

Episode 53 | Feeling Stuck?

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The **Joyful DVM**TM
PODCAST



for **Veterinary
Professionals**

with **Dr. Cari Wise**
Veterinarian
Certified Life Coach

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Feeling stuck and believing you've made decisions that have limited what's possible for you in the future, that's what we're talking about in Episode 53.

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 53. Today, we're going to be talking about feeling stuck, but before we get there, I just wanted to take a minute to celebrate our 53rd podcast episode. We have officially started year two of the Joyful DVM podcast, and I am so excited because just recently we crossed over 20,000 downloads of this podcast. I have really enjoyed talking to you guys every single week, getting the interaction, the emails, the comments, keep them coming, and if there's anything specific that you would like to hear me talk about on the podcast, please don't hesitate to send me an email. Send it to Cariw@joyfuldvm.com and I'll be more than happy to consider talking about your request on a future episode.

For today though, let's talk about feeling stuck because I know many of us feel stuck and we can actually end up in a bit of a loop of feeling stuck if we don't really understand what's going on. So I want to talk about that. It's something that a lot of us do experience. Let's just kind of start out and talk about what do we even mean when we say that we're stuck.

Many of us, when we say that we're stuck, what we mean is that we recognize that our lives aren't moving in the direction that we want them to move. We recognize that maybe our relationships aren't moving forward and these could be intimate relationships; that could be friendships; that could be family relationships. We may recognize that our careers are just kind of the same old day in and day out and so there's no forward momentum there. We may realize that all different kinds of aspects of our lives. As we start to see this, this failure to have forward movement or momentum in these different areas of our lives, we often describe them as being stuck, and overall, we describe our whole lives as being stuck.

What's so interesting about this is many of us struggle with another question, with the most important question, quite honestly, that we could ask ourselves, which is, "What do we want?" What do you want? What do you want as far as your relationships are concerned? What do you want as far as your career is concerned? What is it that you want for your lives? And because we get so stuck in the groundhog day of the same routine over and over and over - wake up, go to work; some of us run through a fast-food restaurant, come home, collapse on the couch, fall asleep, get up, do it all over again tomorrow. It's this constant cycle of the same thing, day in and day out, day in and day out, the days keep ticking by; the time keeps passing, but we recognize internally that we're not moving

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forward. That nothing's changing and we feel very stuck. This goes on long enough, and we start to feel frustrated.

Many of us in our stuckness feel frustrated. We feel disinterested, disengaged, and we can start to feel even resentful about it as well. We try to make sense of it and this is where it starts to get a little tricky. So hang with me here.

When we recognize that we are stuck, when we recognize that we are unhappy in the way that our lives are, maybe it's not all of your life; maybe it's just your career; maybe it's just the relationship, for many of us, it ends up compounding into everything. But when you have an area where you are feeling stuck, what you typically recognize is that you're unhappy. That there's something about that that creates this emotion of unhappiness when you experience it. When we start to try to figure that part out, we recognize kind of two things. We've concluded that we're stuck - the things aren't moving things aren't changing - and we recognize how we feel about that. It's how we feel about it that gets us thinking about it because when we recognize that we're not happy; that we're not engaged; that we're not excited or motivated or looking forward to things, then we start to question, "What's going on here? Why is this happening?" As we start to question it, we start to find reasons why. We start to draw conclusions about why we are stuck. This is where it starts to get a little tricky because most of us when we have recognized that we're feeling stuck, that we are stuck and we're on that quest to figure out why the conclusions that we come up with, the reasons that we justify our stuckness with our blame, quite honestly, what we blame being stuck on, are the things that we can't control.

A lot of the time, it's things like the career we chose and we become like broad, sweeping reasons, quite honestly, when it goes on long enough. So it can come down to the career we chose. Before we get to that kind of level of blame, oftentimes it's things like the schedules. Well, I picked a career in veterinary medicine and so therefore I'm forced to work six days a week. It's the pay. Well, I chose to be a veterinary technician and therefore I'm never going to make more than \$17 or \$18 an hour. So those kinds of conclusions that we start to draw about our lives add to our stuckness.

