

# Episode 4 | The Importance of Developing Emotional Resilience in VetMed

## FULL EPISODE TRANSCRIPT



Developing emotional resilience. And one of the most misused words in the English language. That's what we're talking about in Episode Four. (upbeat music) Welcome to the Joyful DVM podcast. I'm your host veterinarian and certified life coach, Cari Wise. Whether you're dealing with the challenges in VetMed, struggling with self confidence, or you're just trying to figure out how to create a life and a career, that you actually enjoy. You'll find encouragement, education, and empowering concepts you can apply right away. Let's get started.

Hello my friends, welcome to Episode Four. Today we're gonna be talking about emotional resilience. And as we get started, I wanna ask you a question. What is the hardest part of veterinary medicine? So for you in your career, in veterinary medicine. What is the hardest part? Most of us are gonna answer with responses like client interactions, discussions about money, euthanasia, constant worry about cases.

We're gonna say either that or the stress, is the hardest part of Veterinary Medicine. Those things create stress, right. And so it's the stress, and the overwhelm that most of us would identify as the hardest things. We wouldn't identify things like being bitten, or pooped on, or taking the perfect radiograph. Or figuring out how to do a juggler stick on a cat. Those things we don't usually identify as the hardest parts. But when we look at the components of our job, the actual components of our job. Things like restraining , and taking X-rays and drawing blood. Those are components of our job, the client interactions, the money discussions and the euthanasia. Yes, also components of our job.

But it's not those things, that are really the hardest part, right. It's the stress. It's the way that we feel associated with those things. We think the things, are what we dislike about in VetMed. So the things like the client interactions, and the money discussions and the euthanasias. We think those are the things that we dislike. But what we actually dislike, is the way that it feels, when we're doing those things. We don't understand at all, where the feelings actually come from. And so that's what we're gonna talk about next.

Because we really need to understand, the nuances around this word feel. And how our chronic misuse of it, in the English language. Has really muddied the waters, as far as our ability to create emotional resilience. So to start off, let's define what the word feel actually means. I've actually looked it up in the dictionary. And the word feel can be both a verb and a noun. As a verb, here's the definition. To be aware of, through touching. So the word feel as a verb means, to be aware of, through touching. An example of that. The cat feels soft. A second definition of the word feel as a verb, is to experience an emotion or sensation. A couple of examples of that. I feel sad, which

would be to experience an emotion. Or I feel hungry. Which be to experience a sensation. So those are the definitions of the word feel as a verb. Feel can also be a noun. And that definition is the sensation given, by an object when touched. So an example of that, the cat's tongue had an abrasive feel. In that use it is a noun.

So that is the definition of feel. All together, we've got a few different varieties of it. But I think we're pretty clear on what the word feel means, and how it is supposed to be used. Now, what it is not, is a synonym for the word think, or the word believe. Nowhere in those definitions, was feel described in a way, where we can interchange it with the word think, or the word believe. But this is how we often use it. So let me give you a couple of examples of sentences, where we stick the word feel in the wrong place.

Like we use it in the wrong way. So how about this. I don't wanna call her back, because it feels like she's mad at me. Or how about this one. I don't wanna call her back, because the last time I saw her, it felt like she was mad at me. Those sentences are pretty common sentences in the English language. We have probably all used feel in that way. But we're misusing the word feel. This chronic misuse of the word feel, or variations, such as felt like. Have had a significant impact, on our own ability to identify and understand our own emotions. So to explain this, let's take a closer look at the misused example. It felt like the client was mad at me.

First off, we can recognize that we're feeling kind of icky, and we don't like the way that we feel. So when we're remembering this situation, we recognize that we feel a little icky, and we don't like that. We also associate the way that we felt, with that interaction with the client. And then we conclude that the client created the feeling. If that's the conclusion, then the solution to not feeling icky, is probably to not interact with the client. Or to change the interaction with the client, so that you don't feel like she is mad at you. This is all very common. And it all seems a little bit logical. And over time, we become really bitter and frustrated, and really emotionally burned out. Because of our misuse of this word feel, and the implications of it.

So why is that? Well, this conclusion. Remember, we've identified that the way that we don't feel icky, is to either not interact with the client, or to change the way, round the way the interaction goes. So that the client doesn't behave in a way that we feel like they're mad at us. So that we feel like the client is happy. I guess put in another way. And the only way that we can do that, is to just keep trying to adjust the environment, right. We keep trying to change how the interaction goes, so that we don't interpret the client's interaction with us, as one of them being angry with us. And we try, we try and we try, but no matter how hard we try. We still continue to be in situations that we're

interpreting, as if the client is angry with us. We also have mistakenly left our own emotional well being, in the hands of those clients. So if we try and we try, and we try, and clients are still angry, then all of our efforts were for nothing. We feel bad, we feel like failures, we feel like we screwed up somehow. Because if we hadn't, then the client wouldn't be angry.

