

Going Beyond Compassion Fatigue

Certified Compassion Fatigue Specialist Julie Squires reviews compassion fatigue, its impact on the individual and the practice, and how to build resilience in veterinary medicine.

Speaker Bio:

Julie Squires is a Certified Compassion Fatigue Specialist and Certified Life Coach who brings a unique perspective and approach to support the sustained energy and passion of those exposed to the highly stressful and traumatic environment of veterinary medicine. Julie has over twenty-five years of experience within veterinary industry leading organizations developing and executing training, workshops, and 1:1 coaching, most notably for Nestlé Purina, Bayer Animal Health, and IDEXX Laboratories. She is a Certified Compassion Fatigue Specialist through the Traumatology Institute. Her company, Rekindle LLC, offers on-site seminars, workshops, online courses, private coaching, and the Rekindling podcast and is the result of the need Julie saw to help those that work with animals maintain their wellbeing and mental health. Julie lives in New York's Hudson Valley with her husband John, pugs Ernie & Mabel, and Gregg & Duane, their two cats.

Learning Objectives:

1. Understand what compassion fatigue is.
2. Be able to recognize the signs and symptoms of compassion fatigue
3. Understand resilience and how to be more resilient
4. Understand how to shift to a positive mindset
5. Understand self-care and why we need it
6. Recognize the importance of emotional responsibility and self-compassion

Going Beyond Compassion Fatigue



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So I want to welcome all of you that are here. Thank you for giving me a little bit of your time this evening, a little bit of your attention. I know there are so many things, especially in the month of December that are clawing at your attention.

And I so appreciate you coming here tonight to take a little time out for yourself, which let's be honest, that's not something you do very often. It's something you need to do quite often, but it's not something that you do quite often.

Who I Am

- 25 years in the veterinary field
- Certified Compassion Fatigue Specialist
- Certified Life Coach
- Host of the **Rekindling** podcast
- Passionate about mental *health*, wellbeing and personal development in veterinary professionals



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So real quick, who am I? You've heard a little bit about me. I'm Julie Squires. I have worked in the field of vet med for over 25 years. I'm capping it at that. I'm no longer adding the years up because it makes me feel super old.

But I have worked as a receptionist, a veterinary assistant, a hospital administrator, many years in industry sales and I have basically grown up I guess you could say, in the veterinary field and it's because of that that I am super passionate about the mental health and well-being of all veterinary professionals.

Pug M



So with that, I think the most important thing that you should know about me probably is that I'm a pug mom.

The most important thing about me. This is Miss Mabel. She is adorable. She is snoring behind me and hopefully, you won't be able to hear that.

So let's sort of start at the foundational level of as we're talking about everything related to how we feel, our emotional state, our well-being. Let's talk about mental health for a second.

Because one of the things that we know about in our amazing field of Vet Med is that there's a lot of talk about mental health and/or the lack of mental health and what do we do to cultivate more mental health.



Mental *health* is worked for and earned. It's not given to
US.

And here's what I want you to realize. I want you to realize that mental health is something that can be created.

Now, that's not to say that there are not sometimes issues that are affecting our mental health that we have no control over. That is correct. You have genetics at play you don't have control over. You may have family history that you don't have control over. You may have experiences in your own life, traumas that you have no control over.

So take all those things aside and there is still a big piece of the pie left for you to create your mental health. And I want you to think about mental health as something that requires energy and effort. But the return on investment is ginormous because your mental health is the foundation of everything in your life. Everything rests on your mental health.

Now I want you to think about mental health and mental illness as a continuum. No one is 100% mentally healthy and no one is 100% mentally ill. We're all somewhere on this continuum.

And the way that I like to think about it is that I kind of created this idea that I have a imaginary mental health bank account. And I'm always thinking about in all moments of the day, am I putting deposits into my mental health bank account or I'm making withdrawals out of my mental health bank account?

So for example, this morning I woke up and I meditated for six minutes. That's a deposit into my mental health bank account. I journaled for a few minutes. Another deposit. I worked out, that's a deposit into my mental health bank account.

Then earlier this afternoon I had a coaching session with one of my clients who is taking care of her mother with dementia. That was kind of a withdrawal out of my mental health bank account because that was challenging for me.

So what you're trying to do like anything, any type of a bank account is always make sure that you're not in the red. Have more deposits than withdrawals. So in that way as we think about our mental health, there is a lot that we have control over. Yes, there's some stuff we don't have control over.

Again, we can't control our genetics for instance. But we can control, wait a minute, what are the things that I can do for myself?

“Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we **think, feel, and act**. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make healthy choices.” CDC website



What are the things that I can do to aid in my emotional, my psychological and my social well-being?

So why this becomes so important is because your mental health like I said earlier, it's the foundation for you of your experience of your life. It affects how you think, how you feel, how you behave, which are the three things you can control in this world. How you think, how you feel and how you behave. That's about it to be honest with you. We don't have control over a lot more.

And in this way when we start to think about, OK, so wait a minute. Then what becomes the goal of our mental health?

The Goal of Mental Health Is Resilience



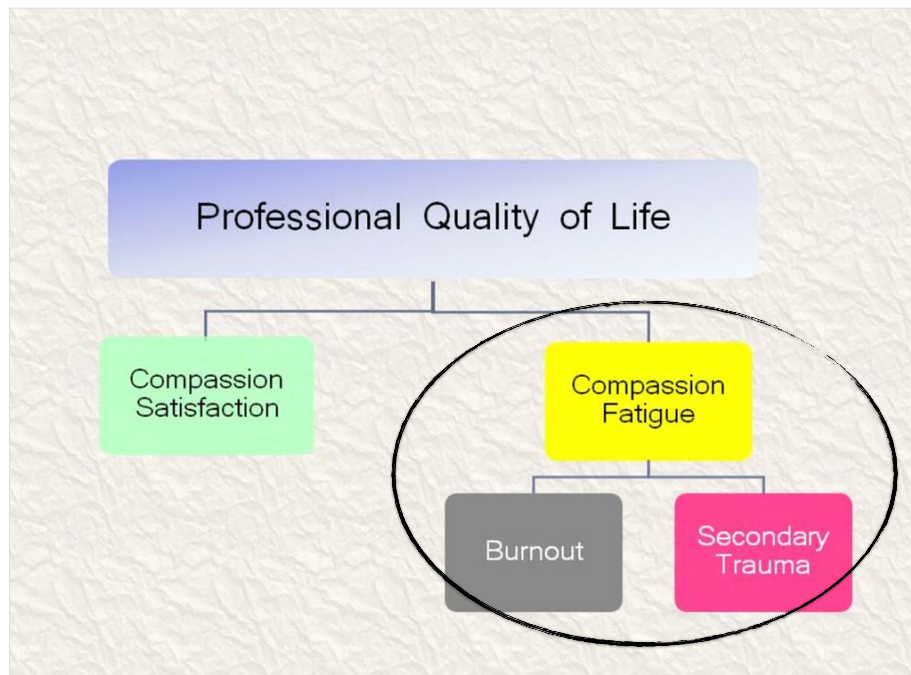
Well, the goal of our mental health then is not to surf through life unscathed. The goal of our mental health becomes resilience. How do I deal with the challenges that are coming at me, that will come at me all of the time in this human life?

And resilience doesn't mean that we go through it with our hair not messed up and we sail through it unscathed, we sail through it without any scrapes or bruises. No, it's the opposite. Resilience doesn't mean it was easy. It just means that again we fall down seven times and we stand up eight. That ultimately is resilience.



Now, here's what you also have to understand. I want to teach you the concept that's known as the 50-50. Now unfortunately, we're not supposed to feel happy all the time. The whole happily ever after thing, that was nonsense. We don't live a happily ever life. Happily ever after life. That's not a real human life.

What a real human life actually is more of this 50-50 concept. And 50-50 means that half of the time we feel positive emotions, half the time we feel negative emotions.



So this is interesting, which means that again half the time we're going to feel emotions like joy, like excitement, like enthusiasm. And then half the time we're going to feel emotions like anger and frustration and stress and overwhelm. And that is a real human life.

So interestingly enough, veterinary medicine is also 50-50. Half of it feels amazing. We call that compassion satisfaction. Half of it feels very heart heavy. That's the compassion fatigue. The burnout, the secondary trauma. And it too is in equal proportions.

And it may not be every single day is in equal proportions but overall it balances out. There may be seasons where it feels like, oh geez, Julie. Feels like there's way more negative things. There's a lot more heart heavy things. And again, this time of year that comes into play. We tend to see more euthanasia.

I was doing a webinar the other day where they said to me, it just feels like everything's dying in December always feels that way. So yeah, there may be times where it feels more like that and that may even be true. But overall, evens out somewhat.

Now let's talk a little bit about what is compassion fatigue. Let's just define that.



What is Compassion Fatigue?

a combination of physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual depletion associated with caring for others in significant emotional pain and physical distress.

Compassion fatigue by definition really is that impact that we feel when we are exposed to another's pain and suffering.

When we feel that gut punch or that heart punch or sometimes I call it a punch to the gut. Meaning your heart and your gut combined. When we feel that by bearing witness to another another's pain and suffering, whether that's your patient, whether that's your client, whether that's your coworker. That is compassion fatigue.

And yeah, it affects anyone in a helping profession. And here's what you need to know about compassion fatigue. It's completely normal. It's normal to experience some level of compassion fatigue. That makes you a normal human.

Now, that doesn't mean that we don't want to be aware of our levels of compassion fatigue and we don't want to pay attention to wait a minute, like where am I on that trajectory of compassion fatigue? Am I getting into some territory where it feels like wow, this is too much, I'm feeling overwhelmed emotionally? I feel like I can't handle this. And therefore what do I need to do to what I would call offset compassion fatigue?

I don't believe we can prevent compassion fatigue. I think it's hardwired in working in a helping profession. So in that way, what we're looking to do is yeah, how do I tilt the scale more in my favor? But yeah, I have

to expect that when I have chosen a field where yeah I am going to bear witness to others' pain, struggle, suffering. Yeah, it's medicine and we are going to experience that. So how do I tilt the scale towards me?