We think that that's the reason that we're stuck because we've made these prior decisions to pursue these careers. I'm talking about careers at this point where you could actually take all this and also apply it to like a relationship or another area of your life. But we've made a prior decision, in this case, I'm talking about the career, we've made that prior decision to pursue this career and now we're in this career and we feel stuck and we're trying to figure out why and so we start to identify components of our current experience in the career as the reason that we're stuck. Where this becomes super problematic is that lots of us draw the same conclusions. When we draw the same conclusions, we feed off each other with those conclusions. We just keep offering each other more evidence of being stuck in these lives that we've created by these careers that we've chosen. As we

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do that, the stuckness doesn't get better. It actually compounds and we feel worse and we feel more stuck and then we feel more hopeless. That becomes this very vicious, downward spiral that doesn't seem like there's a way out of it.

What I want us to recognize here is that being stuck is actually a signal for you. It's an intentional signal. Whenever we feel stuck, our natural tendency is to figure out why, and that why typically comes as blame. So let's just see that for what it is. We don't need to judge it. We don't need to make it bigger than it is. Let's just recognize that's what humans do. So we recognize we're not happy. We feel stuck. We want to know why. We look around us. We see the things around us that we're not happy with. Those become the blame points and we start to buy into this idea that if those things were different, that we wouldn't feel stuck, which may be true and may not be true. But what I want us to do is take another step back and see the opportunity here. That every time you feel stuck, it's actually just a signal. It's actually very intentional.

So what does that signal trying to tell you? What that signal is trying to tell you is that you've just hit a point in your life that you're ready to grow again. As human beings, here in this human experience, we are ever-evolving. We are always growing. We are meant to always be engaged in what's coming next for us. But when we get stuck in the conveyor belt of the same thing, day in and day out, day in and day out, where we're not engaging in our lives, we're just getting up and going through the motions and doing the same thing over and over again, we really miss most of the purpose while we're here. Now I'm not saying that we aren't contributing, and I'm not saying that we shouldn't have stable jobs and go and do that. Please don't misunderstand. That's not what I'm saying at all. But what I'm saying is if we don't engage in our lives through those experiences and we just start to roll with the punches and really adopt the belief patterns that everybody else around us has and absorb everybody else's energy and their emotional state then we are ever creating that for ourselves. The experiences that we have, day in and day out, really are something that only we control from an emotional standpoint. There are always going to be things that happen in the world. There's always going to be things that people say and things that people do. There's always going to be the perfect schedule at 8:00 AM in the morning and by 10:15, the whole thing's blown up and nothing's happening the way that it's supposed to. Those things are always going to happen. Those can either add to your human experience or they can pull back from it.

When we start to blame those changes - those unexpected events - for creating an emotional reaction in us and therefore creating our overall experience, then we start to really disempower ourselves. We do that enough. We start to feel very stuck because we do feel like victims of the circumstances. We really do feel like we don't have any control.

We believe I should say, we believe that we don't have control over our lives and over what happens to us. But what's true here is that we don't have any control over what happens, but we have 100% control over how it impacts us. Do you see the difference? We think we don't have any control over

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what happens to us, but we have 100% control over how what happens influences us. They are two different things. We always stick them together. When we leave them stuck together, then our lives become at the mercy of the things that happen. The things that people say. The things that people do. Whatever happens with this schedule. All the things - a pandemic, a rainy day, if they're out of your favorite kind of creamer at the coffee shop. Your life becomes the effect of all of these things which ends up being a lot of a rollercoaster, not fun. As the disappointing things happen - being out of creamer or rainy day, the schedule that goes to hell - as those things happen, we start to gather that as evidence that we're just kind of stuck in this misery without any control over it. We miss the signals that there's an opportunity here for us to re-engage. But as we really start to notice that stuckness in our lives, what we can really intentionally start to use this for is as a questioning point because that signal really is an opportunity for you to ask yourself, "Okay, what do I want to be different here?". You're going to be able to come up with a whole list of things that you want to be different that are somebody else's responsibility. So the way people behave, for example, you want that to be different, or you want the coffee shop just to not be out of what it is that you want. I mean, you're a patron after all. Right? You go there. You want something in there out of it. It's something they sell every single day. So that kind of stuff. That kind of stuff we identify quickly, "Yeah. I want that to be different", but I'm not talking about that. I'm not talking about the external things that you're never going to control because you're never going to control them.

