

Bonus 2 | Vet Med Can't Make You Happy

FULL EPISODE TRANSCRIPT



for Veterinary
Professionals

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

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Why you'll be waiting forever if you think Vet Med can make you happy, that's what we're talking about in this bonus episode of the Joyful DVM podcast.

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.

Hi everybody! Today, we're going to spend some time talking about exactly why Vet Med can't make you happy. I think this is something that may seem obvious to some and may seem not so obvious to others, but I think it's really important for us to talk about it specifically because when we think about vet med not being able to make us happy, I think a lot of us would agree to that, but the opposite is also true that Vet Med can't make us unhappy. This is something that we don't really recognize as truth and does it seem like truth at all when we're in the thick of it.

So Vet Med. Vet Med cannot make us happy. Vet Med cannot make us unhappy. It doesn't create our self-worth. It doesn't create our value. It doesn't make us worthy of receiving things. It doesn't make us less than or more than. It doesn't make us successful. It doesn't make us failures. Vet Med doesn't do any of those things for us.

Vet Med is simply a career choice. It is a circumstance in our lives. It's part of our factual framework and the way that we interact in our daily lives as part of that framework of the career that we've chosen has consequences. Some of those are positive, and some of those are negative from an emotional standpoint, but it's never the things that happen that create that for us. I think that this is super important for us to really pick apart and understand because without slowing down the whole cycle of what's happening in our lives, it's very easy for us to conclude that veterinary medicine is ruining it. We just don't see success. We don't just get great feedback. We don't have patients that are always getting better. We don't have clients who respond with kind words or just respectful behavior. When our reality is different than that in this profession - when the patients don't respond the way that we want them to, yes, that's a bummer, I mean, that sucks all the way around, but more so when the clients interact with us in a way that's disrespectful, that is rude, and that really impacts our workflow - many of us start to internalize that behavior.

What I mean by internalize it is that we take it very personally and we start to conclude a couple of things. One thing that we start to conclude is that perhaps we caused it. That if we were better then the clients wouldn't have behaved that way. We get there kind of in a roundabout way. If we were better then maybe the patients would have responded better and then the client wouldn't have been angry. If we were better then maybe we could have explained things differently and the client would have agreed to more things and the patient would have had a better outcome, and then I would have

been better. It's kind of twisted how we get there, but at the end of the day, what that client says or does when they interact with us absolutely has no reflection on our own value, our self-worth, our ability to do our job, our success, or our failure in this profession. If we don't recognize that the measure of our contribution to veterinary medicine is not something that can actually even be evaluated, then we're always looking for a way to evaluate it. Where this becomes quite the catalyst for us who have a tendency to maybe have lower self-confidence or to feel a lot of compassion, fatigue, or experience a lot of imposter syndrome, or have a lot of self-doubts or already have maybe low self-worth, a lot of self-value.

For those of us who already kind of come into this profession with those things on board, which is the vast majority of us, by the way, many, many, many of us, I think it's the rarity that somebody comes into this profession full of confidence, without any considerations of imposter syndrome, really believing that they know how to do everything and just thinking every day is sunshine and roses and unicorns. I don't think that is the, you know, the standard person that starts into this profession. I don't think there's a standard person in any area of life, quite honestly. I think the opposite is true. I think that all of us at some level have our insecurities. We have the things that we worry about. We have the things that we're self-conscious about and have areas that were less confident. We have areas where we struggle with our own worth and our value and we bring those things with us because this is part of our human experience. We bring those things with us into our veterinary careers. Where this gets really tricky is that many of us believed along the way as we've worked really hard to get into these careers - going through our educations, our veterinary education, or veterinary technician educations - as we've gone through this, we've also believed that once we achieve it, once we get that credential, once we get out into the real world, that those feelings of self-doubt and inadequacy and the self-consciousness and maybe low self-worth and self-value that those things are going to be magically solved when we achieve this milestone. That milestone is the degree and perhaps even getting started in the job. Then what happens is we get into the job and all those old beliefs about ourselves are still there. We have a new credential. We have some proof that we are "better" than we think we are, but we don't feel better about it, which is really disappointing for many of us because then what sets in is this idea that we are imposters. It actually stacks into imposter syndrome because if we don't feel successful, if we don't feel like we've achieved something, if we don't feel worthy of performing these jobs that we technically are allowed to do because we've done the education and we have the licensure, but if we internally don't feel worthy of being able to do that, then that just shows up again and again and again, and as things don't turn out the way that we want them to, meaning clients that are pleasant to work with and patients that get better, when those things don't happen, we start to compound as evidence that we weren't cut out to do this job. That we aren't good enough to do this job. That we are imposters. We also start to believe that other people are better at it than we are. This is a comparison. I promise you it absolutely isn't. If we don't know that this is going on, what happens is that Vet Med really starts to run our entire lives. This is really the point I wanted to make today.