Now although I started this talk talking about mental health, you have to understand that compassion fatigue is not a mental illness.

Effect on the Individual



- depression
- hopelessness
- physical and emotional exhaustion
- diminished sense of career enjoyment
- bottled-up emotions
- irritability
- substance abuse
- increases in mistakes
- feeling numb
- sleep problems
- anxiety
- problems in personal relationships
- isolation
- poor relationships w/ co-workers
- avoidance of clients
- physical ailments
- intrusive thoughts/nightmares
- suicide

Compassion fatigue is simply a set of signs and symptoms, and it looks different in everybody, which always makes it difficult because they get asked all the time, how can I recognize if one of my coworkers is struggling with compassion fatigue?

I'm like, it's kind of hard. Because they may first of all be hiding their symptoms. We kind of all wear a mask. We do all wear a mask. We don't necessarily show all of our stuff at work, if you will. We to some degree sometimes put on a front all of us. And again, guilty as charged. Did that a lot when I was working in practice.

But notice this, it's like yeah, we have to recognize what some of the signs and symptoms are so we can recognize it in ourselves first of all. And yeah, sometimes you will recognize some of these signs and symptoms in other people and that can spur a conversation with somebody else.

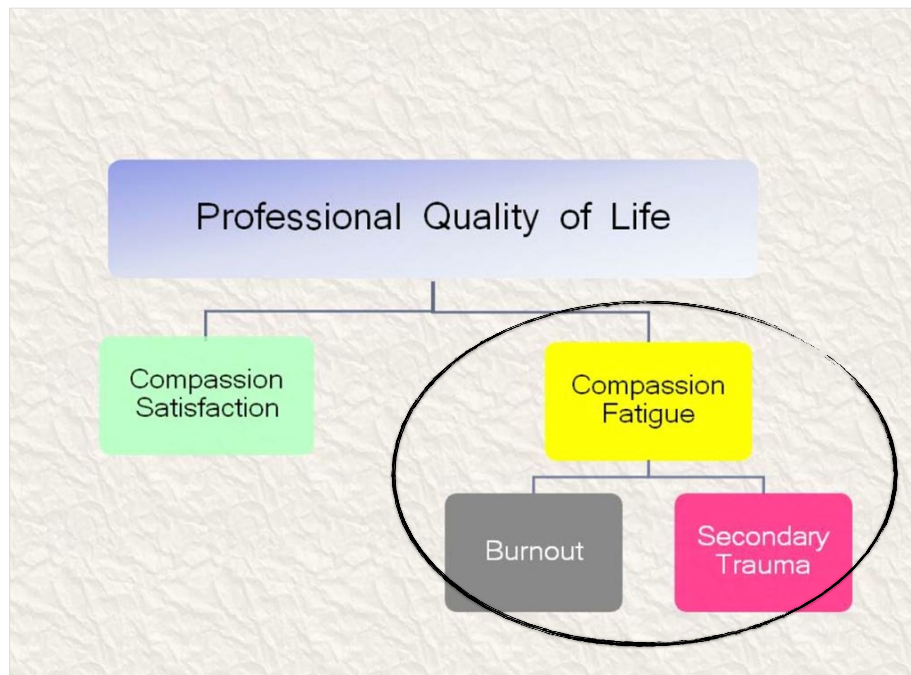
Effect on the Organization



- substandard level of care
- absenteeism
- high turnover
- lack of teamwork
- team conflict
- low morale
- increased cynicism, blaming and complaining
- toxic workplace
- erosion of customer loyalty
- reduced customer satisfaction
- reputation at risk
- poor quality control
- deterioration of the organization's mission

Now, understanding that we also look at, well, what happens if a veterinary team is all experiencing very high levels of compassion fatigue? Yeah, there's some deleterious consequences that can happen there. To morale, to teamwork, to quality of care. It can get very toxic. There can be a lot of negativity.

And hey, veterinary medicine's challenging enough without yeah, we have to also be mindful of where are there places what I'm feeling overwhelmed emotionally and then I have to figure out what do I need to do to take care of myself or what needs to change within the practice. Because sometimes that's the issue.



So I want you to think about compassion fatigue as this sort of umbrella term that also what's also feeding into it is things like burnout and secondary trauma. Now burnout is a little bit different than compassion fatigue. Compassion fatigue incorporates an aspect of trauma. You are witnessing another's trauma, it's impacting you.

With burnout, there is no trauma component. Burnout is literally just that dynamic that exists when one thing exceeds the resources. When the work exceeds the resources. When that happens, over time we will get burned out. When we can't keep up with the pace, which is happening so much right now.

I have a feeling you are all burned out right now. Because all I hear all day long is yes, the caseloads, the clients, the phone calls. Your appointments are booked weeks and weeks and weeks out. So it would make perfect sense yes, that is the dynamic for burnout.

Burnout

A state of chronic stress

1. Physical and emotional exhaustion
2. Cynicism and detachment
3. Feelings of ineffectiveness and lack of accomplishment



If we take that a little bit further, there are three different aspects of burnout. So the first is the physical and the emotional effect of it. The second is all of a sudden we start-- there's this sense of cynicism. There's a sense of we start detaching a little bit from the work.

And the third aspect of burnout can be that we start to feel like no matter what we do, it's just not enough. We just start to all of a sudden believe that we're ineffective because we can't keep up with the workload and we start doubting our own accomplishments.

Burnout

Signs of Physical and Emotional Exhaustion

- Chronic fatigue
- Insomnia
- Forgetfulness/impaired concentration
- Physical symptoms
- Increased illness
- Loss of appetite
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Anger



So signs of physical and emotional exhaustion, kind of the obvious things. I mean, again, this is what I hear all day long. I know a lot of you are emotionally and physically tired and drained right now. And you may also be experiencing some other of those symptoms that go along with this physical and emotional exhaustion all leading into burnout.

And can you be experiencing burnout and compassion fatigue at the same time? Absolutely. And I imagine many of you are as well.

Burnout

Signs of Cynicism and Detachment

- Loss of enjoyment
- Pessimism
- Isolation
- Detachment



The loss of-- The cynicism and detachment, this area of burnout is really when all of a sudden it's like we're just not enjoying the work anymore. We feel very pessimistic. We're very cynical. We're down on the clients. We're down on the organization.

We might be feeling this sense of wanting to isolate and yes, that level of detachment. It's like we're showing up for work but again we're sort of mentally detached from it.

Burnout

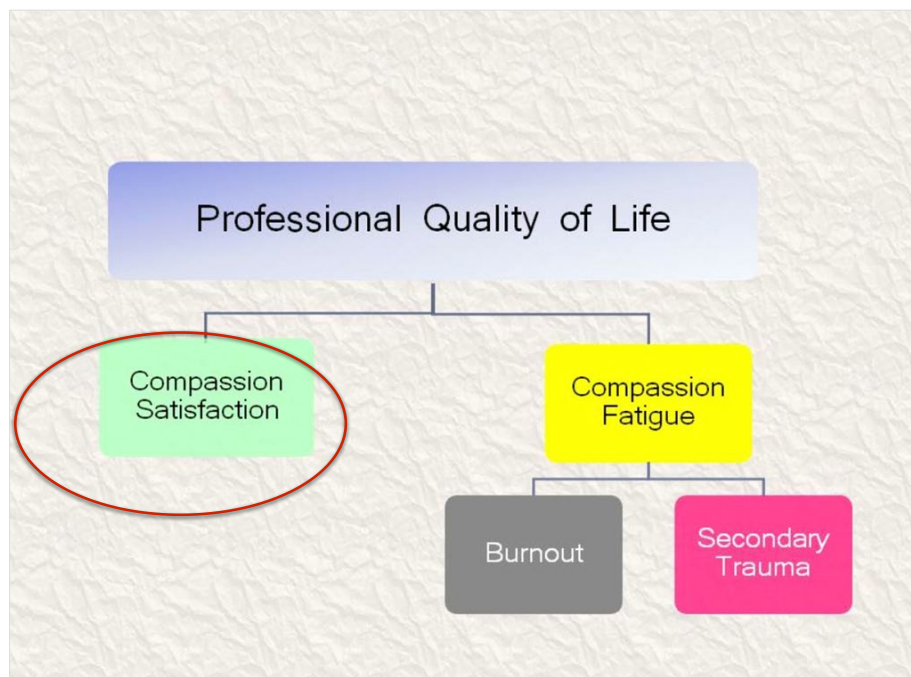
Signs of Ineffectiveness and Lack of Accomplishment

- Feelings of apathy and hopelessness
- Increased irritability
- Lack of productivity and poor performance



And that third piece of burnout is that we, again are just feeling super hopeless and apathetic. Like no matter how hard we try, we can't get through the pile.

No matter how hard we try, there are still more clients who need answers, people who need to come in, packs and need to be wrapped. More and more and more, we just can't ever catch up and then we start to doubt our own ability and our own accomplishments, which again breaks my heart that any of you would ever doubt your own accomplishments. But that's part of the dynamic of burnout.



So as we start to look at the 50-50 of work, secondary trauma to a large degree is another term for compassion fatigue. It's again, when we're traumatized secondarily bearing witness to another's trauma. That's the heart heavy side of things.

Now it's not-- Again, what I said before is like it's 50-50. The whole other side of the equation is the compassion satisfaction side.

Compassion Satisfaction



The pleasure and satisfaction we derive from our work.

What brings us joy.

What makes our heart swell.

