



**DRAFT MANUSCRIPT**

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*Xo, Michelle*

*Five Advanced Excerpts from Book* —pre-Editor!

## 16. DRINKING ON DATES

*“Being single used to mean that nobody wanted you. Now it means you’re pretty sexy and you’re taking your time deciding how you want your life to be and who you want to spend it with.” — Carrie Bradshaw*

I spent a lot of time dead single living in New York City. I was so focused on my career and personal goals — I didn’t want to sacrifice my time and energy spent on those pursuits for just anyone.

Ladies, keep your high standards. I promise you, the right guy is worth the wait.

That said, I went on a lot of first dates to get myself out there. You just gotta do it. As my aunt once told me, “your dream guy isn’t going to pop out of the TV if you’re spending another night at home.”

So let’s talk about alcohol and all the drinking that seemingly “has to happen” to get to know someone.

Make yourself a “Drinks on a Date Rule” — two is usually a good maximum. If you tip in to that third drink it usually means 1) you’re trying to have fun with the liquor rather than the conversation, 2) you’ll be hungover in the morning and 3) the date might have totally sucked and you didn’t even realize it.

A first date doesn’t have to last for hours. Usually you can tell within 45 minutes if you want to see the guy again and your intuition will be that much clearer if you slow down on the alcohol.

I still look back at my first blind date with my boyfriend, Alex, at the Flatiron Room in 2014. We got so lost in conversation that we only ended up ordering one round of drinks. I knew that if he wanted real conversation with me, would walk me home on a freezing cold December evening and kiss me goodnight outside of Gramercy Park, “*only under the influence*” of one drink, that I might have a gentleman on my hands. And I guys, I sure did!

Some of my best dates didn’t involve drinking at all — they were the most creative, natural and easy going. And frankly, these kind of sober “day dates” are much more normalized outside of big cities.

Sure, it’s fun to meet for cocktails or wine on Date #1, but for your second, third or fourth date, try meeting for coffee, catching a movie, sampling bone broth, going to a museum, row boating in Central Park, shopping at Whole Foods and cooking dinner with friends, walking along the

High Line, doing a Citibike adventure, going to a concert or hitting the pavement for a run. Your bond will become stronger, promise.

And if you feel safe, suggest going outside the city for the day to hike or rent kayaks. I've done this before — and sent my best friend GPS coordinates several times — and it was fun!

## 23. WAIT 45 MINUTES

Do you arrive at a party and beeline straight to the bar? *Yup, been there, done that.*

Do you get impatient when the waiter doesn't come around immediately for drink orders? *Yup, I know the feeling.*

You know what you really want? You want to relax, you want to settle in, you want to feel comfortable and social and change your energy from the rush of getting to the party or battling public transportation.

It's not really about the drink.

For my clients who attend multiple social functions for work during the week and don't want to constantly be drowning their nutrition goals with alcohol, we practice a tool called "Arrive and Access.\*"

Try giving yourself 30 to 45 minutes to settle in to the party before ordering your first drink. Sure, you can beeline to the bar, but order a club soda with lime to start. Then focus on creating interesting conversation, saying hi to a few friends or clients, read the menu and choose what you want for dinner. Often you'll find that you'll naturally settle in to the environment without the alcohol and after 30/45 minutes you'll stop craving that drink.

If you want the drink after 30-45 minutes? Order it! No big deal.

When I worked in finance, I realized I didn't want to always have to drink alcohol for work events. It wasn't worth it anymore.

So I started skipping alcohol at most work functions — and no one noticed! You'll find that you'll leave the function "feeling tipsy" but it's just from a social high, not an alcohol-fueled one.

It's really quite intoxicatingly empowering.

\*Borrowed this tool from the stellar "Drink Less, Be More" book by Caitlin Padgett. *Thanks Caitlin!*

## 32. THE STIMULANT CYCLE

How often do you reach outside of yourself for something — something to eat or drink to keep yourself going — when you just don't feel like you have the internal energy to do it? If it's caffeine, sugar, carbs, alcohol or drugs — that's a stimulant.

When we use stimulants to mask how we feel, we can definitely get into trouble.

I used to be a self-proclaimed alcohol pusher. I once showed up to my friend's NYC Bachelorette party, with 14 bottles of champagne from Trader Joe's in a carry-on wheely suitcase. **Disclaimer:** Sure, I was the bridesmaid in charge of the alcohol, but I sure made sure everyone was filled to brim at every single moment.

I used to drink 3-4 cups of coffee a day to cover up and mask my deep fatigue. I was burned out, I was over-exercising, I was under-sleeping, but I kept going thanks to caffeine stimulating my adrenal glands and supplying a never-ending pump of adrenaline and cortisol.

Whenever I was hungover, I'd subsist on quick bursts of sugar every few hours and wayyy more carbs than my usual to make it through the day and still hit all my work deadlines.

I never used hard drugs or marijuana, because I was scared I might like them.

