Episode 12 | Arguing with Reality in Vet Med & Life

FULL EPISODE TRANSCRIPT

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The way things should be, the way they are, and how that gap creates both turmoil and opportunity, that's what we're talking about in Episode 12.

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 Vet Med, 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.

Hey everybody! Welcome to Episode 12. Today on the podcast, I want to spend some time talking about the way that it should be specifically talking about our opinions about the way we believe things should be. Now, what things am I talking about? I'm talking about things specific to your life. So things like about your home and your job, your family. Perhaps how you believe it should be in regard to your finances, your health, your free time, things like that.

So I want you to take just a second and think about three things that you have a belief about how they should be. Just take a quick second here, take a second, and just think, how do I believe things should be in regards to my job, for example. How do I believe things should be in regard to my finances, in regard to my relationships, in regard to my health. Pick two or three, and just bring those ideas to the forefront of your mind. We're going to use those here, in a few minutes, here on the podcast. I think it will be super helpful for you to have those examples ready as we move through the rest of this podcast. Okay.

So let's talk about this, how we believe things should be. We all have an opinion and we're not going to get into what they say about opinions. I have a lot of opinions about opinions, but that the heart of this, we all have an opinion about how we think things should be, in our lives and in the world. And what's interesting is that there's this concept called Confirmation Bias, which reinforces whatever it is that we believe. So when we believe something, our brain automatically goes to work, gathering all the evidence to confirm that belief, to prove that it's true. And interestingly enough, it also disregards any information that could prove that belief to be false, that would contradict what we are believing. It's so useful for us just to know that this is happening. It's not a problem that it happens, but if we aren't aware that it happens, then it definitely has an influence. And that's really what we're going to talk about here. So when you're thinking about how you believe things should be, what we're really trying to get to the heart of is why do you want something to be different than it is. These are the things that I really want you to think of that are true for you.

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We have beliefs about how we think things should be and some of those things are already that way. That's great! But I want you to find the ones that are not the way that you think they should be. Those are the ones we want to look at today. We want to ask ourselves, why do we want it to be different than it is? And more importantly, how do we believe our lives will be different if that thing is the way that we think it should be? Have I lost you yet? So let me just repeat that. Why do you want something to be different than it is, and how do you think your life will be different if it becomes different in the way that you want it to? See that inner turmoil is created when there's a gap between how we believe it should be and how it actually is. And we want to be able to really look at that and identify that disparity because then we could understand a lot of the frustration that we're feeling actually helps us to gain a lot of our power back. I think it's going to be most helpful for me to walk through some examples here of some areas where I think a lot of us probably believe things should be different than they are. We're going to take a look at getting out of work, weight, and then also home. So three examples, they may or may not apply to you, but you can take these examples and apply your own and see how this process works.

So the first one, I should get out of work on time. I think that's one thing that we probably many of us believe should be happening, but probably isn't. We believe that we should be getting out of work on time. So whatever we have that we can identify that thing that we believe should be different, the next question that we want to ask ourselves is, why? Why do we believe that we should get out of work on time? The answer to that for many of us would be something like, so I can have the free time that I deserve. To that question, once you answer the why, then I want you to follow that with another question, why does that matter? So if the why is so that I can have the free time that I deserve then the why-does-it-matter answer might look something like, so I can have a balanced life. Guess what? Another question. So we want to follow that yet with another question, what did you learn from your answers? In this case, what we learned from these answers is that we believe that we can't have a balanced life if we don't get out of work on time.

So let me go through that first example again. First off, we've got a series of questions. What is it that you're believing should be different? So what is it? That's the question number one: what it is that you believe should be different? And I want you to phrase it in a way that is specific to you. I should get out of work on time. So what is it that you believe should be different? Then you're going to ask yourself, why, you're going to answer that. Then you're going to ask yourself, why does that matter? So you're looking at your answer to the why, and you're asking yourself, why does that matter? And then you're looking at that answer and the whole combination of all of those things, and

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you're asking yourself, what did you learn as you are able to pick this apart?

Let's go back through the first example one more time. I should get out of work on time is what we're believing should be happening. Why? So I can have the free time I deserve. Why does that matter? So I can have a balanced life. What did I learn from this? I believe can't have a balanced life if I don't get out of work on time. Fascinating! The reason we believe that we should get out of work on time is because underneath all of that, we're believing that not getting out of work on time is keeping us from having a balanced life. It's no wonder then that we get so frustrated when we get out of work late.