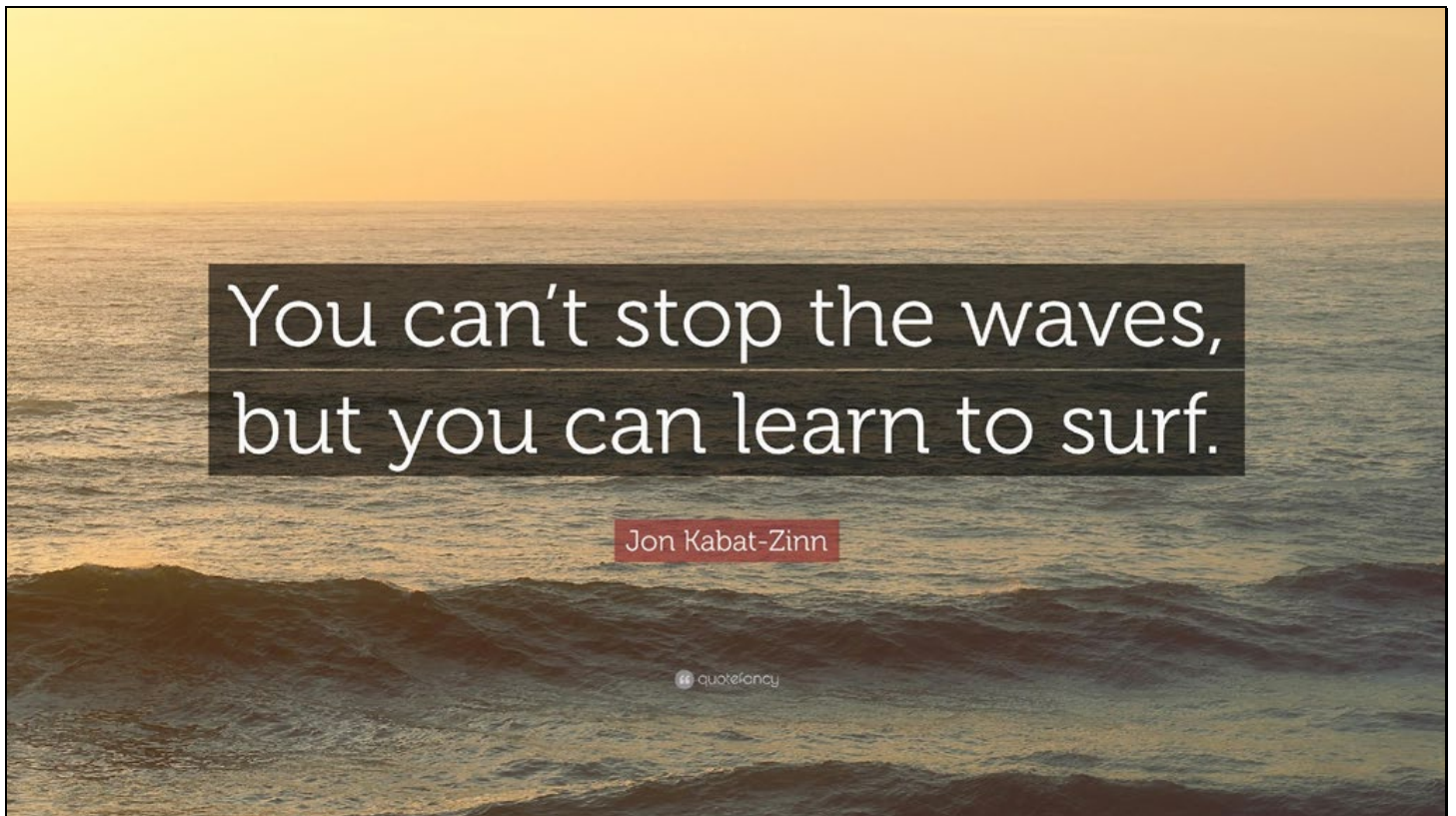
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This is the pleasure that you derive from your work. This is the stuff that again, blows your hair back, that makes your heart swell, that brings you joy.

Yeah, it's the puppies and kittens. Yeah, it's the cases that turn around for you. Yes, it's the clients who are extremely appreciative. Yes, it's the skills and the new tools you get to use and the toys you get to play with. And the new procedures you get to do and seeing the reuniting of the patient with the client after they've been hospitalized for a few days or longer. It's all of that stuff. That's all that compassion satisfaction part of it.

And yeah, I think we need to spend a lot more time looking at that aspect of work and looking for those things every day and dwelling on them to a large degree. I think it would be an amazing practices as we're driving home or commuting home whatever your commute looks like, we're thinking about yeah, what were my sources of compassion satisfaction today? What were the things that again let me up today? What are the things that made my heart twice its size? That's an amazing thing to kind of focus your brain on.

So as we were talking about all these different layers to the complexity of veterinary medicine,



You can't stop the waves,
but you can learn to surf.

Jon Kabat-Zinn

quote fancy

the idea isn't to make veterinary medicine smooth and calm. It's like we can giggle. It's like veterinary medicine is like an ocean and there's waves and they're coming and they come at different direction. And they come with different intensity, in different heights. And we sometimes get hit from behind. That is veterinary medicine.

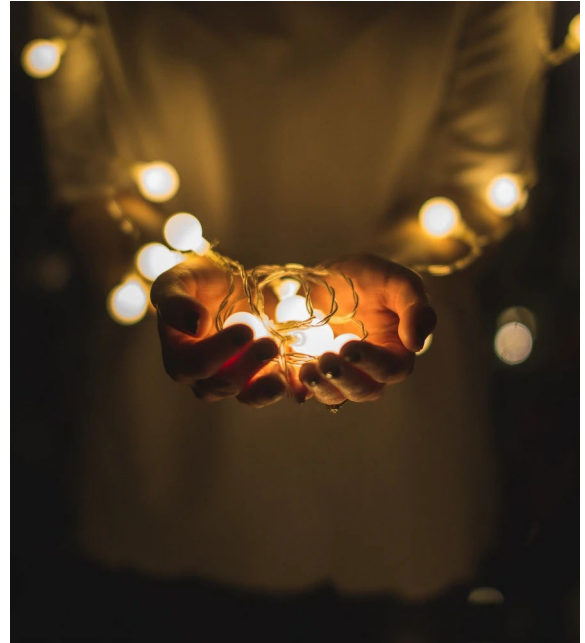
And it's part of what we love about it. We love the unpredictability. We love that it's never the same. So the idea isn't that we have to stop the waves, the idea is, can we learn how to navigate through it. That ultimately is what we're talking about as it relates to resilience.

Cultivating Resilience



“the process of, capacity for, or outcome of successful adaptation despite challenging circumstances,”
(Garmezy and Masten).

Resilience (n): The capacity to absorb energy from disruption.



Resilience, the capacity to absorb energy from disruption. Disruption. Think about that. Think about that. Disruption. The last 20 plus months have been nothing but disruption.

And when we're thinking about resilience, yeah, it is how do we adapt to the challenging circumstances. That's what it means to be resilient. And here's the beautiful thing about this. I know in my heart that veterinary professionals I think are hardwired for resilience probably more so than most professions on the planet.

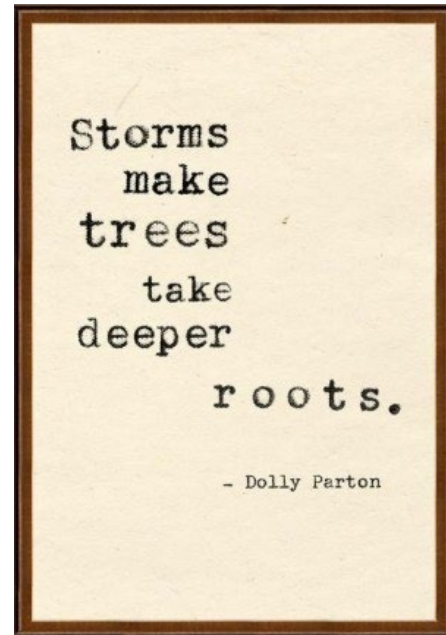
I mean, you are used to having to adapt to challenging circumstances because like I was saying before, you never know what's coming. And think about how many times in veterinary medicine you have had to craft some sort of-- What do I call this? Like a remedy from like nothingness.

What I mean is like how many times have we taken an endotracheal tube, some duct tape and some sort of a widget, done something amazing with it and like created some sort of thing that didn't exist before? Probably an e call. We probably added that to the mix. So think about all the things, it's like you already have so much resilience built into you and I want to empower that about you.

What Is Resilience?

The process of adapting in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or significant stressors.

It not only involves “bouncing back” from these difficult situations, it may also include profound personal growth as the result of these situations.



And like I was saying earlier, being resilient doesn't mean that it's not hard. Oh, no. It means that yeah, sometimes it's hard. Sometimes we get knocked over. Sometimes it's sort of like that big golden retriever that you didn't see coming that runs behind you and like nails you in the back of the knees, and you fall to the ground. Yeah, that's what life does to us sometimes.

And resilience means OK, I eventually got up and dusted myself off. It may have taken a minute, it may have taken a week, it may have taken a month, it may have taken three years. There's no time frame associated with being resilient but it's how we adapt in the face of any sort of tragedy trauma, adversity stressor or even threat.

Resilient People

- Sense of Control
- Problem Solving Skills
- Strong Social Connections
- Identify as Survivors, not Victims
- Able To Ask for Help
- Self-Compassion



Now here's what we know about resilient people. We know that they have these six characteristics. They understand what they can control and what they can't control, which I think is extremely important in vet med. And here's the CliffsNotes version. You can't control other people.

So we have to focus a lot on what we can control, which is ourselves. If we could control other people, it'd be fantastic. But we can't. So we have to understand yeah, my sense of control is within myself. I got to pay a lot of attention to how I'm thinking and feeling and behaving.

What we tend to do is we get so fixated on other people. We want them to be different. We want them to change. And hey if you can figure out how to do that, please send me an email and let me in on that. I don't know how to change other people so I'm going to have to work on myself if I want to feel differently.

Resilient people have amazing problem-solving skills. Oh, here we go again vet med, that would be you. Resilient people have very strong social connections. They realize that hey you know what, we're not meant to do this alone. We are hardwired for connection, which is why so many people have been struggling during the pandemic because we've had to be socially distant.

Because we haven't been able to be with the people that we've wanted to be or if we have, it's been through screens which look at us here, is OK but not as great as if we were all together. So again, yeah, strong social connections. Do you have a small pod of people that you can lean on when times get tough, when you're having a challenge?

Doesn't need to be 50 people. It needs to be one or two. Resilient people also identify as survivors and not victims. So here's what this means. What it means is that hey, sometimes maybe you have been a victim to something. Maybe a trauma has happened to you. And in that moment or during that time frame, you absolutely were a victim.

