

# Episode 52 | How We Block Our Potential

## FULL EPISODE TRANSCRIPT



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How we block our own potential with a filter we don't even know exists, that's what we're talking about in Episode 52.

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 52. Today, we're going to talk about potential. So potential, what on earth is potential? I think we start out and we just think about the definition of that word. So potential is really what's possible and so we think about our potential in a lot of different categories. We like to put it into little buckets. We think about our potential in maybe our health - so our physical wellbeing. Perhaps we think about our potential as far as our career and the jobs that are available to us and the income levels that are available to us. Even the workflow, like the days on, days off that are available to us. So we think about potential from a work perspective. We think about potential from a life perspective - so maybe a relationship perspective - what's possible in maybe an intimate relationship, what's possible in friendships. Those types of relationships, or in the parent-child relationship, whether you are the parent or the child, or probably both. So we think about potential in regards to that. We also think about potential in regard to the future - so what's possible down the road. This can be again in all of those buckets or it can just kind of be overall. These ideas and these thoughts about what we believe is possible for ourselves - our potential - are always floating around in there. So where on earth do they come from? This is where it gets really, really interesting.

What we believe is possible for ourselves in any of these areas is limited by much of what we have drawn conclusions about over time. So the potential is limited by what we believe is possible. So I'll say that again because we're talking about potential and possibilities, if they're interchangeable and they kind of are, but potentials kind of like the overall concept. What we believe is possible is how we can measure our own potential. If we believe that what is possible is very limited then our potential becomes very limited. If we believe what is possible is expansive and infinite, then our own potential becomes infinite. This is true in any of these areas.

What's interesting though is if we take a look at how we actually feel right now. What we actually believe about ourselves and our potential in any one of these areas. We can just look at our careers as an example and we look at our careers in veterinary medicine, and we think about what is possible for me in the future in veterinary medicine. Many of us are concluding that what's possible is just more of the same. That this is the way that it is. That we're going to be stressed. We're going to be anxious. We're going to be overworked. We're going to be underpaid. We're not going to have any work-life balance. We're never going to be able to set any boundaries. That our own personal wellbeing is going to suffer at the hands of the career that we chose. That it was a bad decision. Then

we start drawing all these other conclusions. So we summarize our careers through that kind of thinking. When we try to look forward to something different, if that's the lens that we're looking at the future through, then it does seem very limited, a hundred percent. So what if we kind of take a step back and think about what is it that you believe about your job? What is it that you believe about what's possible for you in your job? Because if we can identify that stuff, then we can see where the potential really is being limited. It's not limited by the things that happen around us. It's only limited by what we believe about it. I know that that doesn't seem like it could be true.

I want to take a couple of minutes here and try to unpack this and explain how it is that we got to this point in human evolution. How did we get to this point where we only see potential through the lens of the tangible things that we can measure today? Because that's exactly where we're at. We're in a place in our lives, many of us, where we look at the world around us and we only examine it through what we know as a species that has been taught to us from the humans that came before and the things that we experience for ourselves and the conclusions that we draw. But it wasn't always like that. This is such an important thing to consider because if we're looking at what's possible for all of us, for the world in general, for ourselves individually, you can make it as broad or as narrow as you want to, if we're looking at that potential, what we believe is possible and we're only taking into consideration the things that we can prove and measure, then we are limiting our potential. Greatly limiting our potential.

Many of you guys are being very logical, very scientific. Your mind likes to figure things out and analyze things. It seems like this is very true. What is possible for you can only be predicted through what you know; what you can measure; what it can be proven. That's that logical brain which we use a lot in medicine. We use it a lot. We'd look at all the evidence of all the diseases that people have identified before and the ways that they've treated them before and the results they've gotten before and over time those have been accumulated into these nice little textbooks and then we have a pet that comes into us and we look at its symptoms and we get some history, some information from a client and we think about that patient in front of us through this very logical framework of all this data that was gathered from people who went through experiences before, and we put the pieces of the puzzle together. What is possible for that patient becomes constricted within what we know about the disease. Very logical. We use this all the time in veterinary medicine.

