going through. And so that just led me to create more videos and people started organically reaching out to me for support and questions and it made me feel so just fulfilled to be able to help people and give back to people. And it also inspired me to really succeed on the Sinclair Method, like I was so determined, and I felt like I wanted to do it for others to prove that it could work and it could happen and so, like connecting with others really helped me to be motivated on my own journey to freedom from drinking through this Method. And so I think just organically, it kind of took on a life of its own over time I guess you could say, with people just reaching out to me, even sharing testimonies, you know. I started sharing those years ago and it was because someone was just like, Hey, I want to share my story, can I put it on your YouTube? And it just, everything has kind of like, snowballed and taken on a life of its own. And so I really think just others out there who are struggling who can relate and I can relate with, that's inspired me to be an advocate. And also thinking about, you know, Claudia and what she did, that's been on my mind a lot. Just if she hadn't have done that TEDx talk and the books and everything she's done like I wouldn't know about it. She could have easily kept

it to herself, of course, you know, like, why put your face out there, but thinking of her courage to do that really inspired me to do it as well.

Jenny Williamson – And for anyone who may not have seen any of your videos yet, talk a little bit about your personal journey on the Sinclair Method. You say it took about nine months for you to reach that freedom from your cravings.

Katie Lain – Yeah, and so, you know, it was up and down for a while. My drinking, I would drink every night home alone and then I'd drink socially on the weekends, usually out with friends and I would try to limit myself to a bottle of wine every night. I knew that was like if I drink that I could go to work. I wouldn't feel great, but I could function the next day, but about half the time I kept it to that and half the time I would drink more. And then on the weekends it was just like day drinking both days and drinking as much as I wanted. And so that was where I was starting on the Sinclair Method. And I remember I had, when I started I had so many extinction sessions at home because that was primarily where I was drinking, and so I noticed some pretty significant changes in my drinking while I was at home. But what I noticed was when I would go out, I could still over drink really easily. And I'd almost be like, is the naltrexone working? like what's going on here? And I know that's a common challenge for people. I think it was a combination of what we're now calling the honeymoon period of me seeing these like pretty big changes in the beginning and then it was kind of spiking back up again, especially if I was drinking in different environments and situations, and then also just being in a different environment. Like you know, when I was drinking home alone, I could be really mindful. And I remember I think it was Claudia, because I emailed her when I first learned about it, and she planted the seed of mindfulness and what that was for me, and so I remember like literally just sipping the wine, drinking it, like really how does it feel? How does it taste? Really trying to like commit to this treatment protocol. So when I was at home in this controlled environment, I could do better than if I was out drinking and kind of losing track of what I was drinking. So it was up and down for a while, but like I said, in the first week I saw some immediate changes and what was happening for me over time is, you know, I was easily drinking seven days a week and then after, you know, a couple of weeks on the Method, I was drinking six days a week and then maybe after a couple of months, five days a week and then four days a week. It was like I was shaving off a day a week like every couple of weeks. Or I was shaving off, you know, I was drinking a whole bottle of wine then I was drinking three quarters of a bottle of wine.

And so the changes I saw, which as a coach I see this be consistent with others as well, is they were really subtle, but they were continuous. But they were gradual enough to where I could easily dismiss them. And I hear people say like, oh, it's probably a placebo or that's no big deal. But I encourage people to really pay attention to those things, because I think that's how TSM works most of the time. It's like these tiny subtle changes that maybe you're drinking a little bit more slowly or you're drinking a little bit less quantity. Those are the changes that I saw in my own journey and I see it with others as

well. And so by the nine-month mark, I reached extinction and I knew I was there after about a month of me really like noticing am I craving alcohol anymore? And I wasn't. I was still drinking at the time and I was having like one or two glasses of wine a month just for the sake of like, Hey, I'm going to an Italian restaurant, I'll have a red wine with my dinner. It wasn't from a place of craving. I just gotten to a place where I didn't even like think about alcohol anymore. And when I did drink it was like one maybe two drinks, and so that's how I realized I was at extinction. And then about a year in was when I accidentally quit drinking alcohol.