Spending a lot of time being frustrated about the things you aren't going to control only hurts you. It doesn't change anything else. So it's so important to recognize that when we spend a lot of time being frustrated and angry over other people's behaviors or over circumstances or over cloudy days and over people being out of stuff at restaurants. If we feel we spent a lot of time getting frustrated and angry about that, we just have to see that we're being frustrated and angry about something that we can't control and the only person suffering through that is us. So it's not useful at all. I'm not even talking about that part. What I'm talking about is your experience of it. How can you experience it differently? You can experience it differently without it being different. It all comes back to what you believe and what is important for you. Do you know what's important for you? Do you know what you're working toward? You don't have to have some great big goal. When we started out heading toward a career in veterinary medicine, we had a very big goal. We had a big goal to get into veterinary medicine.

Whether you're a veterinarian, veterinary technician, even some practice managers out there, this may have been what you worked toward for years. If you have a professional degree, obviously was something that you worked for for years. So you have that goal and keeping that in mind forward, focus kept you moving in that direction even with all the circumstances of the world just kept happening around you. What happens to us is once we get out into the real world and we finish up our academic educations and we get into the routine of our jobs, the experiences that we have become a little bit on the predictable side. If we aren't engaging in our own lives, in a deeper way,

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actually working towards something, keeping in mind why we do what we do, then we do start to live our lives at the effect of the things that happen, day in and day out. There are just no other inputs that really light us up. If we haven't intentionally put our focus somewhere, then your focus will be on what's available to you in the immediate area that you're in. So when we fail at what we focused on something, when we fail to be working towards something, then our life does become the result of the things around us. Not because those things are in control of our lives, but only because we don't engage our minds in anything different.

So when we're feeling stuck, we're not actually stuck in the circumstances. We're stuck mentally. We're stuck in a story that we've accepted as the end of the story. We fail to recognize there's so much more for us to learn and to experience if we would just expand our own perspectives a little bit. That's where the question comes in.

Every single thing that we experienced guys is an opportunity to learn something. The harder it is, the greater the negative emotional impact on us, the greater the lesson. Have you ever noticed? It seems like some of the hardest things just happen over and over and over again has a reason. There's something you're supposed to learn there and you haven't learned it yet. You're not supposed to learn what somebody else should do. You're supposed to learn how you're supposed to grow through that. What is the lesson for you? As you start to engage in your external reality through this lens of what am I supposed to learn here, it all gets really interesting because you start to see that your experiences all have a purpose. They aren't just things happening to you because life sucks. That's what a lot of us end up concluding, that life is just hard and that we've made it harder. There's an important point. A lot of us conclude that we've made it. We've recognized where stuck. We've realized life is hard, and we believe that we've made it harder because of the decisions that we've made in the past - careers, relationships, things like that - and through that lens of believing that we've made our own lives harder or even limited our own lives because of these prior decisions. If we continue to look at our current reality through that lens, what happens is we bring more of that truth to ourselves. What we focus on we create more of. Our brain is always going to seek evidence to prove our thoughts true, my friends. That's just the way the reticular activating system works. So if the only thought process that we offer our mind are ones of doom and gloom and having made prior decisions that ruined our lives, then we will continue to find evidence of that. We will continue to be more stuck in our own story of our lives. The way to break free of that isn't to just ditch your life and run away. Some people do that. I'm not saying that you shouldn't do that. I mean, you do whatever's right for you, but I'm saying is not necessary. That's not the only way. That's the most radical way to make a massive change. But here's the thing, just making a radical circumstance change doesn't change what you're carrying around in your brain. That's the part where your opportunity is. That's the part where your growth is.

As you start to understand your own thought processes and not just accept them as truth, because

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the vast majority of the crap your brain offers you is on autopilot thoughts that probably were beliefs that weren't even yours. You're living your life through a set of rules that you didn't create for yourself. None of that's required. If we never start to question that stuff, then what happens is it does become the rules of our lives. We look at our lives through that. We then compare our current reality against that. We conclude that we're stuck. We come up with all the reasons why - the career we chose; the pay we make; the hours we have. We decide that we're limited only to what we can currently experience and that stuckness just gets deeper and deeper and deeper. We become resentful. We become hopeless. We become frustrated. We become angry. We become bitter. It's a miserable existence. The beauty in it though is that you'll get to the point that you're just not going to be willing to take that anymore. You'll get to the point that your frustration over what is, becomes more intolerable than the fear of what could be.

Many of us are simply afraid to make some changes. Many of us are afraid to pursue anything different even from a thought process perspective. We are fearful of considering a reality that's different than what we've always accepted it to be. Much of that comes from our fear of judgment. Much of that comes from our fear of people not agreeing with us or thinking that we're different or thinking that we're weird. I just want to encourage you to embrace the weird, by all means, because this is your life experience and you get to make it what you want it to be.