We also are applying the same kinds of concepts to our whole lives. Every human is doing this. We're looking at what's possible only through what we already know. What we miss in all of this is that knowledge is really a bit of a filter for potential. It's a big filter. If you restrict what's possible for you only to the things that you know have been possible for somebody else or that you believe is possible for everybody or don't believe, I think it's probably stronger, then your own potential becomes blocked. We didn't always use to do this. So I'm going to go all the way back. Think about a few different things. I want us to think about electricity. I want us to think about automobiles. I want us

to think about cell phones. And I want us to think about the internet. Those four things - electricity, automobiles, cell phones, and the internet - in this day and age, very normal parts of our lives. Absolutely very normal parts of our lives. There are people now in the veterinary profession who have never known a life without these things. They've been around that long at this point. It's hard for people who never existed without these things to consider what it must have been like before. So even if you aren't in that younger generation, you can certainly consider what it was like when you had your telephone was like hooked to the wall and you can talk to your parents or your grandparents and you can learn about a time when the telephone was the party line. You picked it up and everybody could hear. And then before that, when it didn't even exist at all. The same thing with automobiles. It's not that long ago that these things were created. They didn't always exist, but they came from somewhere. What I want to use as examples to show you is that these ideas to the people who lived before they existed were crazy talk. That this stuff was even possible was ludicrous to the people that came before or at least a good deal of the people that came before. But you know who it wasn't ludicrous to? The people who figured it out. The people who believed in it. The people who thought there's a way for us to make light without fire. There's a way for us to drive distances for us to get from one place to another in a way other than horseback. The people who thought let's take this phone off the wall and figure out a way to put it in our hands so we can carry it around. And the people who thought there's got to be a way for us to connect everybody electronically through some kind of network which became the internet.

So somebody at some point had this idea, and that idea was not limited by what they already saw. Their potential wasn't limited by the filter of what they could prove, what they could tangibly measure at the moment in time when they were thinking about these things. It was imagination. What could be possible? What is it that I don't understand yet? What if? The "what if" statements. What if we could figure out how to make light without fire? What if we could figure out how to travel long distances and it didn't require animals to do it? What if we could talk to each other no matter where we were and not have to be tied to a location? What if we could talk to thousands of people just by flipping on a camera on our internet. Somebody somewhere dreamed about those things. It was through that dream that the potential really became ignited. The potential is always there, friends. It has always been there. What limits it is not the factual framework of the world around us. It is simply what we believe about what's around us. As we have, as an entire species, gotten more logical, started to use our mind in that more analytical way, we've begun to view the world through an analytical framework. Our mind can't analyze the things that happen in the world that it can't explain and so what it wants to do is dismiss that. It really starts to push it away.

When we're younger, when we're little kids, what is the word that we often use? What is the question that we ask? We ask all the time - why, why, why, why, why? We're always asking why. We don't know why. Then our parents explained things and our teachers and our mentors and as we get older and we have that curiosity, we continue to dig to understand why. That's a normal thing, guys. That

curiosity is a very, very normal thing, and there's growth that happens through it. As we take in then all the explanations, some of them that don't serve us very well at all, become part of the filter through which we see the rest of the world. They become the filter through which we see our lives. As we have experiences, our own experiences, they become a double-edged sword. Every experience is a massive opportunity for positive growth, absolutely 100%. But those experiences also come with them the potential for us to turn it inward and to use that sword on ourselves through things like self-doubt and judgment and shame and guilt and blame and inadequacy and lack of ability and lack of self-worth.

We can take our experiences and then determine, have an opinion of them, that they were right or wrong, and when we conclude that they were wrong experiences, that they turned out badly, many of us will turn that on ourselves rather than just using it as a data point. There was an experience. This was the outcome. Then recognizing that we get to decide how that plays into our filter moving forward. But because we have the logical brain, because the logical brain is always trying to say, "Yes. It was good or bad. Right or wrong", in every situation making everything very black and white and binary. If it's not obviously positive - a good outcome - the outcome you intended, then our logical brain wants to tell us that it all went wrong. That we did it wrong and enough of those get accumulated over time then we become wrong. We become the problem. At least that's what we believe. None of that's true at all. It's all simply the filter. It's the filter that has been created over time through your experiences and the conclusions that you've drawn about those experiences. Many of those conclusions are adopted. They're not even yours.