But what resilient people do is they say yeah, that terrible thing happened to me, but I survived it. I'm still here. So I'm a survivor. So they make that mental shift in their identity.

The fifth thing that resilient people have the ability to do is to ask for help. Now, it's for the little things like asking for help with walking their dog if they have to work a 12 hour shift. It's for the little things like asking someone to help shovel their driveway if they get a blizzard.

It's for things like asking someone to help do some callbacks with clients or wrap some packs or help out with office appointments because you're buried. Or it's also about asking for help for your mental health. Getting a therapist, a coach. Working with somebody professionally. Working with a psychiatrist getting some medication.

And again, vet med, we haven't done so good on some of like when we look at some of the stats on the ability to ask for help. We score kind of low here. There is still in this profession a lot of stigma about asking for help. And we have to overcome that. We have to overcome that. I don't know how else to say it other than just saying that there is nothing more courageous you could ever do then ask for help. Nothing more courageous.

It is bravery. It is not weakness. Anyone who's ever told you that was playing out wrong. It is courage. It is bravery. That's what it is. It takes a lot of courage and a lot of bravery. And I can tell you in my own life the many times that I've had to reach out for help has been the toughest times but it has been the times when I have exhibited the most courage.

The sixth thing that resilient people have is they embody immense self-compassion. Self-compassion-- Well, guess what self-compassion is. You know how you treat your patients, it's basically you doing that to yourself. That would be self-compassion.

It's all of that kindness and gentleness and love and understanding that you give them so readily that come so easily to you. It's basically doing that for yourself. That's what it is. It's like treating yourself like you treat your best friend. Imagine if we talk to ourselves the way we talk to our best friend. That would be a great place to start.

4 Ways To Strengthen Your Resilience

1. Be physically active
2. Direct your thinking
3. Prioritize self-care
4. Align with your “why”

So let's talk about four ways to strengthen your resilience. Number one-- Number one and two, look at they came in together. We're going to talk about being physically active. We're going to talk about directing your thinking. We're going to talk about prioritizing self-care and we're going to talk about aligning with your why.

These are all research based proven strategies for resilience. I didn't make them up. So you don't like them, you can go to the research and complain there.

1. Physical Activity

- promotes neurogenesis and stimulates the stem cells and neuroplasticity in the hippocampus (the brain's stress center)
- signals to the brain the world is safe



But let's start with number one, physical activity. There is no doubt about it. Here's what we know about physical activity. It changes our brain.

Yeah, it changes our brain. It literally calms down our hippocampus, calms down our amygdala, which is exactly what we need to do because that part of our brain is hyperactive. It is being fired and triggered all day long for things that it shouldn't be triggered for. That's the part of our brain where the fight or flight response comes from.

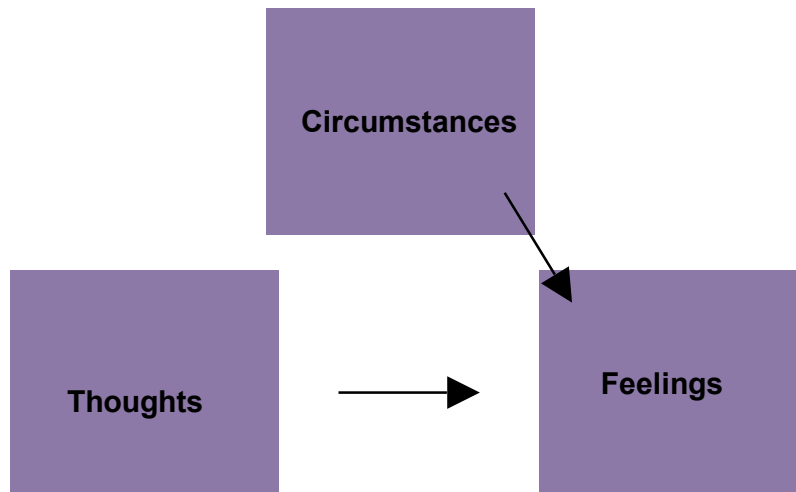
And that stress response is being triggered for things it wasn't designed for in our normal modern lives. That's the part of our brain that was supposed to be triggered when a tiger was around the corner. But it's being triggered with emails and phone calls from clients and text messages and things you see on social media. It's not what it's designed for.

So what physical activity does is calms that part of the brain down but it also is signaling to your brain that the world is safe. When you are being physically active, it's telling your brain that it can complete its stress cycle. And that is really important. So physical activity.

It could be as little as 20 minutes a day. You get to decide what that could be. But moving your body for movement sake is hugely impactful. And it's one of the things I can tell you that not only aids in your mental health, it helps you to burn off some of the emotion that again in our modern day and especially in veterinary medicine is building up, building up, building up, building up.

Emotions are energy, they need to go somewhere. Physical activity can be one way to help burn some of that off. And if we're not burning it off, there's only so much we can keep stuffing it down if we haven't really learned how to process our emotions. So that's number one.

2. Direct Your Thinking



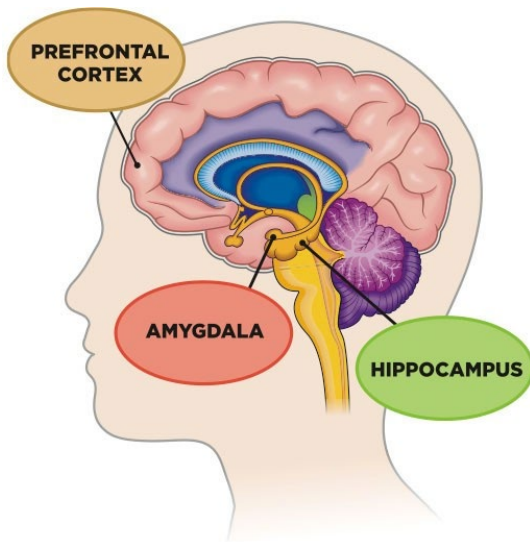
Number two is-- Oops, sorry about that. Is directing your thinking. Why is this important to know how to direct your brain? Because we have all been socialized incorrectly, that's why. Because we've all been socialized to believe that circumstances, things happening around us in our lives are the cause of our feelings.

We've all been socialized that way and it's not true. Circumstances are not the cause of your feelings. A client telling you that you don't care about pets is not the cause of your anger. It's like something that you see on the news is not the cause of your frustration. Circumstances don't cause our feelings.

Euthanasia doesn't cause our sadness. Circumstances don't cause our feelings. What causes our feelings is our thoughts about those circumstances. So what circumstances do is trigger a thought in our brain. That thought in our brain causes how we feel.

Now here's what you have to realize. What you have to realize is hold on a second. You may not have control over the circumstances, but you do have the ability to direct your brain to what you want to think about said circumstances. And I'll give you an example of this. I'll give you an example of how the brain works.

Your Mind



- Primitive brain
- Human brain

So one of the things that we have to realize about our human brain is that we have two parts to our human brain. We have the amygdala and hippocampus. We were talking about that before. That's the primitive brain, the reptilian brain. That's where the fight or flight response comes from. That's the stress response.

That part of your brain has no logic. That part of your brain is instinctual. That part of your brain is just like what our patients are like. Dogs again, they act on instinct. They are very abreactive. That part of your brain is very reactive. That part of your brain is always sensing the world for safety or danger and nothing in between.

That part of your brain again is very binary. It's looking at is this good or bad? Is this black or is this white? It doesn't see any gray it doesn't see anything in between and it's having to make those judgments based on what it needs to do to again, essentially keep you alive. That's all that part of your brain cares about.



But that's also there's why you have a negativity bias.

That part of your brain again is skewed towards the negative. That part of your brain is looking out at the world and looking for problems all the time. It's hardwired and fixated on things, on bad things. It's hardwired to look for problems in other people, hardwired to look for problems in yourself.

That part of your brain will never make you happy. It is not designed for happiness; it is designed for survival. And if that's the only part of your brain that you are using, you're going to be constantly in reactive mode. You're going to constantly be seeing the problems in the world with yourself and with others. You're going to be essentially living into your negativity bias.

The Negativity Bias: How Do We Overcome Our Own Brain?

- Self-awareness and questioning negative thoughts
- Cognitive Restructuring
- Savor Positive Moments

I've got great news for you though. You have another part of your brain that's the human part of your brain. That is that prefrontal cortex. And this part of your brain is what we can use to overcome your negativity bias. Well how do you do that, you might be wondering? How do we overcome our own brain? Yeah, you need to know this if you want to be happy.

And again, even with being happy, you still only get happiness 50% of the time. I don't want to oversell happiness. Think about it. There's tons of things in the world we're never going to be happy about. Yeah, we're never going to be happy about animal abuse, animal neglect. We're never going to be happy about hoarding situations. We're never going to be happy about social injustice. We're never going to be happy about natural disasters.

But still you have to learn how to overcome your brain so you can at least claim more of your happiness that you deserve. So first and foremost, one of the ways to overcome your own brain's negativity bias is to understand that first of all, you have it and to start questioning some of your negative thoughts.

Start questioning some of the judges, especially as it relates to yourself. One of the best places to start is with yourself. Again, I'm a life coach. I work with veterinary professionals one on one. So many of my clients tell me, like they'll come to a session they're like, I'm failing at everything. And I'm like, oh really? OK. And we'll start the question. Is it true that you're failing at everything? Yes, I'm failing at everything. I'm failing at work. I'm failing at home.

And then I'm like, OK. Like, is it true that you're failing at home? It's like, did you feed your pets today? Well, yeah. OK. So you did that. Did you feed your kids today? Yeah, I did. Did you take a shower today? Yeah. All of a sudden we start building up evidence of how you're not failing at everything. So that sort of questioning your negative thoughts.

Cognitive restructuring really is yeah, can I look at a situation and can I understand that there are different ways to look at any situation? And am I opening up my brain to be able to see something and recognize that the way I'm interpreting it may not be the only way?

It's like we tend to get blinders on where we can see things see things only one way. But here's what you have to realize. Here's an example of that. I was coaching a client yesterday who actually works in the lab animal field and she's a vet tech in the lab animal field.