Jenny Williamson – I love that you use the word accidentally because we've seen so many people especially in the last, I would say two years, who came into the Sinclair Method saying I am never going to stop completely. It's not my goal. I don't want it. The entire reason I'm doing the Sinclair Method is because I want to drink like a "normal person". And then a few years on the Method, and they become what I have dubbed, accidentally abstinent. Would you agree that in a more controlled environment you tend to set yourself up for success easier?

Katie Lain – You know, it's interesting. I think, I think yes and no, because I know I've had clients who, like they drink at home and it's way worse than if they're drinking socially. Like I've met people who are like, I would never get drunk out in public. I limit myself to two drinks, but when I'm at home it's when the problem happens. But you know, if someone's approaching this like a treatment and like for me, which I really was doing in that home environment. If someone's in that controlled environment and they're in that right mindset of like I'm drinking in order to drink less, essentially I'm drinking to get my control back, then Yes, I do think that controlled environment can help them to see greater progress. And like a lot of that comes to from just planning ahead of time. Like over and over again I've heard from people who, when they go into their drinking session and have some type of intention, and you might miss the mark, you know, whatever, but the goal here is to go into it with like, Okay, I'm going to try to limit myself to no more than three drinks tonight. I'm gonna have water between. I'm going to make sure to eat beforehand. Like those are all, you know, ideal best practices to really do on the Method, and when someone goes into it with that mindset and planning, it can also help them to have, you know, discern it and feel like their off switch is becoming more prominent, which is really what the Sinclair Method does. It helps us to develop that off switch around alcohol. So I do think that those controlled environments you know, especially again, if someone is viewing this like a treatment, treating it like a treatment, not just oh, I'm just gonna pop my pill and drink and veg out on Netflix and not to say you can't ever do that, like there were certainly times where I just wanted to unwind with my drinks, but like, recognizing that, you know, if we really want to change our relationship with alcohol, we've got to have some mindfulness with it there. But yeah, I think and you know, one thing I will say about like the social drinking for me as well that came to mind is, I didn't realize how much I was drinking out of like social anxiety because it was like my way to kind of calm myself down in social situations. And I think that anxiety a lot of it did come from alcohol anyway, so

it was that cycle. But I think that was another piece where I felt awkward socially, and so a lot of times I would like have a few drinks before I went out and things like that. So it took me a while to be able to be in social settings and not feel like I needed to have alcohol in my system and that was like also a learning curve for me.

Jenny Williamson – And, you know, to continue on this though, whether a person is having one situation where they, whether that situation that they're successful in is at home or whether that situation that they're more successful in is out. How do you help people look at how they're setting themselves up for success in their more successful situation so that they can use those tools in their other drinking situations?

Katie Lain – Yeah, that's a really good question. I think a lot of it has to do with honestly, starting with the internal work that we're doing, like in our program we have a video course on defining your Why, for why you're doing the Sinclair Method, and that really helps someone you know, list out and think about all of the reasons why they want to change their drinking habits, you know, the good ones like I want to be more successful in my career or the bad ones like I'm hurting my liver, you know, there's often a lot of different reasons why. And so I find that if we can understand why we're doing this in the first place, and constantly have that on the forefront of our mind and something we're revisiting on a daily basis with a list somewhere or something, it can just help us stay grounded in the long term goal of why we want to do this. Because the thing is when we have alcohol use disorder, in the moment the craving or the urge to just numb out can be so strong that it can overpower, you know, any kind of like discipline or willpower we might have in the moment, even on the Sinclair Method. You know, I've had people say I consciously decided to skip naltrexone because I wanted the buzz kind of thing, you know, that's just one example, but I think if we're constantly feeding our conscious awareness, like why we want to do this, it can help us stay motivated in those moments when we're feeling tempted. We also have a course on, it's like a mindfulness course but I like to call it like being curious around your drinking, and it just has a ton of different question prompts around like, Why am I craving a drink? Like how strong is my craving? Is there anything else I could do right now instead of drinking? Am I mindfully drinking? Am I chasing that buzz? Just like tons of different questions. And again, I think it starts with like the thought process we have going on in our own mind and our own psyche, because it's our thoughts that then drive our beliefs that then drive our actions. And so if we're going at it with the right mindset and clarity around what we're doing, it can help shift our beliefs and drive our actions.