I like to GO. I like to GET SHIT DONE. And I like to check things off my list and have fun.

So here's what I learned at Nutrition School, personally as I healed from Adrenal Fatigue and in my professional work coaching clients to shift out of the haze of caffeine and adrenaline rushes and into a state of pure vitality.

When you reach outside yourself for energy: in the form of coffee, alcohol, sugar and carbs, then you need to take a moment to recognize **these cravings are calls for help**. I know, it's hard to honor your body's cues — especially during a busy work day — so simply start by noticing, observing and taking some mental notes on your most frequent patterns.

New Yorkers and urban dwellers in cities worldwide consume a lot of coffee, alcohol and sugar. It's EVERYWHERE and we condition ourselves to need it and crave it in order to keep the productivity wheel turning.

You know those days where you eat a coffee and protein bar for breakfast, an iced coffee and an apple for lunch and whatever other carbs, sugar, chocolate or diet coke or espresso lying around the office kitchen? Then you knock back three glasses of wine and whatever you can get your hands on to eat for dinner? *That's a stimulant cycle.*

You know those nights when the last thing you want to do is go to this party, so you grab another coffee, pour yourself an alcoholic beverage and nibble on that extra cookie as a way to convince yourself to just go? *That's a stimulant cycle.*

You know those times you leave work and you just can't breathe from all the stress and the only thing that is going to calm you down is glass of wine ... which turns into a bottle of wine ... and then two double caffeinated lattes the next morning to get yourself back on track? *That's a stimulant cycle.*

Babe, I've been there.

I used to push myself so hard that socially-acceptable stimulants became my escape.

As a natural introvert, highly-sensitive person, high-achiever and sometimes quiet person, I loved the false positive "these drugs" would afford me. Stimulants numb emotions and cover up crappy feelings we'd rather not deal with.

Have you ever heard the quote, "*It's too late for Coffee, but too early for Alcohol*" ... ? Well if that sparks a cord within you, then we've got to talk. We'll want to look in to your symptoms of anxiety and stress, your self-inflicted expectations and make targeted lifestyle tweaks that enable you to keep succeeding, but with less punishment to your body and nervous system.

But until then, here's what I want you to explore:

- Track your symptoms and when you reach for stimulants to alter your energy
- Try adding more water and fruits and veggies to your diet; they crowd out our cravings for caffeine, sugar and alcohol
- When you want to reach for an outside substance, ask yourself: *what is it that my body is actually asking for right now?* Maybe you just want to go home, maybe you just need to move and go for a walk, maybe you just need a Netflix marathon to chill the F out.

I'm living proof that you can unwind this shit.

I'm not perfect, but I've made a lot of strides in the past few years. I typically stick to one cup of coffee (Way #26 "Just one #CoffeeAddict Cup), rarely use alcohol to cover up stress liked I used to, and try to go for a walk, stretch or have a piece of fruit and handful of nuts instead of afternoon sugar binges.

**>> EXTRA CREDIT** If this topic interests you, want to try a little sobriety experiment with me? Pick 7, 10, 14 or 30 days and go alcohol-free (or sugar-free, or caffeine-free). You'll pick up on your habits and learn to unwind some of your automatic behaviors. FYI: Not saying it's going to be easy.

In NYC, ALCOHOL IS EVERYWHERE. But talking about Alcohol is still a taboo subject. When I published my piece on mindbodygreen "100 Days Without Drinking" it caused quite a stir. I was nervous to publish it because I had gone back to drinking moderately after my time off, and after all, my friends know me as the girl who was always pouring more champagne for others, making sure everyone was "having a good time."

Even though I drink only moderately these days, I routinely take little mini breaks from alcohol to challenge myself, reset my tolerance and give my system a reboot.

But hey, alcohol was something that threw me off my healthy eating plan and fitness plan — and in the last few years, it was the final hurdle to getting my stimulant cycle all figured out.

### **I know I'm not alone.**

I see this reliance and stimulant use (and abuse) with so many of my high-performing clients. I could go on for hours here, but alcohol is a big deal for the modern woman and it's something I work on deeply with people who might seem to “have all their shit together” — but are still questioning their reliance on caffeine, alcohol or sugar and have a sneaking suspicion something is *just not quite right*.

In the end, I've realized I just want other people to be happy and to feel empowered, knowing how their decisions impact how they feel and their long-term performance.

### **I want this for you too.**

Reach out and say hi, tell me about your story and your relationship to stimulants. I'd love to hear and promise to always remain confidential with the information you choose to share with me. Email: [michelle@fitvista.com](mailto:michelle@fitvista.com) Instagram: [@michellefitvista](https://www.instagram.com/michellefitvista)

## **68. RUSHING WOMAN'S SYNDROME & MY 5-MINUTE SUPERPOWER**

If you had a superpower, what would it be?