What we then do, is we conclude that going into this job was just a bad idea. Like that's like kind of the end game with all of this, is that we have these situations, where we feel like people are angry with us. We try and we try and we try to do things, so that people aren't angry with us. We realize that we cannot do enough things to keep the people from being angry with us. And so therefore, the only way to get out of feeling like people are always angry with us, is to stop being around them at all. And so we change jobs, or we leave the profession, or worse. And it all seems kind of logical, until you recognize that it's completely jacked up.

That it's not actually what's happening at all. And I think a lot of this actually starts, with the misuse of the word feel. It felt like the client was mad at me. It's a common sentence, many of us would say it. But what it actually means, is that we believe that the client is mad at us. And then that made us feel a certain way. It felt like the client was mad at me. What we really meant was, I believe the client was mad at me, and it made me feel some version of an uncomfortable emotion. We could just use the word icky for now, just kind of as a placeholder. I believe the client was mad at me, and that made me feel icky. So when we pick apart what's really happening, feeling icky, just means that we were experiencing some kind of uncomfortable emotion.

Inside that interaction with the client, we experience some kind of uncomfortable emotion. And most of us, because we recognize that we feel bad. We kind of latch on to that term, feel bad. And we leave it at that. The client is mad at me. It felt like the client was mad at me. We gotta put those things together, without pulling them apart. And recognizing, we believe the client is mad at us, and that's, and then we feel bad. It may seem like semantics. But what we have to understand, is why we feel the way we feel. If we're ever going to be able to create any kind of emotional resilience.

For most of us right now, protecting our own emotional well being, requires us to control all the things, or to avoid all the things all together. It's quite exhausting. And it also doesn't work. Here's why. Our emotions are not created by the things outside of ourselves. So not what that client said and did during the last interaction that you had with them. Not by the way patients respond to treatment. Not by work schedules and salaries and co workers. And not by our parents and our friends. The things that many of

us blame for the way that we feel, are not the things that cause the way that we feel at all. Our emotions are the way that we feel. And those emotional feelings, are created only by the sentences in our minds. Remember, one of the definitions of feel. To experience an emotion or a sensation. This definition helps us to see, that we feel in two different ways. Through emotion and through sensation. Sensations are the things, like hunger and heat and cold and pain. When we feel these things, we feel them in the physical body first, and then we become aware of them in our mind. For example, if we're outside on a hot summer day, and we lean onto a car.

All of a sudden, we may pull our hand back. And say, Oh, that's hot. Because we experienced this sensation of heat. And then we became aware of that in our mind. And verbalized it with the sentence. Oh, that's hot. Another example, is if we've got hours without eating. All of a sudden, we're thinking I'm hungry. Well, that thought of I'm hungry, was prompted from that sensation of hunger, that we felt in our physical body.

In this case, sensations come first, and then they're followed by thoughts. It's completely different than what happens when we feel an emotion. When we feel an emotion. We actually start with a thought, and that thought creates a vibration in our bodies. And many times that emotional response is so fast, that we don't even recognize the thought exists. But I promise you that it's there. So let me give you an example of how this works.

Let's say, that you have a client that you dearly love. One that you're always looking forward to, when they come in. And you learn that that beloved client passed away. You probably emotionally feel sad, immediately. You learn that the client passed away, and emotionally, you feel sad immediately. So why were you sad? Many of us would say, we're sad because she died. But what I want you to see, is that her death is not the reason that you're sad. Our current logic would say that it was. That she died and we felt sad. But that logic is skewed, because that's not what's happening. Not everybody feels sad about the death of this person.

Some people would actually be feeling relieved. Other people might be feeling annoyed. How is that even possible, that we would not experience the exact same emotion. If the event, so her death caused the emotion in the first place. The only reason we can experience different emotions, is if it wasn't the actual event that created the emotion at all.

The other thing that I wanna point out here, is that if it was the event that caused the emotion, then you would have felt the emotion, when the event occurred. What's true

though, is the client passed away three days ago. And you just learned about it right now. Three days ago, at the moment of her death. You were not sad, her death did not create your sadness. It is what you are thinking and believing about her passing, that is creating sadness for you right now.

So let's look at this just a little bit closer, and let's look at how it's possible that you can learn of a beloved client's passing, and some people will feel sad, and some people will feel relieved, and other people will feel annoyed. Let's take a look at how that happens. Let's say we learn of the client's passing, and we immediately feel sad. Why are we sad? Well we're sad because we liked her. We loved her, and we're going to miss her.

