

# Episode 9 | What 2020 is Teaching Us in Vet Med and Beyond

## FULL EPISODE TRANSCRIPT

### The Joyful DVM PODCAST

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A quick look at 2020 and the events that have occurred in just the first half of the year, why clients and everybody else are a little crazier than usual, and why right now is the best time for you to make those changes in your life and your career that you've been afraid to make, that's what we're talking about in episode nine.

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. Hello, my friends. Welcome to episode number nine.

As I record this podcast episode, it's the 30th of June, 2020. And by the time that it publishes, it will be the middle of July. What I have just been doing this morning is scrolling on social media, as I often do, as I'm getting started in my day. And I came across an article that talked about the whirlwind that 2020 has been. I'll link to it in the show notes of this episode.

As I looked back through it, I had forgotten some of the things that had happened this year, and we're only halfway through. I thought it would be really interesting to remind you of some of those things as well, because as I'm scrolling through my social media, and as I'm looking at what my colleagues in the veterinary profession are posting, more and more often, we're posting about how extra crazy the clients are. And we're even putting out notices to please be kind, to be patient, to realize we are doing the best that we can. To help keep the message being spread that we are also considered essential workers, and that we haven't had the luxury, if you will, of being able to stay home during this pandemic along all the craziness that's been going on. I've seen more and more of those posts going up. And so I, I kinda got to wondering why is that necessary? And as I considered that, I came across this article about some of the things that have happened in 2020, and it was just very evident that, "Oh yeah! This is why. This is what's going on." So I wanted to share these reminders with you and then dig in a little bit as to why it is that these things are resulting in what we're seeing and experiencing today in our own lives and also through the lives of our clients and our jobs.

So 28 things that you probably forgot happened, I'm going to link in the show notes to this article. Let me just scan down and I'm going to list a few of them. This year started out with all those fires in Australia. Gosh, it seems like a long time ago, doesn't it? But what a horror that totally was to see all of that land in the beautiful environment burning and those fires and all those people and animals affected. So that is how this year

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started, was literally inflamed.

From there, can we just point out, it's an election year in the US. Many of the things that are listed in this article, come back to that, but let's not get into a lot of details about the election, other than to say, every election year here in the United States tends to be a little bit interesting, tends to be a little bit extra when it comes to drama and it comes to a coverage and then media about that. And this has been no exception. There has been lots of opportunity for political conversation, and that has also added to the extra. Other things that happened that some of us may have forgotten about or not even known or considered or cared, things like Prince Harry and Meghan Markle, stepping down from their duties to the Royal family in England. Also things like, the President being impeached and Kobe Bryant, sadly passing away in a helicopter crash. That was way back in January. It seems like it just happened, but it also seems like a lifetime ago. In addition to that, let's hit February. Oh my gosh. In February, some of the caucuses started again, some of the election stuff, some of that was kind of a big, hot mess. Our president who had been impeached was acquitted. The Boy Scouts filed for bankruptcy. Some first responders were attacked in Texas by a swarm of 40,000 bees. Did you even know that happened? I mean, let's just add some more crazy to this year. Right? Harvey Weinstein was found guilty. The NBA canceled the season. Of course, along here, here, we've got, why did they cancel the season? Right? Well, COVID-19.

So let's just have a pandemic here in 2020. Why not? So the pandemic came across it. We've been watching it for a while at the beginning of the year. And now it's in the US and we know, here we are at the end of June, it has continued to progress. We seem to kind of get a handle on it. Now it's kind of coming out of control again. So all kinds of things were canceled, all kinds of sporting events. And with that definitely the NBA season. We'll have to wait and see what else, right? The Summer Olympics. There's another big one - Summer Olympics in Tokyo were canceled and rescheduled for 2021 due to the pandemic. That only got us to the end of March my friends.

As April went on, there were all kinds of other things going on, people being killed, and in all kinds of different public events that we just keep, it seems like story after story of gun violence and protest and such that may or may not have been associated with any one particular event. Apparently back in April, the Pentagon released videos of possible UFOs. Did not hear about that one, but then I think that's kind of interesting and a little bit humorous as well, because why not? Right? Why not just add that to 2020? And then, May, we learned about Murder Hornets. So as if there wasn't enough. Let's just talk about a whole new giant species of insect that can literally kill people with stings called Murder Hornets and now they are reported in the US and then sadly also in May, there

was lots of video footage of fellow Americans dying, in ways they absolutely never should have died. So Ahmad Arbery and George Floyd and those murders were horrific and they were visible to us. It's very hard to ignore these kinds of injustices that go on in our country when we can see firsthand through the video that we have, that it happens. It's very hard to say, no, that didn't happen when you can watch it. And of course, that came with a lot of emotional uprising, with a lot of what is turned into riots and protests and anger and tears. But it's also brought voices to people who weren't willing to speak up before and weren't able, and that just gets us through May.