What I find sometimes with people is, we do talk a lot about habit change, and of course, that's something we have to change on the Sinclair Method is our drinking habits that are playing out. But sometimes people are so focused on just what they're doing that the habit change feels like this really difficult kind of white knuckled experience, because they're not changing first their thoughts and beliefs around, you know, why they're doing this in the first place. So

recently made a video for our members around like thought habits and really just starting to pay closer attention to like, what thoughts are playing out, you know, in those times where you drink, you know, within your limits, or what thoughts are playing out in the times where you binge drink and drink beyond your limits. Like what are you feeling? what's going on in your environment? and really getting back clarity and answers and insights around this can help us then you know, make those changes that can help promote our success versus just being stuck in that loop of doing the same thing over and over again,

Jenny Williamson – Are you finding that there's less resistance to centering it around being curious, as opposed to being mindful?

Katie Lain – Someone just recently mentioned this. I don't know if you're following the articles that Teddy Kennedy is writing. It's this anonymous person online that's an amazing writer and they're doing a Substack about their Sinclair Method experience. I'll send it to you if you want to see it because they had mentioned in their recent article because I did an interview with them, and I helped them reframe mindfulness to curiosity instead, because they were like mindfulness – No, I don't want to do that. But for me, it was helpful in my own journey, and yes, I do find with others it's a gentler way to go about it and it makes it fun, because for so long we've kind of beat ourselves up mentally for our drinking, like, why do I keep doing that? What's wrong with me? and but if we can go about it with a curious mindset, I know for me when I would over drink on the Sinclair Method I'd be like, why did that happen? Like what was the trigger that set it off? Like why didn't I notice my off switch last night and I can often think back and there would be several reasons of like why it happened. You know, I didn't eat or I didn't wait the full hour or, again, I was in a social setting and my anxiety was coming to the surface and so I was trying to just like, quell it with the wine. So if we can like spend that time in reflection and yeah, be curious as opposed to, like trying to like be rigid with like mindfulness, it can help to make it more fun, I think, which, you know, then hopefully, we'll want to do it more. It was something that helped me in my journey and so that's what I see like advise with others as well and I think it's been more a different way to look at it.

Jenny Williamson – I agree. It seems to be just a different way of framing it, because when you're describing being curious, you're describing the same things that somebody who is mindfully drinking is doing. They're asking themselves questions. I just I feel like by putting the word curious to it, it almost sounds like it's something more genuinely coming from within as opposed to something imposed from an external source that says, you should be doing this, even though it is the exact same thing.

Katie Lain – No, I agree. And there's something about mindfulness, it just makes it feel more like work, I guess, or more rigid, but with curiosity, there's like more fluidity. And you know, it lightens things I think, because like I said, we can be so hard on ourselves even on the Sinclair Method like, dang it like, what happened last night? Why did I drink so much? but that's like our

automatic go to, but if we can turn it around and make it more of like – I sometimes tell people like, be the own investigator in your Sinclair Method journey, like with your little magnifying glass like, okay what caused this to happen? or why did I do that? Or why do I keep doing this? And yeah, those insights for me, it was those insights that would come about just by asking myself these questions, I would get little nuggets of insight like from myself. I don't know where they come from, but it happens for all of us, you know, if we just asked ourselves the questions, and that's really what helped shift my habits and behaviors and really change my relationship with alcohol through TSM. And I think that might be something that's missing with people who are really struggling or feel like they've hit a plateau or they're not getting where they want to go, is that that internal work. They're not taking time to really do that and ask themselves the right questions perhaps, like that could be one thing.

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Jenny Williamson – And in the past few years you have been all over the Sinclair Method digital landscape, including Embody Daily and now the Thrive community that you built with Karen Dion. But can you talk about how your evolution progressed from that first video that you started just for your, somewhat for your own documentation? How did you go from that video to sitting here today running a TSM centered community?