And she was telling me how the company that she works for offered some chair yoga sessions because there's so many of them that are working from home. So she said, so I signed up for the chair yoga session and her partner happened to also be home. So she said she invited her partner into the room to also take part in the chair yoga session.

So my client says to me, she goes, but the instructor. She goes, her voice just annoyed me the way she was speaking. She goes, it just seems so patronizing. It seemed like she was talking to me like I was a child or something.

And she said my partner, we were like going through it a little bit. We're like five minutes into it and she says and I turned to my partner and I kind of made like a funny like smart face. And she goes, my partner said, to me like what's the problem? And she says oh my God, I can't stand her voice. It's like so condescending. And her partner says, what are you talking about? Her voice is fine.

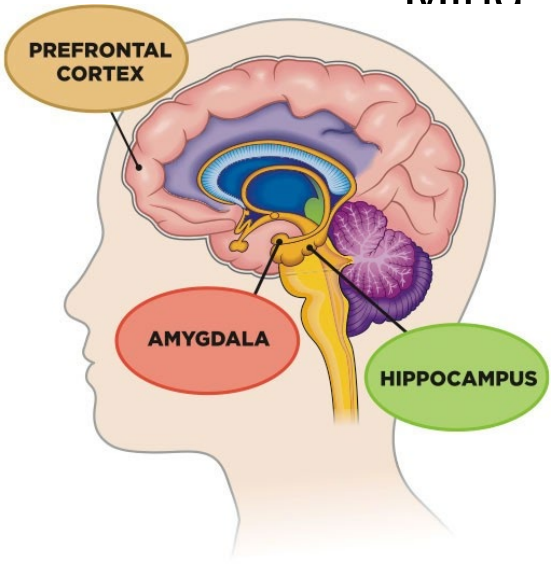
So this is what I'm talking about. We can all look at the same thing and see it very differently. We can all be looking at someone's voice, hearing their voice. One person thinks it's condescending, another person's like it's completely fine.

So cognitive restructuring is understanding that wait a minute, the way I see something is not necessarily the way it is. You have to understand that about your own brain. Your brain lies to you a lot. And the third thing that we can be doing to overcome our own brain is to be looking for the good.

Like we talked about a little bit before. It's like yeah, am I paying attention to those moments that give me compassion satisfaction? Do I have a gratitude practice? It's like, am I looking for on purpose and deliberately? Am I taking my brain and am I shifting it to go hey, what's something good that happened today or what are three things that are good today? Or what's something that-- Where's a place today that I showed up that I'm proud of? What's something that I think I contributed to work today?

You have to direct your brain there. It won't offer that stuff up automatically. Your brain like I told you, is looking for all the problems, not for the good things.

Your Mind



The diagram shows a sagittal cross-section of the human brain. Three specific regions are highlighted with colored callouts: the Prefrontal Cortex (yellow), the Amygdala (red), and the Hippocampus (green). The brain is shown in a light tan color, with internal structures like the cerebellum and brainstem visible in various colors.

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- Primitive brain
- Human brain

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So that ultimately yes, here's it's about turning on your prefrontal cortex. That's the part of your brain that again, has logic, has reasoning, has executive functioning.

That's the part of your brain that actually cares about what you want in your life. That cares about your goals that wants you to achieve those things. Your lower brain doesn't care about any of your goals. It cares about what do I need to do in this moment to stay alive and it will make very sometimes not great decisions.

But your prefrontal cortex, that's the part of your brain that again you need to be using to direct your thinking and to understand that wait a minute, our thoughts are changeable.

My Philosophy



- Thoughts are changeable
- Thoughts are optional
- Thoughts are a choice
- What you think, you create
- Think deliberately



Anything that I'm looking at, I have to be able to look at it and say, wow, is there another way I can also look at this?

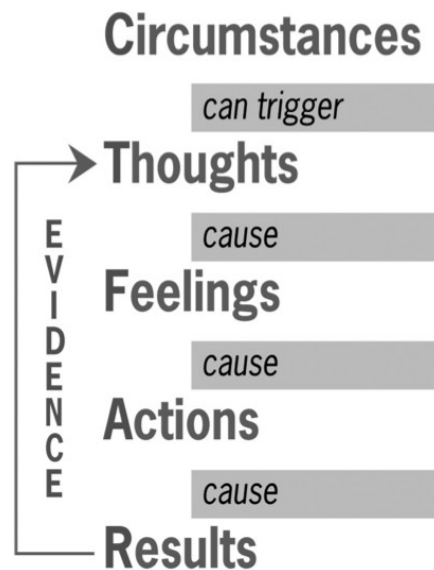
That client who says, hey you don't care about my pet. My first go to thought about that is probably that's so disrespectful. How can they be like that? That's one way to look at it. Another way to look at that comment will be like wow, you know what, I get that this is a difficult time for clients too. All and how we look at it.

And again, remember it's like what I'm going to teach you here is that your thoughts create your feelings. So what you're thinking is causing your emotional state. Remember your circumstances don't cause how you feel, it's your thoughts about them that do.

So what you're thinking, you've got a lot of skin in the game. Your thoughts are creating your emotions. Do you like the majority of your thoughts? If not, you want to start working with some of those and understanding yeah, I can choose my thoughts. I can change my thoughts. My thoughts are optional. I have to understand that I can also think deliberately. I can look at a situation, step back from and go OK, hold on a second.

I see what my brain is offering me up right away. The brain is like, they shouldn't do that. They should be more patient. They shouldn't be so disrespectful. OK, you can think those thoughts. They're going to create a lot of negative emotion for you. They're going to create anger and frustration and annoyance and

maybe that's what you want to feel in those moments. But if you don't, you're going to have to change your own thinking.



This is how we operate. Circumstances trigger your thoughts. Your thoughts cause your feelings. Your feelings then feel how you behave and your behavior creates results. So circumstances, you don't have a lot of control over those. Sometimes you do. Sometimes you do.

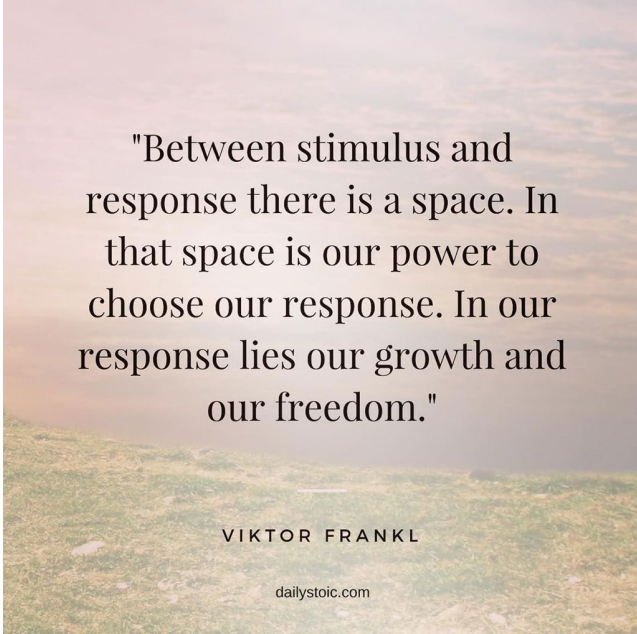
Where you work as a circumstance. You can change some of your circumstances and this is a good example of this. And I did this so much in my earlier life. I changed lots of jobs because I kept thinking like, I didn't like the way I felt. So I'm like oh, I've got to change my job so I would change my circumstance and hoping that I would feel better.

But you can see how the problem was I never changed my thinking. So then I would get to the new job and sure after the honeymoon period yes, a new job is always great for like the first week or so. And then all of a sudden I'd find oh, now I'm feeling the same way again. Yeah, because I brought my brain with me and I never changed my thinking.

So this is what I see lots of people wanting to do is like oh, I think if I'm feeling unhappy it's because of the job. And hey, maybe sometimes it is. Do I believe that there are some practices out there that have some major issues? Yeah, of course. That have some major leadership issues? Absolutely.

And yeah, if you think you're in one of those, if you can leave and find something else, then by all means, do it. But be careful of the times where it's just like the emotions that you're feeling are because of your thinking that is driving your anxiety or driving your insecurities or driving your feeling of inadequacy.

Because again, if you bring your brain, which you will, to the next job if you haven't changed your way of thinking, your mindset, you're going to feel the same way in the next job. So that's just some insight to have here.



"Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom."

VIKTOR FRANKL

dailystoic.com

And what I want to be teaching you is that ultimately between something that happens or stimulus, if you will and how we respond to it, you always have choice and we forget that sometimes. We forget where we have choice.

We have a choice in-- something that a client says to us. We have a choice in how we respond to that. We do. And I get it. At the end of the day, we feel like we don't have a choice. We feel like Julie, you don't get it. Like, I'm exhausted and drained and all I can do is like it's all I can do just to put a smile on my face.

Yeah, I get that. I understand what you're saying. But I want to remind you that your power lies in what you choose to think about all of this stuff. Your power relies in wait a minute, you're the creator of your emotions. You're creating your experience of your life.

What's happening each and every day is that you're being offered neutral things happening to you that your brain is then interpreting as either good or bad. And you have control over that. And it doesn't mean we want to interpret everything as good. It's not about bright citing your life. It's about recognizing wait a minute, I still have some choice here.

I get to decide. I get to step back from a situation and go wait a minute, is there another way I can see this? And you see this happen all the time when there's something happening in the practice and people are thinking about it in all different ways. Some people are angry about it. Some people are fine with it. Some

people are frustrated about it because they're all thinking very differently about that one particular issue. That's the power that we have with our own brain.

3. Self-Care



Now let's talk a little bit about what gets in the way because you can't use your brain to this level that I'm talking about if you're physically, mentally, spiritually, psychologically drained and that's where self-care comes in. So yeah, it's unrealistic for me to expect you to be able to direct your thinking when you are depleted.

We have to talk about self-care. We have to simplify it because I think so many of us have complicated it. We think that it's going to the spot. We think it has to cost a lot of money and I want to debunk all of that.