Let's look at another one. I should be thinner. Why? So I am healthier. Why does that matter? Because there are things in my life I want to do that I'm missing out on because of my weight. What did I learn? I believe I am missing out on my life because of my weight. Fascinating stuff! We believe we should be thinner. We actually judge ourselves. And then, why are we judging ourselves so harshly? Because we believe that we're missing out on our lives; that we are the reason that we're missing out on our lives.

Let's look at the third one. I should have a less cluttered home. This sounds familiar to anybody. This was pretty personal. I should have a less cluttered home. Why? Because I can't find the things I need. It's a disaster. Why does that matter? Because the clutter creates stress. Aha! We're getting to the bottom of it. What did I learn? I believe that clutter creates stress. Interesting! I want the home to be less cluttered, not because the home itself needs to be different than it is, but because I'm believing that if it's less cluttered, I will feel less stress.

I believe that my body should be thinner. Why? Not because a thinner body necessarily creates a positive outcome, but because I believe without it I'm missing out on my life.

I believe I should get out of work on time. Why? Not so much because it's just wrong that I don't, but more so because I'm believing as long as I continue to get out of work late, I can't create a positive life for myself. I can't create a balanced life for myself.

It's really important to dig down through these and take a look at these because right now for many of us what's happening is we have these opinions about how things should be. And I'm not saying that any of these things are bad things to believe: I should get out of work on time, I should have a thinner body, I should have a less cluttered home. I'm not saying getting out of work on time or having a thinner body or having a less cluttered home are bad things to want. It's the, "I should have" that's causing

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problems here. The, "I should have" tagged onto the front of these things that I want, put us in a bit of a victim mentality. They create a very limiting situation. That "I should have thought this" tag onto these forces us to experience our lives at the effect of these things outside of ourselves. It keeps our focus on what we can't control. Let's face it. You can't control all the time, whether or not you get out of work on time. You can't control today the size of your body. Today, it is what it is. You can't control today how much clutter is in your home. You can get to work changing it. You can get to work changing any of these things, but today they are what they are. There is nothing that you can change immediately to "fix these things". So what happens is it keeps our focus on what we can't control. This perpetuates that victim mentality. It actually destroys our self-confidence. It actually stops us from accepting what is and keeps us from understanding that these circumstances: the time you leave work, the size of your body, the condition of your home, actually do not create your feelings. This activity allows us to uncover the underlying belief and consider how confirmation bias is at play.

Confirmation bias has you believed that something is true. So when we have these thoughts, "I should get out of work on time", "I should be thinner", "I should have a less cluttered home", confirmation bias actually gathers all the evidence to reinforce that idea. Yeah, you're right. You should. You absolutely should get out of work on time. You should be thinner. Your house should be less cluttered. We ignore and reject the information that's to the contrary. If we can learn how we are interpreting the circumstances as a personal assault, we actually can then decide if that's the way that we want to interpret the circumstances. If we don't have take the time to break it down like we did here, then these circumstances all feel very personal. It also blocks additional perspectives in problem-solving. It's the ultimate of the if-and-then scenario. If clients show up late for appointments, then I'm not going to get out of work on time and I'm not going to have any free time, I won't be able to create a balanced life. If I were thinner, then I'd be healthier and able to participate more in my own life. If my house were less cluttered, then I'd be able to find things and I'd be less stressed. Notice that in every one of these situations, the outcome that you want is dependent on something that you can't control.

So here's an interesting and helpful thing. The five questions, that's not it. So, what is the should be, why do you believe that, why does it matter, what did you learn. The fifth one is how can you insert "AND" into that situation. The word, "AND", is super powerful. So let's go back and look. So what if instead of that belief that we uncovered in the what-do-you-learn stuff where we learned that I believe I can't have a balanced life if I don't get out of work on time, how can we insert "AND" into that learning statement? We do it like this. I can get out of work late AND have a balanced life. Doesn't seem possible. You

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probably feel a little bit of resistance toward even that concept because for so long, you've been believing that you should be getting out of work on time, very attached to that. The brain's been very busy gathering all the evidence why that's true.