Katie Lain – You ask really good questions, Jenny, honestly I haven't thought about that. I think just, so to be honest like, before I started the Sinclair Method, drinking was my purpose. That's where I got meaning from my life was drinking every day, to be honest, like I didn't have anything else that's meaningful in my life. Like my husband, he's an artist and he surfs, and he has all of these different things that like light him up and are his passion. I remember looking at him just thinking like, I don't have anything like that, like I go to work and I don't really love my job and I drink, like that was my thing. And so when I started making the videos, as I said, some of the people would reach out and give me feedback and the community there was growing and that was just so deeply meaningful to me that I honestly attribute that to my success on the Sinclair Method, just having something so meaningful that I could plug into that became my hobby. And sometimes people would ask me, What's your plan with your channel? Like, what are you going to do with it? And I'm like, I don't know, I'm just making videos as I feel inspired to make them. And then, you know, that kind of gradually evolved to coaching where people would just organically reach out and I'd email with them or chat with them about their situation and then I was seeing that happen more and more. And so I'm like okay, well, maybe I'll offer coaching through Embody Daily. Didn't really promote it, just kind of let people find me and book if they wanted to. And then what I found with the coaching, I love one on one coaching, but what I found is that oftentimes I'd be like, Okay, watch this video or get this resource here or go here. And I was like, dang, I just want like a place where I

could have everything that they need in one place, because it would feel like I'd spend like 10 minutes after the call, just like organizing all the resources I'm trying to share with them on, you know, these different things that I could potentially help them. And so Karen and I started talking about creating a Sinclair Method course like a year before we started our program. It was just like, yeah, that would be cool. Like, let's, you know, maybe do that, like we really felt the need for it because people would, you know, tell me how much they got out of the videos I would make that could help them with the Sinclair Method. And so that conversation led into what's now the community and the whole program which includes all these, we have like 40 video courses to guide people through the Method and lots of other resources and things. But to be honest, it was this organic evolution of me just the cliché of like, doing what I love and not really knowing where it was going. I wasn't expecting this at all. When I started on the Method obviously I didn't ever see it going this way. I never thought I'd work in this field. But yeah, I just, I really feel that for people who've been drinking, you know, for a lot of us we don't really have other meaningful things in our life and I don't know that if I, if I wouldn't have had my YouTube channel and something really meaningful to plug into and a passion and a hobby and something that, you know, I began to really love more than I loved to drink, like I really do attribute that to my success on the Sinclair Method. And if people don't have that, you know, what reason is there to not drink every night or to not, you know, change your habits. And I've seen that with some people who, you know, they're in a job that they hate or they're unhappy in their marriage, or, you know, they're bored in their retirement and it's like, they don't really have anything outside of that that's giving them meaning and excitement in life. And so I really do think that's also part of finding success on the Method is really having other things to look forward to in life. Yeah

Jenny Williamson – And then let's talk a little bit more about the Thrive community itself. Describe the kind of support people are generally looking for when they first come to Thrive.

Katie Lain – Yeah, um, I think for a lot of people it's just that additional kind of structured support on the Sinclair Method where there's like steps and specific guidance for the different, whatever phase they're at. And what I really liked about the program is that it's really tailored to the individual. So it's not like someone has to come in and like do this, do this, do this. It's like everything's accessible for like, they get lifetime access so everything's there for as long as they need it and now they can do everything on their own schedule. So we have people joining who've been on the Method for a while and they're not where they want to be, and so they join us, you know, looking for resources on like, goal setting and habit change, and really something to kind of engage in the treatment protocol more, and more specific steps to take. And then we've got others who are brand new to the Method and they've never heard of it before so they're starting in like, the very beginning of like, what is the Sinclair Method? Like what is naltrexone? So we get people at different stages of the Sinclair Method journey. And again, like, what I love

about the resources is that it's like done on someone's own schedule and whatever phase that they're at.