What Is Self-Care?

Self-care is taking care of oneself.

Activities, intentions and practices we engage in **regularly** to reduce stress and enhance our wellbeing.



What self-care ultimately is taking care of yourself. It could be an activity. It could be a non and doing nothing. It could be in a non activity. It could be in a practice or an intention that is aimed at enhancing your well-being. So you get to decide what that could be.

And here's the deal



You have to take responsibility for your OWN wellbeing. #likeaboss

You have to take responsibility for this. No one can do this for you. You have to understand that this is one of those things that you have to own. You've got to own your self. You've got to understand that, hey wait a minute, in order for me to show up at work every day and be the best version of me that I can be where I am not depleted and drained and angry and frustrated.

In order for me to show up the version I want to be of me, I got to make sure that I am putting those deposits in that we talked about early. What are the deposits you've put in today? Just think about that in your own life today. What deposits have you put into your what I call your mental health bank account? That's the self-care.

So what deposits have you put in? Because I can imagine there's been lots of withdrawals, especially if you went to work today I imagine there were lots of withdrawals. It's like, yeah that cranky client you dealt with, boom that's a withdrawal.

The computer. You're not being able to find something in the computer. That's a withdrawal. Losing that chart, that's a withdrawal. One of your coworkers in a bad mood today. That's a withdrawal. So it's like yeah, where-- Have there been a lot of deposits? And if there weren't, no worries. You're going to change that.

This isn't about this isn't about being mean to yourself. It's about loving yourself and saying oh, I recognize that maybe I do need to up level my self care what could that look like that is easy.

5 Aspects of Self-Care

- Mental
- Physical
- Spiritual
- Emotional
- Social



Now there are five different aspects of self care. Don't get overwhelmed by this. All this means is that, hey, we have mental needs, physical needs, spiritual needs, emotional needs and social needs.

And it doesn't mean that all of those needs need to be met all the time. It means that we need to be aware of oh, mental self-care. That's balancing between stimulating my brain with CE, learning new things at work reading, reading journals, reading research papers and giving my brain a break. That's also part of mental self-care.

Physical self-care, that's anything related to health nutrition wellness. It's about moving your body. It's about taking your medication. It's about taking vitamins. About going to the doctor. It's about putting on daily body lotion. It's about hydrating yourself with water.

It's also about eliminating the water. You know what I mean. You know Those of you that are holding your bladder all day long, stop that. Self-care would be like yeah, I'm going to go practice self-care. I'll be back in three minutes. Got to go pee. That'd be self-care.

Spiritual self-care. Spiritual self-care, again, if you're a faith based person then that may be something along the lines of church or prayer. If you are not faith based, then for you maybe your spiritual self care is being in nature or aligning with what you believe is your purpose or yoga or meditation or volunteering. That might be your spiritual self-care.

Emotional self-care. This is really important. This is actually, am I taking some time in my life to feel my feelings? Which I get. None of us have even been taught how to feel our feelings. So like making time for it, it's like, what are you talking about?

I did an entire podcast episode about this a few weeks ago about making time to feel your feelings. That's something that I've really had to be diligent about. I have history of I never knew how to feel my feelings. So I did everything I could do not feel my feelings. Developed an eating disorder, drug abuse, alcohol abuse.

And I had to learn how to feel my feelings. And now I've had to learn how to actually make time for that. Like set aside some time to just feel what's going on for me. It's so easy to keep busy and pushing it away and distracting ourselves. And I get it but they're not going away. You know this to be true.

Just because we keep busy and distracting and do all these things doesn't mean that those feelings are going away. Those heavy ones need to be processed. They need to be allowed. We need to actually drop into our body and feel them and that's a skill you've got to learn. And I'm sorry that we don't learn that anywhere. I'm sorry we don't learn that in school.

Social self-care is being with others in a positive way, which could be working out together. Could be getting together with your coworkers for who knows, drinks and appetizers. It could be a sip and paint. It could be a book club, could be any of those things. Just getting together. Family get togethers, things like that could be part of your social self-care.

At Home

- Sleep at least 7 hours/night
- Shopping
- Food Prep
- Fuel/Hydration
- Movement
- Routine
- Rest/Solitude
- Tech Management
- Journaling
- Meditation/mindfulness

At

Work

- Take breaks
- Bring food/snacks
- Stay hydrated
- PPE
- Comfortable clothes/shoes
- Coming in early/Leaving on time
- Ask for help



So I want you to also think about some-- Here's some best practices. Self-care is boring. That's how if you're doing it right. It's pretty boring. It's about sleep. It's about maybe doing some food prep. So if you're working those long shifts, you've got some food ready where you don't have to go through the drive-thru, like you have something ready that you can just pop in the microwave, pop in the oven and it's already ready for you.

Self-care is about yeah, hydrating yourself and fueling your body with mostly nutritious stuff. Mostly. Moving your body. Having a routine the way you're living your life, especially a morning routine whatever your morning is. And don't know if we have any shift workers on here. I don't know if we've got ER folks but yeah, routines matter.

Rest in solitude. When is the last time you've done nothing? Now I know people are like oh yeah, just the other day I was like watching Netflix. That's not doing nothing. That's doing something. I mean doing nothing like other than breathing. That's what I mean.

Are you managing your tech? Is your phone buzzing and binging at you all day long and constantly like taking your attention and distracting you? Our brains are fried. I don't know how else to say that, our brains are fried. Really are. Again, self-care is like, what are all the things that I need to do to come back to myself, to come home to myself, to de-escalate the stimuli?

Journaling is amazing amazing, amazing tool and it doesn't have to be four hours of journaling, it can be five minutes. Literally that's probably what I do every day about five minutes of journaling. I do just a brain dump. I just brain dump out what's in my brain onto paper. I get to see my thoughts.

Meditation, mindfulness also again, great practices. At work, let's talk about taking breaks. Yeah and I also understand that it's not always possible, but I want to push back on you a little bit to say that we got to be careful of when we're telling ourselves we can't take a break when it's possible that we actually could. And I want you to hold each other accountable to making sure, again, your coworkers are taking breaks.

I know there will be days where maybe that's not possible if you're short or whatever. OK, well, maybe we can take a five minute break or a 10 minute break just to go walk outside. Maybe we need to bring some food and some snacks to work. Again, all boring stuff. Hydration, wearing our PPE, comfortable clothes and shoes, all self-care. Just being kind to myself.

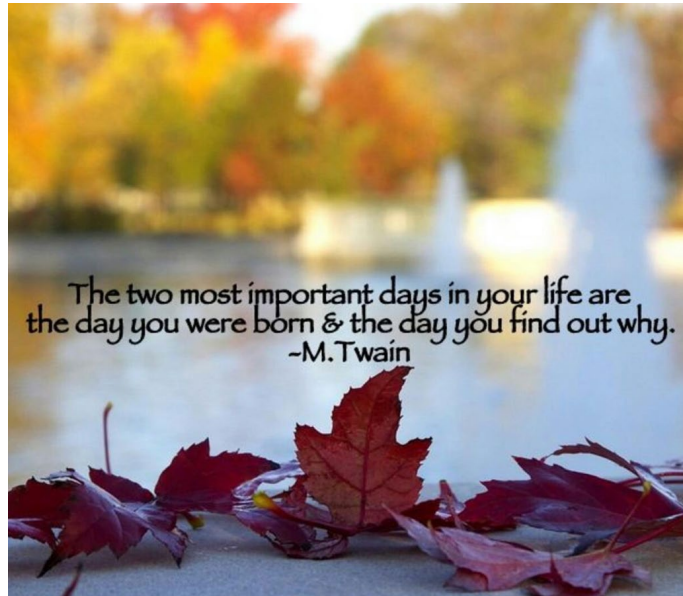
Coming in early. I don't mean an hour early, don't freak out on me. I just mean I am ready to go in my shift starts so that I'm not coming in an already chaotic frenzied state. Because let's be honest. You know what, veterinary medicine is chaotic and frenzied. It is. That's its nature because you don't know what's happening. It's unpredictable.

So you don't want to come in that already state. That wouldn't be being kind to yourself. And then leaving on time. Well, what do I mean by that? It's not always possible but sometimes we tell ourselves we can't leave when we actually can. So be careful of that one.

Asking for help at work. Yeah, we can sometimes-- Here's another aspect of self-care is we expect other people to be able to read our mind to see that we're drowning, to see that we need help and we just need to ask sometimes. Hey, you know what, I'm behind in this. Is there anyone that can help me? Can you help me do this?

Here's, can you just do this one call back for me because I'm behind or can you help me wrap these packs or can somebody help me clean up the OR because it's a mess and I'm going to be leaving in 20 minutes? Asking for help and not expecting that everyone is going to be able to read our minds because sometimes we can't read our minds.

Your Purpose
= Your Why

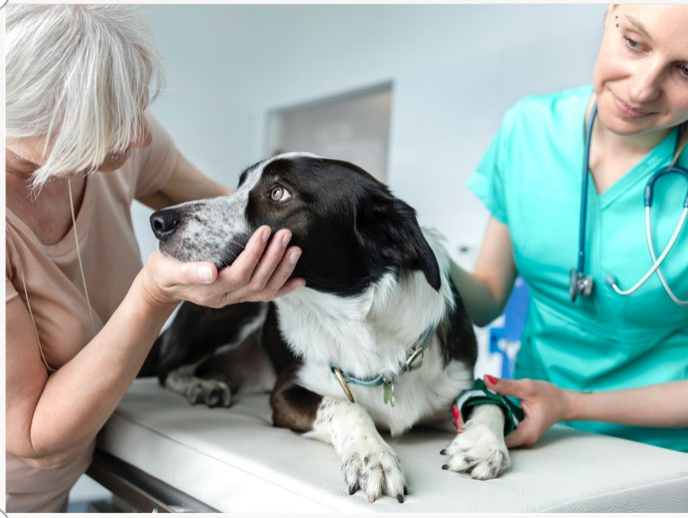


All right. Let's bring this to number 4. Number 4 is about aligning with our why. So your why is your purpose and it's sometimes I think we think it's this big grandiose thing. It's like oh, my purpose. Like well, jeez my purpose isn't to like cure cancer. Since that's not my purpose, I'm not really sure what it is so therefore I'm not going to even think about that. But I think we have to think about our why.

