

# Episode 28 | Get ready for 2021! How to Create Intentional Happiness in Vet Med & Life

## FULL EPISODE TRANSCRIPT

### The Joyful DVM PODCAST

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Intentional happiness, a sick cat, and how this podcast didn't get recorded exactly as I planned, that's what I'm talking about in Episode 28.

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 28. Today, we're going to talk about intentional happiness. But before we get there, I'm going to share a little bit about what this day has been like over here at Joyful DVM. See this isn't the first time that I recorded this podcast. Well, I guess technically, it's the first time I've recorded it, but it's not the first time that I've spoken it. I recorded this podcast I thought earlier today, and as with all things technology, sometimes things don't go as planned. This time, complete human error on my part, selected the wrong microphone, and the entire podcast didn't get recorded. So here I am recording it again. I actually find this to be a little bit funny when I consider that the topic of this podcast is intentional happiness. And as you can hear, I've got some good help in the background, as one of our kittens is deciding to participate, you may hear some meowing along the way.

So intentional happiness. What does that even mean?

First of all, let's think about the word happiness. Happiness is actually just a version of emotion. Happy is a way that we feel. So the idea of intentional happiness means that we become happy on purpose with intention. It is actually something that we can do, but it's not something that we recognize readily. See the way that our brains work is that it's, they're always on the lookout for the negative. They're always looking for things that aren't going right. They're always looking for the things that may be putting us in an area of inconvenience or danger. That's just the way the brain's designed. And if we don't intentionally redirect it toward more positive, useful thoughts, then it's no wonder that a net negative emotional state is what results. A state where we're feeling frustrated and overwhelmed and perhaps hopeless and things like that.

Given the state of 2020, it's very normal for us to be feeling that way. There's just been a lot of circumstances out there. And as our brain has interpreted those often through a negative lens, then the negative emotions do result. I think, now more than ever, exploring this idea of intentional happiness is really crucial.

Intentional happiness is a gift that we can give ourselves. When we make intentional happiness a priority then the things that happen in the world don't automatically start to steal our joy and happiness. We actually take back some control over our own emotional wellbeing.

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Many of us have believed that the way that we remain emotionally healthy, the way that we feel happy, the way that we feel peaceful, is determined by the environment that we're in, by the things that happen around us. And I know for me, this is absolutely true. I 100% thought that was the way that this works. I was wrong about that. And I'm so glad that I was.

See, the way that I feel is never created by the things that happen around me. It's only created by what I believe about the things that are happening. Being able to develop this skill over time has really been useful. And that showed up today when I recorded this entire podcast, got to the end, and found nothing had actually been captured. Years ago, this type of thing would have sent me into it a tailspin. I would have been angry. I would have been really focused on the time that I had wasted recording a podcast that didn't get recorded. I would have been frustrated with the technology. I would have blamed and I would have stood in that and eventually probably gotten around to recording it again. And it probably would have been a little bit tense. It might not even have gotten done that day if I'm being honest. That frustration that I was feeling very well could have led me to make the decision to just screw it for the day and to do it later. But not today. That's not the way this all unfolded.

Today, when I got to the end and I went to review the recording so I can send it off to my wonderful Podcast Virtual Assistant, Joren, to who I want to give a shout out because she's amazing. She always gets my podcasts out into the world when they're supposed to be there, even when I'm missing deadlines, which seems to be happening a little more frequently lately.

Today, I decided, "Nope, we're still going to make this happen today". Today, I wasn't going to let my momentary frustration over the lack of an audio file be the reason that I didn't follow through. Today, I decided that I was not going to allow this one little bump in my day way to ruin the entire day. This would not have always been the case. Today, what I was able to recognize is that although my morning did not start out the way I thought it would - so I thought I would come in here to my office; I would check some emails; answer some support calls; I would then record this podcast, and then I would start into my series of one-on-one coaching calls that I had scheduled - that's the way I thought this day was going to be. And when got to the end of the podcast, right before my coaching call started, that's when I found there was no audio file. My options were to be very frustrated about it or to not be. It really was simply a choice. And so today, instead of getting all frustrated about it and becoming overwhelmed as I looked at all the other things on my calendar today, I just reminded myself of one simple thing, "That although I thought the day was going to unfold a particular way, it actually was never going to happen that way, I just didn't know it".

So the way that it was is the way that it was always going to be. And I found certainty going into my day today, having a plan for how it's all going to unfold. But what was true was that that plan was simply a wish, was nothing that I actually controlled, and the reality became something very different.