Something else that people have gotten a lot of benefit out of is just like the peer support that's in there. And what I find is because it's an actual program that people are joining, they're more engaged to like help one another. And we've created it to where, you know, it's a program that people pay for and so and it's lifetime access for everyone who joins, and so what's happened is with the community piece of it, is that I find that people are really comfortable to be super vulnerable and open with the good and the bad and the ugly on the Sinclair Method, because they're acquainted with their peers in there and everyone's there for a purpose of overcoming this. It's not like people are just dropping in and out or, you know, trolls or anything like that. So it's really creating this safe place for people to share and know that they're not going to be judged. You know, if someone's not complying, it's like they can be open about that and we can support them and give them the resources that might help them with that, or if someone's doing really well, people are going to be cheering them on. So it's really turning into this, you know, the community is taking on a life of its own. And then just having the ability to allow people to get the information that they need for the Sinclair Method, like all in one place. Like I mentioned with the coaching calls before we launched it, it was just like everything was so scattered. And so now it's like, Oh, hey, check out this course and they can quickly link it or this resource or this exercise or things like that. So yeah, and it's really a, you know, up to people to, you know, use it however they want. Some people are really involved and they're in there every day and they're posting and sharing, and others are just there for like the group calls and the video courses. And so it's like everything's there at your disposal whenever you want to use it.

Jenny Williamson – And, thankfully, there are now many TSM related communities that are available online. What's unique about the Thrive community that people can't get elsewhere? Why should they add this to the other groups that they might be involved in?

Katie Lain – Yeah, um, I mean a few different things. When someone joins, they have access to coaches for messaging support. So if questions come up, they always can private message a coach just, you know, for small or big questions and so they have unlimited access to coaches to ask those questions that come up throughout the Sinclair Method journey. They also have access to coaches through our live group support meetings that happen throughout the week as well. And so really what I've heard from our members is just having that ability to be able to like ask a coach a question like, Is this normal? Or what's happening here? Why can't like why isn't this working out? or something, just to have that support knowing that they're getting an answer from someone who's really knowledgeable and truly, you know, an expert quote, unquote, in the TSM space. Also you know, the video courses really been helpful, especially for people who are either brand new to the Sinclair Method, and they have a million questions about what it is. We've designed the

course to really address all of those questions so that they can get the information they need as they're getting started.

And then also, you know, for folks who are more advanced on the Sinclair Method and focused on things like habit change or mindfulness, we've created a lot of different exercises that are super practical for people to do so that they can put, you know, kind of like the mindset and the mindfulness and the curiosity and things we're talking about, they can put it into practice in their day to day Sinclair Method journey. So those are a couple of things that make it unique. Another thing we have is the optional TSM accelerator program, which helps people to, we check in with our members every week for goal setting, so this is an optional group, people don't have to be a part of it. But what we found with some of our members is that having that accountability to just check in and like hey, these are the goals I'm focusing on this week, and everyone's kind of cheering each other on and, you know, sharing Oh, I missed my goals last week, but this is what I'm doing this week, that just creates focus, because if we don't have goals to kind of aim at, even if it's just, you know, I'm gonna be compliant all week, or I'm gonna take my naltrexone, you know, and wait the full hour, or I'm gonna have two alcohol free days, whatever the goals are, just to have that accountability and something to focus on I find helps people to make more progress on the Method as well.

Jenny Williamson – What do you hope Thrive will be in say five years?

Katie Lain – Um, you know, I hope it'll be seen as like the gold standard program for the Sinclair Method. I think building this program and making it be just an awesome, useful resource for people, it's been our number one priority above all else. So we're always like refining and tweaking things, but really making it a place where, you know, anybody whether they're brand new to the Sinclair Method and they're just getting started, or if they've been on it for a while, that it's going to be this, you know, gold standard for Sinclair Method treatment. But I've heard from others out there who have, you know, gotten the prescription from their psychiatrist or their doctor or they've gone to other programs is that not very many people specialize in the Sinclair Method. And I think one of the, I'm so grateful for my personal experience with it, because that's just a totally different perspective than someone who's just trying to understand it from, you know, a medical perspective of Oh yeah, just take the pill and you know. I had someone reach out to me recently, a little side tangent, but he was on the medication for a year with a psychiatrist. The psychiatrist didn't know about the Sinclair Method, and because it wasn't, he was seeing a reduction in his drinking, but he wasn't where he wanted to be, and so they just took him off the medicine and I was like, no, like, why would you do that? They just assume oh, it's not working, rather than, you know, stick with it for the long haul. So I really want TSM to be a really well known treatment. I know you guys do too, and that, you know, our program would be there to really guide people through this specific protocol.