So now here we are in June, we continue to have the pandemic actually getting worse. We know the Summer Olympics are canceled. Lots of beaches are canceled. Events are canceled. We have the election year still looming. And many of us are trying to get back to some sort of normalcy, but what is normal? I think we're starting to recognize that there is no such thing as normal and whatever we thought it was before doesn't exist. And so it's absolutely no surprise to me that our clients are behaving the way that they are. Some of us are just done, right? We're just over it. And it's not just us, it's them too, which is why they're behaving the way they are. So when you're witnessing your clients kind of going off on you, think about the rest of your day. Think about the other things that you've witnessed around you over the last few days and a few weeks. You've seen other people going off in different environments, right? We actually get to see this on social media, too. The scrolling, where you see the people who lose it in the grocery store with the cashiers and are screaming at them, or going up and yelling at each other fighting and in public areas over, over what I mean, who knows, right? It's, everybody's on edge, that's not the point of this. Everybody is on edge. Everybody's crankier than usual. And I think the posts that we're putting out there to remind our clientele to, "Hey, like give us a break. We're doing the best that we can. We're here to help you. Please be kind". I think those posts are useful because I do think that as you read those, that kind of snaps you into a bit of a reality, of like, "Oh yeah!" Like, it kind of helps us to remember that it's not just about us, but the reason that we're even needing to post those things is because everybody is feeling extra emotional right now.

Why is that happening? The reason that we are overall, as a world, if we're just being honest, why we're globally feeling really like emotionally overwhelmed right now is because of this extreme amount of uncertainty. There is so much going on that we have never had to deal with before, specifically with this pandemic. And yes, there are definitely areas of the world that have got undergone these kinds of threats of illnesses and viral illnesses. They have spread quickly, but in the United States and for many other developed areas, this has never really been a thing, right? We've never had to handle this before. We've been fortunate. We've been lucky. It was just really a matter

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of time. Right? And so here we are, and we're all just trying to figure out how to navigate our lives through this. It started out shutting everything down, then, everything started to open up again, the numbers are starting to rise. There's still tons and tons of controversy about the difference between how infectious it is versus how deadly it is. We're not going to get into all those arguments, if you should wear masks or not wear masks. Everybody has their own opinion. Everybody gets to make their own choices and the choices are going to be different. Those different choices also add to the uncertainty. We're all just trying to make the best decisions that we can at the moment with the information and resources we have available at the time. That not only applies to veterinary medicine, which is where you hear me say that a lot, but it also applies to your entire life. We're all just doing the best that we can. And sometimes the emotions get the better of us. Whenever we find ourselves snapping at somebody or yelling at somebody or behaving in a way that we don't really think is aligned with who we are, the only thing I want you guys to do is to recognize that the emotions just won a little bit. Every word that we say, every action that we take in our lives, positive or negative, only comes when it's driven by the emotions that we're experiencing. I think this is super useful to remember because the same thing goes for our clients. So when it is that they're yelling at us because we're not done with their pet fast enough, or they're angry because they can't be with the animal while you're looking at it or doing the care, well, because it's different, what I want you to recognize is that the way that they're expressing their emotions to you, isn't about you. Those words and actions that they're using in those moments are also only coming from their emotions. And whether it's your actions and words or their actions or words, those actions and words are always driven by personal emotions, and personal emotions are always only created by our own thinking. So what that means is that there's something that the clients are thinking and believing in those moments, that's creating an emotional response within them, and that emotional response is driving the words and the actions that they express to us. It's so useful for us to remember this, because if we remember that it really all starts at the level of their thinking, we can agree, hopefully, you can agree that you can't control what they're thinking about. You can't. And so we can have some compassion for them.