The way that potential expands is when you start to open up what's possible. When you start to question all the rules, all the facts, all the proof that's in front of you. When we start to allow ourselves to think about our lives and to think about our own existence, through the lens of things outside and beyond what we can see and measure tangibly here at this moment, then potential expands. Then you become more than what somebody else can measure and evaluate. What's true is you've always been more than that. When you were little and you asked why before the world really had its opportunity to influence you, you were very solid in who you were. Many of us don't remember that at all because we were so young and because the human experience has built into it. This influencing and conditioning of the experiences, this is how we grow as a human. This is how we do this life. We come into this world. We go through a bunch of experiences. We eventually get to take over our own lives, like be responsible for ourselves. It is all of those prior experiences that build into it this framework around what we think is possible for ourselves and for other people and for the world in general. That is what creates the potential.

What I want to offer for you is that if you think there are things in your life that just aren't possible for you, now, you can maybe consider that it's simply the potential that's blocked and not the truth of what is actually available to you. So make that list. What is it that you think you can't do? What is it

that you think you're never going to have? What is it that you think that you've messed up so much that you're at the point of no return? Every single one of those things. The only thing that keeps that truth is what you believe about it. If we tightly hang on to that framework; to that filter through which you're seeing your life, then that will be your reality. What happens is as we build that filter to see our lives through, through our experiences and what the conclusions we draw about our experiences and the conclusions that other people have drawn, their opinions of us, the things they said to us that we have woven into our own filters, as we look at our lives through the filter, then the possibility is very small. It's like trying to look at possibility through a pinhole. It seems very overwhelming and it seems very negative. Instead, we can just start to question the filter. What if that filter is not real? What if it doesn't actually exist? What if all of this is just a human thing that humans have made up to try to feel safe because that's actually what's happening? Why do we even care about our prior experiences? The reason we care about our prior experiences and the reason that we are taught things by our parents and our mentors and people like that is because we believe it keeps us safe.

Stepping into the unknown is uncomfortable because we don't know. Uncertainty is probably one of the most motivating emotions in the human experience. By motivating, I mean, we do all kinds of things to avoid it. We don't love feeling uncertain. Uncertainty often comes with fear. Fear often comes with some kind of negative experience. Something that's happened to us before or happened to somebody else where they felt very afraid and uncertain and had a very negative experience, and then they're trying to warn us off from having those in our own experiences. Now, I'm not saying it's all bad. So being taught not to step out in front of a bus is a really good thing to be taught, a hundred percent. But if we take it to the extreme, to where we become afraid of every bus we ever see, now that's not helpful. This is where we have to look at the filter. Are the things that we're holding in our filter by which we are allowing ourselves to see the possibility for what's available to us in the future in our own lives, are they the things that we really want to be there? The opportunity? Here's the question. The filter - all of the things that you're believing about yourself - and this is where I always recommend starting, everything you believe about yourself, I want you to question every one of those things. Why do you believe that? Where did it come from? Is there really even proof? If what you believe about you is something that somebody taught you; something that somebody told you, even somebody who loves you, I want you to question that. I want you to recognize that you are not required to believe what anybody else says about you. You are the only one who knows you. You are created intentionally. You came here for a purpose and for a reason. As we get older, we start to feel the pull for that. That is what that discontent is. It's not that you're doing your life wrong. It's not that you've made a bunch of wrong choices. It's just that it's time for you to expand your own possibilities. It takes us growing up; going through experiences; having the influence of other people for us to start to recognize what does and doesn't work for each one of us. This gets to be an individual choice. There is nobody in this world that knows better than you how to live your life.

Let me say that again. There is nobody in this world that knows better than you how to live your life.