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My ability to see that at the moment helped me to not be frustrated because I could see it for what it was - was just something that happened but wasn't the end of the world. I didn't make it mean more than a dead. So as I got to the later in the day, I simply readjusted a few items to prioritize the recording of this podcast. Because just like you guys, every day, day in and day out, there's always a constant shuffle of priorities and urgent things that need to be done. We do get to decide which ones we focus on.

And so today getting this podcast recorded so I can get it to Joren in somewhat of a timely fashion this week was certainly a priority and I was able to make it happen. It also changed the tenor of this entire episode. It's not exactly where I went the first time when I recorded the Intentional Happiness podcast. That said, I know this version was the right one and the one that was always supposed to be made.

This kind of ability to reframe situations at the moment, to change our experiences at the moment, is such a wonderful skill. And I can see now, looking back to the other events of this week, that has been very much activated for me.

Earlier in the week, my very favorite cat had some respiratory issues, and I can't even say had because she still does have. But earlier in the week, as I'm sitting here working, was on Monday actually, was working away as usual, and it's not unusual for these guys to be piled up in a cat bed on the desk or in one of the other areas here in the office. And what I notice as I watched her was that she was breathing much more quickly than is normal for a cat. I watched her over a period of hours. I took some video on my phone. I double-checked the rate. I went and got my stethoscope and listened to her. Didn't hear any murmurs. She sounded like she had some airway, upper airway noise. I noticed she looked hunched. I thought she looked uncomfortable. I palpated her. She had some fecal balls, not obstipated or anything, but definitely could feel some hard stool. Now, those kinds of things.

So putting on my vet hat to try to diagnose my cat. As the day went on, the breathing didn't improve and I became worried because I knew what I could determine here on my own was pretty much maxed out and I had no reason and no solution.

So off we went to the vet school. Thankfully I live pretty darn close to the University of Missouri and I was able to get her in there through the emergency service to be seen. Long story short, she did come home with me that night. And over that experience, I had a bit of an emotional roller coaster. I went from being calm on arrival to being hysterically devastated at the diagnosis of congestive heart failure to flat out pissed off at the, Oh, sorry. No, she's not in heart failure, to just tired, when I just decided to take her home. It was quite an experience, and I want to share this with you because as I was going through it, I found myself considering the way that I was feeling. I found myself as the

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watcher of what my brain was trying to do with the situation.

All that was really happening, at the bird's eye level, was that I was sitting in a parking lot. My cat was inside. People were saying words to me on the phone. That's it. Bird's eye level, that's all that's happening. Now, my brain turned it into an entire story and it was that story that created the initial kind of calm that turned into hysterical grief that turned into anger that turned into a bit of resignation. That emotional roller coaster was only created by my brain - by the thoughts that I was thinking, by the story I created about those events that were happening. Quite fascinating to consider that. It also gave me an opportunity to consider from a client's perspective what this is like in the world of curbside.

My client's perspective, not that they necessarily knew anything more when they were just sitting in an exam room, but somehow it's just different sitting in the parking lot. I can't really even explain why. It just feels different. For me, it elevated the level of hopelessness and helplessness that I experienced. I already knew that I personally, as a veterinarian, had tapped out what I was able to do for my pet at my house office. So I knew that. I knew that even the things that I had available to me from a mobile perspective, didn't include diagnostics like radiographs, which is what I knew she needed. So I did have to rely on my colleagues to help me sort this out. Completely was comfortable with that decision. And then as I sat there waiting for information, I was somewhat surprised by the level of overwhelm and helplessness that I felt. It wouldn't have been any different if I had been sitting in an exam room or if I'd been sitting in the waiting room. But somehow it felt different. I would be waiting either way. It was quite an interesting exploration you will of my own thought processes as I went through this and then eventually as I made the request to pull her out of the oxygen cage, check her pulse socks, let's just see if she truly needs to be there. Getting information that she was able to maintain her oxygenation, and I took her home against medical orders. I'll be real honest. We were just going home at this point. Took her home and I've been able to watch her over the last few days.

So now we have an appointment to go back tomorrow to figure out what is actually wrong with this cat. And as I record this podcast episode, right now, I would think nothing. Right now, she's curled up asleep in the chair. She just finished taking a bath. Her respiratory rate appears to be totally normal. But I also know last night, after she ate her dinner and ran around after the other cat for a while, her respiratory rate wasn't normal. So we're going to do a little bit more investigating. And my brain definitely wants to drag me right back into despair and hopelessness to the extent that we had a long conversation, my husband and I, last night about all the terrible things that are probably wrong with her and how I probably won't be able to fix any of them. Not a very intentionally happy place to go.