Jenny Williamson – And this brings up a really important topic because often people are still under the mistaken idea that simply getting naltrexone by any

means is just as effective as working with a Sinclair Method knowledgeable and supportive provider. Can you talk about, because you've seen in coaching where people have done both, plus your own experience of working with a TSM provider? Can you talk a little bit more about how much more difficult the journey can be for people who do not have a supportive, knowledgeable provider that is writing their prescriptions and guiding them through the Sinclair Method?

Katie Lain – Yeah, I mean, I think the number one thing that comes to mind is just like that confusion and lack of confidence or clarity in the protocol. Like if you have a doctor that's not prescribing it correctly, or isn't super knowledgeable about it. All the time I hear from people who are like, Oh, I got confusing instructions, or they told me to take it every day and then I'm drinking at night and so is it working then, and it's just what what's happening. And what's really devastating is that people get on the treatment protocol, they don't have the proper instructions or guidance or expectations around what to expect, and they'll do it incorrectly. They'll assume, Oh, this doesn't work, or oh, I had side effects so I'll probably always have side effects, and so I'll just stop doing the Method. And I'm sure you guys have heard from people too. It's like they learned about the Method five years ago, but because they weren't doing it correctly, or they didn't give it enough time to work, they stopped doing it and they've still been struggling with alcohol, you know, all over the last five years or however long. And so that really breaks my heart honestly, because the thing with naltrexone is the more you use it, the longer you use it and especially if you have specific guidance and you're engaged in the protocol, you're changing your habits, you're developing new coping tools, you're practicing mindfulness, the longer you're using the medication, the better it's going to work. And so like the example I just gave where the guy was on it for a year, he was having more alcohol free days, he was seeing a reduction in his drinking but like oh you weren't where you want to be, so let's scratch it. It's like no. If you were to have given it another six months, you probably would have been exactly where you wanted to be.

And so that just lack of clarity and misunderstanding about how to do the treatment, what to expect, you know, it's a long term treatment protocol so for many people, there's going to be ups and downs, there might be issues of compliance, there might be times where their drinking spikes back up and they don't know why and kind of going at that treatment, not being confident in it, it just breeds a lot of stress and confusion and a lack of clarity which can stall progress. We had someone recently join our program. He was literally on the medication for nine months, only taking the pill, not doing anything else, saw a tiny change in his drinking, but not much else. And he was like, Oh, this must not work. And then he learned about our program and like what success like is required or what's required to be successful in the Sinclair Method, and now he's starting to see some changes. Again, he was on it for nine months and he says himself, he was like, I was just taking the pill. I wasn't doing anything else to change my habits.

And so yeah, I think I honestly started the medicine the first couple of months you know, this pill will just help me drink less and then that's when I started to realize like, oh, here I am drinking even though I don't really have desire to drink, or I noticed that my brain is still thinking about wine at five o'clock, but do I really want wine. And, you know, just all these things that come along with, you know, changing our relationship with alcohol because oftentimes it impacts all different areas of our lives. It's not just about how much we're drinking. It's about how we're coping, how we're spending our time, and our beliefs around alcohol and things like that. So yeah, it just it can stall progress. It can create confusion. Over and over again, people, they got bad instructions or you know, weren't following it to the tee and they quit or throw in the towel, saying It's not working. So yeah, there's risk associated with it and it can just prolong the issue of alcohol use disorder.