It's those thoughts that are creating the sadness for us. So how is it possible that somebody might feel relieved. They're probably thinking, when they learned of her passing, that she's no longer suffering. Or that she's been suffering for a long time. And so they feel relief in her passing. The other person who might be feeling annoyed, when learning of her passing. Is probably thinking a sentence that's completely unrelated to her passing. Probably thinking about how now, they're gonna have to deal with her son, who's a jerk, and so they're annoyed, because they don't wanna deal with him and now they can't avoid it.

So three completely different sentences, about one event. Created three completely different emotions. This is so critical, because we can start to recognize that it's not the things that happened around us, that create the way that we feel. It's just that's the way that we think about it. So now let's take a look at what we're learning, and apply that to our original scenario. That statement, I felt like the client was mad at me. We've already reframed that into what we actually meant which was I believe the client was mad at me, and that makes me feel some kind of icky, uncomfortable emotion.

So now let's try to figure out what that emotion is, by asking the question why? Why do I believe the client is mad at me? Well, when I explained to her during her visit, that she would need to bring Fluffy back for a recheck, before we could refill his meds. She huffed and she rolled her eyes and she complained. Now we've got some context. Now we can remember, why it is that we believed, she was mad at us. We actually interpreted her huffing, her rolling her eyes and her complaining, as anger toward us.

We can reframe that sentence again now, with that critical missing information. I believe the client is mad at me, because the last time I saw her, she huffed and rolled her eyes and complained. Which I interpreted as anger. From there we can ask ourselves the question, so what? And what emotion are we actually feeling? I feel anxious about

calling her back, because I believe if she might be angry. Now we can really understand.

Initially, we said. I don't wanna call her back, 'cause the last time I saw her, I felt like she was mad at me. It all seemed like very buttoned up, and like a very sound statement. But now what we can actually see is, I don't wanna call her back. Because the last time I saw her, she behaved in a way, that led me to believe, she was mad at me, and that makes me feel anxious.

It is our anxiety that is creating that resistance to call her back. It is not the way that she behaved, that's creating that resistance. Seems like semantics, but it's everything. Because when you recognize that, you can see that that icky feeling of anxiety, is coming from what you're thinking, and not from what she is doing. This is the key to growing our emotional resilience.

Once we recognize that our emotions, are created by what we are thinking, then that actually creates a bit of a safety net around us. It's never the things that are happening around us, the things that people do, the things that people say. That create the way that we feel. So we don't need protection from them. We don't need protection from the people in the events. We don't need to get away, from the clients and from our jobs, in order to feel better.

The only thing we need to do, is become super aware of what the emotions are, that we're actually experiencing. And then become curious about what we're believing, that's creating that emotion for us. As we do that, then we get all of our power back. Then we get to be in control of the way that we feel, in any given situation. Our emotional resilience will grow.

In doing this, we just stay in our lane. We become very skilled at staying in our lane. We let the clients be responsible for their emotions. And then we are only responsible for ours. It creates so much freedom for us, and it makes every situation much less dangerous. Because any emotional fallout from a situation, is only created by ourselves, with our own thinking. Like I said, that safety net is cast around us, when we understand this. This helps grow our emotional resilience.

As we grow our emotional resilience. What happens, is our self confidence grows. We become willing to do anything, to put ourselves in any situation. Because we recognize the worst thing that can happen, is an emotional response. And that is something that we alone, are in control of. As our self confidence grows, our entire lives get bigger. What we're capable of gets wider. What we experience becomes more fulfilling,

because we are not afraid of the emotions. Until we understood, that the emotions weren't created by the other people. Many of us live afraid of experiencing our own lives, because we don't want to feel those uncomfortable emotions. As we start to realize, that the uncomfortable emotions cannot be created by the other people. Then we have that freedom to explore things that might be a little scary, but we recognize that the worst of it, is only gonna be created by our own thinking.

So what's the take home message here.

Your emotional resilience, can only grow through your own awareness. Part of your awareness, is going to come, by using the vocabulary in the right way. Let the word feel mean and be used as it was intended. And anytime you can replace this word feel, with the word belief, or the word think in your sentence, just recognize that you're using the word feel wrong. That is actually a great thing to recognize. Because it's an indicator, that there is an emotion there, that you have the opportunity to identify.

If you identify the emotion, you could identify the thought pattern behind it. And that's where all your power lies. Because you and you alone, get to decide what you think, and what you believe in any situation. And that is the only way that you create emotion in your own life. You learned to master that, your emotional resiliency will increase, and your self confidence will follow.

That's gonna wrap it up, for this episode, and I'll see you next time. (upbeat music)  
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