I offer you this story because as you go through the same things, and as your mind takes you down these emotional roller coasters, I just want you to recognize that it's totally normal. That this is the

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human experience, and sometimes we just end up in a catastrophic, downward spiral. But with the practice of intentional happiness, we don't have to stay there.

This is the skill that gives us the ability to consider all the other alternatives perspectives and to think about these different situations in a way that maintains our peace and joy. So, although I also had all of the uncomfortable emotions throughout this experience, including not only what happened with the cat, but then also what happened this morning with the podcast, I could simultaneously maintain my joy and peace. Years ago, I wouldn't have been able to do that. I have now figured out how to be able to remain happy and to remain peaceful even when there are events in the world that my mind turns into a catastrophic story that also at the same time create emotions that are super uncomfortable.

This skill helps me to keep in mind that it's never the events of the world that create my experience. That it's always only what I create for myself. And this is a skill that we teach very intentionally inside of [Vet Life Academy](#).

Now, that being said, we're getting ready to move from 2020 to 2021. And if you guys are anything like me, you're probably looking forward to the change. But here's the spoiler - there's nothing magical that's going to happen on the 1st of January. The challenges that we're experiencing right now are going to be slightly different as time passes, but it's unlikely that there's going to be a drastic change when that calendar flips from 2020 to 2021.

I point this out, not to be a downer, but just to share an opportunity to get ready now to create what we want next year. If we take the time to prioritize what we actually want 2021 to be like, to actually consider the experience that we want to have, then we can actually get to work now creating it for ourselves. The experiences of our lives are defined by the emotions that we feel, and the emotions that we feel are not created by the events of the world. It's only created by our own thought processes - what we believe, what we think, and our opinions.

What we focus on, we will create more of. So if we work to develop that skill of intentional happiness, if we work to adjust our focus on what we actually do want in our lives, instead of continuing to live at the effect of the things that are happening as if we have no choice in its impact, then we can create a different experience for ourselves in 2021, no matter what happens.

This is something I attempt to do every single year. And I think this year it's more important than ever because the world just keeps throwing all kinds of different events at us. And if we don't understand that the way that we feel about those events is something that we can actually intentionally control, then it becomes very easy to become hopeless and frustrated and bitter.

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So as we get ready to move into 2021, we are getting ready to enroll new people into the Intentional Happiness Strategic Success Program. This is a Joyful DVM program, separate from our other ones, that is focused on creating what we want over a 12 month period of time. How we get there is going to be determined by the steps that we take now. Creating that focus today will help us move into that year in the right mindset. And then we can continue to develop that intentional happiness as we move through all of 2021.

So if you want to be part of the 2021 Intentional Happiness Strategic Success Program, you definitely want to make sure that you're on our email list because that's the only way that you're going to be able to find out how to join us.

Now, those of you in Vet Life Academy, I've got you covered because of course, you're already going to be part of this program. But the rest of you who aren't, who perhaps haven't taken the leap to join us inside of Vet Life Academy and go all-in on all the thought work and the mindfulness, this may be exactly what you need to give you that little boost of confidence, that massive boost of happiness, and to help you reestablish that control and intentional living, which will make all the difference in the world in your experience next year. So to make sure that you're on our email list, jump over to joyfuldvm.com and click on the join email button right there on the homepage. We'll add you to our email list and you'll be the first to know when the 2021 Intentional Happiness Strategic Success Program opens up for new students.

Remember my friends, our experience is created only by our own thoughts about the events of the world. We have choices here that we don't even recognize exist. This week brought that home to me in a clear way that I probably needed a bit of a reminder for. Not only in that podcast issues that we had this morning but also in the ongoing experience related to my beloved cat, who has an illness that I have yet to define. If I can figure out how to maintain some peace and happiness amongst all of this and the other things that I didn't even mention that just keep piling up because of course 2020, then I promise that you can do this too. This is where you step up and say, "Look, I may not be able to control the world, but I can always control my own experience. And I choose joy and happiness for me".

Alright, my friends, I'm going to leave you with that. I'll see you next week.

Thank you for listening to the Joyful DVM Podcast. If you'd like to learn more about the concepts 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 Vet Med together.