You are equipped with everything that you need to live it to its fullest potential. The greatest thing that blocks us right now is not our abilities. It's not what we're good at and bad at. It's simply what we believe about what's possible. It is the filter. As soon as we allow ourselves to consider that something different is possible from what we're experiencing right now, the door starts to open. This becomes so important for us in veterinary medicine because it is very easy for us to adopt the beliefs of the people that we spend the most time with. In veterinary medicine, particularly in clinical practice, we are around people who are often struggling, much like we are. Who are experiencing the same things and they're going through the same stressors that we do. The client interactions, the unexpected events, the personal inexperience, the prior decisions like those are the four main categories of veterinary stress, and everybody in a veterinary hospital is experiencing those four levels in a variety of different ways and sharing their experiences verbally. As their experiences get shared verbally and their conclusions about their experiences get shared verbally, then we begin to adopt those same thought patterns. We began focusing on it. It begins weaving itself into the filter through which we see our lives. So it's no wonder that many of us get to that point that we feel hopeless and burnout and frustrated and lots of regrets, "Why the hell did I ever do this job?" When we look at it only through the filter, of course, we're going to end up there. What I want to offer you here is just to recognize that some of the stuff that has gotten caught up in your filter isn't yours. It's other people's stuff and you don't have to keep it. You get to decide how tight or how broad that filter is. If we can take 50 steps back to the heart of who we are, which is absolutely miraculous, stop looking at the world through just what we can logically see about it today at this point in time, and really consider the human species from an evolutionary standpoint, even just go back to what you can gather data on if you want to, to what you can read about, go back hundreds of years, even just go back just that far and see how much the human species has been able to grow and develop and what has been able to build, just look at that. Go back 200 years. Look at what the human species had been able to build and tell me that you can't say miracles in that. There's no way. It doesn't make any sense logically how we were able to create any of this stuff as a human species, except for one reason, and that's because we all have unlimited potential.

What's possible for all of us is unlimited. It is infinite. The only thing that blocks it is the filter through which we go after it; the filter through which we see it. It really is what we believe. What we believe about what is possible is what creates what is possible for us. Our potential is only blocked by what we think. You hear me say many times, what you focus on, you create more of. We know this is true in the veterinary hospital and this helps to explain that. It's because of the filter. You're only seeing what's possible for you through the realm of what you've already experienced there. You're only seeing what's possible for you through what you can tangibly measure and logically explain. But if you take off that filter, if you take off that restriction, the possibility is only limited to what you can see, then everything becomes possible. It really does. The rest of your life can start to become a bit of your own playground. You really get to do in this life whatever you want to do and you're the only one who knows what's best for you. There are no rules. There are no things that you have to do,

boxes that you have to check to have a good life. Your life is amazing. That you are here is intentional and you get to decide what direction you want to take it next.

The final thing I want you to leave you with is I want you to just consider the three or four places in your life where you feel the most stuck. Think about those three or four places. I want you to write those down and I want you to go through and I want you to ask yourself, why. "Why do I feel stuck here? Why do I feel stuck? What am I believing about my circumstances? What am I believing about possibilities for the future in these areas?" If you answer those questions, you're going to start to see what's hanging on inside your filter. You can also find all the opportunities then to start to let it go because the question you'll follow that up with is, "What if this isn't true?" That's what I'm talking about, guys.

All the tangible things that we can see in this world, they're here for an instant, but who you are is infinite. This life experience is a moment in time. You were existing before and you will exist after. This life is not meant to make you suffer. This life is not meant to teach you a lesson. This life isn't meant to be evaluated as good or bad right or wrong. That's not what this is about. This life is simply here to help us grow into more of who we are at that deep level; at that soul level. As we start to build into our filter, the faith that we are all here for a reason; that we are all infinitely, worthy, and lovable, and capable, then what is possible for us in this human experience begins to grow. If we keep measuring it through only what we can see, only what we can prove, then we will just continue to shrink our own individual potentials. We will continue to shrink what's possible for us and our human experience will become harder and harder. I just want you to know that's not required. This does not need to be difficult. So if you'll just start to play around with the idea that maybe everything that you believe about the world can be questioned; that everything that you believe about yourself may not be true and that there is a much greater purpose at play here with an infinite potential available to you, then you can start to let yourself dream about what's possible. The more that you spend time dreaming about what's possible, dreaming about the things that you would love for your life, your focus starts to shift to that. As you shift to that, you bring that into your reality. You are way more powerful than you think.

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

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We can change what's possible in Vet Med together.