

Episode 13 | Therapy vs. Coaching

FULL EPISODE TRANSCRIPT



Episode 13 | Therapy vs. Coaching

FULL EPISODE TRANSCRIPT

| 1

Therapy, Coaching, why both are valuable, and my personal experience with each, that's what we're talking about in Episode 13.

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 13. Today, I want to spend some time talking about the difference between therapy and coaching. The reason I decided to dig into this today is because recently it seems like I've been getting this question more and more frequently from you. It seems like everywhere I turn, somebody wants me to share how coaching is different than therapy, and why one is better than the other. And I want to just start out and say, I don't necessarily think one is better than the other, but I definitely think they're different. So I thought it would be helpful for me to spend a little bit of time describing both so that you can understand maybe which would be best for you or by maybe you could use both.

So let's start out and take a look at therapy. When we think about therapy and coaching, therapy heals the past. It's kind of a very generalized concept just to consider when we think about therapy. If we can think about therapy, just think about the mission of therapy is really to heal the past. It's different than coaching because coaching creates the future. The simplest way to start to look at the differences between: therapy heals. the past, coaching creates the future.

Now, when it comes to therapy, a lot of us have resistance to it. And so let's take a look at why. First off, there's a bit of a stigma around the idea of therapy. This usually comes from underlying beliefs that there's something wrong with us. We're worried that people might find out that we're seeking therapy. And ultimately there's a lot of judgment. We have the fear of judgment from other people, but we also judge ourselves partially if we need therapy. It really creates a lot of resistance and hence stops us from getting the help that a lot of us need. But therapy is very useful because it helps us to understand the past. It connects the dots of our prior experiences to help us understand our current reality, like the choices we've made and we keep making; and the way we feel in certain situations; and how our view of the world was originally shaped and created. That's what therapy helps us to do.

Now, therapy may or may not result in a medical diagnosis and therefore it may or may

Episode 13 | Therapy vs. Coaching

FULL EPISODE TRANSCRIPT

| 2

or may not result in medication. When it comes to therapy, if you're dealing with a psychologist, that's probably somebody with a degree in psychology or social work, and they're not medical doctors. So they don't tend to prescribe. Psychiatrists, on the other hand, do have a medical degree. And when there's medication involved with therapy, it's often because you're seeing a Psychiatrist. There's a little bit of a differentiation there that sometimes it's useful to understand. Unfortunately, many of us actually just stay very resistant to the idea of getting help from a therapist. Why is that? It's not because we don't recognize that we could use the help. Most of us who need it really know we need a little extra help, but it's that fear that I talked about earlier. It's the fear of what other people would say about us if they knew that we needed help. It's also this fear that there might be some formerly documented proof that we had a problem, that we were inadequate. We don't want that record out there. We also may be believing that if it is determined that we need medication, then we're really broken. And we just don't want to face that. It's those fears that actually keep many of us from seeking the help that we really do need.

Therapy heals the past, through explaining our past to us, by helping us to explain it. Coaching creates the future by helping us to realize the possibility. So you may be wondering how does coaching deal with the past? We can't just ignore the past and act like it never happened, right? I say, right, absolutely! Trying to ignore the past actually creates a lot of suffering. And it's really trying to ignore the past that often gets us to that point that we're so desperate to feel better and to get some help. But here's why ignoring the past doesn't help. It's why it actually creates some suffering. We have things in our past that are painful for us to revisit, and so we avoid them. We also avoid any future experience that we suspect could potentially result in feeling similar pain.

Logically, it makes sense if our experiences create our emotional feelings, but they don't. And so what coaching does, is it embraces where our emotional feelings are really coming from, which is our own thoughts. Our thoughts create the way that we feel, not the experiences themselves. We can recognize this as true, because right now we can experience the emotional pain of a past event just by revisiting the experience in our mind. The event is not actually happening right now. We're just thinking about it right now. Our thoughts today create our pain today. Therapy helps us understand the pain we felt back then and even a little bit of that pain that we feel today, but coaching allows us to reframe it and release it so we can use it to move forward. Coaching doesn't find dwelling on the past useful. Why? Because we can't change it. Cycling in the injustice of something that already happened just argues with the reality. We can't undo the things that have already happened in the past. Cycling on it doesn't change it from having happened. If we continue to focus on it, we just continue to stay stuck. We can't move

Episode 13 | Therapy vs. Coaching

FULL EPISODE TRANSCRIPT

| 3

forward by looking backward. As a result, this actually blocks alternative perspectives, and this is the key. Alternative perspectives are so important because remember emotion drives our actions and inactions, and it is our actions that create our lives. Coaching doesn't dismiss the past, but it pushes beyond it. And it pushes beyond the conclusions we've drawn about it to allow us to question how those conclusions are framing our lives. Coaching asks, "But what else?"