As we get into veterinary medicine and we start to absorb the energy of the other people in our hospitals, particularly if we're in an environment that's not supportive, which unfortunately let's face it, as most of the veterinary hospitals at this moment in time, I hope that we change that. I'm working to change that. But what seems to be true right now is the majority of animal hospitals come with a bit of negative energy to them simply because we don't understand our actual role. But if we go into these jobs and we absorb the energy and we absorb the conclusions and the beliefs of the people around us, and those are not useful thoughts and beliefs and emotions, then that just adds to our own negative story. All of it is optional.

You literally get to decide every day what you believe about going to work; what you believe about the clients that you see and you interact with; what you believe about the patients; what you believe is possible for everybody who works there. You get to decide that for you yourself. Nobody else has to believe that but you. You also get to decide where you're going. You get to decide if you want to generate \$200,000 a year as a veterinary technician. You get to decide that. Now, your brain is going to jump right in and say, "But Cari, I make 18 bucks an hour. There's no way. As a veterinary technician, I'm never going to be able to do that." If that is the way that we consider this obstacle, if you consider it as an obstacle, if this is the goal that you have, and you consider your current career choice as your obstacle, and that's all the further that you go with your thought processes, then yeah, that's going to be real for you. You're never going to get there, but the opportunity to get there always exists. The opportunity is created as you start to think outside of the box of your current reality, and this isn't just

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a pay thing. This is literally anything that you want for your life. Any goal that you have. Any dream that you have. Most of us squash all of it because we can only start to look at it from a logical perspective of our current experience. That is a dream killer right there. If you look at the logical interpretation of your current existence, and you try to make sense of how your dream will become reality through that framework, your dream is never going to come true. If your current framework was going to equip you with what you needed to do, you would already have it. It's not a problem that you don't. It's not a problem that you haven't reached your goals yet. It's intentional that you have to start to look outside of what you already know. You have to tap into who you are at your core to what you actually want; to what's important to you; to why you make the choices that you make. As you get to know yourself at that level, and you really, really get familiar with what's important to you individually, and you start to let go of the fear of the judgment of other people who may not value the same things that you do, then the possibility starts to open up. Then your imagination can go to work and you can start to see how.

Here's what I'm pretty darn sure of. I'm pretty sure that you have some pretty big dreams and you have things that you want for your life. You probably have some dreams that you haven't even told anybody because you're afraid they're going to think you're crazy, or they're gonna think you're foolish for wanting these things, or they're gonna think that you're not being logical or practical, and they, whomever they are might, all that may be true. You may have these big dreams. You may have these big goals. You may communicate them to somebody, even somebody that you love, somebody close to you, and they may come back and say, "You're not being practical. You're not being logical. That's not realistic." What I want you to know is that all of that kind of language that comes to us from other people comes from their own fear and their own limiting beliefs. You are not required to believe them. You can allow them to believe whatever they want about what you are capable of, and you get to decide it for yourself. You do not need them to agree with you for it to be true for you. This is where your power to become unstuck really comes in. You get to decide what you're capable of. You get to decide what is possible for you. If we continue to see what's possible for ourselves only through the lens of what currently exists, only through the lens of what we currently experience, day in and day out, in veterinary medicine, then we will only continue to create more of what we have and we will feel stuck. We will then have all the blame come up for the reasons that we're stuck and why we think our potential is limited.

I want you just to see from this is when you start to feel stuck, it is not so much the external reality of what you're currently experiencing that needs to change. It is simply what you believe is possible for you and getting super focus on what it is that you want to create because if you're not focused on creating something different, you never will. Something different isn't just going to fall into your lap. You're not going to just one day, wake up and be unstuck. It's something that you have to intentionally go after. It is worth it. It is something that every single one of us humans needs to do. It's why we are here. This growth process is essential for our entire life experience.