But let's just shake it apart a little bit. Let's just give an "AND" to that situation. I can get out of work late AND have a balanced life. What if that's true? Let's look at another one. What we learned about weight: I believe I'm missing out on my life because of my weight. Let's insert, "AND": I can be my current weight AND participate in my life. That thought is also available to us. Let's just stick the "AND" in there. Let's not make it an either-or situation. Let's not make it an if-and-then situation that's dependent on something outside of us. Instead, let's insert the "AND. I can be my current weight AND participate in my life. How about the next one? What we learned: I believe clutter creates stress. Let's insert the "AND". I can have a cluttered home AND not be stressed. I can have a cluttered home AND not be stressed.

Now don't misunderstand. I'm not giving you a bit of an escape clause here. This is not a way for you to just accept things as they are. They're the starting point for you to see the opportunities that exist without adding in the, "AND", and considering an alternative perspective, the opportunities, the alternate perspectives are not even available to you. You can't even problem-solve because it all seems so absolute when we look at it through the lens of what-should-be. Because what-should-be argues directly with reality, and that creates a lot of hopelessness. That creates a lot of turmoil.

When what you believe should be is different than what is, turmoil always results. That turmoil often comes in the flavor of hopelessness. It also comes in sometimes a lot of sadness and frustration and even anger. Here's the deal, my friends. Hopelessness, sadness, frustration, and anger are never going to drive you forward to create the things that you want in your life. The actions that we take day in and day out of our, in our lives are always driven by emotion 100% of the time. Action is driven by emotion. If your primary emotions day in and day out are on the uncomfortable side: frustrated, angry, hopeless, then it's no wonder that we can't create lives that we actually enjoy. The first step of this is just to take a look at what we're believing about reality, and what reality actually is. What do we think is possible? Are we just arguing with what's true today which in effect cuts off any possibility of it changing in the future? Most of us are. This will help you to find that. It's those, "It should be statements", that gives you that first little hint. As you find the areas to add the "AND" and so you run your way through these questions, and once again, you come up with your, "I should statement". You ask yourself, why, you answer that. Then you ask yourself, why does that matter, and you answer that. Between those three things, you're going to identify that, what you learned,

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what is it that you believe, that's, what's actually going to be uncovered here. When you uncover what you believe, now you can ask yourself an additional question: how do I feel when I believe that statement.

So let's go back and look at our three. How do I feel when I believe I can't have a balanced life if I don't get out of work on time? Pretty miserable, huh? Probably a little hopeless. Probably a little stuck, a little victimized. Those are the ones would come up for me. So I would feel, if I really believed I can't have a balanced life, if I don't get out of work on time, I don't feel like I have any choices. How about the next one? How do you feel if you believe that you can't be your current weight and participate in your own life? Very restricted. Very resentful. Those would be the emotions that would come up for me. And how about the final one? How do you feel if you believe that clutter creates stress? This one for me brings up a lot of judgment. I feel very judgmental about the clutter, about the state of the house being in a cluttered state. We're talking about the clutter that is mine.

So if we look at those emotions now: judgment, resentful, victimized, what kind of positive actions are we going to take in our lives from those places? None. And it all seems so innocent. That's what I really wanted to bring home here today. It all seems so innocent. To be saying, "I should get out of work on time. I should be thinner. I should have a less cluttered house", that talk in our mind. Those sentences that play over and over and over again. They seem like harmless and they seem so true. We don't even question them, but you can see, left on question, they're actually creating so much turmoil and useless emotion, uncomfortable, negative emotion that is then driving the majority of our actions. It's no wonder that we find ourselves stressed out or feeling anxious or begrudging the lives that we're living. We can't even see the opportunity because the picture that we've painted in the "I-should-haves" just keep getting reinforced over and over and over by a neuroscientific principle called Confirmation Bias. It makes perfect sense.