If our interaction with this job, day in and day out, and the narrative that we tell ourselves about our abilities in this job and about our limitations in this job, either self-induced limitations or limitations of the profession - like pay and clients and hours and all of those things - if that's our focus and if that's what we're counting on fixing in order for us to feel good about ourselves and for us to be happy, then I just want us to see that we've given a lot of power to a profession that actually is powerless. The profession itself, that the career in veterinary medicine holds no power in your life. It is simply a decision and it's part of your factual framework. You decided to pursue a career in veterinary medicine, and just as you decided to pursue it, you can also always change your mind. That's the superpower of being human. You do get to make additional choices. Many of us don't recognize that. We think we decided this thing and that now it's like a stamp on our life path and we should always stay in it. We shouldn't even consider changing it or doing something different if we can't be successful at it. What we miss is that there is no measure of success here.

So if you're trying to find your happiness by being successful in veterinary medicine, it's going to be something you will chase forever because neither of those things is defined. What does success in veterinary medicine even mean? The way that I would define it is that you do the best that you can with the information and resources you have available at the time. No matter what that information is or what those resources are. That means you don't need the client to agree to all the things in order for you to do a good job. You don't need the client even to give you all the right information for you to do a good job. You just do your part with what you have available. But most of us because we keep trying to measure our success in this job with patients that get better or clients that are happy when the patients don't get better, on hindsight, when the whole case has kind of unrolled, we can see that the path that we took toward treating an animal - supporting the treatment of an animal for a veterinary technician - that path that we took was very limited by the resources we had available, including information given by the client. We could see why they unrolled the way it did, but if it's not a favorable outcome for the patient, many of us still blame ourselves. We take on the responsibility of that. That's not our job. If we don't start to untangle ourselves from the career then our happiness is always going to be in jeopardy because we're waiting for patients to get better and for clients to be happy, for clients to be appreciative, for all kinds of external, tangible things to fall on the line before you can be happy. I promise you, you don't want to live your life that way.

Vet Med was never supposed to make you happy. It actually can't do that for you. But the good news is it can't make you unhappy either. We just have to start untangling it. The way that we start to untangling it is we start to take back some of our choices. At some point, we made a choice to pursue this career, but we never probably considered the extent to which we wanted the career to infiltrate our entire lives. So where's the rest of your life? What's happening in the time when you're not at work? Are you focusing on things that are important to you? Do you even remember what those things are? What makes you feel alive? What makes you feel energetic? What excites you? What interests you? Do you even think about those things anymore? These questions are really important if

we're ever going to create a career that we enjoy. They're not even career-related questions, but they're going to influence the whole big picture. This is where the idea of our brand new workshop really came into play.

We have a brand new workshop that's going to be starting here in just a couple of weeks. It's called Recapture: Life Beyond Vet Med. We're going to take a look at our entire lives, our entire human existence, and what we want for ourselves. We're going to start to let go of the things that we think we should do. The things that we believe we have to do, because friends, there's not a single thing in this world that you have to do. Not one thing. If you're recognizing that you're very unhappy in your career, let's understand why that is. Because if you're waiting for veterinary medicine to be different before you allow yourself to be happy, you're going to be waiting forever.