I think we have to think about what is it that we're here to do. Like, what is your intention with your one beautiful, precious life? And I love this quote by Mark Twain. The two most important days in your life were the day you were born in the day you find out why.

Now we don't get a text message telling us what our purpose is, we actually just get to decide what our purpose is and here's why it matters.

Protection Against Compassion Fatigue



Knowing and aligning with what you believe is your purpose.

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Why it matters is because it can help to offset compassion fatigue when we are aligned with and know what we're here to do.

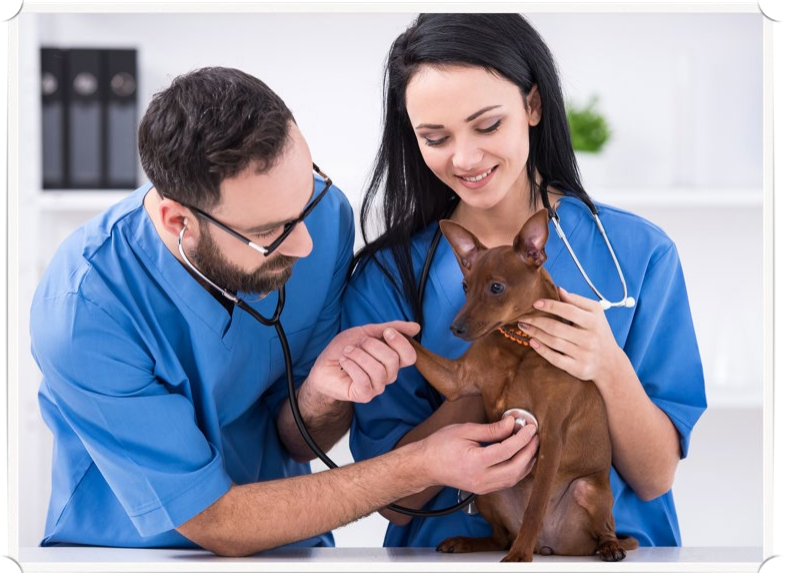
What it does help you do is it helps you to not sweat some of the small stuff, some of those comments from clients. When you know what you're here to do, when you know that you know what, I go to work every day to save lives and make a difference.

When you're like aligned with that, when that's like constantly running through your mind, when that is part of the fabric of your being. Sometimes just so those comments like oh, you just care about the money. That stuff just starts to not always not bother you but it becomes less important. It just sort of falls off of you a little bit easier when again, you are aligned with your purpose.

Now, here's where we get it wrong though, especially here in America. In America we are very, very connected. We connect our identity with our jobs here. You know this to be true. You've heard this before. You've probably heard people say this about Americans is like you can tell an American because they meet someone new and like probably one of their first questions is going to be, what do you do?

Whereas other cultures often doesn't come up. They don't talk about what they do because that's not who they are.

Your Purpose Isn't **WHAT** You Do



And that's where we get it wrong. We sometimes think that our purpose is what we do. Your purpose isn't your job title. Your purpose isn't being a veterinarian or a hospital manager or veterinary technician or veterinary assistant. That's not your purpose.

It Isn't...



- Showing up just for a paycheck
- Mentally tallying what you get vs. the practice
- Comparing yourself to your co-workers
- Engaging in drama/negativity
- Waiting to be told what to do
- Taking things personally
- Feeling entitled
- Blaming others for how you feel
- Doing the bare minimum

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And also, your purpose isn't to show up just for a paycheck or tallying what you get versus the practice or comparing yourself to your coworkers. Comparison is the thief of joy. You're going to suck all of your joy out when you're comparing yourself.

Our purpose isn't to engage in drama or negativity, even though our brain loves it so much. Our purpose isn't waiting to be told what to do or taking things personally or feeling entitled or blaming others for how we feel or doing the bare minimum. None of those things are purpose.

So your purpose isn't what you do. Your purpose is actually who you get to be every single day when you go to work.

It's Who You
Get To BE
While You
Do It.



Who you get to be. Do you see the distinction there because who you get to be is individual. Who you get to be is based on your preferences, your personality, your life experiences, your morals and beliefs, your upbringing. Your travels. All of those things bring in who you get to be.

And in that way, we could put-- let's take veterinarians. We could put 500 veterinarians in a room and all of you would have a different purpose because who you get to be is slightly different because of who you are. Because you're all unique. Same thing with veterinary technicians, assistants, managers, all of it.

Who Do You Get To



BE?

- Showing up with a positive attitude
- Inspiring others
- Strengthening/lengthening the human-animal bond
- Keeping pets healthy longer
- Anticipating the needs of others
- Educating/teaching/supporting customers/pet owners/each other
- Being an example of what is possible
- Leading with love + compassion + dedication + commitment
- Working harder than everyone else because that's **who you are**

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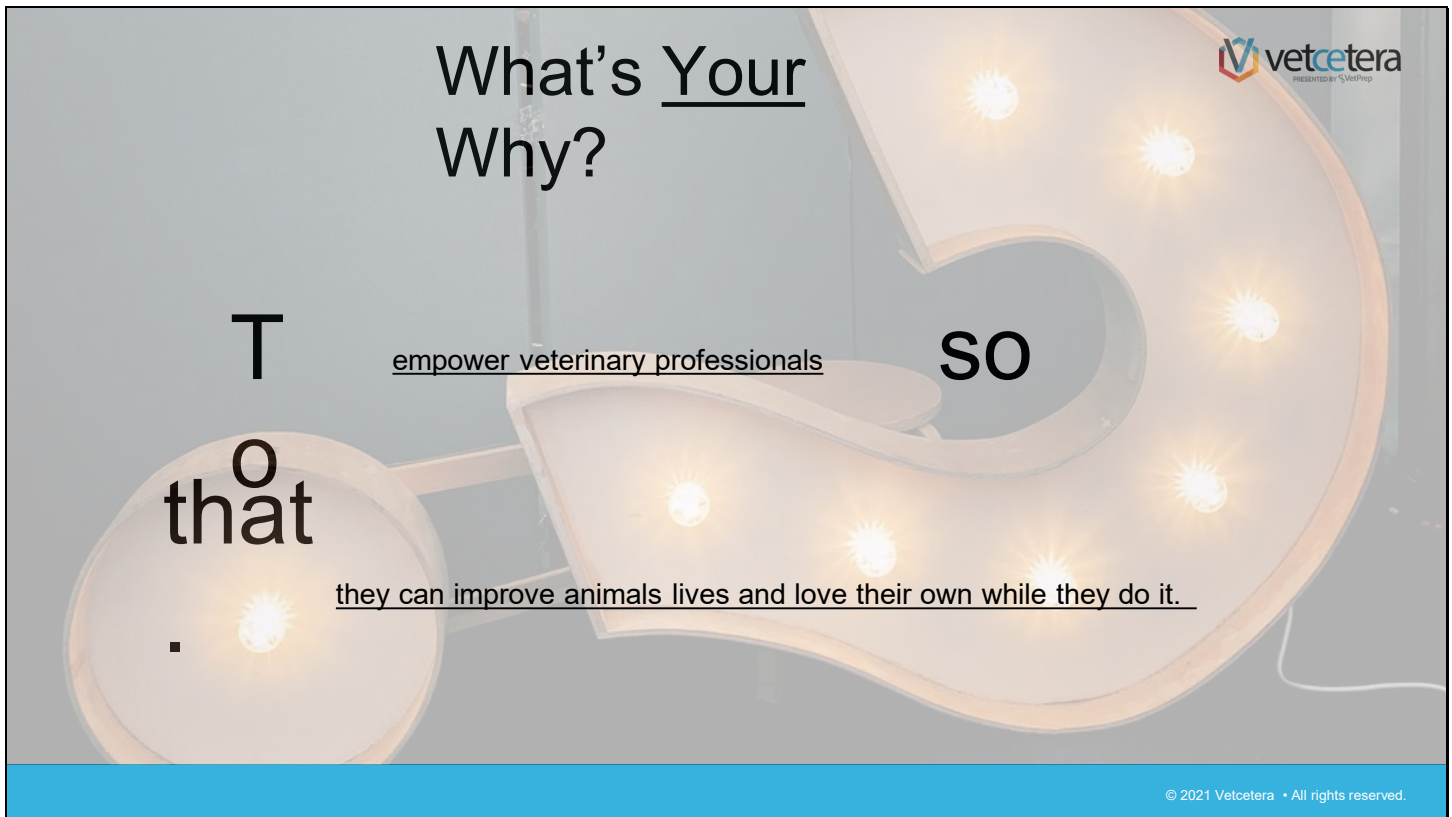
So who do you get to be? Who you get to be is somebody who has the ability to show up with a positive attitude most of the time. Hey you know what, we're all human. We are. We're going to have bad days. But that doesn't mean that we still can't try to bring the positivity most of the time. Again, we're not looking for 100% here.

Who do you get to be someone who inspires others? Again, someone is watching you all of the time at work. There is somebody who is looking at you and is looking for inspiration. Do you like what they see? Who you get to be as someone who is responsible for, has the ability to help strengthen and lengthen the human animal bond. And what an amazing thing that is.

And that human animal bond is pretty dang strong. That's why clients sometimes lose it. They do because they are in such fear of losing something that matters to them so much. I get that. That's challenging sometimes for you.

Who you get to be as somebody who helps keep pets healthy longer. Like, what an amazing thing. We get to do now. Who you get to be as someone who anticipates the needs of others, who can educate and teach not only pet owners, co-workers, colleagues.

Who you get to be as an example of what is possible. Who you get to be as somebody who again, brings the love, brings the compassion, the gentleness and the understanding. And who you get to be as somebody who works hard because you want to make a difference. And that's who you are.



So in thinking about that, I think one of the most powerful things you can do is create a y for yourself, a purpose statement. And this came from Simon Sinek. If you know who Simon Sinek is, he wrote a book called What's Your Why.