So here's some good news. Well, first before we get to the good news, let's just kind of hit the spoiler first. If we really want to hang on to these beliefs, things should be a certain way, and let's just play into, I don't know, best-case scenario, fantasy land, that things do turn out that way eventually, so you're believing that you should be getting out of work on time, and then all of a sudden like magic happens and you're always getting out of work on time. Here's the spoiler. It's not going to be better there than it is here. It's just not. So when you're getting out of work on time, all the time isn't going to feel better than the way you feel right now. So ask yourself that question: what am I believing it's going to be like when that thing that I believe should be happening actually

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happens? Offer yourself the opportunity to answer that question because whatever you're believing about it is generating an emotion. And that's what you're going after, is that emotion. So the great news is that, that emotion is available to you right now. You can actually take some pressure off of you yourself immediately by discontinuing this repeated action of believing that something should be different than it actually is. By stopping the argument with reality, you're kind of release a lot of pressure. So that's wonderful, to begin with. And then, when you catch yourself saying it, "I should have", or "it should be a certain way", quickly ask yourself, why, what do I think is going to be better if things are different. When you give yourself that chance to ask that, answer that question, why you think it should be better, it's going to all boil down to a feeling for you. It really does come down to something with you. You might come up with all these wide serving selfless type of answers. But if you keep asking the right questions: why, why does that matter, at the bottom of it, the reason that you want something to be different than it is for you is because you want to feel a different way than you feel right now. What you're missing and what we all miss is that it's not the situation at hand that's creating the way that you feel. It never is. Emotions are not created by circumstances. Emotions are created only by thoughts. So it's our thoughts about the circumstances.

So in all of these cases, where our circumstances are tagged with the "I should" statement, the misery of that, the turmoil of that, comes from the thought, "I should whatever it is": I should be getting out of work on time, the circumstances at the time that you get out of work. The, "I should get out of work on time", is creating misery for you. That misery, as we dug into it, isn't even about the, "I should get out of work on time". It's about what you believe that you're missing out on or unable to experience because of that. We're giving something outside of ourselves, the control over the state of our lives, quite honestly, and our own emotional wellbeing as well. The great news is you don't have to do that. The great news is now we've got a little bit of a tool that you can use in any of these situations where you can really just question your own thought patterns. It all just starts there. We don't need to judge them. We don't need to beat ourselves up. As we start to recognize how we have kind of painted ourselves into these corners. There's, that's not useful, but as we start to wiggle them apart a little bit and just ask the questions: why, why does that matter, how could I look at this differently, then the opportunities to embrace a different perspective are gonna come up. But what also comes up, which is so fascinating, are the solutions. Right now, when we're so focused on, "I should be getting out of work on time", there's no room to even solve the problem. There's no room to even get creative to consider how is it that we could make this different. That's what's so helpful. "I should be thinner". Again, if we're so focused on what we should be, then we're not at all focused on the solution. What are our opportunities? What can we do? So we want to know why we want to do it, but more

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importantly, we can't even consider the how, if we're just focused on what we think it should be. This really allows you to move forward right now, free of the excuses. When you pull apart all the, "I should haves", the excuses have to fall away. There's no way for the should-haves to hang on to excuses. Once you peel them apart this way. That puts you back in control of your life. That puts the power squarely back into your hands. For some of us, that's going to feel a little bit uncomfortable because we're going to clearly see how we have created our own reality. And it's been much more comfortable for us to be able to blame things outside of ourselves for the way that our lives are. It's just not how it works.

Our lives are really only the result of our own decisions, which are our own actions. Decisions are actions, which are always driven by emotions. And our emotions are only created by our own thinking. Don't beat yourself up as you start to learn this. It's so common that many, many of us would just beat ourselves up because we so clearly see how our thinking got us to where we are, once we understand how it works. But that's not helpful.

Once you, my final word here for you is, as you go through this and you consider this, and I definitely recommend, you may want to go back and read it again and take some, or listen to it again and take some notes. And I want you to think about: how you believe it should be, what do you believe should be different, and why do you go through this. I want you to really consider where your opportunities are. Where your opportunities are to know a little bit more about yourself, a little bit more about your tendencies, and to find your opportunities in your belief patterns. It is so refreshing when you recognize, when you really get that the things that happen around you do not have any influence on your own personal wellbeing, unless you let them. It takes practice. But once you start looking for it, the confirmation bias will actually begin to work in your favor because you will begin to see, "Oh yes! My emotions are created by my thinking". It really wasn't because of something that happened. It wasn't because of something that's not happening that I feel the way that I do.

That's where all your power is: getting to know yourself and really understanding where your emotions are coming from and how you can generate them on purpose to drive the actions, to help you produce the results that you ultimately want in your lives.

Alright, my friends, that's going to wrap it up for this week and I'll see you next time.

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