We are in the middle of a change in veterinary medicine. One of the greatest changes that we've ever seen in this profession, but it's not going to be over in the blink of an eye. A lot of things are changing, but within those changes are tons of opportunities. More opportunities than ever for you to approach veterinary medicine in the way that you want to do it. You're not required to work for somebody else if you don't want to. You're not required to work in a full-service hospital if you don't want to. You're not required to be in clinical practice if you don't want to. There are a million different ways that you can utilize your degree. But if we continue to evaluate our success or failure in this job by how well we can handle veterinary practice, how well we deal with clients who are unhappy, how we, I don't want to use a word make, but whether or not our patients get better, if we use those things to continue to evaluate how well we're doing in our job, we're going to lose every single time because that's not the measure. If you're tying yourself worth to that; if you're waiting for patients to get better and for clients to say happy things before you allow yourself to believe in your ability to contribute and your own success, if you're waiting on those external things to tell you, "Yeah! You're good enough. You're worthy. You should be doing this job.", you're going to be waiting a really long time because it was never the responsibility of the profession. It was never the responsibility of the clients to tell you that you're doing a good job. We love to hear it. I'm not saying that we don't, but if we rely on that before we allow ourselves to believe in what we can individually do; before we allow ourselves to believe that we are worthy and we are capable and we are here on purpose and that this is a fulfillment of a journey that we individually are supposed to go on, if we don't allow ourselves to just consider that outside of this external feedback, then we missed the whole point.

Vet Med was never supposed to make you happy. Vet Med is part of your journey. It's going to catalyze your growth. Your growth comes from digging in and understanding why you feel the way you do, day in and day out, in that profession. Once you start to understand that it also opens up the door and gives you the freedom to make the choices that are right for you in association with that profession.

Happiness doesn't come from doing the job right. Happiness only comes when you recognize your individual unique path and purpose with or without Vet Med, by the way, and when you develop the courage to start walking that journey individually. This is your life. You're the one who gets to decide what comes next. Nobody around you gets to tell you you don't get to do what you want to do. Nobody around you gets to decide that you're not worthy, that you're not capable, that you're not successful. Nobody around you gets to decide what comes next. That's your choice to make. Every day, you get to decide for yourself. Until we start to recognize that our lives are compiled of choices that we make individually, and instead, continue to believe that our lives are the result of the things that happen around us, including everything associated with Vet Med, then happiness is going to stay elusive. But happiness is right in front of you. Right there for you to grab onto, along with success and self-confidence, and a real belief in your own self-worth and your own journey and your own path and your own mission.

If you're curious about how you can grab onto that for yourself so that you could actually start to shift around your entire experience and really take back that power, which is what this is all about - empowered decisions - then please join us in the free workshop. It's going to be a really neat format. We're doing it over five days. It starts a week from Monday. It's called Recapture: Life Beyond Vet Med. It's going to be an online workshop and all you have to do is go to joyfuldvm.com/recapture to sign up. You'll get the emails. You'll get invited to the free pop-up Facebook group we're going to do with. You can join that or not. That's completely up to you. That's an optional component. Just go to joyfuldvm.com/recapture. Join us on this five-day workshop. You're going to start to look at all this stuff. Hopefully, my intent is we'll start to look at all of this from a different perspective. By the time we get to the five days, you're going to see how what your future holds has not been limited by the choices that you've made so far. You're going to be able to see a hint of the reasons why some of the crappy things that have happened have happened. I promise they're intentional, even though they suck at the time, and you're going to be able to start to cultivate some more hope and anticipation over what comes next for you in the future and give yourself some permission to dream a little bit, take back your own power over your own happiness.

Alright, my friends, I'm going to leave you with that. I hope to see you at the Recapture Workshop. Website, one more time, joyfuldvm.com/recapture. Sign up. Join us there and we will see you soon. Have a great week. Bye for now.

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.