Get this — for a good 10 years, my wished for superpower was getting a precious extra five minutes of time every day. I dreamed the entire world would freeze, and I'd get the freedom for ***just five minutes*** to travel among the frozen people.

It would be perfect for always getting to work on time, taking a break during a long business meeting to stretch and do crazy yoga poses or getting time to pee and grab a quick snack on days with a packed schedule.

Other people wish to fly, read people's thoughts, see people naked. WHATEVER your wished for superpower would be, I've figured out the last few years that I could actually make mine come true in real life.

Here's what I slowly did :: **I restructured my mindset about rushing and trying to do “all the things” in limited periods of time.**

Some say that being rushed and being late is symptomatic of an “optimistic person.” We optimists think we can fit in more than we actually can. And while that is certainly true, it’s not fair for our nervous systems to be rushing and juggling so much over the long term.

I’d pretty much always end up being on time for meetings and events, but I’d spike my cortisol, stress myself out and jump over hoops to make sure I’d rush like a crazy woman to get wherever I was supposed to be.

Just like the story of rushing to the subway every morning in Way #82 “How to Survive the Subway”, when we rush, your digestion halts, your adrenaline and cortisol kick in, and it can be hard to unwind the stress response for the rest of the day.

Dr. Libby Weaver of Australia has coined the term “Rushing Woman’s Syndrome” to speak to the phenomenon happening with professional and busy women everywhere across the globe — we want to do it all, and seemingly “effortlessly” fit it all in, but at the core we’re getting more and more stressed every year, f\*cking with our female hormones, and neurologically wiring in the stress response to our brain programming. Our prehistoric brains think we’re constantly running from the enemy and go into survival mode, making it hard to lose weight and hard to ever truly relax. Add in restrictive eating, and over-exercising and it’s a perfect storm for hormonal disaster.

*But there is hope!*

I have my clients practice their “5 Minute Superpower” and create space and time to show up to events with 5 minutes of cushion and time to spare. Sure, you might be fitting in 5 minutes less of work before heading to your lunch meeting, but the long-term mental and physiological effects of giving yourself a time buffer are more than worth it.

**WARNING:** It takes time to unwind a lifetime of rushing behavior and build in those extra 5-10 minutes between obligations. It feels really hard at first. Don’t give up. After several false starts (which is normal), my clients who practice this technique report back that they are finding more ease in their schedule, they feel calmer not always rushing to that workout class and showing up for the meeting with a few extra minutes to spare allow them to perform at a higher level.

## **69. WHAT KIND OF WEEKEND DO YOU NEED?**

Some weekends we need authentic rest, some weekends we need to PARTY.

Some weekends we need to exercise and some weekends we need to REST.

Some weekends we need a ton of social interaction exploring the city, while some weekends we need solo chillout time cleaning out the closet.

Usually it's a little sprinkle of everything over the course of a month; and when *you learn to consciously curate* what kind of weekend *you need*, you'll increase your happiness and decrease chances of "acting out" (over-eating, over-drinking as act of rebellion) or tiring yourself out even more going into yet another busy work week.

Back when I worked in Finance, I unconsciously fell into a habit of going MIA every fifth weekend. My friend started jokingly referring to them as "Michelle Weekends." I'd cancel or avoid social plans and retreat to my self-care trifecta of going to the gym – hanging around and organizing my apartment – and an aspirational trip to Trader Joe's or Whole Foods to re-stock on good food. It was my introvert-way of feeding my personality and resetting my fitness and health habits.

**Now I ask my clients to pay attention to their *gut instinct* of what they need before each weekend and set their intentions for the kind of weekend that will work best for them.**

We can get pulled so many ways saying "yes" to various social engagements that the weekend becomes a continuation of a busy, overscheduled, jam-packed week.

Let's say you're deeply tired from a week of intense business meetings, a day trip to Boston, a terrible date and several early morning workouts with your trainer — you need AUTHENTIC REST. A Friday night in — with a movie, PJs and take-out, a Saturday to sleep in with absolutely zero plans, a hot sweaty Vinyasa Yoga class and maybe time with friends later in the weekend, only if you feel like it. Put a big hold titled "Unstructured Time" on your calendar and MAKE NO PLANS. Do whatever you feel like doing, whenever you feel like doing it.

But let's say you've said yes to a friend's apartment party, a colleague's charity event and brunch with your fun girlfriends from study abroad, and a dating app coffee or drink on Sunday etc, etc. *Talk about overload!* If it were me? I'd probably end up drinking too much, eating too much, covering up my deep fatigue with alcohol and go into Monday even more fatigued.

And hey, if you've had a typical week at work, and are not too tired, sometimes you *do* want to socialize and party. And I think that's great!

So, practice setting your intention for each weekend, listen to your body, craft a YOU weekend. It's not easy at first, but like anything - the more you practice - the more natural it seems.

**Weekends are priceless — make them yours.**

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Thanks for reading! Publishing date of "Self-Care in the City:" April 2018.

*Xo, Michelle*