Another way that we can have compassion for them is to consider ourselves. What are the things that you find yourself doing right now that are out of character? What's coming up for you that hasn't been a problem or been a thing for you for a long time? A couple of really common ones, snapping at people more, even the people that you love, even the people in your household. Do you find yourself snapping at them a little more than usual? How about eating more junk food? A lot of us are consuming foods that we don't normally consume or drinking more. It's another thing. Many of us are shopping more, Amazon, right? Have you become like the amazingly efficient shopper

of all things online and delivery? These types of behaviors, these kinds of things that we're doing are all driven by some of our emotion as well. What's interesting to realize is that uncertainty, that little bit of fear, that lack of confidence in what's coming next, those kinds of emotions, will drive actions, like snapping at people, like consuming foods to make yourself feel better, like doing a lot of extra shopping. Now, food and shopping, the reason your drinking, the reasons that those things work is because you get a bit of a dopamine hit. Dopamine is like the best hormone ever makes you feel wonderful. The downside is it doesn't last very long. Then you also kind of become a little bit muted to it. So a little bit of food makes you feel better for a while, and then it doesn't feel better anymore. Then you're going to have to eat even more and more. The same thing with shopping, buy more things, more things. So that works for a little bit to feel better, but it's not long term. The reason that I wanted to point all of these things out is because if you are, if you can identify where you are acting out of character for yourself, you can give yourself a little bit of grace. You are in uncertain times. We have no idea what's going to happen next. Holy Moly, I just listed off a whole bunch of crazy for the first six months of this year.

We wanted to go back to normal, whatever that is, and it's not ever going to be normal. I'm gonna get to that in a minute. Well, we want then to, to go back to some kind of routine, something predictable. And so far, what 2020 has taught us is there is no such thing as predictable anymore. What I want to offer you is that there never was. So if we can think about that and we can consider, that our clients and their behaviors are coming from that same type of perspective, they're also in a world of uncertainty. They're also in the world of the unknown and of all the things that they've never experienced. And we can look at the people who are reminding us, just how deep-seated some of the biases and social injustice is within our own country, here in the US. If we can look at people through the lens of everything that's going on, it all makes a whole lot more sense. We don't have to agree to be able to have compassion for the other people.

When it's all said and done, 2020 is teaching us lessons and it's creating change that is needed. I'm talking massive change, not just personal change, it's literally at every single level. So why now our clients cranky? Why now are the protests and the riots may be more prominent than they have been over similar events that have happened in the past? It's because people have had enough. The things that tend to keep us from taking action from speaking our truth for fighting, for the changes that we want, the things that tend to keep us from doing that is actually just the emotion of fear. It's the fear of what it might cost us. And at the end of the day, the things that most of us are afraid of, are the loss of the people that we love and the loss of our income making ability. So the loss of

their jobs. It really tends to boil down to loss of life and loss of money.

In 2020, there has been a lot of both. Because of the pandemic, there have been lots of lives lost. There have been lots of job loss. There's been lots of income potential loss. And as we've experienced, and all of us have experienced something, at some level related to these things, whether it's directly happened to us or it's happened to somebody that we know, and we care about, we don't have to go very far to know as somebody that has been greatly impacted in one or both of these areas, if it isn't ourselves. And because we have experienced these things in this time, and we are still here, what has happened as a byproduct is that we've actually created a little more confidence. I know that sounds crazy, but we have been able to create a little bit more self-confidence.

Self-confidence is our willingness to experience any emotion. And as we've experienced all the emotions that have come from the loss of life and the loss of finances that have been kind of secondary to the pandemic and all of the response to that and all the other crazy, it's not just pandemic related, right? I'm talking about all this stuff, the fires, all the stuff that's happened. Because we have personally experienced the emotions that come up through loss of life and loss of finances and have survived it, that actually does create some confidence for us. We realize that the fear of losing those things and the reality of losing those things, isn't as bad as we thought. Now it sucks. I'm not gonna tell you it doesn't suck. But what I want you to see is that you are resilient. That you are able to navigate and make it through to the other side of these things. What's so interesting is we have no idea what the other side is, but we never did. We never knew what was coming. We had created a certain amount of certainty in our own lives, over routine, and how we thought things should be. The events of 2020 have turned that upside down. And as that has happened, people have been able to find the courage within themselves to stand up and start speaking their truth. Things that we believe that needed to be changed for a long time, like the inequalities in the United States and the racism and the way that it has been deeply seated in a lot of the institutions that we have, people are standing up and saying, look, no more. I'm not gonna just stand by and let this happen anymore. I'm not going to be just passively quiet anymore.