Jenny Williamson – Listening to your answer there it also brings up the important distinction that many people have a very difficult time understanding, and that is the difference between when the extinction sessions are freeing you from your craving, and when you have reached your reduction or alcohol elimination goals, because I think a lot of people, because they're waiting to reach those ultimate goals, they're afraid to acknowledge that they've completed the extinction process itself, and now it's up to them to reach their goals. And so can you comment about the thoughts behind people who, you know, they're three, four months in just like Dr. Sinclair's research, and they're not experiencing the cravings anymore, and they know they're not actually craving alcohol anymore, but they're still over drinking. They're still not being mindful. They're still completing and continuing habits. And so they're, they feel like they're at a plateau and not reaching their goals. And so even though the medication has done what it's supposed to do, in eliminating the cravings, they still think it's not working because of the lack of habit change.

Katie Lain – Yeah, and you know, that kind of goes back to like the internal work of defining the why behind all the reasons why you want to do this so that you can have clarity around, you know, what's alcohol costing you and you know, what does the future look like, when this isn't an issue anymore? And I think a big part of what kept me moving forward and motivated to, you know, be disciplined in the moment of like, yeah, it's Saturday afternoon and I could drink today, that would be like the easy choice, but I don't want to be day drinking on Saturday anymore. And that was a habit that took a while for me to break, because Saturdays for years was me day drinking all day long. And so I remember my first time doing that it was like, I went home and watched movies and allowed myself to have a bunch of candy instead. And yeah, it's not ideal, but part of the reason I was able to in that moment, make the right choice that was helping me change that habit is because I had a future version of myself, like, in my mind that was constantly revisiting like that's who I want to be. I wanted to be someone, I think I've shared this with you before, a really simple picture I had in my mind was just me sitting at a coffee shop outside at nine o'clock on a Saturday morning. I wanted that and that meant I wasn't hungover. I probably didn't drink the night before. If I did I

drank one or two, and I was able to be up and out on a Saturday morning by 9am. Like that was just something I wanted for myself because so often Saturdays were hungover in bed and then I'd start drinking at 11 or 12. And so having that clear vision of like, Okay, what does life look like when I have my ideal relationship with alcohol and that's something else we cover in our course as well. And, you know, really painting that clear picture and visualizing it and, you know, I even made, I still make vision boards, but just like having that clear picture of who you're going to be, what you're going to do, how you're going to feel, what will people say about you, just this picture of yourself when alcohol is not an issue anymore. I think that's a really important thing that can help pull us toward our future, because what happens for people in the situation you describe is oftentimes they've reduced their drinking to a point where it's not as bad as it was, you know, maybe they're not blacking out or having as many hangovers, but they're still drinking a lot more than they want to, so they get to this like, comfortable place. It's like yeah, it's improved. It's not as bad so I'll just stick here for a while. And maybe that's necessary in some cases, but if people really want to move forward, it's like okay, well, what is your life look like when alcohol use disorder is no longer the thorn in your side anymore and you have your control back over it. And so I think having that clear picture of your future, and for me, it was, I had a lot of different things, but that coffee shop example was one. How I wanted to feel was a big one, like I wanted to have energy, I was so tired of being hungover. You know, alcohol really did a number on my self-confidence and my mental clarity, and so I wanted to feel more confident in my abilities and myself. And so getting excited about our future when we have our ideal relationship with alcohol can help pull us forward when we've hit that plateau. And again, if someone's not internally motivated to make this change, like, you know, I've worked with people that they're pretty comfortable being where they are, and in my opinion, like just staying there for a while and getting to a place where you feel uncomfortable and feel like Okay, I'm ready to make the next change, like we can't do it for them. And people have to have that internal motivation themselves to really commit to making that change and sometimes that takes time. Sometimes it takes you know, again, like defining your why, of like what's alcohol really costing me like, Why do I want to make this change? Doing that internal work I think is really valuable along this process when our behavior isn't matching, you know, the picture we really have inside of ourselves.

Jenny Williamson – Talk a little bit about the benefit of taking that time for yourself and the grace that you have to show yourself in that plateau as you continue to pause in the part of your journey before you make the next next adjustment.