Let me walk through a personal example to show you the difference in therapy and coaching and how both can be very useful in any given situation. This is my own, personal experience of mine. Many years ago, I owned my own practice. It was a startup practice. And a couple of years in, I was at my breaking point. I was experiencing a lot of the emotional roller coaster, the really high high, the really low lows, up and down multiple times per day, lots of compassion, fatigue, anxiety, and depression. I needed help. I knew I needed help. And all of those stigmas around therapy, the fear of it being documented that I needed help, the fear of somebody finding out that I needed help had kept me from seeking help for a very long time. But I got to the point that I just couldn't do it anymore. Absolutely, I had a breaking point, and so stigma be damned, I decided to get some help. My approach was to seek the help of a therapist, but then also to seek the help of a medical doctor, because I very much suspected that my depression was something that was going to need some medical attention. It ended up, I was right about that. So the therapist helped me to figure out why my depression was created in the first place. The medical doctor helped me to manage the depression medically. During this time I was married to my first husband. And when I went to the therapist for the first time, she asked me about that relationship. I quickly responded, "Everything is fine. That's not the problem". She accepted my answer and we went to work looking for all of the problems that were creating all that stress and anxiety in my life. We dug into the main problems that we see over and over and over again in Veterinary Medicine. You know - the personal interactions, the unexpected patient outcomes, the personal inexperience, prior decisions - all those things you've heard me talk about before. We dug into all of those and just talking to her weekend and week out helped a lot. I did feel better. The medication helped level out all the mood swings and between the two, I really started to live my life again. And then one day during a conversation with my husband, just a followup conversation on a topic we discussed many, many times before, he spoke words that were a deal-breaker for our marriage. Completely unexpected, but there they were. Now, see, I was really stuck at this moment because I had a belief about marriage. You don't get divorced. That was my belief. It was indisputable. Any time throughout the course of our marriage, if any doubt about our relationship or any concern about the marriage would try to creep in, that thought, "You don't get divorced!", would just jump in and override it. I would push away my feelings and my thoughts, and I would just hang

Episode 13 | Therapy vs. Coaching

FULL EPISODE TRANSCRIPT

| 4

onto that belief. You don't get divorced. Divorce is just not an option. That is how I had approached our marriage from day one. But now, here I was in this conversation and words that were spoken, made this marriage as an ongoing reality, a complete deal-breaker. Staying, all of a sudden was no longer an option. It took just that one conversation to completely shake my previous belief about what I thought about marriage and divorce. In that one conversation, a decision about our lives was made for both of us. And that was a deal-breaker for me. I was instantly in a bit of a mental crisis.

I understand now, what was going on, was a bit of what's called Cognitive Dissonance. It's two beliefs that cannot coexist at the same time, and in between those is a lot of turmoil. I understand the neuroscientific terminology for it now. At that point, I didn't. All I knew at that point was that I was stuck and that I needed to talk to my therapist right away. I was in a bit of a mental crisis. So I got to her, I kind of shared everything that had happened. And I just want to say like this, wasn't kind of like the culmination of like an ongoing argument or dispute or anything like this. This was like a normal Monday night conversation in the kitchen. This was like nothing big and bad that is boiling and I've been ignoring, not at all. But this one conversation and the decision that was made by him that impacted both of us was for me a deal-breaker. And at that moment, as I talked about this particular situation and then talked about the history of our lives together, ultimately my therapist gave me permission to divorce him. Permission that I could not give myself, and that's what I did.

Even as I moved forward, quite happily in my life that divorce remained under the surface. It remained a thing that I failed at - a fault to judge myself for. Both the decision to marry him in the first place and the decision to divorce him later. See, I broke my own rule. I had permission from my therapist to do it and my life and his life were much better for getting divorced, but I still broke my rule. Therapy healed the past, but I needed coaching to help me create the future. Something I really didn't understand at the time. So let's jump forward. If we think about where I started, the emotional roller coaster and the depression, those were resolved. Medication really fixed that part of it. The stressors of Vet practice, all the things that drove me to what was for me, anxiety-driven depression, all of those stresses were eliminated because I changed careers. You would think that the happy fulfilling life would have resulted, right? I mean, you fix all the emotional up and down; you get rid of all the causes of the stress; happy fulfilling life should result, but it didn't. What the heck! I'd fixed all the things that I thought were keeping me from the life that I wanted, but I still didn't have the life that I wanted.

See, I was defining the life I wanted by the way I wanted to feel. And I thought that my better circumstances would automatically create a better feeling. And when they didn't, I

Episode 13 | Therapy vs. Coaching

FULL EPISODE TRANSCRIPT

| 5

was either doing it wrong or I was still missing something. There was a piece of the puzzle that I just hadn't figured out. That missing piece was coaching.

Coaching creates the future. Coaching allows us to understand our experiences so we can intentionally create the future that we want. Coaching helps us to uncover our thought patterns so we can understand where our emotions are really coming from. Emotional understanding helps us discover how we created the lives that we have and more importantly, how to create the lives that we want.

But for coaching, I might still be living my life with beliefs that limited my potential, specifically, you don't get divorced, I failed at marriage, and I broke my rule. Limiting beliefs. You don't get divorced. That belief just argues with reality. I failed at marriage. Again, just a thought error. I chose not to be married anymore. And I broke my rule. My rule was never true or useful in the first place. Coaching helped me to understand those thought patterns and what those thought patterns were creating in my life. Coaching is all about perspective and possibility. It never assumes we are broken humans. We are just humans. It doesn't focus on a problem. It finds the lessons. It seeks solutions, and it doesn't give our power to people and things outside of ourselves.

I cherish the time that I spent in therapy. My therapist gave me permission to make the choices that were best for me. It helped me to sort out the events of the past so I could find peace. It healed the past, but coaching, coaching is what opened up the future. By teaching me, I am ultimately in charge of all of my choices and emotions, and I literally can create the life that I want, no permission required.

If you want to learn more about how you can do the same thing, I definitely recommend that you check out my Everything Is Possible Webinar. You can grab a seat at joyfuldvm.com/webinar, and you can start to learn how these concepts associated with coaching can really help you to unlock your own thought patterns, gain control of your emotional wellbeing, and to take the actions that will move you forward intentionally toward the life that you want. 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. 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.

© 2020 Joyful DVM LLC