Why are they doing that now? Many people are just like, "Oh, we've had enough!" Enough is enough, like that. If you ask them why now, they'll say enough is enough. It's gone on for too long. Yes. I agree. It's gone on too long, but why now? It's because despite all of the crazy that has happened in 2020, you have found courage. You have found some of your own resilience. You have found and been able to tap into some of

your own power. When pushed against the odds, we really do find what we're made of. And that's why 2020 is teaching us so much and how it is actually going to give us an amazing gift as we move forward. It's not going to be the same. We're never going to go back to the way it was. And that's okay. It's actually better. The same thing is true for our veterinary hospitals. The opportunity is yours, my friends. If you like the way you're doing business now, the way your hospital functions now, if it's creating a more quality of life for you, because it's drop-offs, because it's opening and closing the specific time, because you are having to hold people accountable and too tight schedules and drop-offs and pickups, and it's making things work better, keep doing it.

Many of the changes that we're implementing now, we're doing it because we "have to" or "had to" because of the pandemic. But what I want you to see is there's a lot of opportunity for you to make the changes that you would have loved to make anyway. And now the pandemic and the events that have been going on in the world have just offered you the excuse to do it. It kind of prompts you up with a little bit of courage if you will. You didn't have to just say, "we're doing it this way because this is the way that I want to do it". You've got a reason that you feel justified in your decision. What I want you to see is you never needed that decision. You don't ever need that justification to make some of those decisions that were going to make your entire organization run in a way that was more aligned with what you wanted for your life and the life of the people that work with you. You need never needed that. And it's okay that you didn't do it before because you've done it now. But what I want you to do now is if you like the way it's running, keep doing it. As things start to open up, there is no expectation that you have to go back to doing things exactly the way that you did before. This is going to be the theme that we're going to see in the entire world. We're not going to ever go back to doing things exactly the way that we did them before. And now here's the kicker. There are going to be people who are frustrated about this. There are going to be people who express their dismay over these decisions. It's okay. They're doing it anyway, right? They're already. There's people who are already expressing their dismay over the way that you're doing things now. But if your practice, is like most of the practices that I've talked to, you've probably okay, that you're busier than you've ever been. That you're generating money at levels that's uncommon for this type of year. The summer is usually busy in veterinary hospitals, we know that. We know that we tend to make a lot of our money in the summer, but it's not just that, right 'cause we're just getting started in the summer thing. So if you're one of those hospitals that has found that you are actually generating more money, doing it this way, and you like it, keep doing it. If you're a hospital that has suffered through this, where are your opportunities? What's different? What are you unwilling to change in order to serve clients? And also what is it that's missing? So where is the lack of revenue actually coming from? Is it coming from those

non-veterinary related things, like food sales and maybe like shampoos and some of the ancillary items. Some of us in our hospitals, we stock a lot of that extra fun stuff, you know, just the tangible items that aren't service-based. And so when you lose foot traffic, you're losing revenue from that. So is that where you're losing revenue for your hospitals? I don't know. Look at it because you definitely have an opportunity to see why is your revenue being shifted? It's a big opportunity for those who are, of us who are finding that our revenue is down. It's likely not service-based revenue that you're losing. So why? If it is service-based revenue that you're losing again, why? Let's just ask ourselves, why is that? Is it because you have chosen to be open fewer hours? Is it because you have chosen to lay some people off you don't have as many doctors? I don't know for you, but what I want you to see is that you do have opportunity in that to identify where you can actually adjust things. Because I promise there are lots and lots of veterinary hospitals who are sharing that they are busier than they've ever been. They're also sharing that they're finding a bit of quality of life in this that they didn't have before. Because you're either open or you're closed, right?

The boundaries are easier to keep because we're justified by things outside of ourselves. Now that you've learned to speak the words, to set those boundaries, to communicate the way that you want to do business, let's not stop doing this as things start to open back up.

As the opportunity to go back to normal, it starts to present itself, let's ask ourselves, did we like normal? Did we like the way that it was before? That's what 2020 is teaching us. It's teaching us how to not settle for where we are. It's teaching us that we can make changes and can, we can survive, that we can experience, really hard things, we can feel terrible, emotionally and still take actions that serve what we want for our lives and for the world in the future. That's why everything is so extra.