Katie Lain – Yeah, I mean, I think there's definitely something, there's a lot to be gained in that place to be honest, because, you know, even if you're comfortable there right now, you know, in a couple of weeks or a couple of months, maybe you won't be, you'll be ready to move forward. But if we're trying to like force ourselves to go faster than you know, we're really ready to go, I think that's what, you know, why so many of us try to go sober and then

we relapse. It like backfires on us because we're trying to make too much change too quickly, and it's not sustainable. And so in that time, if someone's at a plateau, there's a lot of work that can be done there. Like again, the reflective, the internal work, you know, if you're still drinking every day, it's like, okay, well, what does life look like when I'm not doing that and kind of mentally preparing yourself for that change, versus like, you know, comparing your success to someone else's and why did they get there in six months when I've been doing this for nine and I'm not there yet. That's really damaging oftentimes. We're human and we can't help but compare our journeys to other people's, but yeah I think there's a lot to be gained there. And you know, this Method yes, we're focusing on drinking less, but it's not all about drinking less. It's about changing, like you said, like our identity with regards to alcohol and how we think about alcohol, how we think about ourselves. And so sometimes we need to hit that plateau to do some of that internal work and reflective work to really, you know, help shift our thought habits and beliefs that we have about ourselves. You know, a lot of us that struggle with alcohol, our knee jerk reaction is to beat ourselves up for anything and talk negatively to ourselves and you know, just not treat ourselves with respect. And for me, I remember clearly on the Sinclair Method, several months into it I was realizing that I was still kind of self-sabotaging with my drinking sometimes, and I didn't want to do that anymore. And I was like, why is this happening? And again, time spent reflecting taught me that I didn't treat myself like somebody I respected because I didn't respect myself. And so I had to learn self-respect through this process, because when we're drinking a lot, like alcohol just robs that from us. It just can make us feel like this big. And so I realized like I keep self-destructing because I don't have enough respect for myself to treat myself kindly and do good things to toward myself. And so one thing that helped me is I would think of myself as my mom or my sister because I love and respect them. I never want to hurt either one of them. So it's like, well, how would I treat them in this situation? How would I talk to them in this situation? And, you know, that was during a time where I was still drinking probably like four days a week on the Sinclair Method, drinking more than I wanted to, but it allowed me to, like take a step back and like fix that issue of me learning to respect myself. And of course, it was a process but that insight of like, I don't respect myself, so therefore treat myself like someone I don't respect. And so that happened in a place where I was still drinking a lot, you know, not super focused on my drink reduction, but more about changing that thought pattern and belief system that was operating in me for so long.

Jenny Williamson – Wow, and that's difficult work. That's, you know, that's not stuff that comes easy.

Katie Lain – No. It's changing years or even decades for some people, you know, this programming in this way we've been seeing ourselves in the world and alcohol is such a quick effective numbing tool. And so I often find too, if we're still turning to it for that, it's so easy to turn to it and over drink and I went through a very deeply emotional mourning process of realizing oh, man, if I really want to change my drinking, I can't turn to alcohol as that coping tool anymore. Like that can't be my main coping tool and that took a while to

break that but a lot of people I think, still rely on it for that. And, of course, we're going to drink too much if we're looking to alcohol to get drunk or numb or escape or turn our brain off. We have to learn to not do that anymore, you know, or find healthier ways to do that.

Jenny Williamson – And thankfully, there's a great community called Thrive that people can come to, to help through that very difficult navigation process. So, thank you so much for being here today and being on our show again, Katie. I always love our conversations and it's great to have you back on the show.

Katie Lain – Thank you, Jenny. You ask great questions. I always love talking with you as well. So thank you so much for having me.

TSM Tip – Voice over -This TSM Quick tip is brought to you by the C Three Foundation, with support from our sponsor: Alcure.

Sarah Michael Novia – Claudia, what's a super simple act of mindfulness of drinking TSM?

Claudia Christian – Asking yourself why. For instance, I've just finished a glass of wine. Am I going to mindlessly pour myself another one? Or am I going to ask myself do I really want or need a second glass and why?

Sarah Michael Novia – Probably not.

Claudia Christian – Ask yourself why. That is an act of mindfulness.