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When we let fear stop us; when we let the conclusions of the world sink in as absolute truth and reality, and we start to get all logical and practical about what we can do in this lifetime, then our lives get really, really small. We didn't start out this way. This very left-sided brain influence that has become so much of human culture, especially American culture, is not all there is. It's not even most of what is. The right side of the brain - the way that you feel, what you can imagine, the things you're excited about, your imagination, your dreams - that stuff's super important. The litmus test for you, the indicator for you is how you feel emotionally. That's how you know if you're moving closer toward your dreams or further away. When, day in and day out, we're in that negative net emotional state - we're frustrated, we're angry, we're bitter - and we land in the blame game, we start to blame all the things outside of us for why we feel that way and we start to judge and become critical of all the things that are happening with the other people and with the world, our world really does start to shrink because we will just see more of that. We will feel very, very stuck.

The way out of it is not to change the world. The way out of it is to change your perspective. The way out of it is to get focused on what you believe and what you're interested in; what your dreams are and what you want to build for yourself; what goals you have for yourself. If you don't know where to start, if you've pushed away your dreams for so long, and you have no idea where to start, there's a couple of tips.

Number one, just find some time to be alone, to be in total quiet. We don't have enough of this in our lives anymore. So you've got to find some time even just 15 minutes where nobody bothers you. If that means you go sit in a closet with your earbuds in with some white noise music in the background so you can't hear anything around you, then do that. Literally 15 minutes and just write, "What do I dream for my future?" Write that on a piece of paper, and then just start to write whatever comes into your mind for like 15 minutes, and then go back and look at that. Get outside. Take a walk. Get out of the confines of the house. Get out of all the inputs. Turn off the television. Turn off the podcasts. Turn off all of it and just be with yourself. Get outside. Get some sunshine and see what starts to come up for you. If you have some that you know that you enjoy - if you have a hobby, if you're a crafter, if you like to go fishing - if you know whatever the things are that you have enjoyed in your life, go do some of those and watch what you start to think about as you engage in those activities. It takes some intentional decision-making for us to pursue this. It's not the natural state of the brain. The natural state of the brain wants to always be scanning for the negative. It also wants to see your current reality as the only reality, but that's just not true. That's not the way that we are designed. There are dreams. There are hopes. There are goals that you have in there. Here's what I want you to hear. Even if you feel stuck; even if you believe that the decisions that you made have put you in a position that you can not have anything different; if you feel trapped; if you believe you've kind of screwed up your own life, I just want you to know that that's not true. I know you don't believe it right now and that's okay, but I believe it for you and you can catch up with me on this. It's a process though. You're not going to wake up tomorrow and it's all going to be sunshine and roses. That's not how this works. But

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this is the work that is in front of you to do. This is exactly why you get to that point where you just don't want what you have anymore. The most tragic conclusion we make is we recognize that what we have is that what we don't want anymore. But what we don't recognize is that we have the total power to change it for ourselves. We don't have to have our prior decisions be different than they are in order to make it happen. It all has to start with getting real focus on what it is that you want for your life and who you are as a person and what's important to you. If you can't answer those questions, that's where you start. That's your homework. Start there.

Nothing's off-limits. You're not allowed to judge what you want. You want what you want for a reason. It's inspired desire. It's all intentional. When we pursue the things that we dream of; when we pursue the things that we're interested in and the things that really light us up, it is so beneficial for the entire world. It all has a purpose. It may not be logical. It may not be practical to this day and age, to the way that we, as a collective, tend to think about things. I want you to just let that go. Logical and practical doesn't have a place here. We're talking about your dreams. We're talking about what's important to you. We're talking about what really lights you up. I want you to find those things inside of you again. I want you to stop squishing those down. I want you to really give some intentional focus and time in engaging with that and start to see how when you get back to really focusing on what's important to you, how the external reality all starts to get a lot easier, and how your momentum starts to pick up even if your external reality doesn't change. It's fascinating stuff. That's how you get unstuck. You don't need people to be different. You don't need your job to be different. You just need your focus to be different. Where are you going? Where are you heading? What's important to you? Answer those questions and then everything else is going to start to shift, and it's all going to start to become your actual current reality.

Alright, my friends, that's leaving you quite a bit to think about today. I would love to know what you find what comes up for you - your aha moments - when you take that 15 minutes to yourself. Just do a little journaling about what you want. Would love to know and let's just continue this conversation. Don't forget when you're ready to dig in and do even more of this kind of work, I'd love for you to join us in [Vet Life Academy](#). This is exactly what we do there. We dig into all the old thought patterns and beliefs and habits so that we can actually start to create the lives that we want for ourselves intentionally. To learn more, just visit joyfuldvm.com/vetlifeacademy. We'd love to see you there.

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

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