People are frustrated. They're scared. They're over it. And so they're speaking up. Their emotions are driving their actions and you can either use that for good or you can use that for bad. And we see both in this world. But when it's all said and done, you get to decide for you what you want to create for your future. And the changes that you're making now, these are the ones that matter. These are the ones that count. Because there has never been a better time to redefine everything that you're doing in your life. Everything is changing. So your one change that may have seemed so big and scary all on its own back way back in 2019, today is just one more thing that's changing. I'm seeing it in my own life for sure, in the decisions that I'm making and the way that I'm showing up. I'm also seeing it in my community. Literally, I've been trying to get my dogs into the groomer. For weeks, I know that she's been closed and I've been waiting and

I've been waiting and I've been waiting for her to reopen. And I've talked to her on Facebook a few times and I've even reached out to her and I've said, "Hey, you know, this is your chance. This is your chance to decide what do you want for your business." Because I knew, over months of working with her, over years of having her as the groomer for our dogs as, and she was a solo, a solo shop. I could see when I would go in there that she was tired. I could see that she was stressed. And so I just gave her some very unsolicited business advice and said, "Hey, this is your opportunity. This is your opportunity to decide how you want to do this, moving forward. You literally could cut your clientele in half or a third, double or triple your prices, work the hours you want to work. You're going to lose clients, yeah, but you're going to keep your best clients. And you're going to get your quality of life back". The same thing goes for us in the veterinary world. You can decide how much stuff are you going to be willing to put up with moving forward. Where scarcity tends to drive a lot of our decisions on getting people in at the last moment and adding on extra stuff to our days, in this environment, we just have not had the ability to do that, right? We've really been limited because of the precautions we've had to put in place to COVID-19. How about we keep some of that stuff in place? How about we keep saying no, when no is really the answer that we want to give? My groomer, when it's all said and done, last night found out she's just not going to reopen at all. She's just decided she's finished. Of course, I'm sad. You know what good for her. Good for her for taking this opportunity to realize that what she had created for herself and her family through that business, wasn't what she wanted for her future.

You guys all have that same opportunity. If what you have right now is not what you want for your future, there has never been a better time than right now to make that change. There's never been a better time.

Change is all around us. 2020 is teaching us what we are made of, what we are able to handle. It is also giving us some of our power back because we are building our confidence in our courage, through these experiences. We're doing it as a global community. The changes are going to be global when it's all said and done. We're going to look back at 2020 and be like, "Whoa, do you remember what that was like?"

So don't miss your opportunity because you're afraid to make a change. If what you've had in the past for your job or your career is not what you want. Let's look at your opportunities for what's moving forward. There are jobs out there. There are opportunities out there. What's happening for you right now does not have to be the way that it stays from the rest of 2020 and beyond that. You are powerful. You have a voice. Stand up for what you believe in. We no longer need to be afraid of what the other people say and do. We understand the words and actions of other people are

driven by their emotions, which are created by their thoughts only. You can't control their thinking so you can't control their reactions. Let's stop trying to do that. Instead, let's look at our own actions and recognize that our own actions are driven by our own emotions and those emotions are created by our own thinking. If we don't like what we're creating in our own lives right now, or what we've created in the past, it all goes back to what we are thinking and believing about our lives, about our jobs, and about what is possible. We have the opportunity to shift that story, right now. And as we shift that story, we create a different emotion. We start taking different actions. Tiny actions repeated over time, create massive change. It all starts with one intentional decision today. That's what 2020 is teaching us. And I can't wait to see how it produces results for all of us as we move forward.

If you want to learn more about how you can actually start to leverage your own thought patterns to create exactly what you want in your life, that's what we do inside the Vet Life Academy. I'd love for you to check it out and go to [joyfuldvm.com/webinar](https://joyfuldvm.com/webinar) to learn more. That's going to wrap it up for this episode and I'll see you next time.

Thank you for listening to the Joyful DVM Podcast. If you'd like to learn more about the concept and ideas discussed here, and how to apply them to your own life to create confidence and empowerment for yourself, you'll love Vet Life Academy. To check it out and learn more, visit [joyfuldvm.com/vetlifeacademy](https://joyfuldvm.com/vetlifeacademy). And if you're loving this podcast, I'd appreciate it if you'd share it with your friends and leave us a review on iTunes. We can change what's possible in VetMed together.