He talks a lot about purpose. He talks a lot about the purpose of figuring out your purpose, claiming your purpose for yourself and aligning with it. And guess what? Your purpose can change. Your purpose may change from December 2021 to February of 2022. That's fine but it's important to connect to it and to align with it.

And he gave us this little template to create our own purpose statement. And at first, it doesn't look like a lot. Just like three words that looks very not like a lot. To blank so that blank. This template is designed that to do something so that there's some sort of an outcome.

So I'll give you a little insight into what my purpose is as it stands today. My purpose is to empower veterinary professionals. Empower you. Show you where your power resides, especially over your emotions. To show you not only that again, you are the creator of your emotions, you have to learn how to process your emotions and take amazingly good care of yourself because you're worth all of that.

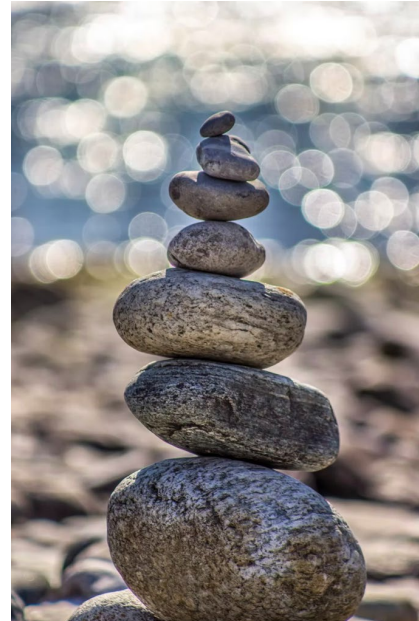
Why do I want to do that? So that you can improve the lives of animals and then love your own life while you're doing it. It's not enough for me that you show up every day as amazing that you are and you're making a difference, you're improving the lives of your patients. You're improving the lives of your clients.

It's not enough for me that you do that. But if you're also not again, finding joy and happiness in your life because of all that.

So that's my why. So your homework is to create a why statement for yourself. To blank so that blank. And I think to be honest, it's a cool thing you can do with everybody at work and you could all put your purpose statements up on the wall. And you could just see what everybody what they are aligning with. Like, what an amazing, powerful thing to do when in a powerful practice.

Resilience Reminders

- It requires doing something
- What is resilient may not always be pleasurable in the moment
- It's a discipline, proactive behavior that strengthens our mind, body and spirit



All right, some reminders here. First of all, resilience. Yeah, it does require doing something. The research about resilience says, yeah, we have to be proactive in it. And maybe resilient may not always be pleasurable in the moment. What does that mean?

That yeah, whether that is physical activity, whether that is self-care. It's like yeah, in the moment our brain tries to talk us out of a lot of these things. Oh, you don't have time. It takes away from others. You should do laundry instead. But sometimes we have to, again work against sometimes that own narrative in there that's not serving us.

And yeah, it is some discipline and some proactive behavior on our part that does help to strengthen our mind, our body and our spirit. And you know what, I want you to own that like a boss. It is our responsibility to do that and it doesn't mean that it's always easy. And sometimes when we're really struggling, it's going to look a lot different than when we're not struggling.

So I also want you to be kind to yourself in what that might mean, especially if some of you are feeling like, you know what, yeah, that sounds great but I don't have a lot right now to give. OK, great. Then what I offer to you is what would it look like-- what would like a baby step look like for you? What would just one small thing look like that does seem easy and doable for you that would be something to help strengthen your mind, body, and spirit? Consider that. Think about that.

So before I open up for questions, I want to just to show you a quick video that I made. I made this some probably-- it was fairly some halfway into the pandemic, I guess I could say. And it was designed so that I was expressing my heartfelt appreciation for all of you. I know this is not an easy time.

I know that so many of you are struggling. I know it's exhausting and tiring and you feel unappreciated and clients have not been on their best behavior. And I know that wears away at you because you have huge hearts. And so I want to just to in response to that to show you a little bit of love. So turn up the volume sit back and enjoy.

Video

[MUSIC PLAYING] You're the engine that makes all things go. And you're always in disguise, my hero. I see your light in a dark. Smile in my face when we all know it's hard. There's no way to ever pay your back. Bless your heart. Know I love you for that. Honest and selfless. I don't know if this helps it but good job. You're doing a good job, a good job. You're doing a good job.

Don't get too down. The world needs you now. Know that you've matter, matter matter, yeah. You're doing a good job, a good job. You're doing a good job. Don't get too down. The world needs you now. Know that your matter, matter, matter, yeah.

Six in the morning. As soon as you walk through that door, everyone needs you again. The world is out of order. It's not as sound when you're not around.



All day on your feet, hard. Keep that energy, I know. When it feel like the end of the road, you don't let go. You just press forward. You're the engine that makes all things go. Always in disguise, my hero. I see a light in the dark. Smile on my face when we all know it's hard.

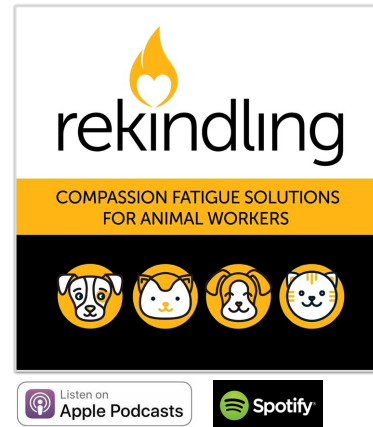
There's no way to ever pay you back. Bless your heart. Know I love you for that. Honest and selfless. I don't know if this helps it but good job. You're doing a good job, a good job. Good job. You're doing a good job. Don't get too down. The world needs you now. Know that you matter, matter, matter, yeah. Yeah, it's a good job. You're doing a good job, a good job. Good job. You're doing a good job. Don't get too down. The world needs you now. Know that you matter, matter, matter, yeah.

The mothers, the fathers, the teachers, the preachers. Strangers to friends. That show up in the end. From the bottom to the top, the listeners that hear us. This is for you. You make me fearless. You're doing a good job, a good job. You're doing a good job. Don't get too down. The world needs you now. Know that you matter, matter, matter, yeah.

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Good job. I hope you tell yourself good job, at least 50 times a day. That's my wish for all of you is to tell yourself, good job 50 times a day. That would be amazing.

So yes, thank you for giving me that opportunity just to show a little bit of love your direction because you all deserve it. You are amazing and I want you to take good care of yourselves as well. So I don't know if we have any questions but, I think I've been going to serve them up.

We do have one question here and I just want to say thank you for that video. That was a good reminder that we are cool, interesting, fun group of people and that our community is worth fighting for.

And I really appreciate your lecture tonight and hopefully, we've helped some people here just get some tools as we struggle through our daily challenges. So we did have a question. This person wrote I found your list of at home and at work self-care very helpful and eye opening. Is there a book on self care that you'd recommend?

Yes, there is. I was looking I was looking over here because actually in the other room. I love. This is a real-- It's a great book on self care. It's a little bit old but it is-- Oh my gosh, now all of a sudden I'm-- Richardson. Oh my gosh, it's called The Art of Self-care. And I can't think of her first name. Now I'm looking it up.

She gives you such a-- The Extreme Art Of Self-Care. Cheryl Richardson. It's a great, really great book. It really like take self-care so further beyond even just of me listing some of those best practices. It takes

even to a deeper level. So I would totally recommend that, one of my favorite books. I'd love to give that book as a gift to be honest with you.

Yeah, I've read that one. It's really good. We have a couple more questions that just popped up. One venting with a colleague, good or bad?

Well, I mean you know what, we all need to vent sometimes. We do. And I think it's human nature to want to alleviate our burden. When you're feeling frustrated or angry or heart heavy about something, we do want to alleviate that burden. And the problem is typically what ends up happening is-- And that's the attempt.

And sometimes it works to a degree but sometimes when the other person then starts joining me like yeah, you're right. That's terrible, they shouldn't have done that. Then you aren't getting the relief that you want because then they're then joining you and you're now both swimming in the misery.

So you have to watch that a little bit. I think to some degree yeah, it can be a little bit helpful, but I think you also have to know when to turn it off to be like OK, hey I just want to vent. Can we just vent for like three minutes about this? OK, now I'm done and then like you can move on to another conversation or walk away or something like that, it's probably helpful.

And venting is a little bit different than-- Venting is different than debriefing. Debriefing is something that we need to do when there's been some sort of traumatic or very stressful events. Like maybe an animal died unexpectedly, a client-- Like there was a real big issue with a client. Sometimes we may need to debrief about something. That's a little bit different. That's in the span of like all getting together and talking about how you felt in that moment and using the space for that. Good question though.

Yes, very good question. And definitely something that I've found myself doing maybe more than I should at times. OK. And then we have, what recommendations do you have for mental health and resilience during vet school? And this is from someone in their first year.

About mental health resources in vet school, was that the question?

Correct.

First of all, I'm hoping that your vet school which I do know so many of them now have really started to offer more resources such as social workers, such as mindfulness-based stress reduction courses. I would be looking first of all, there. And again, understanding that yes, there's concern here in our profession.

So if that's not a resource and you have to go on your own, then of course, I would be looking at yeah, do I need therapy? Do I need to work with a coach? Do I need to somehow invest in a stress reduction program? Like what kind of needs am I thinking that I need if I can't get those met at the school? Which sometimes you're not going to be able to, you may have to go out on your own.

It's a good question because it's showing me that Yeah that there's this understanding of yeah, I need support sometimes and I'm not exactly sure where to get it. I would first say like look around at what you have at your disposal. Sometimes we don't even realize what's in front of us until we actually start looking for it.

Now I'm hoping that in most vet schools, at least the ones that I have lectured at, there usually is a being committee. A compassion fatigue committee. Like there's already these groups that are starting and they're offering resources. So I'd also be looking at some of those.

Great. Thank you very much. And I believe that's all the questions we had for today. Thanks again Julie for the really great webinar. We really appreciate your help. I found some information that I hadn't known about before and hopefully everybody got a little something that can help them in their daily lives.

Thanks, everybody. Be well.

Bye.

All images provided by Julie Squires.